

New Quincy Courthouse

Draft Environmental Impact Report

Prepared for:
Judicial Council of California

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NEW QUINCY COURTHOUSE PROJECT

Draft Environmental Impact Report

Prepared for:

Judicial Council of California

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Volume 1 presents the following appendices:

Appendix A. Notice of Preparation and Public Scoping Comments

Appendix B. Air Quality and GHG Emissions Calculations

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ºC	degrees Celsius
ºF	degrees Fahrenheit
AB	Assembly Bill
ACM	asbestos-containing material
ADWF	average dry-weather flows
ALUCP	Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan
APN	Assessor's Parcel Number
ASHRAE	American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers
AST	aboveground storage tank
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials
AT&T	American Telephone and Telegraph Company
AVCSD	American Valley Community Services District
BA	Bachelor of Arts degree
BAU	business as usual
BS	Bachelor of Science degree
BAAQMD	Bay Area Air Quality Management District
BERD	Built Environment Resource Directory
BFE	base flood elevation
bgs	below ground surface
BMP	best management practices
B.P.	before present
CAA	Federal Clean Air Act
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
Cal/OSHA	California Occupational Safety and Health Administration
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
CalEPA	California Environmental Protection Agency
CALGreen	California Green Building Standards Code
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Cal OES	California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
CAP	Climate Action Plan
CAPM	capital preventative maintenance
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CBC	California Building Code
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDFG	California Department of Fish and Game
CDPH	California Department of Public Health
CEC	California Energy Commission
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CFC	California Fire Code

CFP	California fully protected
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
cfs	cubic feet per second
CFS	chlorofluorocarbons
CGS	California Geological Survey
CH_4	methane
CHRIS	California Historical Resources Information System
CHP	California Highway Patrol
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNEL	community noise equivalent level
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO	carbon monoxide
CO_2	carbon dioxide
CO_2e	carbon dioxide equivalent
CPF	cancer potency factor
CPT	cone penetration test
CREC	controlled recognized environmental condition
CRHR	California Register of Historic Resources
CRPR	California Rare Plant Rank
CSSC	California species of special concern
CUPA	certified unified program agency
CWA	Clean Water Act
CY	cubic yard
dB	decibel scale
dBA	A-weighted sound level
DBE	design-build entity
DOC	California Department of Conservation
DPM	diesel particulate matter
DPS	distinct population segment
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
EF	exposure frequency
EFH	essential fish habitat
EIR	environmental impact report
EO	Executive Order
EOP	emergency operations plan
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
EPAP	Encroachment Permit Application Package
EQSD	East Quincy Services District
ESA	environmental site assessment
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
Facilities Standards	California Trial Court Facilities Standards
FC	federal candidate for listing
FE	federally endangered
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FESA	Federal Endangered Species Act
FFE	finished floor elevation
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration

FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FMMP	Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
FP	State fully protected
FPMS	Fossil Prediction Map System
FPT	federal proposed threatened
FRA	federal responsibility area
FT	federally threatened
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
g/L	gallons per liter
GHG	greenhouse gas
gpm	gallons per minute
GSA	groundwater sustainability agency
GSP	groundwater sustainability plan
GVWR	gross vehicle weight rating
GWP	global warming potential
H_2O	water vapor
H_2S	hydrogen sulfide
HAP	hazardous air pollutant
HCP	habitat conservation plan
HDM	highway design manual
HFCs	hydrofluorocarbons
HMMP	habitat mitigation and monitoring plan
HRS	historical resources study
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
HVAC	heating, ventilation, and air conditioning
Hz	hertz
ICC	International Code Council
ITP	incidental take permit
Judicial Council	Judicial Council of California
LBP	lead-based paint
LCI	Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
LCM	lead-containing materials
Ldn	Day/night average sound level
L_{eq}	equivalent noise level
L_{max}	maximum sound level
LED	light-emitting diode
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
LHMP	local hazard mitigation plan
LID	low impact development
LOS	level of service
LRA	local responsibility area
LSAA	Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement
LUST	leaking underground storage tank
m^2	square meter
MBARD	Monterey Bay Air Resources District
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MCAB	Mountain Cities Air Basin
MEIR	maximally exposed individual resident

MEP	maximum extent practicable
mg/cm^2	milligram per square centimeter
mg/kg	milligrams per kilogram
mgd	million gallons per day
MLD	Most Likely Descendent
MMRP	Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
MRZ	Mineral Resource Zone
msl	mean sea level
MS4	municipal separate stormwater system
$MTCO_2e$	metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent
N_2O	nitrous oxide
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NCCP	natural community conservation plan
NED	National Elevation Dataset
NEHRP	National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program
NEIC	Northeast Information Center
NESHAP	National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NOAA Fisheries	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Marine Fisheries Service
NOP	Notice of Preparation
NO_2	nitrogen dioxide
NO_x	nitrogen oxides
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPPA	California Native Plant Protection Act
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NSAQMD	Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District
O_3	ozone
OEHHA	California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
OES	Office of Emergency Services
OHP	Office of Historic Preservation
OSHA	U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration
Pb	lead
PCALUC	Plumas County Airport Land Use Commission
PCBs	polychlorinated biphenyls
PCB-CM	PCB-containing material
PCFSC	Plumas County Fire Safety Council
PCTC	Plumas County Transportation Commission
PFCs	perfluorocarbons
PG&E	Pacific Gas & Electric
PM	particulate matter
$PM_{2.5}$	fine particulate matter
PM_{10}	inhalable coarse, respirable, or suspended particulate matter
PMI	point of maximum impact
Porter-Cologne Act	Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

ppb	parts per billion
ppm	parts per million
PPV	peak particle velocity
PRC	Public Resources Code
Project	New Quincy Courthouse Project
PV	photovoltaic
PWWF	peak wet-weather flows
QFPD	Quincy Fire Protection District
QCSD	Quincy Community Services District
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
REC	recognized environmental condition
REL	reference exposure level
ROG	reactive organic gas
ROW	right-of-way
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
RWD	Reports of Waste Discharge
RWMG	Regional Water Management Group
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SAA	Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement
SB	Senate Bill
SC	state candidate for listing
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
SE	state endangered
SFHA	Special Flood Hazard Area
SF_6	sulfur hexafluoride
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
SGMP	soil and groundwater management plan
SHMA	Seismic Hazards Mapping Act
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SLF	Sacred Lands File
SMARA	Surface Mining and Reclamation Act
SMARTS	Stormwater Multiple Application and Report Tracking System
SMAQMD	Sacramento Metro Air Quality Management District
SO_2	sulfur dioxide
SO_4^{2-}	sulfates
SOx	sulfur oxides
SR	State Route
SRA	state responsibility area
ST	state threatened
State	State of California
STC	sound transmission class
SVP	Society of Vertebrate Paleontology
SWP	California State Water Project
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TAC	toxic air contaminant
TCR	tribal cultural resource

TMDL	total maximum daily load
TOB	top of bank
UCMP	University of California Museum of Paleontology
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USC	U.S. Code
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
UST	underground storage tank
U.S.	United States of America
UTM	Universal Transverse Mercator
UV	ultraviolet
UWMP	urban water management plan
VdB	velocity decibel
VegCAMP	Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program
VHFHSZ	very high fire hazards severity zone
VMT	vehicle miles traveled
VOC	volatile organic compound
WDR	waste discharge requirement
WQO	Water Quality Order
WUI	wildland urban interface
WWTP	wastewater treatment plant
XRF	x-ray fluorescence
$\mu g/m^3$	micrograms per cubic meter

Executive Summary

Introduction

This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to inform decision makers, representatives of affected and responsible agencies, the public, and other interested parties of the potential environmental effects that may result from implementation of the proposed New Quincy Courthouse Project. This document is prepared in conformance with CEQA (California Public Resources Code [PRC] section 21000, et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14 Section 15000, et seq.).

As required by CEQA Guidelines section 15123(a), "[a]n EIR shall contain a brief summary of the proposed action and its consequences." This executive summary includes (1) a summary description of the proposed Project (Project), (2) a synopsis of environmental impacts (including significant and unavoidable impacts, if any) and recommended mitigation measures (Table ES-1), (3) an identification of the alternatives evaluated, (4) a summary of the areas of controversy associated with the Project, and (5) a summary of issues to be resolved including the choice among alternatives and whether or how to mitigate significant effects.

Project Summary

Project Description

The Judicial Council of California (Judicial Council) has prepared this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to evaluate the potentially significant environmental impacts that may result from the construction and operation of its proposed New Quincy Courthouse Project (herein referred to as Project). The Project would relocate the Plumas County Superior Court functions presently operating in the Plumas County Courthouse to a newly constructed courthouse building located at 253, 287 and 295 Lawrence Street.

Project Objectives

The New Quincy Courthouse Project is proposed to accomplish the following objectives which are immediately needed improvements that enhance the Superior Court's ability to serve the public:

- Provide a permanent, sustainable, safe, and accessible courthouse that improves the public's access to justice and enhances public services.
- Align courthouse spaces and organization with Judicial Council's *California Trial Court Facilities Standards*.
- Improve security, relieve current space shortfall, and improve operational efficiency and customer service.

Required Lead Agency Approvals

As the CEQA lead agency, the Judicial Council has the responsibility for, among other things, preparing and certifying an EIR that addresses the potential environmental impacts of the Project; identifying feasible mitigation measures that could avoid or minimize significant environmental impacts; evaluating a reasonable range of feasible alternatives; adopting findings with regard to each significant environmental impact; providing a statement of overriding considerations for all environmental impacts that cannot be mitigated to a less-than-significant

level; and adopting a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) to ensure that all required mitigation measures are implemented.

The Judicial Council may approve the Project only after consideration and certification of the Final EIR and making appropriate findings. Because the Judicial Council is the lead agency and is acting as the judicial branch of state government, local government land use planning and zoning regulations would not apply to the Project. However, the Judicial Council has considered local policies and guidelines in the preparation of this EIR.

Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines, this EIR focuses on the potentially significant direct and indirect environmental impacts that could result from implementation of the Project. The EIR impact analysis evaluates in detail potential impacts on aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, transportation, tribal cultural resources, utilities and service systems, and wildfire.

Other resources were determined to not be impacted or to have a negligible and therefore not significant impact due to absence of the evaluated resource in the Project area or the nature of the proposed activity. Impacts on these resources were dismissed from detailed analysis in the EIR. These resource areas include agricultural and forest resources, energy, land use and planning, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, and recreation. These impacts are briefly discussed in Chapter 3 Impacts Found Not to Be Significant.

Of the potential Project impacts evaluated in detail in Chapter 4 Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, transportation, and wildfire impacts are determined to be less than significant; no mitigation is required to reduce impacts to these resources.

Potentially significant impacts on aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, tribal cultural resources, and utilities and service systems can be reduced to less-than-significant levels with mitigation. A summary of the potentially significant environmental impacts of the Project and the mitigation reducing these impacts to a less-than-significant level is presented in Table ES-1.

Table ES-1 Summary of Potentially Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impact	Mitigation Measure
Aesthetics	
Impact AES-1: Nighttime construction lighting has the potential to adversely impact light-sensitive uses, including residential areas. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	**Mitigation Measure AES-1: Requirements for Construction Lighting.** All lighting used in construction of the Project shall be equipped with exterior hoods and directed downward or only to those areas needed for operations and safety. Construction lighting shall not be directed toward off-site areas. Exterior light fixtures used for construction of the Project shall be designed to prevent the spillover or trespass of light outside the Project site boundary. All lighting shall be of minimum necessary brightness consistent with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) worker safety requirements. High illumination areas not occupied on a continuous basis shall have switches or motion detectors to light the area only when occupied.

Impact	Mitigation Measure
Air Quality	
Impact AIR-1: Project construction could generate emissions of diesel particulate matter (DPM) that could pose an adverse health risk to residential receptors adjacent to the project site. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	**AIR-1: Construction Equipment Restrictions.** To reduce potential, short-term adverse health risks associated with $PM_{2.5}$ exhaust emissions, including emissions of DPM generated during Project construction activities, the Judicial Council shall require its designated contractors, contractor's representatives, and/or other appropriate personnel to comply with the following construction equipment restrictions: • All mobile construction equipment greater than 50 horsepower in size shall meet U.S. EPA and CARB Tier IV final exhaust emission standards. This may be achieved via the use of equipment with engines that have been certified to meet U.S. EPA and CARB Tier IV final emissions standards, or through the use of equipment that has been retrofitted with a CARB-verified diesel emission control strategy (e.g., particulate filter) capable of reducing exhaust $PM_{2.5}$ emissions to levels that meet U.S. EPA and CARB Tier IV final emissions standards. As an alternative to having all mobile construction equipment greater than 50 horsepower meet U.S. EPA and CARB Tier IV final exhaust emission standards, the DBE may prepare and submit a refined construction health risk assessment to the Judicial Council once additional project-specific construction information is known (e.g., specific construction equipment type, quantity, engine tier, and runtime by phase). The refined health risk assessment shall demonstrate and identify any measures necessary such that the Project's incremental carcinogenic health risk at nearby sensitive receptor locations is below the applicable significance threshold of 10 cancers per million population.
Biological Resources	
Impact BIO-1: Project activities could impact special-status plants. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	**Mitigation Measure BIO-1a: Pre-Activity Focused Survey for Special-Status Plants.** Prior to initial ground disturbance in the Project site, and during the appropriate blooming period for each species: alder buckthorn (May - July), Castlegar hawthorn (May - August), obtuse starwort (May - August), and Sheldon's sedge (May - August), focused surveys will be conducted by a qualified plant ecologist within suitable habitat in the Project site and a 50-foot buffer around the Project site, where feasible. A qualified plant ecologist is an individual who has minimum of a BA or BS in biological sciences or related discipline (e.g., environmental sciences) and professional work experience in biological sciences, including a minimum of two survey seasons conducting surveys for each special-status plant species that will be surveyed. The purpose of the survey will be to assess the presence or absence of special-status species. If no special-status species are found in the project site or in the 50-foot buffer, then no further mitigation will be warranted. The results of the survey will be documented. If a special-status species is found on the Project site, then Mitigation Measure BIO-1b would be implemented.

Impact	Mitigation Measure
	Mitigation Measure BIO-1b: Avoidance Buffers. To the extent feasible, and in consultation with a qualified plant ecologist, the Judicial Council and/or its DBE will construct the Project to avoid impacts on all populations of special-status plant species within the Project site or within the identified buffer of the impact area described in Mitigation Measure BIO-1a. Avoided special-status plant populations will be protected by establishing and observing the identified buffer between plant populations and the impact area. All such populations located in the impact area or the identified buffer, and their associated designated avoidance areas, will be clearly depicted on any construction plans. In addition, prior to initial ground disturbance or vegetation removal, the limits of the identified buffer around special-status plants to be avoided will be flagged or fenced. The flagging will be maintained intact and in good condition throughout Project-related construction activities. If avoidance is not feasible, then Mitigation Measure BIO-1c will be implemented. **Mitigation Measure BIO-1c: Provide a Mitigation Plan for Impacts to Special-Status Plants.** If the impact on special-status plants cannot be avoided, the Judicial Council shall comply with CDFW's determination of the appropriate measures to mitigate the Project's significant impacts on special-status plants. These measures may include preserving and enhancing existing populations, creation of off-site populations on Project mitigation sites through seed collection or transplantation, and/or restoring or creating suitable habitat in sufficient quantities to mitigate against loss.
Impact BIO-2: Project activities could impact western bumble bee. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	**Mitigation Measure BIO-2a: Pre-construction/Pre-disturbance Survey for Western Bumble Bee.** Prior to the start of construction activities, including tree removal, staging of equipment, and/or grading activities, a qualified biologist shall conduct pre-construction surveys for western bumble bee nests. The qualified biologist shall have a degree in biological sciences, or similar degree; knowledge in the life history and ecology of western bumble bee and their identification; and have a minimum of two field seasons of experience conducting focused surveys with positive identification of western bumble bee. Pre-construction surveys shall entail a minimum of three visual encounter surveys for foraging western bumble bees and their active nests. Surveys should be conducted during the height of the active flight season (April - September) when probability of detection is highest, and in the same year that Project activities are planned to start. These surveys should be spaced 2 to 4 weeks apart to account for variability in resource use and availability. Surveys shall be conducted during dry conditions (i.e., when it is not raining, foggy, or drizzling), when temperatures are above 70° Fahrenheit, and during low wind speeds (i.e., less than 8 miles per hour) (CDFW 2023). If the pre-construction surveys do not identify western bumble bee nests, no additional surveys or mitigation is required. If western bumble bee nests are observed, then Mitigation Measure BIO-2b will be implemented.

Impact	Mitigation Measure
	Mitigation Measure BIO-2b: Prepare a Habitat Protection Plan for Western Bumble Bee. If western bumble bee nests are detected on the Project site, the qualified biologist shall prepare a plan to protect active nests and surrounding foraging areas and protect potential overwintering habitat within the Project site. The plan shall be implemented as part of the site activities. The plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following measures: • Fencing or flagging to delineate no-disturbance buffers around active nest sites. • Construction monitoring during initial ground disturbance activities. • Avoidance of initial ground disturbance between November and February to protect potential overwintering queen western bumble bees. • Retaining existing woody debris to support overwintering queen bumble bees. • Where erosion control and/slope stabilization are required, prescription of seed mix composed of locally native flower species, known to be visited by western bumble bee. **Mitigation Measure BIO-2c: Obtain an Incidental Take Permit.** If "take" or adverse impacts to western bumble bee cannot be avoided, then CDFW shall be consulted to determine if a CESA Section 2080 Incidental Take Permit (ITP) is required. If an ITP is required, the Project shall comply with any requirements of the ITP.
Impact BIO-3: Project activities could impact nesting willow flycatchers. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	**Mitigation Measure BIO-3: Pre-Construction/Pre-Disturbance Protocol-level Surveys for Willow Flycatcher.** *Avoidance.* To the extent feasible, construction activities, including mobilization and staging, surveying, clearing, grubbing, vegetation removal, fence installation, demolition, grading, and any other related activities, should be scheduled to avoid the nesting season. If construction activities are scheduled to take place outside the nesting season, all impacts to nesting birds protected under the MBTA and California Fish and Game Code would be avoided. The nesting season for willow flycatcher generally extends from late May through mid-August. *Pre-Construction Protocol-level Surveys*. If construction and construction noise will occur within the avian nesting season (from late May to mid-August), all suitable habitats located within the Project's area of disturbance, including staging and storage areas plus a 250-foot buffer around these areas shall be thoroughly surveyed, as feasible, for the presence of active nests. The survey protocol (Bombay et al. 2003) can be found at https://www.birdpop.org/docs/misc/Meadows-A-Willow-Flycatcher-Survey-Protocol.pdf and requires the following: • A minimum of two separate surveys in one year at each site; one during survey period 2 (June 15-25) and one during either survey period 1 (June 1-14), or survey period 3 (June 26-July

Impact	Mitigation Measure
	15) to document presence or absence of willow flycatchers in the survey year. • To be considered a separate survey, visits must be at least 5 days apart; surveys done fewer than 5 days apart are not considered to be in separate survey periods. • Follow-up visits are required when a flycatcher is detected and suspected but not confirmed to be a willow flycatcher. • The surveys will be conducted by a qualified biologist. The qualified biologist shall have a degree in biological sciences, or similar degree; knowledge in the life history and ecology of the willow flycatcher and locally common avian species; and have a minimum of two field seasons of experience conducting protocol-level surveys for willow flycatchers with positive identification of willow flycatchers. The qualified biologist will also have the necessary regulatory agency permits and be approved by CDFW to conduct willow flycatcher surveys. • The results of the surveys shall be documented per the requirements of the protocol. If the surveys result in the location of active nests, no site disturbance and/or mobilization of heavy equipment (including but not limited to equipment staging, fence installation, clearing, grubbing, vegetation removal, fence installation, demolition, grading, and soil stockpiling), shall take place within 250 feet of willow flycatcher nests unless smaller buffers are determined to be appropriate by the qualified biologist in consultation with CDFW.
Impact BIO-4: Project activities could impact nesting birds, including yellow-breasted chat and yellow warbler. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	**Mitigation Measure BIO-4: Pre-Construction/Pre-Disturbance Survey for Nesting Birds.** *Avoidance.* To the extent feasible, construction activities, including mobilization and staging, surveying, clearing, grubbing, vegetation removal, fence installation, demolition, grading, and any other related activities, should be scheduled to avoid the nesting season. If construction activities are scheduled to take place outside the nesting season, all impacts to nesting birds protected under the MBTA and California Fish and Game Code would be avoided. The nesting season for most birds in Plumas County extends from February 1 to September 15. *Pre-Construction Surveys.* If construction and construction noise occur within the avian nesting season (February 1 - September 15), all suitable habitats located within the Project's area of disturbance, including staging and storage areas plus a 250-foot (passerines) and 1,000-foot (raptor nests) buffer around these areas shall be thoroughly surveyed, as feasible, for the presence of active nests. The surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than 5 days before commencement of any vegetation trimming, site disturbance activities and/or equipment mobilization. If Project activities are delayed by more than 5 days, an additional nesting bird survey shall be performed. Active nesting is present if a bird is building a nest, sitting in a nest, a nest has eggs or chicks in it, or adults are observed

Impact	Mitigation Measure
	carrying food to the nest. The results of the surveys shall be documented. A qualified biologist is an individual who has minimum of a BA or BS in biological sciences or related discipline (e.g., environmental sciences) and professional work experience in biological sciences, including a minimum of two survey seasons conducting surveys for avian species in the Project region or in other areas with similar habitats. If pre-construction nesting bird surveys result in the location of active nests, no site disturbance and/or mobilization of heavy equipment (including but not limited to equipment staging, fence installation, clearing, grubbing, vegetation removal, fence installation, demolition, grading, and soil stockpiling), shall take place within 250 feet of non-raptor nests and 1,000 feet of raptor nests, unless smaller buffers are determined to be appropriate by a qualified biologist. If work is required within the buffers, the qualified biologist will assess the level of disturbance from the planned work and determine if a smaller buffer is warranted (e.g., installation of sheet pile with an impact hammer would not warrant a smaller buffer, but minor grading and excavation may warrant a smaller buffer). If the qualified biologist determines that a smaller buffer is warranted, then the planned work may proceed. The qualified biologist will observe the behavior of the nesting bird(s) and/or chicks during the onset of the planned work and if the nesting bird(s) and/or chicks do not show signs of distress then work may resume within the smaller buffer. If the nesting bird(s) and/or chicks show signs of distress, then the planned work will cease within the smaller buffer and work may resume within the original buffer established. The buffer shall remain in place until the chicks have fledged. Monitoring by a qualified biologist will ensure compliance with MBTA and relevant California Fish and Game Code requirements. Monitoring dates and findings shall be documented.
Impact BIO-5: Glass windows and facades as well as lighting in the newly constructed building could potentially cause injury or mortality to birds through collisions with glass surfaces. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	**Mitigation Measure BIO-5: Standards for Bird Safe Buildings.** The Project shall implement the applicable bird-friendly design standards from the 2025 California Green Building Standards Code A5.107 (ICC 2025), which may include the following building specifications: • At least 90% of glazing on building elevations between grade and 40 feet high, and at least 60% of glazing above 40 feet above grade will use bird-friendly mitigation strategies • Glazing with visual markers shall include, but is not limited to, the following: ▪ Etched or fritted glass with patterns of elements on the exterior. ▪ Interior or exterior glazing film with 2 × 2 visual markers. ▪ Laminated glass with 2 × 2 visual markers, patterned ultraviolet (UV) coating or use of contrasting patterned UV-absorbing and UV-reflecting films. ▪ Glass block or channel glass. ▪ Developed glazing technologies documented to reduce bird strikes.

Impact	Mitigation Measure
	• Glazing protected by exterior features that create a visible barrier in front of the glazing, may include, but not be limited to: ▪ Horizontal or vertical slats, grills, netting or sunshades. Additionally, the Project shall implement the applicable bird-friendly design options for landscaping and lighting from the USFWS *Reducing Bird Collisions with Buildings and Buildings Glass Best Practices*, which may include the following: *Lighting* • Avoid unnecessary lighting, including perimeter lighting. • Install motion sensors on all lights (both interior and exterior) that activate only when people are present. • Ensure all exterior lighting is "fully shielded", so that all light is only emitted downward below the lowest light emitting part of the fixture. • Ensure that any lights that are not motion-activated are turned off at night, especially architectural lighting, interior lighting, and lobby or atrium lighting. *Landscaping* • Avoid using glass in supplemental structures (e.g., bus shelters, guard rails, glass walls, etc.). If unavoidable, use glass with visual markers or exterior features listed above. • Avoid planting trees and shrubs adjacent to, seen through, or reflected in any glass structures. If unavoidable, use glass with visual markers or exterior features listed above. • Avoid placing indoor plants adjacent to clear glass windows or move them far enough away so that they can't be seen from the outside. For all measures intended to avoid and minimize the likelihood of bird strikes at the Project, the relevant guidance documents should be consulted for detailed discussion and descriptions of the applicable design specifications. Additionally, the proposed design specifications to minimize bird strikes will be approved by a qualified biologist with experience in both avian ecology and analyzing bird strike potential from buildings.
Impact BIO-6: Project activities could impact roosting bats and bat colonies. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	**Mitigation Measure BIO-6a: Avoidance and Minimization of Impacts to Special-Status Bats and Sensitive Bat Colonies.** No less than 6 months prior to Project initiation, a habitat assessment for roosting bats shall be conducted for all buildings and trees on the Project site and within 100 feet of the site, as access allows. A qualified bat biologist will conduct the survey and will look for evidence of bat use in buildings and trees. A qualified bat biologist is defined as a biologist with a degree in biology, ecology, zoology, or related degree, is knowledgeable in life histories of bat species, can correctly identify bat species, has demonstrable experience conducting surveys/assessments with positive findings and mitigation planning (i.e., avoidance, minimization,

Impact	Mitigation Measure
	compensatory) for bats and is familiar with survey protocols, and is knowledgeable of state and federal laws protecting sensitive species. If evidence of use is observed, or if roost sites are present in areas where evidence of bat use might not be detectable (such as crevices), an evening survey that utilizes bat acoustic detectors will be conducted to determine if bats are roosting on the site, the species, and the location of the roost. The evening survey must be conducted during the appropriate time of year when bats are detectable in the region (March 15 - September 15, or as determined by the qualified biologist). If an active roost of special-status bats, maternity colony, or winter hibernacula of non-special-status bats is detected, construction activities will be modified or revised to avoid disturbance of the roost. If an active roost of special-status bats, maternity colony, or winter hibernacula of non-special-status bats cannot be avoided, removal or disturbance of the roost will be scheduled to take place outside the maternity roost season (April 15 - September 15), and winter hibernacula season (October 15 - March 1). If special-status bats, maternity colony, or winter hibernaculum is detected and construction work cannot be modified or revised to avoid removal or disturbance of the occupied roost, the qualified bat biologist shall develop a bat mitigation plan (see Mitigation Measure BIO-6b). **Mitigation Measure BIO-6b: Bat Mitigation Plan.** At a minimum, the bat mitigation plan will include methods for humane bat exclusion, including the timing of the exclusion, type of exclusion devices to be used, and no-disturbance buffers around any sensitive roosts adjacent to the Project area. Acceptable timing for exclusion is September 15 - October 15 or March 1 - April 15. The timing may be adjusted by a qualified biologist based on regional weather patterns. The bat mitigation plan shall also prescribe replacement bat roost habitat that is specific to the type of roost and the species being displaced. The plan will describe (1) the type of roost habitat being removed, (2) type of replacement habitat structure to be constructed/installed, (3) location of the replacement habitat, (4) performance standards for the use of the habitat by the displaced species, and (5) timeline for monitoring the use of the habitat, and (6) the credentials of the biologist performing/overseeing the exclusion. This plan will be implemented at least 30 days prior to eviction of bats from the roost. **Mitigation Measure BIO-6c: Tree Removal.** To minimize impacts on individual roosting western red bats, trees without a maternity colony or winter hibernacula may be removed September 15 - October 15 or March 1 - April 15. Additionally, trees shall be removed when evening temperatures are above 45°F, daytime temperatures are at least 65°F, and there is no forecasted rain for 48 hours before or after tree removal activities. Once these conditions have been met, the following process shall be followed to remove trees with potential roost habitat. • Remove trees in two steps over a period of 2 days where portions of the trees containing no habitat are removed on the first day and the remaining portion of the tree with habitat is

Impact	Mitigation Measure
	removed on the second day. All branch removal shall be conducted using chainsaws or similar handheld equipment. • When removing the tree on the second day, work should be conducted in a sensitive manner, and where reasonably practicable, so that the cut tree is lowered to the ground and left for at least 48 hours to allow any existing bats to leave the tree unharmed. • A qualified bat biologist shall be present to point out potential roost habitat to the tree removal contractor and to monitor tree removal.
Impact BIO-7: Under stormwater management Outfall Option, artificial lighting of building exterior or parking areas may illuminate the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* and drainage channel having adverse effects on riparian habitat. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	**Mitigation Measure BIO-7: Outdoor Lighting Plan.** The Project shall implement an outdoor lighting plan that includes reduced lighting in parking areas during inactive periods specified in Facilities Standards 16.C.1.h. The outdoor lighting plan shall also incorporate design standards from the 2025 CalGreen Code A5.203, which shall include the following specifications: • A5.203.1.1.1 Newly installed outdoor lighting power shall be no greater than 90 percent of the Allowed Outdoor Lighting Power, and general hardscape lighting within the scope of Title 24, Part 6, Section 140.7(b)1 shall have a color temperature no higher than 3000K. The Allowed Outdoor Lighting Power calculation is specified in Title 24, Park 6, Section 140.7, Requirements for Outdoor Lighting. • A5.203.1.1.1.2 Outdoor pole mounted luminaries shall be installed with tilting not greater than 10 degrees, or the outdoor luminaires shall be installed with arm-mount or tenon-mount capable of tilting less than or within 10 degrees.
Impact BIO-8: Project activities could potentially impact the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* and riparian habitat. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	**Mitigation Measure BIO-8a: A Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (HMMP).** For Outfall Option or Culvert Option, an HMMP shall be prepared and implemented to replace and protect sensitive native habitats (including aquatic habitat; see below) in the Project site. Onsite restoration will include replacement and/or habitat enhancement ratios at a minimum 1:1 mitigation ratio for temporary and permanent impacts on *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* as well as aquatic habitat. If on-site restoration is not feasible, then offsite in-kind restoration or preservation will also be at a minimum 1:1 mitigation ratio, unless an applicable agency requires a higher or lower restoration or preservation mitigation ratio. Specific recommendations are provided below. • Identify the responsible parties. • Describe Project impacts on habitat types and functions and values. • Identify specific sites for restoration and identify the amount and type of habitat restored in each site. • Set goals and performance standards for the restoration.

Impact	Mitigation Measure
	• Set goals and performance standards for the control of invasive weeds with a Cal-IPC Inventory rating of moderate or high. • Provide a detailed implementation plan, including a schedule for completing and monitoring the restoration, financial assurances, construction drawings for a planting/restoration plan, an irrigation plan if appropriate, and maintenance requirements. • Specify monitoring requirements and a minimum monitoring period of 5 years, with annual reports. • Identify contingency and adaptive management measures if restoration does not meet performance standards. The HMMP may be included with any permit applications to the USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW, and the ultimate details will be refined pending agency comments. Permit requirements related to the HMMP shall be incorporated into the final HMMP that is implemented. **Mitigation Measure BIO-8b: Construction Measures to Minimize Invasive Plant Infestations.** For Outfall Option, the following measures shall be taken during construction to minimize invasive plant infestation and potential impacts of invasive plants on sensitive vegetation communities: • All ground disturbing equipment used adjacent to native habitats will be washed (including wheels, tracks, and undercarriages) both before and after being used at the site. Worker personal gear, including boots, should also be cleaned and clear of plant material prior to entering the work area. • All seeds and straw materials used on site shall be weed-free rice straw, and all gravel and fill material shall be certified weed free. • The Project will implement erosion control measures to reduce stormwater runoff which can carry the seed of invasive plants to sensitive vegetation habitats (see below). • All disturbed soils within sensitive habitats will be stabilized and planted in accordance with the restoration plan prepared for the Project (see Mitigation Measure BIO-8a). • Soil and vegetation removed from weed-infested areas will not be used in general soil stockpiles and will not be redistributed as topsoil cover for the newly filled areas. All weed-infested soil will be disposed of off-site at a landfill or buried at least 2.5 feet below final grade. **Mitigation Measure BIO-8c: Long-term Riparian Protection Measures.** The following measure(s) for the long-term maintenance and avoidance of impacts to the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* as well as aquatic habitat for Outfall Option will be implemented through an education and notification process for all future Judicial Council site managers such that no vegetation management along the banks of or in the unnamed drainage channel would occur without consultation with a qualified biologist and notification of CDFW if work would occur within the banks of the drainage ditch.

Impact	Mitigation Measure
Impact BIO-9: Project activities could potentially impact jurisdictional waters (drainage channel). **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	See **Mitigation Measures 8a and 8b.**
Impact BIO-10: Project activities could impact biological resources in conflict with Plumas County General Plan policies. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	See **Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-8**.
Cultural Resources	
Impact CUL-1: Ground-disturbing activities associated with building demolition and future development within the Project site could directly or indirectly damage buried and unknown unique archaeological resources pursuant to PRC section 21083.2 and CEQA Guidelines section 15064.5. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	**Mitigation Measure CUL-1: Protection of Archaeological Resources.** Should any pre-contact or post-contact archaeological materials be exposed during ground-disturbing activities, all such activities shall stop within a 50-foot radius of the discovery, and a qualified archaeologist shall be retained to determine whether the find is a unique archaeological resource. The archaeologist shall perform data recovery on any unique archaeological resource, unless the archaeologist recommends and the Judicial Council determines that other methods of mitigation are more culturally appropriate under the circumstances of the discovery.
Impact CUL-2: Ground-disturbing activities associated with development within the Project site could disturb human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	**Mitigation Measure CUL-2: Protection of Human Remains.** If pre-contact or post-contact human remains and associated funerary objects are exposed, work within 50 feet of the discovery will be halted and the resource protected in compliance with applicable state law. The Judicial Council or its designee shall immediately notify the Plumas County Coroner. If the Coroner determines that the human remains are Native American remains, the Coroner shall notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) to determine the Most Likely Descendant (MLD) (Health & Safety Code 7050.5; PRC 5097.98). The Judicial Council of California shall also contact the Mooretown Rancheria of Maidu Indians as requested by the Tribe. Additional statutory requirements apply depending on the nature of the discovery.
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	
Impact HAZ-1: The removal of the existing 200-gallon kerosene AST, which currently does not have any	**Mitigation Measure HAZ-1: Install Secondary Containment for 200-Gallon Kerosene AST.** The Project shall install a form of secondary containment that is at least 110% of the AST capacity beneath the 200-gallon kerosene AST currently located inside the

Impact	Mitigation Measure
form of secondary containment, during site redevelopment could result in the accidental release of hazardous materials (i.e., kerosene) into the surrounding environment. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	Quincy Lumber & Supply building prior to the removal of the AST from the site. The secondary containment shall remain in place as the AST is transported off site.
Impact HAZ-2: Project demolition of the existing onsite buildings has the potential to release ACMs, LCM/LBP, and universal wastes, which could pose a significant hazard to contractors during demolition activities. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	**Mitigation Measure HAZ-2: Implement Hazardous Building Material Survey Recommendations.** The Project shall implement the hazardous building materials abatement measures recommended in the Hazardous Building Material Survey (dated April 21, 2026), as follows. Furthermore, suspect materials and/or surfaces encountered during the planned demolition activities that have not been assessed shall be sampled and analyzed to assess whether they are asbestos, lead and/or PCB-containing. <u>Asbestos</u> The following requirements apply only to those activities that would involve the Quincy Lumber & Supply building: • The Vinyl Sheet Floorings (Linoleums) located in Area 3 (mezzanine) in rooms 12 and 14 contain 25% Chrysotile. The Transite Sheet Flooring located in Area 2 under a layer of particle board contains 75% Chrysotile. These materials shall not be disturbed by unauthorized personnel. • Prior to demolition activities which would disturb identified ACMs, a licensed abatement removal contractor shall remove the ACMs. The licensed abatement contractor must maintain current licenses as required by applicable state or local jurisdictions for the removal, transporting, disposal, or other regulated activities. • Applicable laws and regulations shall be followed, including those provisions requiring notification to regulatory agencies, building occupants, demolition contractors, and workers of the presence of asbestos. • Although not a regulatory requirement, asbestos abatement monitoring consulting services shall be performed by a third-party environmental consultant, to include oversight of abatement contractor activities to be performed in accordance with the abatement specifications, daily air monitoring, clearances, verification of complete removal of hazardous materials, and preparation of a closeout report summarizing the abatement activities. <u>Lead</u> The following requirements apply only to those activities that would involve the Quincy Lumber & Supply building:

Impact	Mitigation Measure
	• The identified LBP located at the Quincy Lumber & Supply building on the sashed windows located on the east side and the door and window frames/trims located at the store front (south side) of the building shall not be disturbed by unauthorized personnel. All disturbances and removal activities shall be performed by a licensed abatement contractor with certified lead personnel. All lead related removal activities shall be performed in accordance with the Cal/OSHA Lead in Construction Standard, Title 8 CCR 1532.1. • Proper waste stream categorization is required for lead components which will be removed. Prior to disposal, a composite sample of the representative LCM material shall be analyzed for total lead for comparison with the Total Threshold Limit Concentration in accordance with EPA reference method SW-846. If the concentration of total lead is greater than or equal to 1,000 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg), the LCM waste material must be disposed at a landfill which can receive such wastes. If the concentration is less than 50 mg/kg the sample may be disposed as construction debris, if it is to remain in California. If the total lead result is greater than or equal to 50 mg/kg and less than 1,000 mg/kg, the sample must be further analyzed for soluble lead by the Waste Extraction Test for comparison with the Soluble Threshold Limit Concentration as described in Title 22 CCR 66261.24a. Additionally, if the result is greater than or equal to 100 mg/kg, the sample must be further analyzed for leachable lead by the Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedure for comparison with the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) limits. Based on the results of the soluble and leachable analysis, the waste material may require disposal as a RCRA-Hazardous waste or non-RCRA- (California-) Hazardous waste. <u>Universal Wastes</u> Universal wastes identified in the Hazardous Building Material Survey (Tables 8, 9 and 10) shall be removed and properly recycled or disposed of by the selected abatement contractor during demolition activities. The abatement contractor shall provide proper manifesting for all universal wastes removed and recycled to prove the disposal of all materials was completed in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal requirements.
Impact HAZ-3: The potential for soil and/or groundwater contamination for leaking sewage pipes or historical disposal of inks and solvents associated with on-site printing facilities could present a significant hazard to contractors and the environment during site	**Mitigation Measure HAZ-3: Halt Work in the Event of Discovery of Past Hazardous Materials Release.** Should any evidence of a past hazardous materials release (i.e., stained soil or chemical odors) be discovered during demolition and grading activities at or near the Feather Publishing Co., Inc., all demolition and site preparation work shall temporarily halt, and the Judicial Council shall consult a qualified firm or individual to observe and collect samples of the impacted soil or groundwater for laboratory chemical analysis and follow-up clean-up action (i.e., a soil and groundwater management plan (SGMP)), if required.

Impact	Mitigation Measure
demolition and grading activities. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	
Impact HAZ-4: Project construction equipment exhaust would occur approximately one-quarter mile from Quincy School and could result in incremental cancerogenic health risk increases. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	See **Mitigation Measure AIR-1**.
Hydrology and Water Quality	
Impact HYD-1: For both Outfall Option and Culvert Option, Project construction activity within the drainage channel could release sediments into the downstream waters and cause siltation. The discharge of stormwater runoff from the onsite drainage system to the drainage channel could increase peak flow velocity within the drainage channel and cause or exacerbate erosion or siltation either onsite or offsite. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	**Mitigation Measure HYD-1a: Perform Hydrologic Study for Channel Capacity.** For Outfall Option, prior to approving the final design of the onsite LID features and initiation of site preparation activities, the Judicial Council shall engage the service of a registered engineer to perform a hydrologic study to evaluate whether the Project would cause a greater on- or off-site flooding compared to existing conditions. Should the hydrologic study demonstrate that the runoff flows contributed by the Project would exacerbate existing flooding, the hydrologic study shall recommend measures to reduce the additional flooding to less than significant. Recommended measures may include an increase in the storage volume of the proposed onsite bioretention features and other measures the engineer determines to be effective to adequately control (i.e., prevent more severe flooding over existing conditions) the increase in peak flows. The Project must incorporate the hydrologic study's recommendations into the design of the proposed onsite bioretention features and site-wide storm drain system. The Judicial Council shall coordinate the implementation of the recommendations of the hydrologic study with the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board and Plumas County Department of Public Works. The Judicial Council shall obtain all applicable permits required for work within the drainage channel for the design and construction of the new stormwater outfall prior to site preparation activities. These permits may require additional conservation and mitigation measures. **Mitigation Measure HYD-1b: Perform Hydrologic Study for Appropriate Culvert Design.** For Culvert Option, prior to approving the final design of the onsite bioretention features and initiation of site preparation activities, the Judicial Council shall engage the service of a registered engineer or qualified hydrologist to perform a hydrologic study to ensure appropriate culvert design and sizing. The new culvert shall be designed such that it accepts the runoff discharging from the

Impact	Mitigation Measure
	existing culvert under Lawrence, from the Project site, and surface runoff from adjacent parcels that currently contribute to the drainage channel. The point of discharge, including the stormwater outfall, to the north of the Project site must be designed such that modeled flow does not cause erosion, exceed the capacity of the receiving channel, or exacerbate onsite or offsite flooding. The design of the culverted channel must account for projected flood hazards and potential backups into the Project's storm drain system. In conformance with the hydromodification management provisions of the Statewide Phase II Small MS4 Permit, the proposed culverted channel and on-site stormwater management systems that contribute to the culverted channel shall not exceed the existing rate(s) and durations of flow under existing conditions at the point where stormwater leaves the Project site. The Judicial Council shall obtain all applicable permits required for work within the drainage channel for the design and construction of the new culvert prior to site preparation activities. These permits may require additional conservation and mitigation measures.
Impact HYD-2: The Project proposes new impervious surface areas that have the potential to increase stormwater runoff flow rates and volumes in the onsite open drainage channel (Outfall Option) or culverted drainage channel (Culvert Option) that may cause a greater exceedance in the channel capacity than occurs under existing conditions and exacerbate existing flooding onsite or offsite. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	See **Mitigation Measure HYD-1a and HYD-1b**. **Mitigation Measure HYD-2: Incorporate Onsite Drainage Features.** For both Outfall Option and Culvert Option, prior to initiating site preparation activities, the Judicial Council and/or its contractor shall develop and finalize the Stormwater Control Plan for the Project's onsite drainage features in compliance with the Statewide Phase II Small MS4 Permit and its standards for regulated projects (E.12.e. Post Construction Storm Water Management Program). The final Stormwater Control Plan shall be designed to incorporate the findings of the hydrology study undertaken in Mitigation Measure HYD1a for Outfall Option or Mitigation Measure HYD-1b for Culvert Option. All modeling performed for the Stormwater Control Plan shall be undertaken by a registered engineer and conducted to common civil engineering industry standards. The final Stormwater Control Plan shall demonstrate that the onsite drainage system would retain stormwater runoff from the Project site to the extent that the system prevents an increase in the exceedance of the capacity of the drainage channel (on site and off site) and does not exacerbate existing onsite and offsite flood hazards. If the channel capacity hydrologic study required in Mitigation Measure HYD-1ab or the culvert design hydrologic study required in Mitigation HYD-1b determine increased onsite retention capacity or other measures are needed to prevent the exacerbation of existing flooding, particularly during storm events, the final Stormwater Control Plan and the onsite drainage system must be designed so that the LID features have the capacity to temporarily store the volume of runoff necessary so as to prevent any modeled exceedance in channel capacity over existing conditions from occurring and ensure the Project does not exacerbate existing onsite and offsite flood hazards.

Impact	Mitigation Measure
Impact HYD-3: Under stormwater management Outfall Option, debris and sediment may accumulate in the drainage channel reducing its peak carrying capacity. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	**Mitigation Measure HYD-3: Long-Term Maintenance of Drainage Channel.** If the Project implements Outfall Option and retains the open drainage channel, the Judicial Council or its contractors shall over the life of the Project maintain the drainage channel to ensure it functions at peak carrying capacity. Prior to Project completion, the Judicial Council or its contractors shall develop a routine maintenance plan requiring periodic debris and sediment removal in the drainage channel in consultation with a qualified biologist and in accordance with any permitting approvals required by a resource agency (i.e., the California Department of Fish & Wildlife and the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board). The routine maintenance plan shall specify how frequently the debris and sediment removal activities shall occur and shall establish an inspection schedule to monitor debris and sediment levels and channel capacity. To ensure routine debris and sediment removal activities do not damage or remove riparian vegetation, the routine maintenance plan shall include measures to minimize impacts to riparian vegetation occurring within the banks of the drainage channel. Over the life of the Project, the Judicial Council or its contractors shall maintain the drainage channel to continuously provide flow capacity for the design storm event determined by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board.
Impact HYD-4: Existing flood flows that occur along the northern portion of the property could be redirected by the Project's stormwater system and contribute to downstream flooding. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	See **Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-3.**
Impact HYD-5: Under existing conditions, the Project site is prone to flooding at the north and east areas of the site. The proposed site design would use those areas for parking, which could potentially result in the release of automobile-related pollutants if inundation of the new parking area were to occur. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	See **Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-3.**

Impact	Mitigation Measure
Noise	
Impact NOI-1: Construction noise associated with the Project would potentially exceed the FTA's 80 dBA L_{eq} significance thresholds for construction noise at nearby sensitive receptor locations. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	**Mitigation Measure NOI-1.** To reduce potential construction noise levels at nearby sensitive receptor locations, an 8-foot-tall noise barrier shall be installed during all site preparation, grading, and paving activities that have a line of sight to and occur within 100 feet of an occupied dwelling unit or mobile home. The barrier shall only be required along the portion of the job site perimeter that lies between the active work area and the affected dwelling unit(s). In addition, a temporary barrier shall not be required if a permanent barrier is already present between the work area and the affected dwelling unit. The barrier shall consist of nominal 1.0-inch plywood with a minimum material density of approximately 1.7 pounds per square foot installed. Alternatively, the barrier may consist of commercially available acoustic panels, blankets, etc. that have a minimum sound transmission class (STC) or transmission loss value of 20 dB or higher. The barrier shall be installed at grade or mounted to structures located at grade, such as a K-rail, and be maintained free of openings or gaps (other than weep holes). Construction ingress/egress shall not be permitted through the barrier unless there is no other viable access point due to specific project constraints or other access requirements. The noise barrier may be removed following the completion of all site preparation, grading, and paving activities (i.e., it is not necessary once framing and typical vertical building construction begins provided no other site preparation, grading, or paving work is still occurring in the area).
Tribal Cultural Resources	
Impact TCR-1: Ground-disturbing activities associated with building demolition and future development within the Project site could directly or indirectly damage unknown buried and tribal cultural resources pursuant to PRC § 20174 and PRC § 5024.1. **Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation**	**Mitigation Measure TCR-1: Protocols for Inadvertent Discovery of Tribal Cultural Resources.** The Judicial Council shall require the following steps to be taken, including as a part of all contracts related to construction of the Project, as applicable: If tribal cultural resources or potential tribal cultural resources are discovered during Project implementation, all activities within a 50-foot radius of the find shall be stopped, the Judicial Council's Project Manager and Tribal Representative(s) from the tribes included on the Native American Heritage Commission's list of Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the Project's geographic area shall be immediately notified. The Tribal Representative(s) shall evaluate the find(s) within 48-hours and make recommendations to the Judicial Council if it meets the definition of a tribal cultural resource (PRC § 21074) and follow the procedures below. The qualified archaeologist shall make recommendations to the Judicial Council, and the Judicial Council will make a determination. Should the Tribal Representative(s) be unable to evaluate the find(s) within this defined period, only the qualified archaeologist shall make the recommendation. A. If the find(s) does not meet the definition of a tribal cultural resource, a historical resource, or a unique archaeological

Impact	Mitigation Measure
	resource, no further study or protection is necessary prior to resuming Project implementation. B. If the find(s) does meet the definition of a tribal cultural resource, then it shall be avoided by Project activities and preserved in place, if feasible. The contractor shall implement any measures deemed by the Judicial Council to be necessary and feasible to preserve in place, avoid, or minimize impacts to the tribal cultural resource. If avoidance is not feasible, as determined by the Judicial Council, the Tribal Representative(s), if available, shall make recommendations regarding the culturally appropriate treatment and disposition of such find(s) and significant impacts to such tribal cultural resources shall be mitigated in accordance with the recommendations of the Tribal Representative(s) prior to resuming construction activities within the 50-foot radius.
Utilities and Service Systems	
Impact UTL-1: Construction of stormwater drainage infrastructure under Outfall Option and Culvert Option would alter the hydrology of the drainage channel and biological resources along the eastern property line.	See **Mitigation MeasuresBIO-1 through BIO-4, BIO-6 through BIO-8, HYD1 through HYD-4.**

Alternatives to the Project

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6 states that an EIR shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to a project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the Project. Below is a summary of the alternatives to the Project which are considered in Chapter 7 Alternatives of this EIR.

Alternatives Considered and Rejected for Detailed Analysis

Renovation of Plumas County Courthouse

This alternative would retain the Judicial Council Superior Court operations at its current location in the Plumas County Courthouse by renovating the courthouse to meet regulatory safety requirements and operation programming needs. The courthouse building is County-owned and Judicial Council court operations occur within a portion of the courthouse building. Given that the Judicial Council has no control over the courthouse building, the renovation would be disruptive to court operations, the potential limitations of site development, and impacts on a candidate historic resource, the Judicial Council determined this option was infeasible.

Protect Quincy Lumber & Supply Building/Reduced Building Footprint

This alternative would retain the existing Quincy Lumber & Supply building by constructing a new courthouse that has a reduced footprint compared to that proposed by the Project. The Quincy Lumber & Supply building is a non-historic notable structure on the Project site. A

reduced building footprint could be achieved by making the single-story building smaller or by making the new building a two-story building instead of a one-story building (either two stories above ground or a one-story building with a basement as a second floor). The Project reflects a reduced programming space from a 54,000-square-feet, two-story layout to a 23,100-square-feet, single-story layout for budgetary reasons per direction of the Court Facilities Advisory Committee on August 9, 2024 (see section 7.5.2). This alternative was rejected for detailed analysis because it would not meet the Project objectives to align with the California Trial Court Facilities Standards, improve security, and improve operational efficiency as well as the proposed Project, would work against the fixed project budget, and avoidance of the Quincy Lumber & Supply building is not necessary in order to avoid or reduce a significant environmental effect.

Other Alternative Project Locations in Public Comments

This alternative involves building a new courthouse on a different site. The Judicial Council received comments from the public during the NOP comment period suggesting alternative sites in order to not impact the Quincy Lumber & Supply building. The Judicial Council investigated nine sites as a matter of due diligence. Its investigation into these parcels concluded that the site features do not present adequate scoring evaluations per the categories of the site selection criteria of the Judicial Council's Site Selection Policy. Specific categories evaluated include location, traffic and transportation, objectives, budget, physical elements, subsurface/geotechnical conditions, seismic conditions/requirements, utility infrastructure/conditions, and environment. Alternative locations were rejected for detailed analysis because they were not available for the Project, did not meet the site selection criteria, and/or did not enable the Judicial Council to meet the Project's basic objectives and design criteria for safety and security.

Alternatives Analyzed

No Project Alternative

Under the No Project Alternative, the Project, consisting of the construction of an approximately 23,100 square-foot, one-story courthouse building and supporting landscaping, parking, and utility upgrades would not occur. The Judicial Council would continue to operate in the existing Plumas County Courthouse building for an unknown length of time.

Outfall Option

The preferred Project would use Culvert Option as identified in this EIR. Culvert Option would enclose the open drainage channel in a culvert within the Project site to reduce future maintenance obligations associated with an open drainage channel and reduce the potential for ongoing impacts to biological resources and hydrology. Culvert Option may require permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and/or California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW); it may not be feasible depending on the actions of these permitting authorities.

Under the Outfall Option Alternative, the Project would use Outfall Option as identified in this EIR. Outfall Option would retain the open drainage channel and construct a stormwater outfall pipe. The Judicial Council may elect to implement this alternative depending on final Project design, anticipated impacts, and the actions of permitting agencies. This EIR analyzes the impacts of Outfall Option and Culvert Option.

Stonehouse Tavern Project Location

The Judicial Council analyzed the Stonehouse Tavern located at 1918 E. Main Street in East Quincy as a potential courthouse location during its 2023 site selection process described in section 7.4 and ranked the alternative as second to the Project Site. The Stonehouse Tavern site meets the basic size criteria to accommodate the preferred programming space of the new courthouse. The site comprises two parcels: the Stonehouse Tavern commercial property and an adjacent residential property. Most of the project impacts at this location would be similar to the proposed Project site. Biology and hydrology/water quality impacts would be reduced. Cultural resource impacts would be increased and unavoidable as the Stonehouse Tavern is conservatively assumed to be a historic resource based on readily available information. The site is also not preferred due to its decentralized location to the downtown core of Quincy, more remote distance from most justice partners, and a less-than-optimal functional arrangement.

Environmentally Superior Alternative

The Outfall Option Alternative is considered the environmentally superior alternative. Retaining the drainage as an open channel would reduce impacts on biological resources (special-status species, riparian habitat, potential jurisdictional waters), which may require permits from regulatory agencies (i.e., CDFW, RWQCB, and USACE), and avoid channel modification hydrology and water quality impacts that would occur if the Judicial Council chose the Culvert Option. The Stonehouse Tavern Project Location Alternative would have less significant impacts on biological, hydrology, and water quality resources when compared with the Project's Outfall Option and Culvert Option; however, these avoided or reduced potentially significant Project impacts are mitigated to a less-than-significant level on the Project site. Whereas the Project site structures were determined not to be historic resources, the Stonehouse Tavern is conservatively assumed to be an historical resource and its demolition for Project development would be considered a significant and unavoidable cultural resource impact. Thus, the Stonehouse Tavern Project Location Alternative would have a greater impact on cultural resources than the Project. Because the Outfall Option would reduce Project impacts on biological resources and hydrology and water quality and would not have the significant and unavoidable cultural resource impact caused by the Stonehouse Tavern Project Location Alternative, the Outfall Option is the environmentally superior alternative that meets the basic Project objectives.

Potential Areas of Concern and Issues to be Resolved

CEQA Guidelines section 15123 requires that the summary of an EIR identify areas of controversy known to the lead agency, including issues raised by agencies and the public. Comments received on the NOP are summarized in section 1.5.1 (see Table 1-2). Based on public comments and input received to date, areas of interest that are related to potential adverse physical environmental effects consist of the following:

Quincy Lumber & Supply Building (295 Lawrence Street; APN 115-031-054): During the NOP process public comment was received (see Appendix A) that the existing Quincy Lumber & Supply building on the Project site is considered by some residents to be a historical location in Quincy. The red and white barn is visually prominent when traveling west on SR 70/Lawrence Street through Quincy. Comments received from the public state that the building is a local landmark and should be preserved in its present condition and location and/or materials should be salvaged. Based on these public comments, the Judicial Council conducted a professional

analysis of the Quincy Lumber & Supply building as a potential historical resource under the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR).

To be a protected environmental resource under CEQA, historical resources need to meet specified federal or state criteria. Based on the professional analysis, the Quincy Lumber & Supply building does not meet those criteria and is not an environmental resource within the scope of this CEQA analysis.

This EIR discusses this building in section 4.1 Aesthetics and section 4.4 Cultural Resources.

1 Introduction

This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed New Quincy Courthouse Project (Project) has been prepared in accordance with and complies with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970 as amended (PRC § 21000 et seq.) and CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR § 15000 et seq.). Per section 21067 of CEQA and sections 15367 and 15050 through 15053 of the CEQA Guidelines, the Judicial Council of California (Judicial Council) is the lead agency under whose authority this document has been prepared. As an informational document, this EIR is intended for use by the Judicial Council decision makers and members of the general public in evaluating the potential environmental effects of the Project.

1.1 Project Overview

The Judicial Council is the administrative arm of the California Court System. The Judicial Council's responsibility includes implementation of the Trial Court Facilities Act of 2002, the landmark legislation that shifted the governance of courthouses from California counties to the State of California (State). Following the Trial Court Facilities Act of 2002, the Judicial Council conducted a survey to assess the physical condition of California's courthouses. The survey showed that 90 percent of the courthouses need improvements to protect the safety and security of the public, litigants, jurors, and families who are served by California Courts. In October 2008, the Judicial Council identified "Immediate and Critical Need" courthouse projects, in an effort to prioritize future courthouse construction and renovation. The Immediate and Critical Need projects were located in 34 counties across the State.

The Reassessment of Trial Court Capital-Outlay Projects (Judicial Council 2019) presents a statewide list of trial court capital-outlay projects based on prioritized need. The New Quincy Courthouse Project is ranked in the highest priority group as an immediate need. The Judicial Council proposes to construct a new courthouse to relocate Superior Court operations that are currently housed in the Plumas County Courthouse, located in Quincy at 520 Main Street, to the Project site. The existing County owned Plumas County Courthouse is not affected by the Project.

The Project site consists of three contiguous, privately-owned parcels in the unincorporated town of Quincy in Plumas County. The Project site encompasses 2.86 acres in total. Site addresses include 253 Lawrence Street, 287 Lawrence Street, and 295 Lawrence Street. The Project site is located immediately north of Lawrence Street, which in this location in downtown Quincy serves as State Routes (SR) 70/89. The Project would require the acquisition of land from the owners of the site's parcels.

The new courthouse will provide a new permanent state-owned facility that is accessible to the public and can provide enhanced services to the public. The courthouse building will include courtrooms with support spaces, and administrative and operations areas. The Project also includes site improvements, including new on-site surface parking lots and drive aisles, and rerouted utility connections to serve the new building.

1.2 Design-Build Method

The Project will utilize the design-build method of project delivery. Because this is a design-build project, total improved site development details, which include building elevations, landscape plantings, and other project-specific facilities details are not known at this time. In design-build,

a Criteria Architect team develops performance criteria to establish the building's design characteristics.

Building and site sustainability features are not yet determined but will be developed by the design builder to comply with the Judicial Council's California Trial Court Facilities Standards (Facilities Standards), applicable CALGreen requirements, applicable State of California Executive Orders, and any other Judicial Council requirements. The Facilities Standards address physical durability of facilities, design principles, sustainable design, site design, architectural criteria, and many other topics specific to court facilities.

The Judicial Council has used the Facilities Standards to inform the analysis included throughout this EIR. However, as the Project is a design-build project, design and engineering details, construction documents, and other details would continue to be developed during and following the preparation of this EIR. This EIR adopts a conservative approach to analyzing the significant likely impacts on the environment from the range of potential design and construction details resulting from the design-build process. Thus, mitigation measures are proposed to reduce the potential for significant environmental impacts regardless of whether the final design and construction may cause the impact. The analysis of impacts and mitigation measures in this EIR are expected to apply to the range of potential design-build details under the applicable standards, and no further analysis or mitigation is anticipated for specific design alternatives.

1.3 Intended Uses and Purpose of the EIR

An EIR is an objective, informational document that informs decision makers and the public of the potential for significant project effects, including possible ways to minimize those effects, and the EIR describes a reasonable range of alternatives to the project (CEQA Guidelines §15121(a)). An EIR must be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision makers with information enabling them to make a decision that intelligently considers the project's potential direct and indirect environmental consequences. The evaluation of the environmental effects of the Project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in light of what is reasonably feasible (CEQA Guidelines §15151). CEQA requires decision makers to balance the benefits of a project against its unavoidable environmental consequences. If environmental impacts are identified as significant and unavoidable, the Lead Agency may still approve the project if it finds that social, economic, legal, technological or other benefits outweigh the unavoidable impacts. The Lead Agency would then be required to state in writing the specific reasons for approving a project, based on information in the EIR and other information sources in the administrative record. This reasoning is called a "statement of overriding considerations" (PRC § 21081 and CEQA Guidelines § 15093).

This EIR will be used by the Judicial Council and other regulatory agencies having jurisdiction over the Project (Responsible and Trustee Agencies) when considering approval of the Project. A list of anticipated subsequent approvals is provided in EIR section 1.4. This EIR will provide sufficient information about the Project to allow responsible and trustee agencies, stakeholders, and the public meaningful evaluation of potential environment impacts, while also informing the Project's later design, engineering, and construction details.

1.4 Lead and Responsible Agencies

1.4.1 Lead Agency

In conformance with CEQA (PRC §21000 et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR §15000 et seq.), the Judicial Council is the "lead agency" for the Project. The lead agency is defined in CEQA Guidelines section 15367 as "the public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project." The Judicial Council has determined an EIR is the appropriate CEQA document for the Project. The Judicial Council, as lead agency, is responsible for scoping the analysis, preparing the EIR, responding to comments received on the Draft EIR, and completing all other required aspects of the CEQA process.

1.4.2 Responsible Agencies

Responsible agencies are State and local public agencies other than the lead agency that have authority to carry out or approve a project or that are required to approve a portion of a project for which a lead agency is preparing or has prepared an EIR. The following agencies listed in Table 1-1 could be required to act as responsible agencies for the Project:

Table 1-1. Required Agency Permits and Approvals

Agency	Permit or Approval
Federal	
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Potential permitting of culverting the open drainage channel.
State	
State Public Works Board	Property acquisition.
Office of the State Fire Marshal	Approvals to construct and occupy.
State Water Resources Control Board (Central Valley Region)	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Permit/Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Plumas County requires new development and redevelopment projects as part of the Phase 2 Small MS4 Permit program to ensure that the appropriate construction best management practices (BMPs), source control measures, low impact development site design measures, and stormwater treatment measures will be implemented. Separate Permits may be required for the new stormwater runoff outfall and for potential culverting of the open drainage channel.
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement may be required for stormwater connection to drainage channel or for culverting the open drainage channel.

Agency	Permit or Approval
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)	Encroachment Permit Application Package (EPAP) for modification to adjacent public sidewalks, streets, access or encroachments into the Caltrans right-of-way.
Local	
County of Plumas	Adjustment to existing easements or property information; storm drainage; fire and emergency services site access.
American Valley Community Services District (AVCSD)	Domestic water; fire water; sanitary sewer.

1.4.3 Trustee Agencies

Trustee agencies under CEQA are specific public agencies with legal jurisdiction over natural resources that are held in trust for the people of California and that would be affected by a project, whether or not the agencies have authority to approve or implement the project. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) may act as a trustee agency for the Project.

1.5 Scoping of Environmental Issues

1.5.1 Notice of Preparation and Public Scoping Meeting

To initiate preparation of this EIR, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR § 15082(a), 15103, and 15375), a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for this Draft EIR was published on October 15, 2025, to inform agencies that an EIR was being prepared and invite comments on the scope and content of the document. The comment period closed on November 17, 2025. Additionally, as recommended by the CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR § 15083) the Judicial Council held a public scoping meeting on October 23, 2025, for the purpose of inviting public comment. Public notice of the scoping meeting was distributed to individuals that previously expressed interest, local community agencies, responsible agencies, and the Project Advisory Group. The NOP was also posted at the Plumas County Clerk-Recorder's office. Quincy is not served by a physically printed local newspaper. The Plumas Sun, an online newspaper serving the Quincy area, reported on the scoping meeting and opportunity to comment in an article on October 28, 2025.

The Judicial Council received 26 comment letters in response to the NOP and scoping meeting; one was provided by the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW), one was provided by the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD), and 24 were provided by members of the public. The comment letters are attached to this EIR as Appendix A. A summary of written comments received via email and where in the EIR the environmental issues raised in the comments are addressed is presented in Table 1-2.

Table 1-2 Comments on the Notice of Preparation

Comment Topic	General Response	Location in EIR where topic is addressed
Preserve Quincy Lumber building ("Red Barn"/"Lumber Barn") – Opposes demolition of Quincy Lumber building, a prominent community structure. *(8 comments)*	The building was professionally evaluated and does not qualify as a historic resource under federal or state criteria. Potential impacts to the building are not an environmental issue that can be addressed in this EIR.	*See historic resources discussion in EIR section 4.4 Cultural Resources.*
Barn Disposal - Interest in knowing the disposal plan for barn lumber and building materials. *(2 comments)*	The Judicial Council may consider opportunities for repurposing barn lumber when deciding how it will implement the Project.	*See EIR Executive Summary, Potential Areas of Concern and Issues to be Resolved.*
Preserve "Stone House" building – Opposes redevelopment of off-site Stone House building as potential alternative site for new courthouse. *(2 comments)*	The Project would not redevelop the Stonehouse Tavern building. The Stonehouse Tavern site is evaluated as an alternative location to the Project site.	*See discussion in EIR section 7.6 Alternatives.*
Preserve Old Quincy Courthouse – Opposes demolition of old Quincy Courthouse building. *(2 comments)*	The Project would not demolish the existing courthouse building, which will remain under County ownership.	*See discussion in EIR Chapter 2 Project Description.*
Partial Approval of Proposed Site – Approves redevelopment of Feather Publishing Building and recreational vehicle storage structure but disapproves of demolition of Quincy Lumber building. *(2 comments)*	An alternative that uses the Project site but preserves Quincy Lumber & Supply building was evaluated as a possible Project alternative.	*See historic resources discussion in EIR section 4.4 Cultural Resources and EIR section 7.5 Alternatives Considered but Rejected for Detailed Analysis.*
Approval of Proposed Site – Proposed site for new courthouse is ideal due to location near old courthouse and proximity to restaurants. Quincy Lumber building is in disrepair. *(3 comments)*	This comment generally supports the Project.	*See discussion in EIR Chapter 2 Project Description.*
Preference for Two-Story Building and Smaller Building Footprint – Change the proposed single-story building into a two-story building with smaller footprint. Building size is excessive. *(4 comments*)	An alternative that uses a smaller footprint and two-story building was evaluated as a possible Project alternative.	*See discussion in EIR section 7.5 Alternatives Considered but Rejected for Detailed Analysis.*

Comment Topic	General Response	Location in EIR where topic is addressed
Excessive Parking – Suggests reducing the number of parking stalls. Current parking proposal of 160 spaces is excessive *(2 comments).*	Anticipated parking is 117 spaces. Parking will be designed during the design-build process using applicable rules and guidelines. The quantity of parking is not considered a change in environmental conditions under CEQA.	*Parking is described in the EIR Chapter 2 Project Description. The potential increase in impervious surfaces from parking is discussed in EIR section 4.8 Hydrology.*
Building Efficiency – Ensure new building employs efficient heating and cooling systems. Use natural light. Consider use of geothermal heat pump technology to boost building efficiency. *(2 comments)*	The Judicial Council is committed to sustainable and efficient building design as described in the California Trial Court Facilities Standards.	*See discussion in EIR section 4.6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions.*
Compatibility with Community Character – New courthouse should be designed to be aesthetically compatible with rural and agricultural character of the community. *(1 comment)*	The Judicial Council's Trial Court Facilities Standards require the Project design to integrate into the local community.	*See discussion in EIR section 4.1 Aesthetics.*
Flooding in Quincy – Permeable pavers should be used for all parking areas and parking should not be excessively large. *(1 comment)*	Parking size and stormwater control features are designed during the design-build process. Potential stormwater impacts based on conservative assumptions are evaluated in this EIR.	*See discussion in EIR section 4.8 Hydrology.*
Alternative Sites for New Courthouse – Other sites are available. Consider alternative sites for new courthouse such as sites identified in comments on East Main Street, Redberg Avenue, Lee Road, Crescent Street, Orion Way, and the vacant Plumas/Sierra Regional Courthouse in Portola. *(10 comments)*	The Judicial Council considered all available potential sites during the site selection process and considered all sites recommended by members of the public, as potential alternatives for the Project.	*See discussion of Alternative Sites in EIR Chapter 7 Alternatives.*
Site Selection Process – Site selection process did not include enough public input. Process should be extended to consider alternative sites for new courthouse. *(3 comments)*	The Judicial Council considered all available potential sites during the site selection process and considered all sites recommended by members of the public, as potential alternatives for the Project.	*See discussion of Alternative Sites in EIR Chapter 7 Alternatives*

Comment Topic	General Response	Location in EIR where topic is addressed
EIR Scoping Meeting Noticing – Noticing of October 23, 2025 public scoping was insufficient (e.g., did not include publication in local internet newspaper, radio station, or community's physical bulletin boards). Suggests holding another public meeting. *(4 comments)*	The Judicial Council noticed the start of the NOP comment period and public hearing according to CEQA requirements. The NOP was provided to local agencies and posted in the County Clerk-Recorder's office. As also noted, the local online newspaper reported on the scoping meeting and comment period, providing additional notice to the community. The public will also receive notice of this Draft EIR and may provide comments.	*See EIR Chapter 1 Introduction.*
Proposed Costs – Questions high costs for construction of new courthouse. Requests information about funding sources for project. *(2 comments)*	Project funding is not a CEQA environmental topic analyzed in this EIR.	
California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW): Provides the CEQA requirements for assessing impacts to biological resources including identifying a comprehensive project description; the environmental and regulatory setting; direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to biological resources; and alternatives to avoid or minimize significant impacts to resources under CDFW's jurisdiction. *(1 comment)*	The Judicial Council appreciates CDFW's notes on EIR requirements and has complied with CEQA in this analysis.	*See discussion in EIR section 4.3 Biological Resources.*
Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD): Lists the requirements of the EIR impact analysis and describes potential permit requirements for specific features of the Project. *(1 comment)*	The Judicial Council appreciates NSAQMD's notes on EIR requirements and has complied with CEQA in this analysis.	*See discussion in EIR section 4.2 Air Quality.*

1.5.2 Public Review of Draft EIR

Consistent with the requirements of CEQA, a good-faith effort has been made during the preparation of the EIR to contact all responsible and trustee agencies; organizations; persons who may have an interest in the Project; and all government agencies.

The Judicial Council filed a Notice of Completion with the State Clearinghouse, indicating that this Draft EIR has been completed and is available for review. A Notice of Availability of the EIR has been published concurrently with distribution of this document. This Draft EIR is being circulated for a 45-day public review and comment period, commencing on November 16, 2026 and concluding at 5 p.m. on December 31, 2026. A public meeting will be held during the review period. The Notice of Availability provides details of meeting date, time, and location.

During this period, comments from the public, organizations, and agencies regarding environmental issues identified in the EIR may be submitted to the lead agency at the following address:

> Alexandra Cervantes, Senior Facilities Analyst
> Judicial Council of California, Facilities Services
> 2860 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 400, Sacramento, CA 95833-3509
>
> Email: newquincycourthouseproject@jud.ca.gov (enter "New Quincy Courthouse EIR in the 'Subject' line)

Comments on the Draft EIR must be received in writing by the end of the comment period. The Draft EIR is available for review online at: https://courts.ca.gov/facilities/plumas-county-new-quincy-courthouse. Hard copies of the Draft EIR and technical appendices are available for review at:

> Quincy Branch Library
> 445 Jackson Street, Quincy, CA 95971

1.5.3 Response to Comments and Final EIR

Upon completion of the public review period for the Draft EIR, the Judicial Council will prepare a Final EIR that addresses substantive comments received on the Draft EIR related to environmental issues and identifies text revisions to the Draft EIR as a result of those responses or other changes initiated by the Judicial Council. The Final EIR will incorporate the Draft EIR and the documents taken together will constitute the Final EIR. The Judicial Council will consider the adequacy of the Final EIR in accordance with the requirements of CEQA when it considers approval of the Project.

The Judicial Council must certify the Final EIR before making a decision to approve the Project. Prior to approval of a project that would have a significant environmental effect, CEQA requires the adoption of findings (PRC § 21081; CEQA Guidelines § 15091 through 15093). If the Final EIR identifies significant adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated to less-than-significant levels, the findings must include a Statement of Overriding Considerations for those impacts (CEQA Guidelines § 15093(b)).

1.5.4 Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

As required under CEQA (PRC § 21081.6; CEQA Guidelines § 15097), the Judicial Council will adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) describing the mitigation measures that will avoid or reduce significant effects on the environment (PRC § 21081.6; CEQA Guidelines § 15097). The MMRP will be prepared at the time of Project approval and is designed to ensure compliance with the Project description and mitigation measures of the EIR during and after Project implementation. This EIR recommends mitigation measures in a format that will facilitate preparation of the MMRP. The MMRP will identify the specific timing and roles and responsibilities for implementation of adopted mitigation measures if the Project is approved. If the Judicial Council decides to approve the Project, the Judicial Council will be responsible for verifying implementation of the MMRP.

1.6 Document Organization

This Draft EIR is organized as follows:

- **Chapter ES, Executive Summary.** Provides a summary of the Project description and objectives, the Lead Agency and Responsible agencies' responsibilities, a summary of alternatives considered, and proposed mitigation measures.
- **Chapter 1, Introduction.** Describes the Project, intended uses and purpose of the EIR, scoping of environmental issues, and type of EIR and organization.
- **Chapter 2, Project Description.** Describes the Project location, zoning, and surrounding land uses, Project purpose and objectives, Project characteristics including construction and operation of the project, and Project approvals.
- **Chapter 3, Impacts Found Not to Be Significant.** Presents a brief discussion of the environmental resources found to have no or less-than-significant impact and were therefore not brought forward for additional analysis within the Draft EIR.
- **Chapters 4, Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures.** Describes the approach to the environmental impact analysis and contains individual sections that reflect the CEQA Appendix G recommended environmental resource areas and describe existing conditions, detail the regulatory framework, and assess the potential environmental impacts of the Project. When the analysis identifies potentially significant effects, mitigation measures are presented to lessen the impacts. Implementing these measures would reduce potentially significant impacts to less-than-significant levels whenever feasible.
- **Chapter 5, Cumulative Impacts.** Describes the cumulatively significant impacts, if any, considering the incremental effect of implementing the Project in combination with the impacts of related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects.
- **Chapter 6, Other CEQA Required Assessments.** Describes the growth inducing impacts and significant and unavoidable environmental impacts of the Project, as well as the significant irreversible environmental changes that would result from Project implementation.
- **Chapter 7, Alternatives.** Describes a reasonable range of alternatives to the Project, evaluates the extent to which those alternatives could substantially lessen the Project's significant impacts while attaining most of the Project objectives, and compares the effects of the alternatives to those of the Project. This section also identifies the environmentally superior alternative, as required by CEQA.
- **Chapter 8, References.** Lists the sources of information cited throughout the Draft EIR. the individuals who contributed to preparation of the Draft EIR, and the persons, such as staff of State agencies, consulted during the preparation of the Draft EIR.
- **Chapter 9, List of Preparers.** Lists the individuals who contributed to the preparation of the EIR as well as persons consulted.
- **Appendices.** Provide background and technical information to support analysis of this Draft EIR.

2 Project Description

2.1 Project Location and Site Description

2.1.1 Project Location

The Project site consists of three contiguous, privately-owned parcels in the unincorporated town of Quincy in Plumas County (Figure 2-1: Regional Location). Site addresses include 253 Lawrence Street (APN 115-031-055), 287 Lawrence Street (APN 115-031-052), and 295 Lawrence Street (APN 115-031-054). The Project site is located on the north side of Lawrence Street and encompasses 2.86 acres in total. Lawrence Street in this location in downtown Quincy serves as State Routes (SR) 70/89; as such, the Project site is located immediately north of SR 70/89 (Figure 2-2: Site Vicinity).

2.1.2 Existing Site Characteristics

The Project site is currently occupied by three commercial structures (two buildings and one overhead canopy structure)—Feather Publishing Co., Inc. at 287 Lawrence Street, a storage facility for boats and recreational trailers at 253 Lawrence Street, and the Quincy Paint Center and The2Mic (amplification supplies for guitars) at 295 Lawrence Street, the latter of which was previously occupied by Quincy Lumber & Supply. Asphalt pavement, including parking areas and drive aisles, surround the onsite structures and cover a large portion of the Project site (Figure 2-3: Project Site Photos). The north and northwest portions of the site contain unpaved gravel surfaces. The Judicial Council proposes purchasing the three parcels from the current private owners for the construction of the new courthouse.

The Project site is surrounded by a mix of duplexes and single-family residences and small businesses. A bike path along a former railroad alignment is located immediately north of the site. An inactive, former wastewater treatment plant is located north of the bike path. Chain-link fencing is present along the eastern site boundary, separating the drainage channel from the rest of the site. The western site boundary contains noncontiguous segments of wooden fencing and chain-link fencing. The site contains minimal landscaping in the form of several non-contiguous landscaped areas containing shrubs and landscape rock.

Quincy is located in the flat-lying American Valley surrounded by mountainous terrain of the northern Sierra Nevada. The Project site is in the southern half of Section 14, Township 24 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base and Meridian, on the Quincy, California 7.5-minute U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangle. Elevations on the Project site range from approximately 3,412 to 3,420 feet above mean sea level (msl; BKF 2023).

The nearest surface water is in an unnamed drainage channel within the Project site along its eastern boundary (Figure 2-3: Project Site Photos, Photo 3). Runoff in this drainage channel originates south of the Project site where it is culverted in an underground drainage pipe that travels under Lawrence Street. The 36-inch storm drainpipe emerges from under Lawrence Street and discharges to the open drainage channel along the eastern edge of the site. A stormwater catch basin is located along the Project site's Lawrence Street frontage within the SR 70/89 right-of-way. An easement occurs along the drainage channel to allow maintenance access.

The unnamed drainage channel flows northward to eventually join Clear Stream and Spanish Creek, which are tributaries to the East Branch North Fork Feather River. The Project site drains to the east, toward the existing drainage channel, and stormwater runoff sheet flows into the open drainage channel. The onsite drainage channel is approximately four to six feet below property elevation.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), part of the Project site lies within Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) Zone AE, an area subject to inundation by the 1% annual chance flood (100-year flood) event. On the Project site, Zone AE has a base flood elevation (BFE) of 3,412 feet above msl adjacent to the northern site boundary and a BFE ranging from 3,412 to 3,417 along the onsite drainage channel (FEMA 2005). Additionally, a non-SFHA flood zone, Zone X, occurs on the Project in the western and southwestern portions of the site that includes: areas with 0.2% annual chance flood (500-year flood) event; areas with 1% annual chance flood with average depths of less than 1 foot or with drainage areas of less than 1 square mile; and areas protected by levees from 1% annual chance flood. The remainder of the site is not located in a flood zone.

Per the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) prepared for the Project, a 150-gallon propane above-ground storage tank (AST) is located on the northern side of the 253 Lawrence Street structure [boats and recreational trailers covered canopy structure], a 500-gallon propane AST is adjacent to the 287 Lawrence Street structure [Feather Publishing Co. building] to the northeast, a 200-gallon kerosene AST is located inside the 295 Lawrence Street structure [Quincy Paint Center and The2Mic building], and a 120-gallon propane AST is located outside the western side of this structure. (Geocon Consultants 2023)

2.1.3 Project Site General Plan/Zoning Designations and Surrounding Land Uses

The Judicial Council, acting as the judicial branch of State government, is not subject to local land use regulations; however, the Judicial Council, as lead agency, considers local policies in evaluating whether the Project's impacts would be significant.

The parcels that comprise the Project site have a Plumas County General Plan land use designation of Commercial. The Commercial land use designation identifies locations that are appropriate for a wide range of businesses, including retail, offices, and services. This designation is a mixed-use designation in that residential use is permitted in conjunction with commercial uses. Buildings with two or more uses in the same structure are encouraged in this designation, but single use residential, retail, or office buildings are also allowed.

The site is zoned Periphery Commercial (C-2) by the County of Plumas and can include, "building supply, business offices, child day care homes, limited child day care homes, child day care facilities, gas stations, health services, heavy equipment sales, heavy equipment services, lodging facilities, personal services, places of assembly, postal services, prefabricated building sales, recreation facilities, restaurants, retail stores, self-service facilities, taverns, vehicle sales, vehicle services, wholesale commercial supply, and parking lots," and dwelling units.

The Project is not subject to local General Plan and zoning designations; however, a courthouse use would be consistent with the Commercial land use designation and Periphery Commercial uses of business offices, places of assembly, and parking lots.

The Project site is bounded by Lawrence Street/SR 70/89 to the south, multi-family and single-family residential land uses to the west, a bike path along a former railroad alignment and a

defunct, former wastewater treatment plant to the north, and multi-family residential and commercial land uses to the east (Figure 2-2).

2.2 Project Need and Objectives

Senate Bill 847 (Stats. 2018, ch. 45, § 8), which is trailer bill language related to the 2018 Budget Act and codified as Government Code section 70371.9, required the Judicial Council to reassess projects identified in its update to its trial court capital-outlay plan and prioritization methodology adopted on October 24, 2008. SB 847 provides that other projects may be included for reassessment at the discretion of the Judicial Council and specifies the criteria to be used in the reassessment. The reassessment was to be submitted to the Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review and the Assembly Committee on Budget by December 31, 2019.

SB 847 required the reassessment to be based on existing criteria along with the newly mandated criteria. The list of prioritized projects to be developed in response to SB 847—referred to as the Trial Court Capital-Outlay Plan—will be adopted annually by the Judicial Council and submitted to the California Department of Finance. Projects can be for new construction or for acquisition, renovations, building additions, and conversion of structures to court use.

The Revision of Prioritization Methodology for Trial Court Capital-Outlay Projects (Judicial Council 2019) presents a statewide list of trial court capital-outlay projects based on the revised prioritized need. The New Quincy Courthouse Project (this Project) is ranked in the highest priority group as an immediate need. Judicial Council court operations in Plumas County are currently provided in the county-owned, historic Plumas County Courthouse, located in Quincy approximately 0.2 miles southwest of the location for the Project. The existing courthouse supports all court operations and courtrooms for all case types, as all previous branch court locations in the county—in Portola, Greenville, and Chester—have closed over the past several years.

The existing county-owned courthouse building is substantially out of compliance with regulatory safety, seismic, accessibility codes, and Judicial Council space standards. The existing courthouse building is rated as a FEMA high-risk, seismically deficient building. Among the existing courthouse building's functional issues are its space shortfall, overcrowding, and security deficiencies. The existing courthouse building lacks sufficient space for a lobby and entrance screening, public waiting areas, and juror assembly and deliberation areas. The existing courthouse building also lacks holding facilities, attorney-client interview rooms, a self-help area, multiple points of ingress/egress, onsite parking facilities for the public, and a path of circulation for in-custodies separate from the public and judicial officers and staff. The Project would address these deficiencies by relocating Superior Court operations and courtrooms to a new, permanent facility. The existing county-owned historic courthouse would remain under County ownership.

The New Quincy Courthouse Project is proposed to accomplish the following objectives which are immediately needed improvements that enhance the Superior Court's ability to serve the public:

- Provide a permanent, sustainable, safe, and accessible courthouse that improves the public's access to justice and enhances public services.
- Align courthouse spaces and organization with Judicial Council's California Trial Court Facilities Standards.

- Improve security, relieve current space shortfall, and improve operational efficiency and customer service.

2.3 Project Characteristics

The Judicial Council proposes to construct a new courthouse to relocate Superior Court operations that are currently housed in the Plumas County Courthouse, located in Quincy at 520 Main Street, to the Project site. The existing Plumas County Courthouse will remain in place under County ownership. The County's plans for repurposing the existing Plumas County Courthouse are not currently available and are not part of the Project.

The new courthouse would provide a new permanent state-owned facility that is accessible to the public and can provide enhanced services to the public. The courthouse building would include courtrooms with support spaces, and administrative and operations areas. The Project also includes site improvements, including new on-site surface parking and drive aisles, and rerouted utility connections to serve the new building. The Conceptual Site Plan is shown in Figure 2-4: Conceptual Site Plan.

The Project would utilize the design-build method of project delivery. Because this is a design-build project, total improved site development details, including building elevations, landscape plantings, and other project-specific facilities details are not known at this time. In design-build, a Criteria Architect team develops performance criteria to establish the building's design characteristics.

Specific building and site sustainability features are not yet determined but would be developed by the design-build entity (DBE) to comply with the Judicial Council's California Trial Court Facilities Standards (Facilities Standards), applicable CALGreen requirements, applicable State of California Executive Orders, and other Judicial Council requirements. The Facilities Standards reflect the Judicial Council's commitment to sustainable and efficient buildings and require all new courthouse projects to be designed to receive the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver rating or higher.

2.3.1 New Courthouse Building

The proposed new Quincy Courthouse would be an approximately 23,100 square-foot, one-story building dedicated to court functions. An approximately 9,600 square-foot outdoor, ground-level access area for loading, in-custody sallyport, and secure parking would be located immediately adjacent to the courthouse building to the north/northwest. The building would consist of one above ground floor level; the Project does not propose any subterranean building area.

High volume public functions, court, and court support functions would all take place on the single ground floor level of the new courthouse. The new courthouse would include the following features and areas:

- Two courtrooms
- Multipurpose room
- Public lobby and security screening area
- Chambers and courtroom support areas
- Court operations area
- Clerk's office

- Family court services area
- Self-help area
- Space for administration and information technology
- Jury Services area
- Sheriff area
- Central in-custody holding area
- Space for staff and building support
- Secured loading zone and sallyport

The new courthouse building would be set back a minimum of 25 feet from all property lines per Facilities Standards. The building setback from the nearest property lines would be 25 feet or greater depending on the site layout option the DBE pursues in the final site and building plans. A secure perimeter would be constructed along the Project site perimeter.

The new Quincy courthouse building would be designed and constructed according to the Facilities Standards, which have been adopted by the Judicial Council in accordance with rule 10.180 of the California Rules of Court to establish standards for design and construction of court facilities. The Facilities Standards promote buildings that are functional, durable, maintainable, and efficient and that provide long-term value to the public, the judicial branch, courthouse occupants, the community in which they reside, and court users and taxpayers of California.

2.3.2 Access, Parking, and Circulation

Direct access to the Project site is provided by Lawrence Street / SR 70/89. Lawrence Street is a one-way street (westbound) as it travels in front of the Project site. Vehicles exiting the Project site would only be allowed to turn right out of the site onto Lawrence Street. Regional access is provided by SR 70 and SR 89. The Project site is well served by the Plumas Transit Systems Quincy Local bus route, with three bus stops within 0.25-mile of the site and additional bus stops within 0.5-mile of the site. The Quincy Local bus route provides connections to the East County and North County bus routes, also operated by Plumas Transit Systems (Plumas County Transportation Commission 2025).

Access to the Project site is currently provided by two driveways that each provide ingress and egress and together span most of the site's Lawrence Street frontage. The Project would change the existing site driveway configuration. The primary point of site ingress/egress would be a new two-way driveway off Lawrence Street. The drive aisle from this primary driveway would extend along the eastern side of the courthouse to parking lots. The Project would construct a second driveway at the southwest corner of the site; this driveway and accompanying drive aisle along the western side of the courthouse would serve as an in-custody drive aisle with controlled access. Access to the in-custody drive aisle from Lawrence Street would be controlled by an in-custody control point installed just north of the accompanying driveway. The Project proposes an emergency vehicle only ingress/egress route onto Summerfield Lane, northwest of the proposed courthouse building, at the existing Summerfield Lane dead-end cul-de-sac.

The Judicial Council anticipates providing approximately 117 onsite parking spaces for court staff and visitors. Parking stalls would be distributed throughout the site. Public/staff/juror parking stalls would generally be located along the eastern site boundary adjacent to the drainage channel, in the rear of the site, and adjacent to the courthouse building. Secure

parking stalls would be located immediately north of the courthouse building, separate from public/staff/juror parking by the loading zone parking area, which would also be located immediately north of the courthouse building. The vehicle sallyport would be located at the northwest corner of the courthouse building at the northern terminus of the in-custody drive aisle.

The street frontage at the existing building entrance on Lawrence Street would require adjustment to the existing crosswalk curb ramps. Caltrans would require an Encroachment Permit Application Package (EPAP) and associated coordination for the proposed changes to the street frontage along Lawrence Street.

2.3.3 Utilities

The Project site is currently served by all wet and dry utilities required to provide service to the new courthouse building. Existing utility infrastructure serving the Project site may require expansion/upgrades to support the new courthouse building.

The American Valley Community Services District provides water supply and wastewater service to the Project site and maintains and operates the water and wastewater utility main infrastructure serving the site. Although site plans are not currently available, it is conservatively assumed all existing water and sanitary sewer pipelines within the Project site would be replaced and upsized as needed to serve the new courthouse.

Electrical service is provided to the site by Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E). The Project site is not served by natural gas utilities as gas service is currently not available. The Project would likely require offsite improvements to upgrade utility mains and install tie-ins for the new courthouse building. Photovoltaic (PV) solar carport structures over 80 of the parking stalls are planned for future installation. The PV carports would provide a portion of the electricity used to serve the site, in addition to electricity obtained from PG&E.

Dry utilities that are privately owned, including telecommunications and electricity, would be coordinated with each utility company (AT&T, Comcast, PG&E).

2.3.4 Project Operation

The existing Plumas County Courthouse is currently understaffed. The typical number of employees needed for courthouse operations is 31. The new Quincy Courthouse can be expected to employ up to 31 staff. The Project would not change the hours of operation, expected staffing levels, number of courtroom proceedings, or visitor use.

2.3.5 Project Construction

Following site acquisition and performance criteria, Project construction would commence with design development, site preparation and demolition activities, which would include: hazardous materials abatement, as applicable; removal of existing propane and other fuel tanks; and demolition and removal of existing structures. Following the completion of site preparation and demolition activities, construction of the proposed courthouse building and site improvements would occur. In total, Project demolition and construction activities are expected to span approximately 26 months, with an anticipated construction period from February 2030 to April 2032. The estimated site acquisition, and Project construction dates are subject to change.

Site preparation, demolition, and construction work would take place between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. during weekdays, with approval from the State required for nighttime or weekend work, dependent upon coordination efforts with external stakeholders (i.e., Plumas County).

2.3.5.1 Demolition Activities

The Project proposes demolition of the existing on-site commercial structures (i.e., two buildings and one covered canopy structure), and paved parking areas. Any demolition excavations (e.g., removing old foundations, utilities, etc.) would be backfilled with suitable soil compacted as engineered fill in accordance with the recommendations presented in the Project geotechnical report in all areas to receive structures, pavements or flatwork (Atlas Technical Consultants 2025).

Existing underground utilities, where encountered, would be properly abandoned and/or entirely removed if said utilities have the potential to impact the proposed building, pavement, or flatwork areas. In general, utility pipelines less than 4 inches in diameter may be abandoned in place provided the pipelines would not be close to new foundation elements and would not interfere with new utilities. Pipelines that are left in place would be plugged at the ends with concrete or sand-cement slurry. Larger utility pipelines or pipelines that underlie the new building foundation would be removed and replaced with engineered fill or left in place and completely grouted with flowable sand cement slurry or controlled low-strength material (CLSM; Atlas Technical Consultants [Atlas] 2025).

2.3.5.2 Grading and Drainage

The Project site is relatively flat and slopes east toward the onsite drainage channel. Although proposed cut and fill quantities are not currently available, grading for the proposed building and surface parking areas is expected to be balanced on the site because the site is already flat. Excavation activities are anticipated for utility trenching. Site grading and geotechnical engineering would occur in accordance with Judicial Council standards and the geotechnical report prepared for the Project (Atlas 2025).

The proposed building and parking lot areas would be cleared of existing pavements, trees, roots, abandoned utilities, and other obstructions and deleterious materials. The proposed building and parking lot areas would be stripped of soil containing organic matter (if present).

According to the Project's geotechnical investigation, possible fill materials were identified within the uppermost 6 to 7 feet below ground surface (bgs) at the rear [north] of the property and to a possible depth of 3 feet bgs in one boring toward the front [south] of the property. Bedrock was not encountered in any of the borings within the depth explored. Free groundwater was encountered in each of the borings at depths of 6 to 12½ feet bgs (Atlas 2025).

Areas potentially requiring deeper excavations such as utilities may require isolated dewatering to lower the groundwater level below the bottom of the excavation during Project construction (Atlas 2025).

2.3.5.2.1 Stormwater Runoff Management

The Project's stormwater runoff system would be regulated by the Statewide Phase II Small MS4 General Permit Water Quality Order (WQO) 2013-0001-DWQ. In line with the requirements of this permit for regulated projects (E.12.e. LID Design Standards), the Project

would collect stormwater runoff within the site and direct it into "one or more facilities designed to infiltrate, evapotranspire, and/or bioretain the amount of runoff specified in Section E.12.e(ii)(c) Numeric Sizing Criteria for Storm Water Retention and Treatment" (WQO 2013-0001-DWQ and Amendments, pp. 53-54). Once the storm water runoff passes through these treatment features, it would be piped to the drainage channel along the eastern property boundary for discharge. The new discharge pipe would require an appropriately designed outfall to prevent erosion under Outfall Option or would be connected to a culvert drainage channel under Culvert Option. Construction would occur below the top of the drainage channel bank and may require permits as described in section 4.3 Biological Resources and section 4.8 Hydrology and Water Quality.

2.3.5.2.2 Drainage Channel Management Options

The Project includes two alternate approaches to the long-term management of the open drainage channel that would be determined at the design/build stage and in consultation with the resource agencies responsible for permitting work on water features (see section 4.3 Biological Resources and section 4.8 Hydrology and Water Quality for detailed discussion).

Outfall Option under consideration is to leave the drainage channel open as it is currently and construct only the new stormwater runoff outfall pipe. The Judicial Council would be responsible for the long-term maintenance of the drainage channel function including any ongoing or recurring permits for periodic dredging or other maintenance activities.

Culvert Option under consideration would reduce the long-term maintenance impacts of owning the existing drainage. The Project would culvert the drainage along its entire length within the Project site boundaries. A new culvert would be connected to the existing culvert under Lawrence Street, convey runoff along the eastern side of the Project site, and discharge the runoff into the open channel to the north of the Project site in approximately the same location as existing runoff meets the channel. The new stormwater runoff drainage pipe needed for Project development would connect and discharge into this new culvert at a point along the channel extent within the site. This option assumes all riparian vegetation along the drainage channel within the Project site and the open water feature would be removed. This option would likely require permits from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and/or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The permitting requirements for this option are discussed in detail in section 4.3 Biological Resources and section 4.8 Hydrology and Water Quality. Culvert Option is the preferred option.

Both options for the long-term management of the drainage channel are analyzed in this EIR.

2.3.5.3 Construction Equipment and Staging

Grading and site preparation for this Project would be conducted using conventional earth-moving equipment. Construction staging, including laydown yards and temporary workspaces, would be contained within the existing footprint of the Project site. No additional laydown areas are proposed.

2.4 Anticipated Permits and Approvals

The Judicial Council, acting as the judicial branch of State government, is not subject to local land use regulations; however, the Judicial Council, as lead agency, considers local policies in evaluating whether the Project's impacts would be significant.

The Judicial Council is responsible for certifying the CEQA document and approving the Project.

As the Project Proponent/Lead Agency, it is anticipated that the Judicial Council would be required to obtain permits and approvals for the Project as shown in Table 1-1.

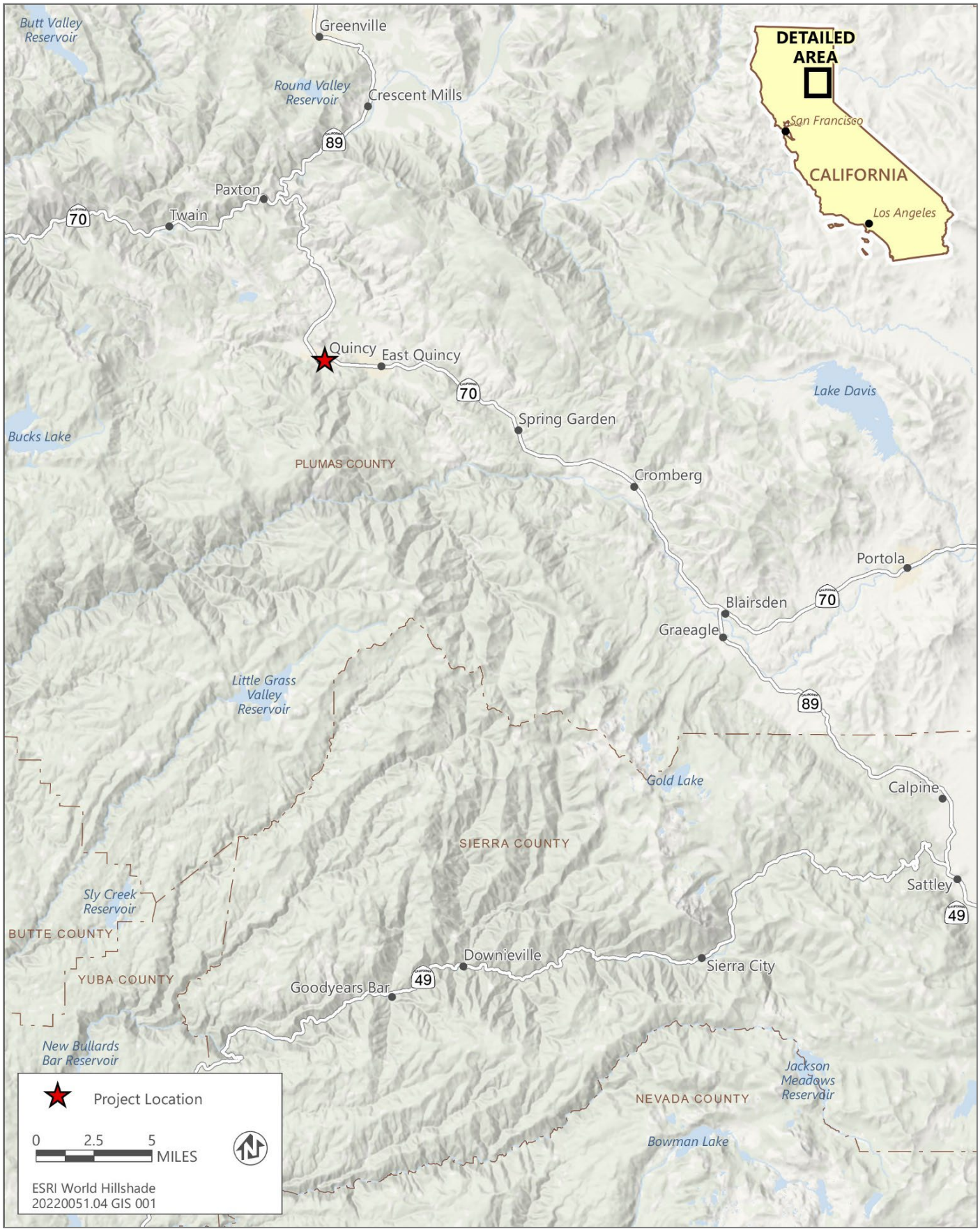


Figure 2-1 Regional Location

New Quincy Courthouse Project



Figure 2-2 Site Vicinity

New Quincy Courthouse Project



Photo 1. View of Project site from Lawrence Street at Church Street. The former Quincy Lumber & Supply barn sits at the southwest corner of the property close to the driveway entrance and is visually prominent.



Photo 2. View of Project site from Lawrence Street. The former Feather Publishing Company building (left) and an Recreational Vehicle carport (right) sit at the center and east side of the property.

Figure 2-3 Project Site Photos

New Quincy Courthouse Project



Photo 3. Drainage channel along the eastern property boundary looking north.Gravel driveway shown to the left is adjacent property.



Photo 4. Northeast corner of Project property showing fenceline at northern boundary (left) and fenceline along easetern drainage channel (right).



Photo 5. North end of Project property looking south toward the backside of the Feather Publishing Company building.

Figure 2-3 Project Site Photos

New Quincy Courthouse Project



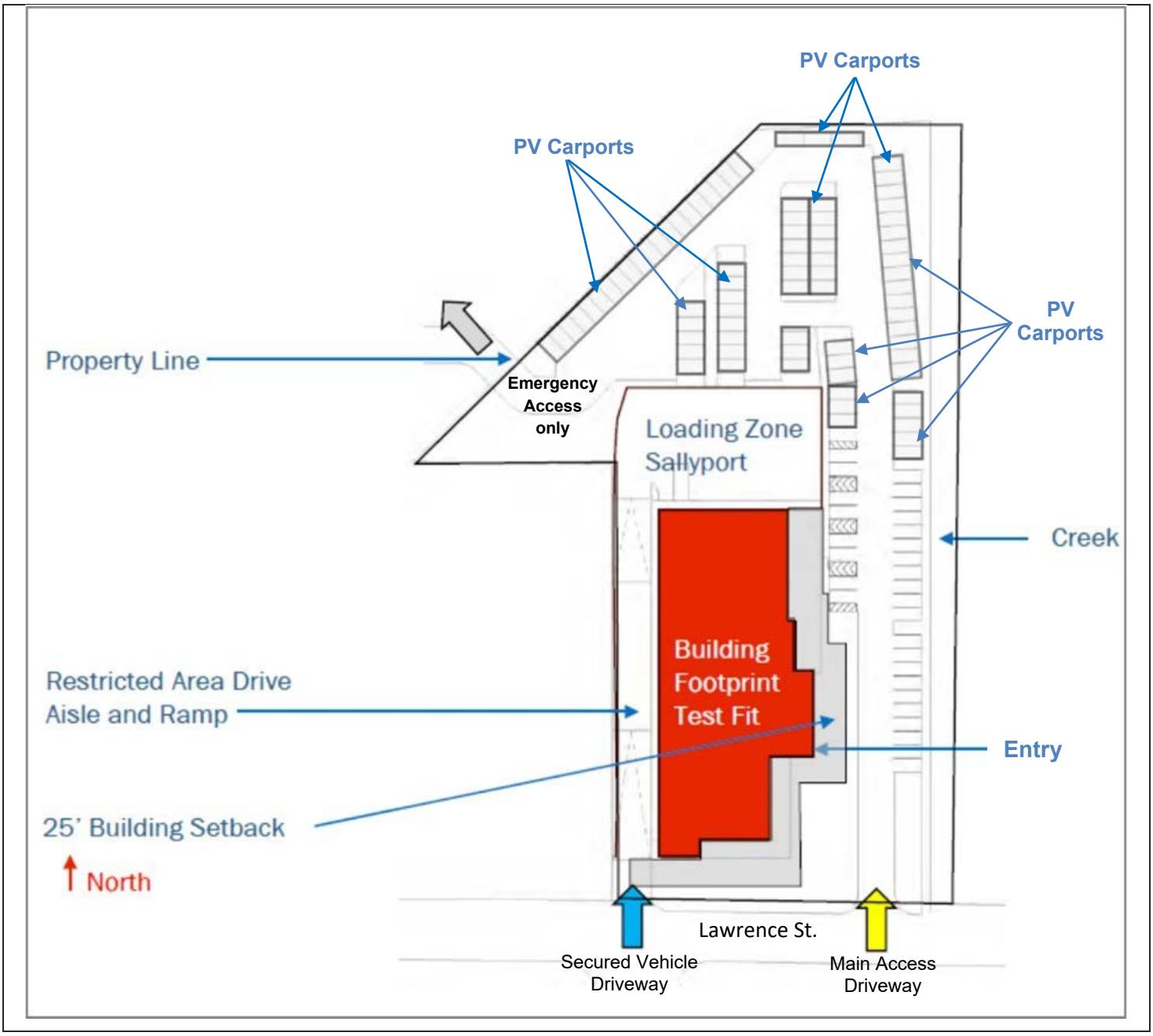
Photo 6. West side of Project property looking south toward Lawrence Street. Areas adjacent to buildings are paved for vehicle access. Feather Publishing Company building is to the left. The rear entrance to the Quincy Lumber & Supply barn is center. Buildings to the right of the barn are off site on adjacent property.



Photo 7. West side of Project property looking nortwest toward Summerfield Land and adjoining residential neighborhood. Fenceline shows property boundary.

Figure 2-3 Project Site Photos

New Quincy Courthouse Project



Source: Judicial Council
PV: Photovoltaic

Figure 2-4 Conceptual Site Plan
New Quincy Courthouse Project

3 Impacts Found Not to Be Significant

In its early analysis of the Project and Project site, the Judicial Council determined that an EIR would clearly be required (CEQA Guidelines 14 CCR § 15060(d)). To focus this EIR on the significant effects of the Project (CEQA Guidelines 14 CCR § 15060(d)), the Judicial Council considered the topics in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. The Appendix G topic areas listed below are those where the Judicial Council's initial analysis determined the Project would clearly have no impact or a less-than-significant impact on the environment. The remaining Appendix G topics where the potential for a significant effect was identified are analyzed in the remaining chapters of this EIR.

- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Energy
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation

3.1 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, an impact related to agriculture and forestry resources is considered significant if the Project would do any of the following:

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

The Project site is currently developed with three commercial buildings. According to 2022 Important Farmland Map for Plumas County, produced by the California Department of Conservation (DOC) under the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), the Project site is classified as "Not Mapped" (DOC 2022). There is no Farmland at the Project site; thus, the Project would not result in conversion of Farmland to a non-agricultural use. Therefore, no impact would occur, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

2. **Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?**

The Judicial Council, acting as the judicial branch of State government, is not subject to local land use regulations; however, the Judicial Council, as lead agency, considers local policies in evaluating whether the Project's impacts would be significant. As stated in section 2.1, the Project site is zoned Periphery Commercial (C-2) by Plumas County. The Project site is not zoned for agricultural use nor is it under a Williamson Act contract. The Project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract. Therefore, no impact would occur, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

3. **Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in PRC § 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by PRC § 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code § 51104(g))?**

The Judicial Council, acting as the judicial branch of State government, is not subject to local land use regulations; however, the Judicial Council, as lead agency, considers local policies in evaluating whether the Project's impacts would be significant. As described above, the Project site is zoned for commercial use. The Project site is not zoned for agricultural use nor is the Project site zoned as forest land, timberland, or a Timberland Production Zone. Therefore, no impact would occur, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

4. **Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?**

The Project site is developed with three commercial buildings. The Project site does not contain any forest. The Project would not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to a non-forest use. Therefore, no impact would occur, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

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

The Project site and the surrounding parcels are developed with commercial and residential uses. There is no Farmland or forest land either within or adjacent to the Project site. The Project site would not result in off-site conversion of Farmland or forest land to other uses. Therefore, no impact would occur, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

3.2 Energy

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, an impact related to energy is considered significant if the Project would do any of the following:

1. **Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation; or**
2. **Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?**

Construction activities associated with the 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.

Once operational, the Project would consume energy for vehicle trips and electricity, and water and wastewater conveyance and treatment. The Project site is not currently served by natural gas. Electricity and gasoline fuel consumption are energy sources necessary to operate and maintain the Project in a safe manner. Lighting is essential for safety and security. Due to energy efficiency standards being improved over time, the new structure would be more efficient in its energy consumption than the existing structures. The Project would not conflict with or obstruct any state plan adopted for the purposes of increasing the amount of renewable energy or energy efficiency. The Project would be built to the latest CALGreen Code and would not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy.

The Judicial Council, acting as the judicial branch of State government, is not subject to local land use regulations; however, the Judicial Council, as lead agency, considers local policies in evaluating whether the Project's impacts would be significant. The Project would not conflict with or obstruct any other local plan, because no local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency apply to the Project area.

The Project would also be constructed and operated consistent with the Judicial Council Energy Conservation Guidelines which are part of the Judicial Council's effort to increase awareness and collaboratively address facility electricity usage. The 2017 Energy Conservation Guidelines provide a checklist of key implementation actions to reduce facility electricity consumption, as applicable, and generally address how facility users operate a building to reduce building electricity consumption. The Judicial Council would seek LEED Silver certification, for which building designers would focus on reducing energy consumption and waste, and would also comply with applicable guidelines from the Judicial Council's Guidelines for Energy Conservation in Trial Court Facilities (Judicial Council 2017) and Facilities Standards. Many actions in support of LEED Silver certification and identified within these Judicial Council Standards and Guidelines align with State plans for energy efficiency. In accordance with the Sustainable Design standard in the Facilities Standards, the Project would include building design features to achieve a 15 percent increased energy efficiency compared to the minimum Title 24 requirements.

Additionally, the Project would provide a new courthouse building to facilitate court activities in Quincy that currently operate within the existing Plumas County Courthouse building. The Project does not propose to expand court activities above existing levels of operation, and the new building would include design features consistent with all relevant energy efficiency standards. For these reasons, the Project would not result in the wasteful, inefficient, or

unnecessary use of energy resources. Therefore, no impact would occur, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

3.3 Land Use and Planning

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, an impact related to land use and planning is considered significant if the Project would do any of the following:

1. **Physically divide an established community?**

The Project proposes to build a new courthouse to relocate court operations in the Town of Quincy. The Project site is currently developed and served by municipal utilities. Access to the Project site is provided by Lawrence Street/SR 70; no new access roads are required to serve the Project. The Project does not include any physical barriers that would result in the division of an established community. Therefore, no impact would occur, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

2. **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?**

The Judicial Council, acting as the judicial branch of State government, is not subject to local land use regulations; however, the Judicial Council, as lead agency, considers local policies in evaluating whether the Project's impacts would be significant. The Project site has a General Plan land use designation of Commercial and is zoned Periphery Commercial. A public service facility such as a courthouse would be a permitted use if the local zoning were applicable. The Judicial Council did not identify any local policies that were adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect which would be applicable to the Project site if the local agency had jurisdiction. In addition, the Judicial Council adopted Facilities Standards that include environmental considerations, and which will be incorporated into future design details, construction documents, and other materials required for implementing the Project. There are no potentially significant adverse environmental effects attributable to the Project that are the result of any conflict with local plans and policies. Therefore, no impact would occur, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

3.4 Mineral Resources

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, an impact related to mineral resources is considered significant if the Project would do any of the following:

1. **Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be a value to the region and the residents of the State?**

The Plumas County General Plan identifies undeveloped areas in the county designated for mining and mineral production activities. Additionally, the General Plan contains policies that require the conservation of undeveloped areas with significant mineral resources (County of Plumas 2013). The Project site is currently developed and is not designated by the County as an area with significant mineral resources. The Project site is not located in a designated State or regionally important area of known mineral resources (i.e., a Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ), such as MRZ-2). Therefore, no impact would occur, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

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

The Project would not result in the loss of locally important mineral resources recovery sites. According to the County's online General Plan Land Use Map, there are no areas on or near the Project site that contain mineral resources of local importance (County of Plumas 2024). Therefore, no impact would occur, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

3.5 Population and Housing

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, an impact related to population and housing is considered significant if the Project would do any of the following:

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

The purpose of the Project is to build a new courthouse that meets Judicial Council space standards and complies with regulatory safety, accessibility, and seismic codes. The existing Plumas County Courthouse has the capacity to staff 31 employees. The new courthouse would also have the capacity to staff 31 employees. Existing court operations at the Plumas County Courthouse would be relocated to the new facility. The Project would not induce substantial population growth because it would not increase the need for housing employees, and it relocates existing court operations. The Project does not propose new homes, businesses, or other infrastructure, such as new roads or utility infrastructure with capacity to serve new development, that could directly or indirectly induce substantial population growth within the area near the Town of Quincy. Therefore, no impact would occur, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

2. **Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?**

The Project site consists of three developed commercial buildings that would be demolished to build a new courthouse. No homes would be displaced and because no homes would be displaced, people would also not be displaced, and no replacement housing would be necessary. Therefore, no impact would occur, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

3.6 Public Services

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, an impact related to public services is considered significant if the Project would do any of the following:

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

Fire protection?

Fire protection in Plumas County is provided by 19 local fire protection districts. The Project site is served by the Quincy Fire Protection District. The closest fire station to the Project site is Quincy Fire Station 1, located approximately 0.2 miles west at 505 Lawrence Street. The Project proposes to relocate court services provided at an existing courthouse within the Town of Quincy, to a new courthouse in a location just 0.2 miles distant. Construction of the Project would not result in adverse impacts to fire services from the change in location of court services or the physical characteristics of the proposed courthouse. The Project would not increase the population in the area or negatively impact service ratios and response times.

The Judicial Council would be required to incorporate California Fire Code (CFC), California Health and Safety Code, and federal Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) requirements into the Project design to address emergency access and finished surfaces for firefighting equipment; fire hydrant placement and sufficiency of fire hydrants; and fire flow availability. Finally, the Facilities Standards include requirements related to courthouse design, including emergency access and fire suppression systems inside courthouse buildings. Incorporation of these standards would likely reduce the dependence on fire department equipment and personnel compared to current operations both at the existing courthouse and in the existing structures on the Project site by reducing fire hazards. Therefore, no impact would occur, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

Police protection?

The Project proposes to build a new courthouse to relocate court operations in the Town of Quincy. The Project does not propose increasing courthouse employees or services that could result in increased need for police protection. The new courthouse would be staffed with Judicial Council security personnel and sheriff deputies which already provide security services at the existing courthouse, and emergency response is provided by the California Highway Patrol. Therefore, the Project would not affect police protection performance objectives and would not require the construction of new or expanded police protection facilities that could result in a physical environmental effect. Therefore, no impact would occur, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

Schools?

As stated above, the Project does not propose any new housing or employment that would require new school facilities or services. As discussed in Population and Housing above, the Project would not result in population growth in the Project area and therefore would not contribute to a change in the number of students served by schools in the area. The Project would not generate students or the need for expanded or new school facilities, the construction

of which could result in an adverse environmental impact. Therefore, no impact would occur, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

Parks?

See analysis presented in “Recreation,” below.

Other public facilities?

The Project would not lead to increased use of public facilities. The new courthouse would have the capacity to staff 31 employees, the same as the existing courthouse. The Project would not increase the need for other public services or facilities, the construction of which could have a significant environmental effect. Therefore, no impact would occur, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

3.7 Recreation

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, an impact related to recreation is considered significant if the Project would do any of the following:

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

The Project consists of a new courthouse with associated parking. The new courthouse would have the capacity to staff 31 employees, the same as the existing courthouse. The Project does not propose an increase in the number of employees or existing services. Additionally, the Project does not include new housing or schools, which would in turn increase the long-term use of nearby recreational facilities. The nearest public recreational facility to the Project site is Dame Shirley Plaza, which is roughly 0.3 miles southwest. There is no anticipated increase in use of existing parks by the relocated courthouse employees, and the Project would not increase the level of usage such that substantial physical deterioration would occur or be accelerated. Therefore, no impact would occur, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

2. **Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?**

The Project does not include recreational facilities, nor does it propose the building of any infrastructure that would require construction of or expansion of recreational facilities. The Project consists of a new courthouse with associated parking and landscaping to relocate existing court services. Because the Project does not include new recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that could have a physical effect on the environment, there would be no impact.

4 Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

The Project is evaluated based on the focused analysis of its effects on the following 14 environmental topic areas. The Project may have potentially significant impacts on the environmental topic areas listed below; therefore, this EIR includes additional analysis of those potential effects.

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Noise
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire

A detailed analysis of environmental impacts will be presented for each resource area (listed above) utilizing the model Environmental Checklist Form found in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines section 15063(f). Impacts to the environment for demolition, construction, and operation of the Project will be assessed and described, and the level of significance of impacts will be measured against criteria that have been established by regulation, accepted standards, or other definable criteria.

Each environmental resource area is reviewed by analyzing a series of questions presented in CEQA Guidelines Appendix G regarding the level of impact the Project may have on the environment. Substantiation is provided to justify each determination. One of six conclusions is then provided as a determination of the Project's potential effect on each of the environmental resources.

- **No impact** indicates that the demolition, construction, and operation of the Project would not have any direct or indirect effects on the environment. It means no measurable or probable change from existing conditions. This impact level does not need mitigation.
- A **less than significant impact** is one that would not result in a substantial or potentially substantial adverse change in the physical environment. This impact level does not require mitigation.
- A **significant impact** is defined by CEQA section 21068 as one that would cause "a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project." Levels of significance can vary by project, based on the change in the existing physical condition. Under CEQA, mitigation measures or

alternatives to the Project must be included to reduce significant impacts to less than significant, to the extent feasible.

- A **potentially significant impact** is one that, if it were to occur, would be considered a significant impact as described above before the application of mitigation measures. For CEQA purposes, a potentially significant impact is treated as if it were a significant impact. Because the term “significant” has a specific usage in evaluating the impacts under CEQA, it is used to describe only the significance of impacts and is not used in other contexts within this document. Synonyms such as “substantial” are used when not discussing the significance of an environmental impact.
- A **significant and unavoidable impact** is one that would result in a substantial or potentially substantial adverse effect on the environment, and that could not be reduced to a less-than-significant level even with feasible mitigation measures incorporated. Under CEQA, a project with significant and unavoidable impacts may proceed, but the lead agency is required to prepare a “statement of overriding considerations” in accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15093, explaining why specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including region-wide or statewide environmental benefits, of a proposed Project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects.
- A **beneficial impact** is an impact that is considered to cause a positive change or improvement in the environment and for which no mitigation measures are required.

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4.1 Aesthetics

This section analyzes impacts to existing viewsheds, visual character, and visual quality of the Project site and surrounding Project area. The term “Project area” refers to all areas where the Project may be visible, including areas in the vicinity of the Project site as well as areas further from the site. This section also discusses existing scenic roadways and the Project’s contribution to light and glare in the Project area.

4.1.1 Environmental Setting

4.1.1.1 Visual Resource Evaluation Concepts and Terminology

Aesthetic resources consist of the objects (artificial and natural, moving, and stationary) and features (e.g., landforms and waterbodies) that are visible in a landscape. These resources add to or detract from the visual appeal of the landscape. A visual change can be perceived by an individual or group as either positive or negative, depending on a variety of factors or conditions (e.g., type of viewer, sensitivity to visual change, distance from the visual change, or seasonal conditions).

Visual character of an area is a reflection of the area’s natural state and cohesiveness, including topography, vegetation, water bodies, and other natural features, as well as the quality and character of the built environment. These relationships are considered in terms of dominance, scale, diversity, and continuity. Visual character-defining resources and features include landforms, vegetation, buildings, transportation facilities, open space, water bodies, geologic features, historic structures, downtown skylines, and apparent upkeep and maintenance of property. The basic elements that comprise the visual character of landscape features are form, line, color, and texture. The landscape's appearance is described in terms of the dominance of each element.

Viewer groups within the Project area include residents, business employees, visitors, travelers on SR 70, and recreationists using the bike trail north of the Project site. Sensitivity to visual change varies among viewer types. Sensitivity to views, along with the degree of Project visibility or visual exposure, affects the viewer response. Generally, residents and recreationists are considered as highly sensitive viewers. Viewers are defined by their relationship to the Project area, their visual preferences, and their sensitivity to changes associated with the Project improvements. Visual preferences, or what viewers like and dislike about the Project area’s visual character, factor into the perception of an area’s visual quality. Visual quality serves as the baseline for determining the degree of visual impacts and whether a Project’s visual impacts would be adverse, beneficial, or neutral. The viewer’s distance from landscape elements plays an important role in the determination of an area’s visual quality. Landscape elements are considered higher or lower in visual importance based on their proximity to the viewer. Generally, the closer a resource is to the viewer, the more dominant, and therefore visually important, it is to the viewer.

Visual quality is an assessment of the composition of the character-defining features of the landscape.

4.1.1.2 Existing Visual Character and Quality

Plumas County is a predominantly rural county located within the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range and includes the Upper Feather River Watershed along with several unique valley areas.

Plumas County contains and is surrounded by the Plumas National Forest. The County's visual character is linked to its geography and natural topography, vegetation, and cultural history of the region (Environmental Science Associates 2012). The Plumas National Forest plays a major contributing factor in the undeveloped nature of the County and its scenic mountains and valleys.

Quincy is a small town (unincorporated community) within Plumas County nestled along SR 70 in the American Valley. In the downtown area of Quincy, SR 70 is split with westbound traffic traveling on Lawrence Street (past the Project site) and eastbound traffic traveling on Main Street, one block south of Lawrence Street. While driving through Quincy, motorists on SR 70 see mixed commercial, institutional (County Courthouse, U.S. Post Office, Plumas National Forest Ranger Station, churches), and some residential land uses. The building types are of mixed ages and styles. Parking lots line the street and there is limited landscaping along Lawrence and Main Streets in Quincy.

Views in the Project area are characterized by distant scenic ridgelines and vegetated forest lands. The Project site is located in an area of mixed land uses with residential, a closed wastewater treatment plant and undeveloped lands to the north, commercial and residential land uses to the east, commercial land uses to the south across Lawrence Street, and commercial and residential land uses to the west. Single-family residential homes on Summerfield Lane abut the Project's western boundary. The overall visual character of downtown Quincy is of a small town with a variety of businesses lining the highway but there is no distinct or unified visual character. There are no high-rise buildings in downtown Quincy.

The 2.86-acre Project site is located in a relatively urbanized area of Quincy designated by the County General Plan and zoned for commercial use. The Project site has flat topography and is developed with three existing commercial structures. The majority of the property has a paved or gravel surface with minimal landscaping. A fenced drainage channel with associated riparian vegetation runs along the Project's eastern boundary. Trees are present along the eastern and northern property boundaries. Views of the Project site are shown in Figure 2-3. The Project site has minimal exterior night lighting.

The former Quincy Lumber & Supply building (Figure 2-3, Photo 1) is a prominent visual feature of the Project site and is associated with the town's historic commercial activity and connection to the timber industry. The building is currently painted "barn red" with white trim. The building is noticeable amongst the other commercial buildings along Lawrence Street because it is located close to the road, has a barn-like shape, is red and white in color, and has the words "Quincy Lumber and Supply" in large white letters. The mostly vacant structure has value as a contributing feature to the town's rural character. The historic qualities of this building are assessed in section 4.4 Cultural Resources. The building does not qualify as a historic structure under the National Register of Historic Places or California Register of Historic Resources, though it may contribute to the visual quality of the built environment in Quincy.

4.1.1.3 Scenic Vista

Scenic vistas are defined in this document as natural landscapes that provide views of unique flora, geologic, or other natural features that are generally free from urban intrusions. Typical scenic vistas include views of mountains and hills, large, uninterrupted meadows/fields and open spaces, and natural waterbodies. Scenic vistas can be impacted by development in two

ways. First, a structure may be constructed that blocks the view of the vista from public vantage points. Second, the vista itself may be altered (i.e., development on a scenic hillside).

There are no federal or state designated scenic vistas or locally-designated scenic vistas in the Project area identified in the Plumas County General Plan or other County planning documents; however, scenic vistas may generally be understood to include views of the surrounding forested ridgelines visible throughout the town. The Project site is located within the developed area of Quincy on a valley floor and is not part of a scenic vista.

4.1.1.4 Scenic Highways

According to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) State Scenic Highway Map there are no designated state scenic highways within Plumas County; however, portions of SR 70, 89, and 36 outside of the Quincy area (Caltrans 2025) are considered eligible for listing as a state scenic highway. Additionally, there are no county designated scenic roads near the Project site (Environmental Science Associates 2012).

4.1.1.5 Existing Light and Glare

There are primarily two sources of light intrusion in the Project area:

- light emanating from structural interiors and passing through windows; and
- light from exterior sources, such as street lighting, building illumination, security lighting, traffic headlights, and landscape lighting.

Existing sources of light and glare within the Quincy area primarily occur in the established developed areas and include light from car headlights, street lighting, building illumination and security lighting, and light emanating from building interiors. The Project site is in an urbanized area surrounded by ambient lighting sources. Existing night lighting within the Project site is minimal and is primarily focused on the building entrances.

4.1.2 Regulatory Setting

4.1.2.1 Federal Regulations

No federal regulations are applicable to aesthetics in relation to the Project.

4.1.2.2 State Regulations

4.1.2.2.1 California Trial Court Facilities Standards

The Judicial Council's proposed courthouse design would be required to conform to the Facilities Standards. The Facilities Standards 1.C.4 Design Excellence identify the following elements for building design:

- Reflection of the dignity of the law and stability of the judicial system.
- Responsiveness to local context, geography, climate, and setting.
- Reflection of the importance of the activities within the courthouse, with adequate spaces that are planned and designed to be adaptable to change.
- Consideration of the economics of operation and maintenance, including controlling long-term ownership costs.
- A sustainable, healthy, safe, and accessible environment.

- Technical excellence in building systems.

The Facilities Standards 3.D Integration of Building and Site include the following site and building design criteria standards that are focused on minimizing the potential for adverse visual impacts of new courthouse facilities:

- Consider orientation for purposes relating to daylighting, glare, solar gain, and passive solar heating.
- Orient buildings to take advantage of views; conversely, in new buildings, do not block major view corridors. Orientation for views should not compromise optimal solar orientation.
- Building shape, size, and scale contribute to a facility's architectural and visual character. To convey human scale, and not overwhelm court users, massing and scale of all new construction shall be considered during planning and design.
- Building height and coverage may respect local zoning regulations, although such regulations do not strictly apply to state buildings.
- Detail of architectural elements of large buildings should maintain a sense of scale and sensitivity to the neighborhood context. Consider the visual and environmental effects that new and existing structures would have on the neighborhood and on existing buildings located in the sphere of influence caused by shading or reflectance, changes in airflow, and views to and from existing buildings.
- Design the location and visibility of utilities to minimize impact on the landscape.
- Provide a related group of landscape materials, to promote continuity throughout the site.
- Provide visual focus for the public entry and the path to it with appropriate planting scale and plant placement.
- Define outdoor spaces consistently and with appropriate scale and function throughout the premises.
- Use landscaping and building configuration to shade and provide sound, sun, and wind buffering for outdoor spaces and pedestrian areas. Provide shading on southern and western building elevations.

The Facilities Standards 16.B. Lighting Criteria and 16.C.1 Exterior Lighting include the following exterior lighting requirements that would reduce potential Project impacts on nighttime light and glare:

- Luminaires shall be selected and located to minimize direct or reflected glare. When multiple luminaires are specified, the specifier shall ensure that the luminaires meet equivalent performance standards.
- Exterior lighting shall be compatible with security cameras used on the site. Typically, an average to minimum uniformity ratio of 4:1 shall be achieved, with well-shielded luminaires out of view of cameras. Lighting levels do not need to be high if the light source is of good color quality, uniformity is high, and glare is minimized
- Exterior lighting shall not contribute to light pollution or trespass by emitting light beyond the property. Minimize glare and unwanted light for neighbors. The U.S. Green Building Council's LEED for Building Design and Construction (Sustainable Sites credit category: Light Pollution Reduction) shall be used as a guideline for developing the exterior

lighting plan, as shall the code-required light pollution reduction measures in the California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen; 24 CCR, Part 11). Designers should consider specifying LED luminaires compliant with the International Dark-Sky Association requirements—specifically, a correlated color temperature of 3,000 kelvin or less.

- Outdoor lighting shall have photo sensors or an astronomical time clock for control.
- Designers shall use LED sources with integrated occupancy/motion controls in parking lot luminaires. Emergency lighting shall be exempt from this requirement.
- Exterior lighting levels shall be reduced rather than turned off during nighttime hours of inactive periods in compliance with CALGreen. Lighting required for emergency lighting or nighttime security shall be exempt.

The Facilities Standards 16.C.2 Security Lighting further addresses nighttime security lighting needs:

- Provide a comprehensive nighttime security lighting scheme. A nighttime security lighting scheme shall be developed and discussed with the Judicial Council's Emergency Planning and Security Coordination unit and coordinated with the architectural design team—to satisfy both security needs and the architectural design intent establishing the nighttime civic presence of the facility.

4.1.2.3 Local Regulations

The Judicial Council, acting as the judicial branch of State government, is not subject to local land use regulations; however, the Judicial Council, as lead agency, considers local policies in evaluating whether the Project's impacts would be significant.

4.1.2.3.1 Plumas County General Plan

The Plumas County 2035 General Plan, adopted December 17, 2013, includes the Conservation and Open Space Element, which contains goals and policies related to visual character and quality. The following aesthetics-related policies from the Plumas County General Plan may be relevant to the Project.

Policy 7.5.10 Community Character. The County shall promote the appropriate preservation and or achievement of community character building design, exterior modifications, and public space improvements in areas where the community has expressed the need for improved community design and enhancement. Proposed building designs shall be developed to preserve the unique historic nature of each individual community. Where community plans are developed, these plans shall include scenic resources to be protected or preserved.

Policy 7.6.6 Lighting and Night Sky. The County shall require that new lighting be designed and configured to reduce light pollution, glare, and spillage.

4.1.2.3.2 Plumas County Code of Ordinances, Title 8 Building Regulations (Outdoor Lighting)

Plumas County has adopted the 2022 California Building Energy Efficiency Standards, more commonly referred to as "Title 24" or "Title 24 Energy Requirements". These standards include requirements in the Energy Code (Title 24, Part 6), which are also required in the Facilities Standards, and voluntary energy efficient provisions in CALGreen (Title 24, Part 11). The

outdoor lighting part of the Energy Standards sets minimum control requirements, maximum allowable power levels, minimum efficacy requirements, and cutoff (uplight and glare) zonal lumen limits for outdoor luminaires for residential and non-residential buildings.

4.1.3 Impacts Analysis

4.1.3.1 Methodology

The aesthetic value of an area is a measure of the variety and contrast of the Project area's visual features, the character and quality of those features, and the scope and scale of the scene, combined with the anticipated viewer response. The analysis of aesthetics impacts for this Project uses a qualitative approach for characterizing and evaluating the visual resources of the surrounding areas that could be affected by the Project. This approach was based on the following three steps:

a. An objective inventory of the visual features or visual resources that comprise the landscape.

b. An assessment of the character and quality of the visual resources in the context of the overall character of the regional visual landscape.

c. Consideration of the importance to viewers, or sensitivity of the viewers, to the identified visual resources in the landscape.

The above factors were considered along with the Project elements that would be visible during Project operation, which include the proposed new courthouse, exterior lighting, new parking area, and the type and duration of anticipated construction and demolition activities.

Viewers sensitive to visual changes to the Project site include adjacent residents west of the Project site on Summerfield Lane, north of the site on Railway Court, and east of the site in the American Valley Estates mobile home park. Motorists on SR 70/Lawrence are not considered sensitive receptors to any visual changes to the Project site since SR 70 is not a designated Scenic Highway.

4.1.3.2 Thresholds of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Project would have a significant impact related to aesthetics if it would:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.
- In nonurbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

- Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

4.1.3.3 Topics Not Addressed Further

Substantial Adverse Effect on a Scenic Vista: Scenic vistas are typically categorized as either panoramic views (visual access to a large geographic area) or focal views (visual access to a particular object, scene, setting, or feature of interest). There are no designated scenic vistas, overlooks, or viewpoints in or near the Project site. Therefore, the Project would have no impact on a scenic vista, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

Scenic Resources within a State Scenic Highway: There are no state designated scenic highways in the vicinity of the Project site. The Project site is not visible from a state scenic highway. Therefore, no impact from damage to scenic resources within a State Scenic Highway would occur, and this issue is not discussed further in this EIR.

4.1.3.4 Conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality

The Project consists of the demolition of the three existing buildings on the Project site, removal of existing pavement, minor grading, installation of new utility pipelines, and the construction of the new courthouse and associated driveways and parking lot. The redevelopment of the Project site with the proposed courthouse would substantially alter the visual character of the site by removing the existing structures on the property, including the visually prominent, former Quincy Lumber & Supply building (see Figure 2 3 Project Site Photos) and replacing them with a new courthouse building (see Figure 2-4 Conceptual Site Plan).

The Quincy Lumber & Supply building is noticeable because of its color and barn-like structure. The building is mostly vacant and is showing signs of degradation. The Quincy Lumber & Supply building does not meet the criteria for a historical resource as evaluated in section 4.4 Cultural Resources. Demolition of the Quincy Lumber & Supply building would not conflict with any applicable regulations or policies related to visual character or quality. Additionally, the local community is divided on whether the Quincy Lumber & Supply building should be preserved or demolished. Public comment received on the NOP for this EIR includes competing community interest in preserving the building for its community value versus removing the building to allow site development with new uses (Table 1-2).

The proposed new courthouse building would be constructed as a design-build project (see section 1.2 and section 2.3). The proposed new courthouse would be designed within the Facilities Standards to complement the visual character of the surrounding area. The courthouse would contribute to the visual character and quality of the Quincy downtown area by exhibiting the dignity and importance of judicial services and maintaining a sense of scale and sensitivity to the neighborhood context as required by the Facilities Standards (see section 4.1.2.2). The new courthouse would be designed to integrate with the visual character and quality of the area and stand with the dignity and importance of judicial services, which would positively contribute to the visual character and quality of the area.

The Conceptual Site Plan shows the new courthouse building located in the southwestern portion of the site and the parking lot located in the northern and western portion of the site. The new courthouse would be a single-story, approximately 23,100 square-foot building. An approximately 9,600 square-foot outdoor, ground-level access area for loading, in-custody sallyport, and secure parking would be located immediately adjacent to the courthouse building

to the north/northwest. Public access to the Project site would be changed from the existing two vehicle driveways spanning most of the site's Lawrence Street frontage (see Figure 2-2 and Figure 2-3, Photos 1 and 2) to a single two-way driveway at the southeast corner of the site. The Project would construct a second driveway at the southwest corner of the site to access an in-custody drive aisle with controlled access. The Project proposes a new emergency vehicle ingress/egress route onto Summerfield Lane, northwest of the proposed courthouse building, at the existing Summerfield Lane dead-end cul-de-sac. The Project would have 25-foot setbacks from the street frontage and from the side and rear property lines. Overall, Project development would have site coverage and development intensity similar to the existing use of the property.

Project impacts to the open drainage channel would depend upon the selected drainage channel maintenance options described in section 2.3.5.2. The open drainage channel is not a prominent feature when viewed from the surrounding area, including Lawrence Street. The vegetation along the top of the bank provides a very narrow band of vegetation but does not significantly contribute to the visual character of the Project site or its immediate vicinity. Any potential loss of vegetation from the Project would not degrade the visual character of the Project area.

The Project site is located within the urbanized area of the town of Quincy. The site is presently developed with commercial uses, and the proposed courthouse building would be a public facility use similar to surrounding commercial and government facilities. The single-story height of the proposed courthouse would not serve as a contrast with the surrounding one- and two-story buildings in the surrounding area. These proposed changes in the visual character of the site would not present a substantial change in the visual character of the surrounding area, which is a predominantly built out portion of Quincy's downtown. Furthermore, the courthouse would be designed according to the Facilities Standards, which establish site design planning criteria to ensure the integration of building and site design with the surrounding area. While the Judicial Council is not subject to local land use regulations, the Judicial Council has considered local policies, including Plumas County General Plan Policy 7.5.10 related to community character and Policy 7.6.6 related to lighting and the night sky, in the evaluation of the Project's impacts on scenic quality. Because there are no applicable zoning or other regulations that apply to the Project regarding scenic quality, the Project would have ***no impact*** caused by conflict with zoning or regulations governing scenic quality.

4.1.3.5 Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area

4.1.3.5.1 Project Operational Lighting and Glare

The Project site is located in an urbanized area with ambient lighting sources. The site currently contains limited, low-level nighttime building lighting. The Project would introduce new nighttime lighting sources from parking lot lighting, including security lighting, and exterior building lighting to the Project site.

Exterior lighting would be designed and installed to illuminate the site and minimize spillover illumination. Lighting installed for the Project would comply with the Facilities Standards (see section 4.1.2.2) and incorporate relevant lighting strategies. The current Facilities Standards for exterior lighting include requirements for selecting and locating lights to minimize direct or reflected glare and state that the primary purpose of exterior lighting is to provide safety and security for those entering and exiting the building outside of daylight hours. The Facilities

Standards require each project design team to develop a luminaire specification that uses the least number of types of light required to satisfy the design in an effort to simplify maintenance and reduce exterior lighting energy consumption during inactive periods at night while striving to maintain the uniformity of light during the reduced-light-level scenario, which can help contribute to the sense of safety in pedestrian areas and parking lots at night.

The closest receptors that may be impacted by nighttime light and glare originating on the Project site are the residents on Summerfield Lane immediately west of the Project site. Other residential areas are further from the Project site and screened by intervening buildings. While the Project would introduce new nighttime parking lot lighting and exterior building lighting, the Facilities Standards for exterior lighting described in the Regulatory Setting (section 4.1.2.2) would address potential nighttime light impacts on surrounding residential areas, and Project lighting would be consistent with existing urbanized nighttime lighting conditions.

The Project building would be constructed with surfaces, including windows and building exterior finishes, that may potentially produce daytime glare (sunlight reflection of shiny building surfaces). Receptors that may be impacted by daytime glare reflecting off of the new courthouse building include pedestrians and motorists, including those driving on Lawrence Street and other roadways from which the Project site is visible. The new courthouse building would be single-story and oriented with the entrance lobby facing east. Given that the building would not be multi-story with large building surfaces exposed to reflective sunlight that could create glare impacts, the building would be unlikely to cause sunlight glare impacts to motorists on SR 70/Lawrance or to the adjacent residential neighborhood.

Facilities Standards 16.B Lighting Criteria, 6. Visual Criteria requires that luminaires be selected and located to minimize direct or reflected glare. Facilities Standards 3.D Integration of Building and Site, 2.a. Orientation requires that facilities planners consider glare, among other factors, when siting buildings and determining building orientation. While the Project may introduce a new source of daytime glare on site, the Facility Standards related to lighting and glare would address potential daytime glare impacts on receptors.

For these reasons, the Project would not create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. This impact would be ***less than significant***.

4.1.3.5.2 Construction Lighting

Project construction would occur over an approximately 26-month period. During the months of November through April, sunset ranges from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM, and as such, nighttime begins as early as 5:00 PM. The Project may conduct grading and construction activities during nighttime hours between 5:00 PM and 7:00 PM. Nighttime construction activities would require lighting to ensure safe and effective working conditions. Nighttime construction lighting has the potential to impact light-sensitive uses, including residential areas. The nearest residential area to the Project is immediately adjacent to the Project's western boundary on Summerfield Lane. Another residential area is the American Valley Estates mobile home park east of the project site. Construction activities would not occur beyond 7:00 PM (see section 2.3.5) and therefore, the need for nighttime construction lighting would be limited to the early evening hours. Given the short duration and early termination of nighttime lighting, the operation of construction lighting during the early evening hours would not be significant. However, there is still the potential for construction lighting to spill over onto nearby residential parcels that are considered sensitive receptors. To reduce impacts from nighttime construction lighting to the maximum

extent feasible, Mitigation Measure AES-1 is included to ensure construction lighting would be shielded and construction lights would be directed only to areas required for operations and safety.

With implementation of Mitigation Measure AES-1, temporary lighting during Project construction is not expected to create new substantial sources of light and glare that would adversely affect nighttime views. This impact would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated***.

Mitigation Measures

Impact AES-1: Nighttime construction lighting has the potential to adversely impact light-sensitive uses, including residential areas.

Mitigation Measure AES-1: Requirements for Construction Lighting. All lighting used in construction of the Project shall be equipped with exterior hoods and directed downward or only to those areas needed for operations and safety. Construction lighting shall not be directed toward off-site areas. Exterior light fixtures used for construction of the Project shall be designed to prevent the spillover or trespass of light outside the Project site boundary. All lighting shall be of minimum necessary brightness consistent with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) worker safety requirements. High illumination areas not occupied on a continuous basis shall have switches or motion detectors to light the area only when occupied.

4.2 Air Quality

This section analyzes the potential short-term and long-term air quality effects associated with the Project. This section describes existing local and regional air quality conditions; summarizes applicable air quality regulations at the federal, State, and local levels; and includes an evaluation of direct impacts, as well as cumulative effects given the nature of criteria air pollutant emissions impacts.

4.2.1 Environmental Setting

4.2.1.1 Climate and Meteorology

Climate and meteorology are important considerations for air quality. Local dispersion and regional transport of air pollutants directly relate to prevailing meteorological factors. Wind directions and speeds, and vertical temperature structure (inversions) are the primary determinants of transport and dispersion effects.

Plumas County is topographically diverse with elevation ranging from roughly 1,200 feet in the Sierra Valley to 8,400 feet in the Sierra Nevada range. Because Plumas County is situated at the junction of the Sierra Nevada and Cascade ranges, local wind behavior changes significantly based on terrain elevation, canyon alignment, and daily temperature cycles. In Quincy, the wind pattern charts and prevailing breezes are largely defined by its mountainous, Sierra Nevada valley geography. The town typically experiences prevailing winds from the south during the spring months, while the remainder of the year leans toward a mix of calmer or localized valley wind flows. Winter storms can bring strong, gusty winds from the south/southwest.

The County's topography greatly influences its climate, which results in disproportionate levels of precipitation throughout the region. The Sierra Nevada Crest acts as a barrier to storm systems between the western and eastern portions of the County creating a rain shadow effect. The western side of the Sierra Nevada Mountains receives more than 90 inches of rain annually, areas east of the Sierra Crest receive only 11 inches, with the majority occurring from October to April. Throughout the year, average temperatures (measured at Portola) can range over 80 Fahrenheit (ºF) during the summer months to 18ºF during the winter months (Plumas County 2012).

4.2.1.2 Criteria Air Pollutants

The U.S. EPA has established National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for six common air pollutants: ozone (O_3), particulate matter (PM), which consists of "inhalable coarse" PM (particles with an aerodynamic diameter between 2.5 and 10 microns in diameter, or PM_{10}) and "fine" PM (particles with an aerodynamic diameter smaller than 2.5 microns, or $PM_{2.5}$), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), and lead. The U.S. EPA refers to these six common pollutants as "criteria" pollutants because the agency regulates the pollutants on the basis of human health and/or environmentally-based criteria and because they are known to cause adverse human health effects and/or adverse effects on the environment (U.S. EPA 2020a; U.S. EPA 2020b).

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has also established California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) for the six criteria air pollutants regulated by the Federal Clean Air Act (CAA), plus the following additional air pollutants due to their known adverse effects on human

health or the environment: hydrogen sulfide (H_2S), sulfates (SO_X), vinyl chloride, and visibility reducing particles (CARB 2020a).

A description of the criteria air pollutants associated with the Project and its vicinity is provided below.

Ground-level Ozone, or smog, is not emitted directly into the atmosphere. It is created from chemical reactions between oxides of nitrogen (NO_X) and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), also called Reactive Organic Gases (ROG), in the presence of sunlight (U.S. EPA 2022a). Thus, ozone formation is typically highest on hot sunny days in urban areas with NO_X and ROG pollution. Ozone irritates the nose, throat, and air pathways and can cause or aggravate shortness of breath, coughing, asthma attacks, and lung diseases such as emphysema and bronchitis.

ROG is a CARB term defined as any compound of carbon, excluding carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, carbonic acid, metallic carbides or carbonates, and ammonium carbonate, and includes several low-reactive organic compounds which have been exempted by the U.S. EPA (CARB 2004).

VOC is a U.S. EPA term defined as any compound of carbon, excluding carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, carbonic acid, metallic carbides or carbonates, and ammonium carbonate, which participates in atmospheric photochemical reactions. The term exempts organic compounds of carbon which have been determined to have negligible photochemical reactivity such as methane, ethane, and methylene chloride (CARB 2004).

Particulate Matter (PM), also known as particle pollution, is a mixture of extremely small solid and liquid particles made up of a variety of components such as organic chemicals, metals, and soil and dust particles (U.S. EPA 2022b).

PM_{10}, also known as inhalable coarse, respirable, or suspended PM, consists of particles less than or equal to 10 micrometers in diameter (approximately 1/7th the thickness of a human hair). These particles can be inhaled deep into the lungs and possibly enter the blood stream, causing health effects that include, but are not limited to, increased respiratory symptoms (e.g., irritation, coughing), decreased lung capacity, aggravated asthma, irregular heartbeats, heart attacks, and premature death in people with heart or lung disease (U.S. EPA 2022b).

$PM_{2.5}$, also known as fine PM, consists of particles less than or equal to 2.5 micrometers in diameter (approximately 1/30th the thickness of a human hair). These particles pose an increased risk because they can penetrate the deepest parts of the lung, leading to and exacerbating heart and lung health effects (U.S. EPA 2022b).

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas that is formed by the incomplete combustion of fuels. Motor vehicles are the single largest source of carbon monoxide in the Bay Area. At high concentrations, CO reduces the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood and can aggravate cardiovascular disease and cause headaches, dizziness, unconsciousness, and even death (U.S. EPA 2022c).

Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2) is a by-product of combustion. NO_2 is not directly emitted but is formed through a reaction between nitric oxide (NO) and atmospheric oxygen. NO and NO_2 are collectively referred to as NO_X and are major contributors to ozone formation. NO_2 also contributes to the formation of particulate matter. NO_2 can cause breathing difficulties at high concentrations (U.S. EPA 2022d).

Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2) is one of a group of highly reactive gases known as SO_X. Fossil fuel combustion in power plants and industrial facilities are the largest emitters of SO_2. Short-term effects of SO_2 exposure can include adverse respiratory effects such as asthma symptoms. SO_2 and other SO_X can react to form PM (U.S. EPA 2022e).

Sulfates (SO_4^{2-}) are the fully oxidized ionic form of sulfur. SO_4^{2-} are primarily produced from fuel combustion. Sulfur compounds in the fuel are oxidized to SO_2 during the combustion process and subsequently converted to sulfate compounds in the atmosphere. Sulfate exposure can increase risks of respiratory disease (CARB 2022a).

Hydrogen Sulfide (H_2S) is a colorless gas with a strong "rotten egg" odor that can be smelled at very low concentrations. H_2S is also an irritant that can affect the eyes and lungs. H_2S is formed during the biological reduction of sulfates and decomposition of organic material.

Lead (Pb) is a metal found naturally in the environment as well as in manufactured products. Mobile sources used to be the main contributor to ambient lead concentrations in the air. In the early 1970s, the U.S. EPA established national regulations to gradually reduce the lead content in gasoline, and in 1996, lead was banned from gasoline. As a result of these efforts, emissions of lead from the transportation sector and levels of lead in the air decreased dramatically. Lead can adversely affect multiple organ systems of the body and people of every age group. Lead poisoning in young children can cause brain damage, behavioral problems, and liver or kidney damage. Lead poisoning to adults can cause reproductive problems, muscle and joint pain, nerve disorders and kidney disease (CARB 2016a).

Visibility Reducing Particles impact the environment by decreasing visibility (haze). These particles vary greatly in shape, size and chemical composition, and come from a variety of natural and manmade sources. Some haze-causing particles are directly emitted to the air such as windblown dust and soot. Others are formed in the air from the chemical transformation of gaseous pollutants (e.g., sulfates, nitrates, organic carbon particles) which are the major constituents of fine PM. These fine particles, caused largely by combustion of fuel, can travel hundreds of miles causing visibility impairment. Haze not only impacts visibility, but some haze-causing pollutants have been linked to serious health problems and environmental damage as well. Exposure to $PM_{2.5}$ and PM_{10} in the ambient air can contribute to a broad range of adverse health effects, including premature death, hospitalizations and emergency department visits for worsened heart and lung diseases (CARB 2020a).

Common criteria air pollutants, such as ozone precursors, SO_2 and PM, are emitted by many sources and have effects on a regional basis. Other pollutants, such as hazardous air pollutants (HAPs) and toxic air contaminants (TACs; see below) are generally not as prevalent and/or emitted by fewer and more specific sources and, therefore, have greater effects on local air quality conditions and local receptors.

4.2.1.3 Toxic Air Contaminants

In addition to criteria air pollutants, the U.S. EPA and CARB have classified certain pollutants as HAPs and TACs, respectively. These pollutants can cause severe health effects at very low concentrations, and many are suspected or confirmed carcinogens. The U.S. EPA has identified 187 HAPs, including such substances as benzene and formaldehyde; CARB also considers particulate emissions from diesel-fueled engines and other substances to be TACs (CARB 2020b).

Diesel Particulate Matter (DPM). Diesel engines emit both gaseous and solid material; the solid material is known as DPM. Almost all DPM is less than 1 micron in diameter and thus is a subset of $PM_{2.5}$. DPM is typically composed of carbon particles and numerous organic compounds. Diesel exhaust also contains gaseous pollutants, including VOCs and NO_X. The primary sources of diesel emissions are ships, trains, trucks, rail yards and heavily traveled roadways. These sources are often located near highly populated areas, resulting in greater DPM related health consequences in urban areas. The majority of DPM is small enough to be inhaled into the lungs and what particles are not exhaled can be deposited on the lung surface and in the deepest regions of the lungs where the lung is most susceptible to injury. In 1998, CARB identified DPM as a TAC based on evidence of a relationship between diesel exhaust exposure and lung cancer and other adverse health effects. DPM also contributes to the same non-cancer health effects as $PM_{2.5}$ exposure (CARB 2016c).

4.2.1.4 Mountain Cities Air Basin (MCAB)

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) divides the state into air basins that share similar meteorological and topographical features. The Project area is located in the Town of Quincy in Plumas County within the MCAB. The MCAB lies along the northern Sierra Nevada Mountains close to or contiguous with the Nevada border and covers roughly 11,000 square miles. Elevations range from a few hundred feet at the Sacramento County boundary to more than 10,000 feet above sea level at the Sierra Crest. CARB officially recognizes the MCAB as an area impacted by ozone transport from upwind air basins.

4.2.1.4.1 Ambient Air Quality Standards and MCAB Attainment Status

In general, the NAAQS and CAAQS define “clean” air, and are established at levels designed to protect the health of the most sensitive groups in our communities by defining the maximum amount of a pollutant (averaged over a specified period of time) that can be present in outdoor air without any harmful effects on people or the environment. Air pollutant levels are typically described in terms of concentration, which refers to the amount of pollutant material per volumetric unit of air. Concentrations are typically measured in parts per million (ppm) or micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu g/m^3$).

The U.S. EPA, CARB, and regional air agencies 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 the 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 in order for a region to be classified as nonattainment. Federal and State laws require nonattainment areas to develop strategies, and implementation 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 is incomplete and does not support a designation of attainment or nonattainment.

Table 4-1 summarizes the MCAB's attainment status.

Table 4-1: Attainment Status of the MCAB

Pollutant[(A)]	State Designation	Federal Designation
Ozone (O_3)	Nevada County: Non-attainment (due to overwhelming transport); Sierra and **Plumas County: Unclassified**	2008 O_3 Standard (75 ppb) Western Nevada County: Serious Non-attainment; Sierra, Plumas, Eastern Nevada County: Unclassifiable. 2015 O_3 Standard (70 ppb) Western Nevada County: Serious Non-attainment; Sierra, Plumas, Eastern Nevada County: Unclassifiable.
PM_{10}	Nevada, Sierra and **Plumas Counties: Non-attainment**	Unclassified
$PM_{2.5}$	**Portola area in Plumas County: Non-attainment** Nevada, Sierra and **Remainder of Plumas County: Unclassified**	2012 Annual Standard (12µg/m^3) Portola area in Plumas County: Moderate Non-attainment; Nevada, Sierra and Remainder of Plumas County: Unclassifiable/Attainment 2012 24-hour Standard (35µg/m^3) Unclassifiable/Attainment 2024 Annual Standard (9µg/m^3) [(B)] Unclassifiable
CO	**Plumas County: Attainment**; Nevada, Sierra County: Unclassified	Unclassifiable/Attainment

Source: NSAQMD 2024

(A) In addition, the entire district is either Attainment or Unclassified for all State and federal NO_2, SO_2, Pb, H_2S, visibility reducing particles, sulfates, and vinyl chloride standards.

(B) On February 7, 2024, the U.S. EPA lowered the primary annual average health-based standard for $PM_{2.5}$ from 12 µg/m^3 to 9 µg/m^3. The U.S. EPA generally makes initial attainment/nonattainment designations within 2 years of the issuance of a new standard.

Local Air Quality Conditions

Ozone and PM are the major regional air pollutants of concern in the MCAB as air quality standards for particulate matter and ozone have been exceeded in several counties within the MCAB for many years. Although the non-Portola area of Plumas County has not exceeded the NAAQS and is designated Unclassified for the CAAQS for ozone, the Portola area is designated Non-Attainment for state and federal $PM_{2.5}$ standards. High $PM_{2.5}$ concentration values have been recorded by the Quincy area monitors (NSAQMD 2024).

4.2.1.5 Sensitive Receptors

Some people are more affected by air pollution than others. CARB defines sensitive receptors as children, elderly, asthmatics and others who are at a heightened risk of negative health outcomes due to exposure to air pollution. The locations where these sensitive receptors congregate are considered sensitive receptor locations (CARB 2026a). Sensitive Receptor locations may include hospitals, schools, and day care centers, and such other locations as the air district board or CARB may determine (California Health and Safety Code § 42705.5(a)(5)). The sensitive air quality receptors located within proximity to the project site include:

- Single family residential land uses adjacent to the Project site to the west and north along Lawrence Street and Summerfield Lane.
- Single family residential land uses approximately 90 feet south of the Project site along Lawrence Street.
- Mobile home residential receptors approximately 220 feet east of the Project site located in the American Valley Estates mobile home park.

4.2.2 Regulatory Setting

4.2.2.1 Federal Regulations

Federal Clean Air Act

The Federal Clean Air Act (CAA), as amended, provides the overarching basis for both federal and state air pollution prevention, control, and regulation. The Federal CAA establishes the U.S. EPA's responsibilities for protecting and improving the nation's air quality. The U.S. EPA oversees federal programs for setting air quality standards and designating attainment status, permitting new and modified stationary sources of pollutants, controlling emissions of HAPs, and reducing emissions from motor vehicles and other mobile sources. In 1971, to achieve the purposes of Section 109 of the Federal CAA, the U.S. EPA developed primary and secondary NAAQS. Primary standards are designed to protect human health with an adequate margin of safety. Secondary standards are designed to protect property and public welfare from air pollutants in the atmosphere.

The U.S. EPA requires each state prepare and submit a State Implementation Plan (SIP) that consists of background information, rules, technical documentation, and agreements that an individual state will use to attain compliance with the NAAQS within federally-imposed deadlines. State and local agencies implement the plans and rules associated with the SIP but the rules are also federally enforceable.

4.2.2.2 State Regulations

California Clean Air Act

In addition to being subject to Federal requirements, air quality in the state is also governed by more stringent regulations under the California Clean Air Act, which was enacted in 1988 to develop plans and strategies for attaining the CAAQS. In California, both the Federal and State Clean Air acts are administered by CARB. CARB oversees the functions of local air pollution control districts and air quality management districts, which in turn administer federal and state air quality activities at the regional level.

California Air Resources Board In-Use Off-Road Diesel Vehicle Regulation

CARB's In-Use Off-Road Diesel Equipment regulation is intended to reduce emissions of NO_x and PM from off-road diesel vehicles, including construction equipment, operating within California. The regulation imposes limits on idling; requires reporting equipment and engine information and labeling all vehicles reported; restricts adding older vehicles to fleets; and requires fleets to reduce their emissions by retiring, replacing, or repowering older engines or installing exhaust retrofits for PM. The requirements and compliance dates of the off-road regulation vary by fleet size. CARB has off-road anti-idling regulations affecting self-propelled diesel-fueled vehicles 25 horsepower and higher. The off-road anti-idling regulations limit idling on applicable equipment to no more than five minutes, unless exempted due to safety, operation, or maintenance requirements. In 2022, CARB approved amendments requiring the use of renewable diesel fuel starting January 1, 2024. Fleets comprised of Tier 4 Final equipment or zero emission equipment are exempt from this requirement.

CARB On-Road Heavy-Duty Diesel Vehicle (In-Use) Regulation

CARB's On-Road Heavy-Duty Diesel Vehicles (In-Use) regulation (also known as the Truck and Bus Regulation) is intended to reduce emission of NO_x, PM, and other criteria pollutants generated from existing on-road diesel vehicles operating in California. The regulation applies to nearly all diesel-fueled trucks and buses with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) greater than 14,000 pounds that are privately or federally owned, and for privately and publicly owned school buses. Heavier trucks and buses with a GVWR greater than 26,000 pounds must comply with a schedule by engine model year or owners can report to show compliance with more flexible options. Since January 1, 2023, all trucks and buses operating in California, with few exceptions, were required to have 2010 model year engines or newer. In 2022, CARB approved amendments requiring the use of renewable diesel fuel starting January 1, 2024. Fleets comprised of Tier 4 Final equipment or zero emission equipment are exempt from this requirement. CARB indicates implementing the use of renewable diesel in Tier 4 Interim and older engines would result in a 10 percent reduction of NO_X emissions and a 30 percent reduction of PM emissions (CARB 2022b).

4.2.2.3 Local Regulations

The Judicial Council, acting as the judicial branch of State government, is not subject to local land use regulations; however, where the local agency is implementing delegated federal and/or state authority, such as under the Federal and State Clean Air Acts, the Judicial Council may be subject to the local implementing rules.

Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District

The NSAQMD is the agency primarily responsible for maintaining air quality and regulating emissions of criteria and toxic air pollutants within the MCAB. The NSAQMD is a special district created by state law to enforce local, state, and federal air pollution regulations and has jurisdiction over Nevada, Plumas, and Sierra Counties. The NSAQMD has air quality attainment plans for Western Nevada County and Portola (in Plumas County) to address attainment of the 2015 8-hour ozone NAAQS and the 2017 24-hour $PM_{2.5}$ NAAQS in those areas. As of the date on which this report was prepared, the NSAQMD does not have an air quality attainment plan or any other air quality plan relevant to the Quincy area.

Currently, the NSAQMD has 9 regulations containing over 140 rules designed to control and limit emissions from sources of air pollutants and administer state and federal air pollution

control requirements (NSAQMD 2026). Table 4-2 summarizes the primary NSAQMD rules and regulations that may apply to the Project.

Table 4-2: Potentially Applicable NSAQMD Rules and Regulations

Regulation	Rule	Description
Regulation II: Prohibitions	Rule 205: Nuisance	Establishes that a person shall not discharge from any source whatsoever such quantities of air contaminants or other material which cause injury, detriment, nuisance or annoyance to any considerable number of persons, or to the public, or which endanger the comfort, repose, health or safety of any such persons, or the public, or which cause to have a natural tendency to cause injury or damage to business or property.
Regulation II: Prohibitions	Rule 207: Particulate Matter	Establishes that a person shall not release or discharge into the atmosphere from any source or single processing unit, exclusive of sources emitting combustion contaminants only, particulate matter emissions in excess of 0.1 grains per cubic foot of dry exhaust gas at standard conditions.
Regulation II: Prohibitions	Rule 226: Dust Control	Limits fugitive dust emissions through reasonable precautions such as, but not limited to, cessation of operations, cleanup, sweeping, sprinkling, compacting, enclosure, chemical or asphalt sealing, and use of wind screens or snow fences.
Regulation II: Prohibitions	Rule 230: Architectural Coatings	Limits VOC emissions associated with architectural coatings to a standard of 50 g/L for flat coatings and 100 g/L for non-flat coatings.
Regulation V: Permit to Operate	Rule 526: Limiting Potential to Emit	Limits emissions for stationary sources, including diesel-fueled emergency standby engines with output of less than 1,000 horsepower to a standard of operating for 5,200 hours and consuming 265,000 gallons of diesel fuel in every 12-month period.
Source: NSAQMD 2024		

Plumas County General Plan

The Plumas County 2035 General Plan, adopted December 17, 2013, includes the Conservation and Open Space Element, which contains goals and policies related to air quality. The following air quality-related policies from the Plumas County General Plan may be relevant to the Project:

Policy 7.9.3 Dust Suppression Measures. The County shall require developers to implement dust suppression measures during excavation, grading, and site preparation activities as required by the NSAQMD.

4.2.3 Impacts Analysis

4.2.3.1 Methodology

The methodologies and assumptions used in preparation of this section follow the Guidelines for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts of Land Use Projects developed by the NSAQMD, as approved on August 26, 2024 (NSAQMD 2024). Information on existing air quality conditions, federal and state ambient air quality standards, and pollutants of concern was obtained from the U.S. EPA, CARB, and NSAQMD. This EIR air quality analysis has been closely coordinated with the GHG analysis in section 4.6.

4.2.3.2 Thresholds of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Project would have a significant air quality impact if it would:

- Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan.
- Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard.
- Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.
- Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people.

The NSAQMD established significance thresholds, shown in Table 4-3, to determine if a project would have air quality impacts under CEQA. The significance thresholds are tiered so that levels with higher allowable amounts of pollutants require more extensive mitigation. Projects that exceed the Level B Threshold have significant air quality impacts (NSAQMD 2024). The NSAQMD has also confirmed that projects which generate emissions above the thresholds presented in Table 4-3would have a cumulatively considerable impact.

Table 4-3: NSAQMD Thresholds of Significance

Threshold Level	ROG (lbs/day)	NO_X (lbs/day)	PM_{10} (lbs/day)
Level A Threshold	<24	<24	<79
Level B Threshold	24–136	24–136	79-136
Level C Threshold	>136	>136	>136
Source: NSAQMD 2024			

Additionally, NSAQMD implementing rules and regulations presented in Table 4-2 above apply to the Project's impact analysis.

4.2.3.3 Conflict with or Obstruct Implementation of the Applicable Air Quality Plan

The Project site is located in the town of Quincy, within Plumas County, which is regulated by the NSAQMD. There are no applicable air quality plans with which to evaluate consistency. Although the non-Portola area of Plumas County is designated Unclassified for the $PM_{2.5}$ NAAQS and CAAQS, the Portola area is designated Nonattainment for the $PM_{2.5}$ CAAQS, as shown in Table 4-1, and accordingly a State Implementation Plan (SIP) was approved by CARB

on February 16, 2017 to address PM emissions. The NSAQMD land use guidance states that if an area (or downwind area) is non-attainment for one or more NAAQS and is subject to attainment or maintenance demonstration requirements as part of an SIP, the SIP takes precedence and therefore a project may not interfere with the demonstrated attainment/maintenance plan. However, Quincy is not considered downwind of the nonattainment (Portola) area and the SIP has no requirements for the Quincy area as they relate to $PM_{2.5}$ emissions. No other area in Plumas County has an air quality plan. As a result, the Project would not conflict or obstruct implementation of air quality plans. Therefore, ***no impact*** would occur.

The NSAQMD land use guidance states that the lead agency should provide a listing of the emission increases anticipated from each project for various categories of emissions sources, and that daily maximum emissions of PM_{10}, reactive organic gases and nitrogen oxides should be compared to the thresholds of significance described in Step Three: Emission Threshold of Significance (NSAQMD 2024). As described in more detail below, the Project would not generate short-term or long-term emissions that exceed NSAQMD recommended criteria air pollutant thresholds.

Construction Emissions

The Project involves the demolition of existing commercial structures and the construction of a new, approximately 23,100-square-foot courthouse on approximately 2.86 acres of land. The Project's potential construction emissions were estimated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod), Version 2022.1. The modeling is based on default CalEEMod assumptions, with the following project-specific modifications:

- **Construction Architectural Coatings:** CalEEMod default assumptions for construction architectural coatings VOC content were updated to reflect the requirements of NSAQMD Rule 230.

The Project's estimated construction criteria air pollutant emissions are presented in Table 4-4.

Table 4-4. Estimated Project Construction Emissions (Unmitigated)

Construction Year	Pollutant Emissions (Maximum Daily Pounds) (A)				
	ROG	NO_X	CO	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
2028	1.4	14.5	15.5	3.4	1.8
2029	12.1	9.1	12.1	0.4	0.3
NSAQMD CEQA Level A Threshold	***24***	***24***	***--***	***79***	***--***
Potential Significant Impact?	No	No	No	No	No

Sources: NSAQMD 2024

(A) Maximum daily ROG, CO, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ emissions occur during the summer. Maximum daily NO_X emissions occur during the winter.

As shown in Table 4-4, potential construction emissions would be below all NSAQMD Level A significance thresholds. Section 2.3.5 provides an updated construction schedule between February 2030 and April 2032, which was determined after the modeling in Table 4-4 and the

technical appendix. The two-year emissions modeling results would not change, except to the extent that additional regulatory requirements over time could decrease the modeled emissions.

Operational Emissions

Upon completion of construction activities, the Project would generate emissions of regulated air pollutants from:

- **Small "area" sources.** The proposed land use would generate emissions from small area sources including landscaping equipment and the use of consumer products such as paints, cleaners, and fertilizers that result in the evaporation of chemicals to the atmosphere during product use.
- **Energy use and consumption**. The proposed land use would generate emissions from electricity use in the facility's water and space heating equipment. The Project site is not served by natural gas utilities and gas service is currently not available. This analysis assumes that the Project will not include combustion of natural gas in water and space heating equipment.
- **Mobile sources.** The proposed land use would generate emissions from vehicles travelling to and from the proposed courthouse building.

The Project would include an emergency backup generator, however the placement within the Project site, technical specifications, hours of operation per day, and annual runtime details are currently unknown. Conservatively, this analysis assumes the Project would include an approximately 744 horsepower emergency backup generator that would operate for reliability-related operations, such as testing and/or maintenance, over an annual average 8-hour annual runtime. The emissions factors used in this analysis for calculating emissions of the emergency backup generator are based on CalEEMod default emergency generator and fire pump emission factors in Appendix G, Table G-40 of the CalEEMod User Guide (CAPCOA 2022).

The Project's operational emissions were estimated using CalEEMod version 2022.1 using default data assumptions, with the following project-specific modifications:

- **Vehicle Trips:** CalEEMod default assumptions for vehicle trip rates and trip lengths were updated based on information provided by Fehr and Peers in their Quincy Courthouse Transportation Analysis Memo (Fehr and Peers 2026).
- **Operational Architectural Coatings:** CalEEMod default assumptions for operational architectural coatings VOC content were updated to reflect the requirements of NSAQMD Rule 230.
- **Energy:** The Project would not include natural gas usage. CalEEMod's default assumption regarding the quantity of natural gas that would be consumed by the proposed courthouse was converted to electricity consumption at a rate of 3.412 kBTU per kWh (Energy Star 2015).
- **Mobile Sources:** This analysis presents emissions associated with vehicle travel to and from the Project site. It is noted that, upon completion of construction activities associated with the Project, these mobile emissions would represent a change in emissions at the Project site. However, as described in the section 4.10 Transportation, the Project would result in a net change of zero VMT compared to that of the existing courthouse. Therefore, the mobile emissions presented in this analysis are considered to be similar to those of the existing courthouse, and the Project is not expected to result in

a substantial increase in emissions in terms of mobile source emissions within the air basin.

The emissions resulting from operation of the Project are shown in Table 4-5.

Table 4-5: Estimated Project Operational Emissions

Source	Pollutant Emissions (Maximum Daily Pounds) (A)				
	ROG	NO_X	CO	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
Area	0.7	<0.1	1.0	<0.1	<0.1
Energy	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
Mobile	3.5	5.9	41.5	7.7	2.0
Backup Generator(B)	1.2	3.4	3.1	0.2	0.2
Total(C)	5.4	9.3	45.6	7.9	2.2
NSAQMD CEQA Level A Threshold	***24***	***24***	***--***	***79***	***--***
Potentially Significant Impact?	No	No	No	No	No

Sources: NSAQMD 2024

(A) Maximum daily ROG, CO, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ emissions occur during the summer. Maximum daily NO_X emissions occur during the winter.

(B) Maximum daily pollutant emissions calculated for an assumed maximum 1-hour daily operation for testing and/or maintenance.

(C) Totals may equal due to rounding.

As shown in Table 4-5, the Project's potential long-term change in criteria air pollutant emissions would be substantially below all NSAQMD significance thresholds for operation. As such, the project's operational emissions would not cause or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation. Additionally, the Project's operational emissions presented above are representative of new emissions associated with the proposed new courthouse, and do not take an emissions credit or reduction associated with the net change in emissions compared to the operation of the current courthouse. Therefore, the Project is not anticipated to significantly increase emissions compared to existing conditions and the air quality impact from project emissions would ***be less than significant***.

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

According to the NSAQMD, the MCAB is designated nonattainment for both the NAAQS and CAAQS for PM_{10}, as indicated in Table 4-1. The NSAQMD confirmed that the Quincy area is not designated nonattainment for any other criteria air pollutant. As shown in Table 4-4 and Table 4-5 in response (a) above, the Project would not generate short-term or long-term emissions that exceed NSAQMD recommended criteria air pollutant thresholds. This impact would ***be less than significant***.

4.2.3.5 Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations

Project-related construction activities would emit TACs that have the potential to disperse and result in adverse health risks at sensitive receptor locations near the project site. Construction activities associated with the Project would generate on- and off-site exhaust emissions, including DPM, in the form of $PM_{2.5}$. The specific quantity of emissions emitted at any given time would be dependent on the type and number of pieces of equipment operating, the equipment's engine classification, the equipment's horsepower, and the load the engine is under. Off-site emissions would be generated from haul trucks used to transport soil and construction debris to and from the site.

The U.S. EPA AERMOD dispersion model (version 23132) was used to predict pollutant concentrations at existing sensitive receptors near the project site. The AERMOD dispersion model is an EPA-approved model for simulating the dispersion of pollutant emissions and estimating ground level concentrations of pollutants at specified receptor locations. AERMOD requires the user to input information on the source(s) of pollutants being modeled, the receptors where pollutant concentrations are modeled, and the meteorology, terrain, and other factors that affect the potential dispersion of pollutants.

Modeled Construction Sources / Emission Rates

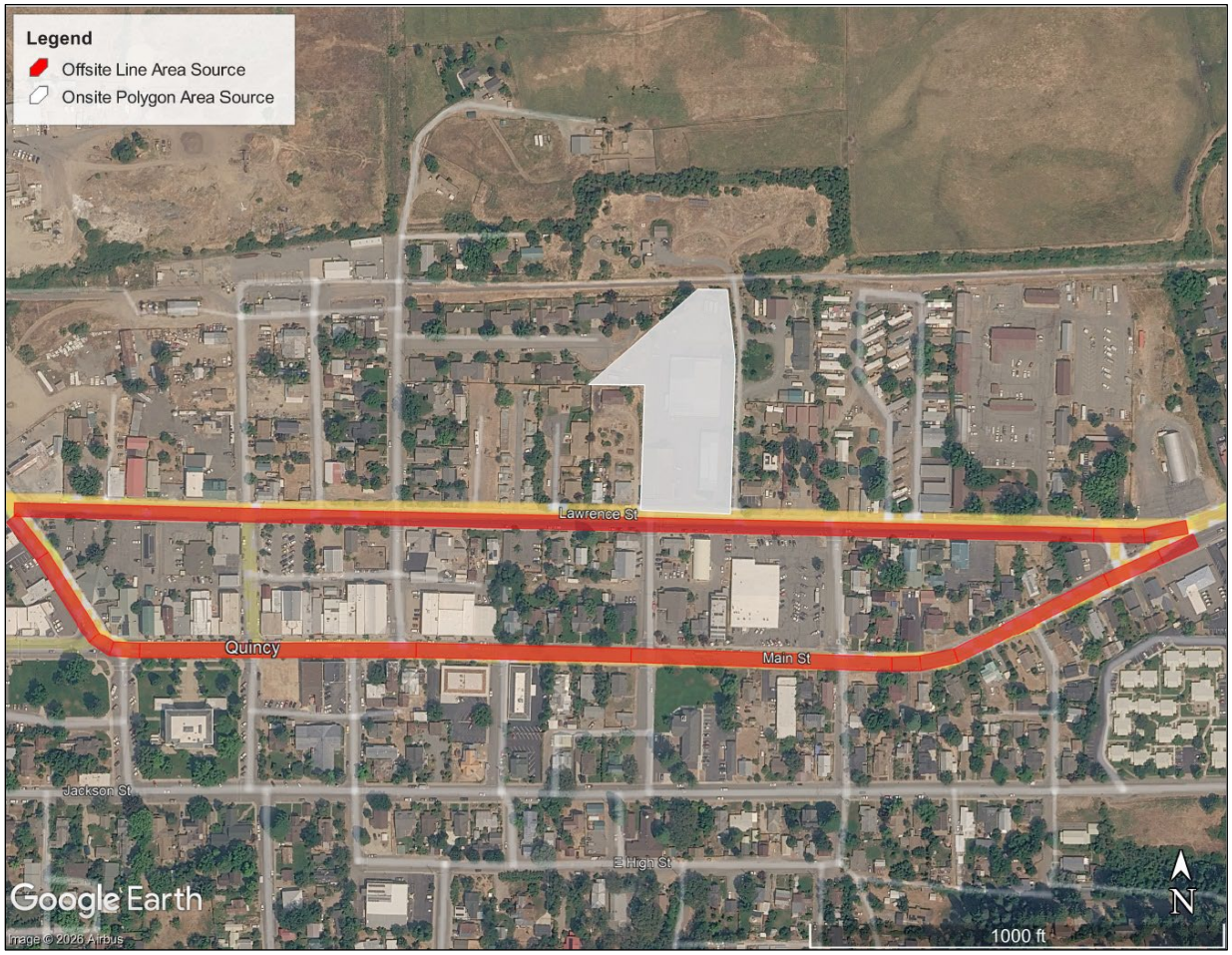
On- and off-site construction emissions were modeled as a series of area and line area sources, as shown in Table 4-6 and Figure 4-1: Modeled Construction Emissions Sources.

Table 4-6: AERMOD Source Parameters

Source ID	Source Description	UTM Coordinates(A)		Size (m^2)
		X	Y	
PAREA1	Year 1 Onsite	675711.10	4422858.74	10,882.4
PAREA2	Year 2 Onsite	675711.10	4422858.74	10,882.4
ARLN1	Year 1 Offsite via Lawrence St	676049.32	4422856.80	867.9(B)
ARLN2	Year 1 Offsite via Main St	675180.53	4422843.70	943.8(B)
ARLN3	Year 2 Offsite via Lawrence St	676049.32	4422856.80	867.9(B)
ARLN4	Year 2 Offsite via Main St	675180.53	4422843.70	943.8(B)

(A) UTM coordinates represent the southwest corner of the source.
(B) Reflects length of line area source in meters

Figure 4-1 Modeled Construction Emissions Sources



Although the NSAQMD does not have established guidelines for modeling construction DPM concentrations, the NSAQMD has noted that NAAQS and CAAQS exist for both PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$, although more emphasis has recently been placed on $PM_{2.5}$, and the Quincy area has historically monitored relatively high $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations (NSAQMD 2024). Conservatively, $PM_{2.5}$ construction exhaust emissions were presumed to be 100 percent DPM; $PM_{2.5}$ fugitive dust emissions were not modeled to determine total combined $PM_{2.5}$. An emissions rate for each source listed in Table 4-6 was derived from the CalEEMod emissions estimates shown in Appendix B. The annual emissions generated during construction of the Project were converted to an average emission rate in terms of grams / second averaged annually over the duration of construction activity.

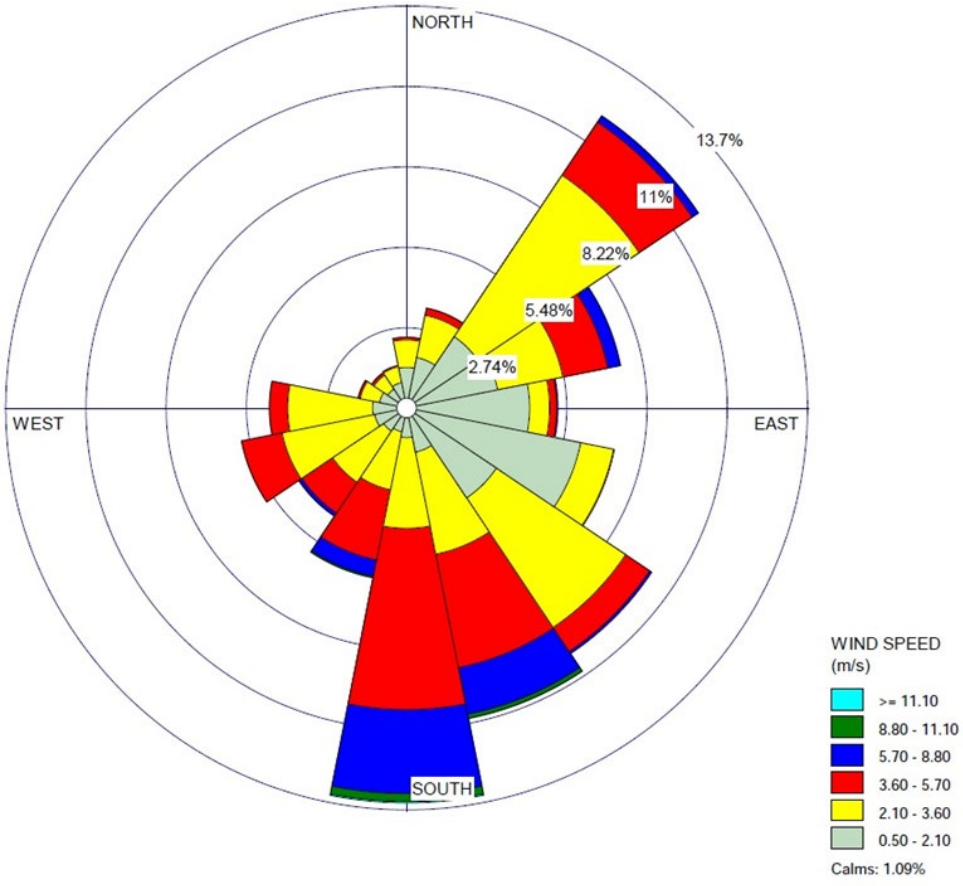
On-site DPM emissions were modeled as a series of polygon area sources. Two area sources were modeled for the construction activity area, which reflect construction activities occurring at the Project site during Year 1 and Year 2, respectively. The Sacramento Metro Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) recommends a release height of 5 meters for construction equipment. Since the NSAQMD does not have a recommended release height for $PM_{2.5}$ exhaust emissions generated by construction equipment, the SMAQMD's release heights have been used (SMAQMD 2013). Two percent of the CalEEMod estimated off-site emissions were added to each polygon area source to account for any on-site truck idling during construction activity.

Off-site DPM emissions from vehicles were modeled as four line area sources. All haul trips entering and exiting the project site were assumed to travel on Lawrence Street and Main Street. Hauling and vendor trips were modeled as area line sources, with a release height of 4.15 meters, the approximate height of a truck exhaust.

4.2.3.5.2 Meteorological Data Inputs

AERMOD requires meteorological data as an input into the model. The meteorological data is processed using AERMET, a pre-processor to AERMOD. AERMET requires surface meteorological data, upper air meteorological data, and surface parameter data such as albedo (reflectivity) and surface roughness. For the Project, pre-processed surface data was obtained from CARB for Blue Canyon Nyack Airport, the closest meteorological station to the project site (see Figure 4-2 Wind Rose for Blue Canyon Nyack Airport). Five complete years of meteorological data from January 2014 to December 2019 were utilized. The meteorological data was processed using AERMET version 19191.

Figure 4-2 Wind Rose for Blue Canyon Nyack Airport



Source: CARB 2026b

4.2.3.5.3 Terrain Inputs

Terrain was incorporated by using AERMAP (an AERMOD pre-processor) to import the elevation of the project site using data from the National Elevation Dataset (NED) with a resolution of 1/3 arcsecond.

4.2.3.5.4 Modeled Receptors

A receptor grid, with a grid spacing of 975-meter by 500-meter grid with a receptor spacing of 75 meters along the x-axis and 50 meters along the y-axis was generated over the residential / school land uses surrounding the project site. The grid's center coordinates were 675620.57 meters Easting and 4422860.07 meters Northing. The grid was converted to 154 discrete Cartesian receptors. An additional receptor grid, with a grid spacing of 250-meter by 250-meter grid with a receptor spacing of 25 meters along the x-axis and 25 meters along the y-axis was generated over the residential land uses west of the project site. The grid's center coordinates were 675669.56 meters Easting and 4422941.83 meters Northing. The grid was converted to 121 discrete Cartesian receptors. A total of 17 discrete Cartesian receptors were removed because they were located within the plant boundary, and then 7 additional receptors were added along the plant boundary area.[1] Based on the above, a total of 265 receptors were modeled for the Project.

4.2.3.5.5 Health Risk Methodology

Cancer risk and non-cancer health risks to sensitive receptors within one-half mile of on-site sources were estimated using the U.S. EPA's AERMOD dispersion model and recommendations contained in the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) Air Toxics Hot Spots Program Guidance Manual. Cancer risk is the calculated, pollutant-specific estimated probability of developing cancer based upon the dose and exposure to the TACs. Cancer risk is determined by calculating the combinatory effects of the cancer potency factor (CPF) when inhaling the toxic, the daily inhalation dose, the age group the receptor is cohort to, the duration of exposure over a lifetime (70 years), and other factors such as age sensitivity and the amount of time spent at the location of exposure. Risks were assessed for the inhalation pathway (i.e., breathing) for residential receptors. Cancer risk equations for residential receptors are summarized in Table 4-7 and Table 4-8. Receptor exposure to potential construction emissions was assessed for the two years in which construction activities were modeled to take place and the receptors would be exposed to construction $PM_{2.5}$ emissions.

[1] The plant boundary was modeled around the boundary of the Project site to remove discrete receptors generated within the Project site boundary. The modeled plant boundary adds discrete receptors at the vertices along the plant boundary perimeter.

Table 4-7: Cancer Risk Equation

Residential/ Student Risk:	$RISK_{INH.RES} = DOSE_{AIR.RES} \times CPF \times ASF \times ED/AT \times FAH$
Where:	
$DOSE_{AIR}$ =	Daily Inhalation Dose (milligrams/kilograms [mg/kg]-day). See Table 5-8.
CPF =	Cancer Potency Factor for Inhalants (mg/kg-day). CPF is expressed as the 95th percent upper confidence limit of the slope of the dose response curve under continuous lifetime exposure conditions. The CPF for diesel exhaust is 1.1 mg/kg-day.
ASF =	Age Sensitivity Factor (ASF). ASF is a protective coefficient intended to take into account increased susceptibility to long-term health effects from early-life exposure to TACs. The recommended ASFs are 10 for the third trimester to birth and two-year age bins, three for the two-year to nine-year and 16-year age bins, and one for receptors over 16 years of age.
ED =	Exposure Duration (years). Exposure duration characterizes the length of residency (30 Years) or employment (25 Years) of the receptor.
AT =	Averaging Time (years). A 70-year (lifetime) averaging time is used to characterize to total risk as a factor of average risk over a typical lifespan.
FAH =	Fraction at Home. FAH is the percentage of time the receptor is physically at the receptor location. Consistent with OEHHA recommendations, the FAH was set to 85 percent for the third trimester to birth and two-year age bins, 72 percent for the two-year to 16-year age bins, and 73 percent for receptors over 16 years of age.
Source: OEHHA 2015, Appendix I	

Table 4-8: Inhalation Dose Equation

Residential Dose	$DOSE_{AIR.RES} = C_{Air} \times BR/BW \times A \times EF \times 10^{-6}$
Where:	
C_{AIR} =	Concentration of TAC in air (micrograms/cubic meter [µg/ m^3]). Concentration of toxic in micrograms per one cubic meter of air. The AERMOD program is used in the study to determine concentrations of diesel particulate matter at surrounding discrete and grid receptor points.
BR/BW =	Breathing Rate ÷ Body Weight (Liters [L]/kg/day). Daily breathing rate normalized to body weight. The 95th percentile breathing rate to body weight ratios are used in this study with a recommended 361 L/kg/day for the third trimester to birth age bin and 1,090 L/kg/day for the birth to two-years age bin.

Residential Dose	$DOSE_{AIR.RES} = C_{Air} \times BR/BW \times A \times EF \times 10^{-6}$
	The 80th percentile breathing rate to body weight ratios are used in this study with a recommended 572 for the two-years to 16-years age bin, 261 L/kg/day for the 16-years to 30-years age bin, and 233 L/kg/day for the 16-years to 70-years age bin.
A =	Inhalation Absorption Factor. Is a coefficient that reflects the fraction of chemical absorbed in studies used in the development of CPF and Reference Exposure Levels (RELs). An absorption factor of one is recommended for all chemicals.
EF =	Exposure Frequency. EF is the ratio of days in a year that a receptor is receiving the dose. The recommended EF is 0.96 characterizing an assumed 350 days a year that a residential receptor is home for some portion of the day.
Source: OEHHA 2015	

Non-Cancer Risk

The chronic non-cancer hazard quotient is the calculated pollutant-specific indicator for risk of developing an adverse health effect on specific organ system(s) targeted by the identified TAC, in this case DPM. The potential for exposure to result in chronic non-cancer effects is evaluated by comparing the estimated annual average air concentration to the chemical-specific, non-cancer chronic reference exposure levels (RELs). The REL is a concentration below which there is assumed to be no observable adverse health impact to a target organ system. When calculated for a single chemical, the comparison yields a ratio termed a hazard quotient. To evaluate the potential for adverse chronic non-cancer health effects from simultaneous exposure to multiple chemicals, the hazard quotients for all chemicals are summed, yielding a hazard index. The chronic REL for DPM was established by OEHHA as 5 µg/m^3. For an acute hazard quotient, the one-hour maximum concentration is divided by the acute REL for the substance; however, there is no acute REL for DPM.

Chronic non-cancer risks are considered significant if a project's TAC emissions result in a hazard index greater than or equal to one. Non-cancer risk equations are summarized in Table 4-9.

Table 4-9: Non-Cancer Risk Equation

Chronic Hazard Quotient:	$HI_{DPM} = C_{DPM}/REL_{AAC}$
Where:	
HI_{DPM} =	Hazard Index; an expression of the potential for non-cancer health effects.
C_{DPM} =	Annual average DPM concentration (µg/m^3).
REL_{DPM} =	Reference exposure level (REL) for DPM; the DPM concentration at which no adverse health effects are anticipated.
Source: OEHHA 2015	

Cancer and Non-Cancer Risk Significance Thresholds

The NSAQMD does not establish a significance threshold for excess cancers to determine significant impacts to sensitive receptors. Other air districts, such as the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), and Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD), have determined significance thresholds for excess cancer risks for individual projects under their jurisdictions, respectively. Table 4-10 shows the respective significance thresholds for excess cancer risks under the BAAQMD, SCAQMD, and SMAQMD jurisdictions.

Table 4-10: Excess Cancer Risk Significance Thresholds by Jurisdiction

Air District	Significance Threshold (in excess cancer risks per million population)
BAAQMD	Individual project increased cancer risk: 10 in one million
SCAQMD	Maximum Incremental Cancer Risk: 10 in one million
SMAQMD	Incremental increase in cancer risk at any off-site receptor: 10 in one million
Source: BAAQMD 2025, SCAQMD 2023, SMAQMD 2020	

As shown in Table 4-10, the BAAQMD, SCAQMD, and SMAQMD jurisdictions have established 10 excess cancer risks per million population as a significance threshold for determining impacts on sensitive receptor exposure to substantial pollutant concentrations. To determine the impacts of the Project on sensitive receptor exposure to construction activity related substantial pollutant concentrations, for the purposes of this analysis the Judicial Council conservatively assumes a significance threshold of 10 excess cancer risks per one million population.

Additionally, the NSAQMD does not establish a significance threshold for non-cancer risks. Other air districts, such as the BAAQMD, SCAQMD, and Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD), have determined significance thresholds for non-cancer risks. Table 4-11 shows the respective significance thresholds for chronic and acute hazard index non-cancer risks under the BAAQMD, SCAQMD, and MBARD jurisdictions.

Table 4-11: Non-Cancer Risk Significance Thresholds by Jurisdiction

Air District	Significance Threshold (chronic and acute hazard index)
BAAQMD	Individual project increased non-cancer hazard index (chronic or acute): 1.0
SCAQMD	Chronic & Acute Hazard Index: 1.0
MBARD	The hazard index for acute or chronic impacts: 1
Source: BAAQMD 2025, SCAQMD 2023, MBARD 2016	

As shown in Table 4-11, the BAAQMD, SCAQMD, and MBARD jurisdictions have established a chronic and acute hazard index of 1 as a significance threshold for determining impacts on sensitive receptors regarding non-cancer risks. To determine the impacts of the Project on sensitive receptors regarding non-cancer risks, for the purposes of this analysis the Judicial Council conservatively assumes a significance threshold of a chronic and acute hazard index of 1.

4.2.3.5.8 Health Risk Assessment Results

The predicted locations of the annual point of maximum impact (PMI) and the maximally exposed individual resident (MEIR) for DPM exposure during construction, along with contours of pollutant concentrations in proximity of the project site, are shown in Figure 4-3 Construction Health Risk Assessment - Year 2 Unmitigated DPM Concentrations (ug/m^3) for unmitigated construction emissions. The predicted unmitigated PMI is located along the eastern boundary of the project site. Since the PMI for DPM exposure is located on land that is not occupied by a receptor on a permanent basis, lifetime excess cancer risks and chronic non-cancer health hazards, which are based on exposure to annual average pollutant concentrations, were not estimated for the modeled PMI. Accordingly, health risks were assessed at the modeled MEIR location. For both years, the MEIR for DPM exposure is located at the single-family residence at 341 Summerfield Lane. The predicted unmitigated, annual average $PM_{2.5}$ concentration at the unmitigated MEIR is 0.03885 µg/m^3. The HRA for residential receptors evaluated worst-case carcinogenic and non-carcinogenic risks to child (3rd trimester, 0-2 years, and 2-16 years) and adult (16-30 years and 30-70 years) receptors. As shown in Table 4-12, unmitigated construction exhaust emissions would have the potential to result in incremental cancerogenic health risk increases of, at most, approximately 17.2 excess cancers per million population (for the child 0-2 years age bin). This amount exceeds the assumed significance threshold of 10 excess cancer risks per million population (see above discussion in Cancer and Non-Cancer Risk Significance Thresholds).

To reduce potential $PM_{2.5}$ (and DPM) emissions generated by Project construction activities to below the significance threshold, Mitigation Measure AIR-1 would be incorporated into all appropriate engineering and site plan (e.g., building, grading etc.) documents (see Mitigation Measures). Mitigation Measure AIR-1 requires all mobile diesel construction equipment greater than 50 horsepower meet U.S. EPA and CARB Tier IV final emission standards. This measure is estimated to reduce construction related $PM_{2.5}$ emissions by approximately 59 percent, thus reducing the Project's potential adverse health risks from construction activities to less-than-significant levels. Table 4-12 summarizes the Project's mitigated construction health risk estimates. The predicted locations of the PMI and the MEIR for total DPM exposure during construction, along with contours of pollutant concentrations in proximity of the Project site, are shown in Figure 4-4 Construction Health Risk Assessment -- Year 2 Mitigated DPM Concentrations (ug/m^3).

Table 4-12: Maximum Increased Cancer Risk from Project Construction DPM Emissions

Receptor Age Range[(A)]	Health Risk Increase at MEIR (Excess Cancer Risk per Million Population) 341 Summerfield Lane	
	Unmitigated	**Mitigated**
Child Receptor (3rd Trimester)	16.3	6.7
Child Receptor (0-2 Years of Age)	17.2	7.0
Child Receptor (2 -16 Years of Age)	2.3	0.9
Adult Receptor (16 to 30 Years of Age)	0.4	0.1
Adult Receptor (30 to 70 Years of Age)	0.3	0.1
Significance Threshold	10	10
Threshold Exceeded?	**Yes**	**No**

Source: See Appendix B

(A) Excess cancer risk estimate assumes the receptor is in the infant stage at the beginning of exposure and proceeds to child and adult stages over time.

As shown in Table 4-12, the maximum mitigated health risk for the mitigated MEIR location would be approximately 7.0 excess cancers per million population, which does not exceed the Judicial Council's assumed cancer risk threshold of 10 per million population. The impact would be l***ess than significant with mitigation incorporated***.

Mitigation Measures

Impact AIR-1: Project construction could generate emissions of diesel particulate matter (DPM) that could pose an adverse health risk to residential receptors adjacent to the project site.

Mitigation Measure AIR-1: Construction Equipment Restrictions. To reduce potential, short-term adverse health risks associated with $PM_{2.5}$ exhaust emissions, including emissions of DPM generated during Project construction activities, the Judicial Council shall require its designated contractors, contractor's representatives, and/or other appropriate personnel to comply with the following construction equipment restrictions:

- All mobile construction equipment greater than 50 horsepower in size shall meet U.S. EPA and CARB Tier IV final exhaust emission standards. This may be achieved via the use of equipment with engines that have been certified to meet U.S. EPA and CARB Tier IV final emissions standards, or through the use of equipment that has been retrofitted with a CARB-verified diesel emission control strategy (e.g., particulate filter) capable of reducing exhaust $PM_{2.5}$ emissions to levels that meet U.S. EPA and CARB Tier IV final emissions standards.

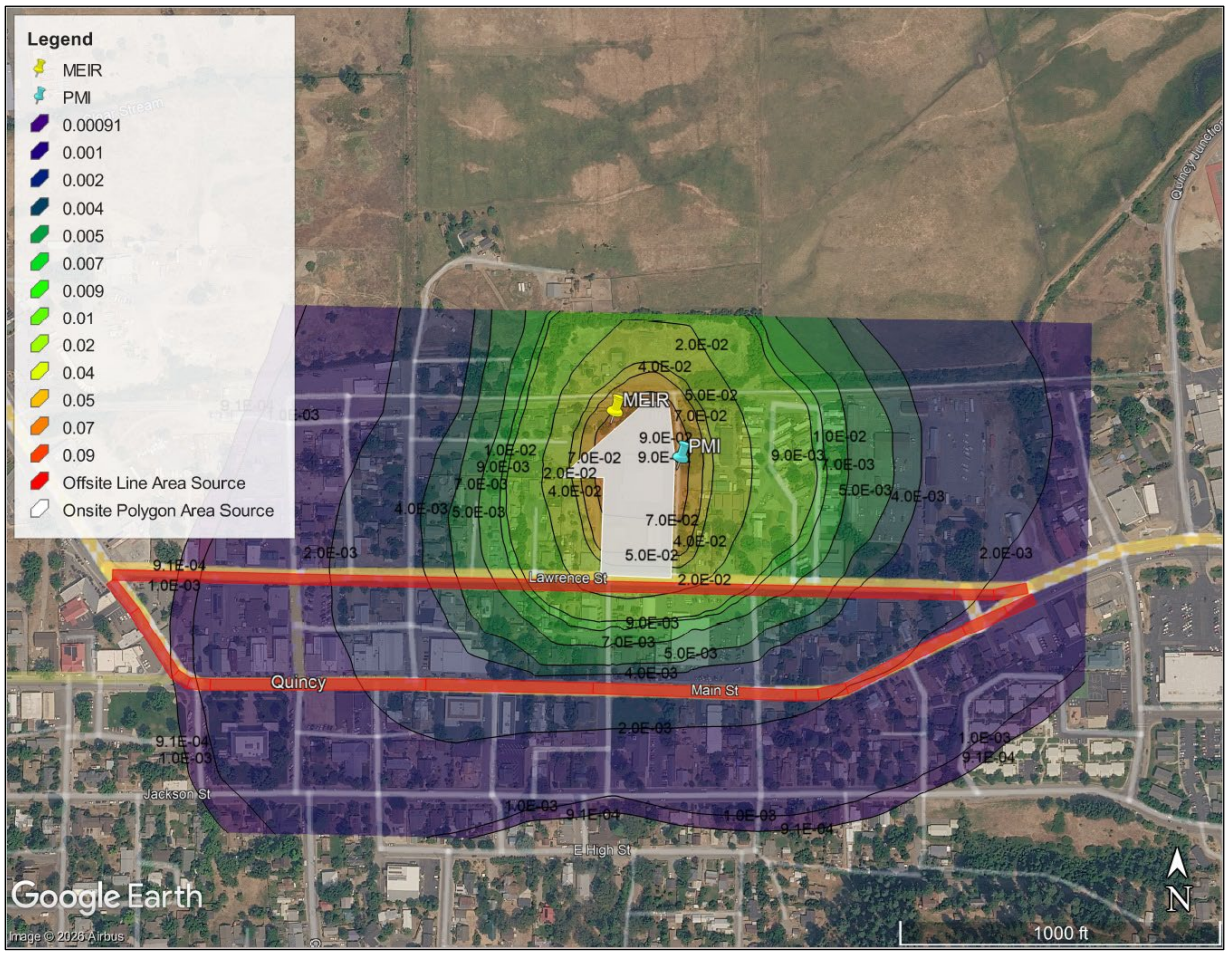
  As an alternative to having all mobile construction equipment greater than 50 horsepower meet U.S. EPA and CARB Tier IV final exhaust emission standards, the DBE may prepare and submit a refined construction health risk assessment to the Judicial Council once additional project-specific construction information is known (e.g.,

specific construction equipment type, quantity, engine tier, and runtime by phase). The refined health risk assessment shall demonstrate and identify any measures necessary such that the Project's incremental carcinogenic health risk at nearby sensitive receptor locations is below the applicable significance threshold of 10 cancers per million population.

4.2.3.5.9 Non-Cancer Risk

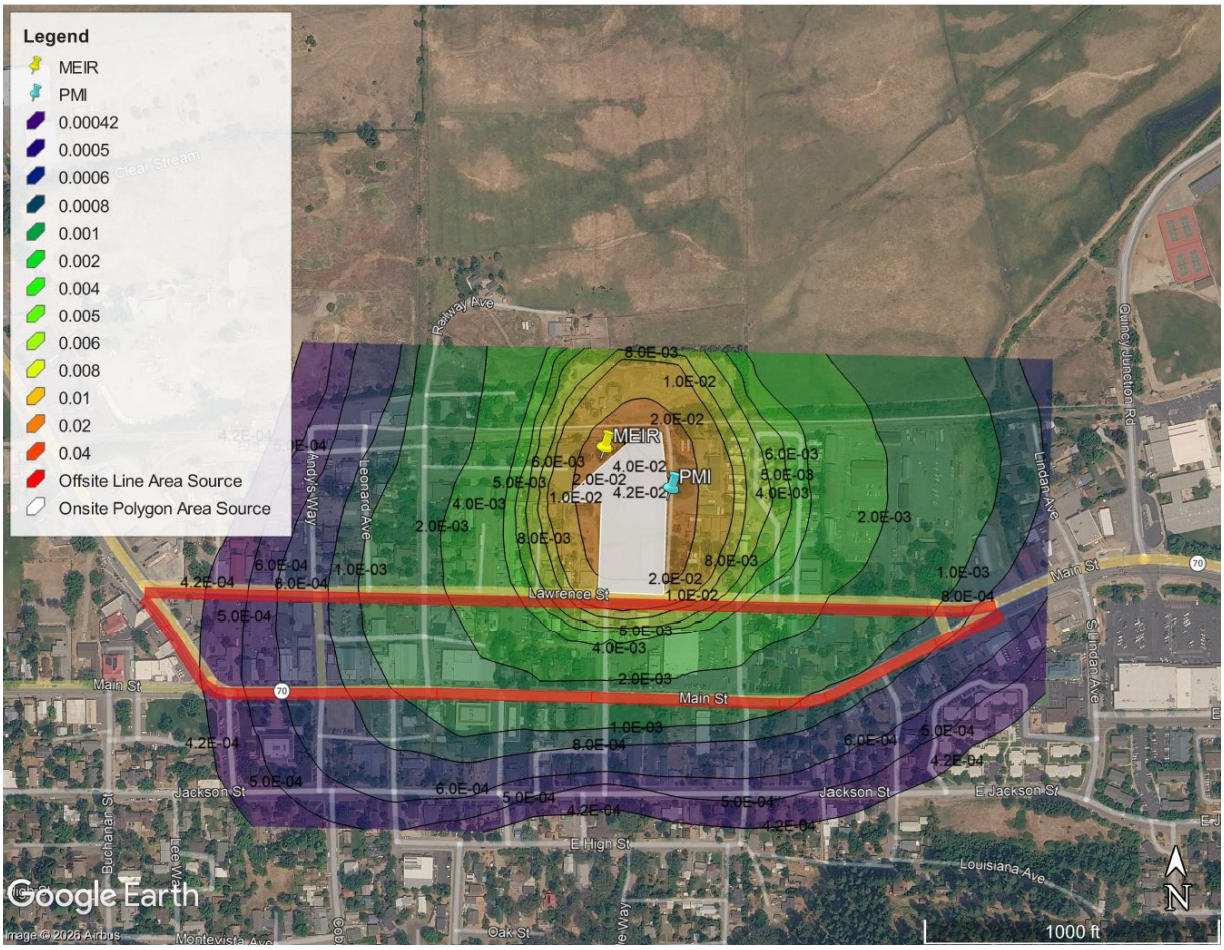
The maximum annual average DPM concentration at the MEIR location under unmitigated and mitigated conditions would be approximately 0.0841 µg/m^3 and 0.0391 µg/m^3, respectively. All other receptors would be exposed to annual average concentrations below these values. Based on the chronic inhalation REL for DPM (5 µg/m^3), the calculated chronic hazard quotient during the maximum exposure to DPM concentration would be 0.01682 (unmitigated) and 0.00782 (mitigated), which is below the Judicial Council's assumed non-cancer hazard index threshold value of 1. This impact would be ***less than significant***.

Figure 4-3 Construction Health Risk Assessment - Year 2 Unmitigated DPM Concentrations (ug/m^3)



Note: Concentrations for Year 2 of construction are presented as Year 2 has the highest emissions during the construction period

Figure 4-4 Construction Health Risk Assessment -- Year 2 Mitigated DPM Concentrations (ug/m^3)



Note: Concentrations for Year 2 of construction are presented as Year 2 has the highest emissions during the construction period.

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

The Project could generate odors from the following sources and activities:

- Evaporation of gasoline, oil, and other fluids that can escape from construction equipment and motor vehicles (e.g., haul trucks, tow trucks, and other vehicles).
- Off-gassing of volatile compounds from asphalt surfaces (e.g., paving) and architectural coating activities.
- Emissions from heavy-duty construction equipment (e.g., a loader, backhoe, grader, etc.) and passenger vehicle and truck exhaust pipes.

Potential odors may or may not be perceived as objectionable, offensive, a nuisance, etc., depending on the individual's olfactory sensitivity. Odors are generally regarded as an annoyance rather than a health hazard. An odor that is offensive to one person may not be offensive to a different person, and unfamiliar odors are more easily detected and are more likely to cause complaints than familiar odors, as a person can become desensitized to almost any odor over time (known as odor fatigue). In general, the quality and intensity of an odor

influence a person's reaction. The quality of an odor indicates the nature of the smell experience (e.g., flowery, putrid). The intensity of an odor depends on its concentration in the air. When an odor sample is progressively diluted, the odor concentration decreases. As this occurs, the odor intensity weakens and eventually becomes low enough where the odor is no longer detectable.

Although the Project could generate potential odors that could be detectable at adjacent residential receptor locations, this impact would not be significant for several reasons. First, the potential odors associated with the Project are common in the vicinity of the project area due to existing roads and vehicle trips. The Project, therefore, would not result in the release of atypical or unfamiliar odors near sensitive receptors (e.g., fuel evaporation and exhaust odors associated with general vehicle operations, and asphalt odors from paving and repaving activities on local roads). Second, construction activities would not result in the continuous generation of odors. Rather, odors would be intermittent and only generated during certain activities (e.g., equipment operations, vehicle trips) and times of day (e.g., during and immediately after equipment operations). Construction activities would also be temporary in duration. Finally, potential odors from construction and operational activities would disperse due to wind flow across the Project site and surrounding lands. For these reasons, the construction and operation of the Project would not generate unusual, atypical, or excessive odors that could affect a substantial number of people. Therefore, this impact would be ***less than significant***.

4.3 Biological Resources

This section addresses impacts on biological resources known to occur, or with potential to occur, in the Project area. The analysis includes a description of the existing environmental conditions, the methods used for site and impact assessment, the impacts associated with implementing the Project, and mitigation measures proposed to reduce potentially significant impacts, where necessary. This section also includes a brief overview of the protection of biological resources in the Project area. The "Project area," as used in this section, refers to the general, broader vicinity of the Project site that shares characteristics with the Project site that are relevant to biological resources. A Biological Resources Report (MIG 2026) prepared for the Project is presented in Appendix C.

4.3.1 Environmental Setting

4.3.1.1 Existing Vegetation Communities, Habitats, and Land Cover Types

The Project site is located within the Northern Sierra Nevada Foothills District of the Sierra Nevada Region, both of which are contained within the larger California Floristic Province (Baldwin et al. 2012). Where applicable, vegetation communities were mapped using CDFW's Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program's (VegCAMP) currently accepted list of vegetation alliances and associations (CDFW 2025a). The field survey on September 25 and 26, 2025, identified three vegetation communities/land cover types on the Project site, which are summarized in Table 4-13, and their distribution is depicted in Figure 4-5 Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types.

Table 4-13. Summary of Vegetation Communities, Land Cover Types, and Habitats in the Project Site

Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types	Area (acres)
Wild Oats and Annual Brome Grassland Alliance	0.81
Developed	1.76
Lemmon's Willow Thickets Alliance (includes freshwater aquatic habitat)	0.30
Project Site Total	**2.87**

Wild Oats and Annual Brome Grasslands. This vegetation community is dominated by non-native annual grasses and forbs that are characteristic of disturbed areas. In the Project site, *Wild Oats and Annual Brome Grasslands* are the dominant vegetation community (Appendix C, Photo 1). Non-native grasses observed included wild oats (*Avena barbata*) and velvet grass (*Holcus lanatus)*. Native grasses observed included blue wildrye (*Elymus glaucus*). Non-native herbaceous species observed included curlycup gumweed (*Grindelia squarrosa*), tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*), chicory (*Cichorium intybus*), field mustard (*Brassica rapa*), black medick (*Medicago lupulina*), prickly wild lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*), sweet pea (*Lathyrus latifolius*), English plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), and woolly mullein (*Verbascum thapsus).* Native herbs observed included Canada horseweed (*Erigeron canadensis*) and California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*).



Source: ESRI 2025, MIG 2025

Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types

- Wild Oats and Annual Brome Grassland Alliance
- Lemmon's Willow Thickets Alliance
- Developed

Base Map Features

- Unnamed Drainage
- Project Site

0 62.5 125 250 US Feet

Figure 4-5 Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types

New Quincy Courthouse Project

MIG

Lemmon's Willow Thickets. This native riparian vegetation community is growing along the drainage channel, and the shrub layer is dominated by Lemmon's willow (*Salix lemmonii*) (Appendix C, Photo 2). At the time of the field visit, water was flowing in the channel. The depth of the water was shallow (less than 12 inches) and the width of the channel was approximately 5 feet to 8 feet. *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* occur along stream banks, lake shores, seeps, and mesic meadows in the middle to high Sierra Nevada and Cascades. *Carex* species (sedges) are regularly associated with *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* and represent the highest cover of the herbaceous layer. Other native trees, shrubs, and vines observed included black cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*), Oregon oak (*Quercus garryana*), chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), blueberry (*Vaccinium uliginosum*), bitter cherry (*Prunus emarginata*), and California wild grape (*Vitis californica*). Non-native trees and shrubs observed included Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*), paradise apple (*Malus pumila*), and catalpa (*Catalpa* sp.). Understory vegetation observed included non-native spearmint (*Mentha spicata*), teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*), sweet pea, woolly mullein, velvet grass, and tansy. Native understory species observed included blue wild rye, sedge (*Carex* sp.), and willowherb (*Epilobium* sp.).

Developed. Developed land cover includes the buildings, paved areas, and ornamental plantings adjacent to buildings. Ornamental vegetation observed included Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) and common lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*) (Appendix C, Photo 3).

Non-native Invasive Plant Species. Invasive plants degrade habitat quality for native plants and animals by altering vegetative structure and often reducing specific food and structural resources required by native animals. As a result, invasion of native habitats by non-natives results in adverse effects on both the native plants being displaced and native animals that would otherwise use those habitats. Because many invasive plants can easily colonize recently disturbed areas and/or tolerate repeated disturbance better than many natives, Project construction activities, such as clearing and grading, could create conditions suitable for spreading of invasive plant species. In addition, bare upland soils left after construction of temporary staging areas could encourage growth of weedy species; and mulching or erosion control mixes could include and thus introduce invasive, non-native plant species.

Five invasive species classified as highly or moderately invasive by the California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) were identified in the Project site within the *Wild Oats and Annual Brome Grasslands* and *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* vegetation communities (Table 4-14).

Table 4-14. Summary of Invasive Plants Identified in the Project Site

Species	Cal-IPC Rating
Common Velvetgrass (*Holcus lanatus*)	Moderate
Himalayan Blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*)	High
Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*)	Moderate
Teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*)	Moderate
Wild oats (*Avena barbata*)	Moderate

4.3.1.2 Special-Status Species and Sensitive Habitats

For this analysis, special-status species are defined below. Impacts on these species are regulated by federal and state laws described under the Regulatory Setting in section 4.3.2.

- Listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) as threatened, endangered, proposed threatened, proposed endangered, or a candidate species.
- Listed under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) as threatened, endangered, rare, or a candidate species.
- Listed by the CNPS as California Rare Plant Ranking (CRPR) 1A, 1B, 2, 3, or 4.
- Designated by CDFW as a California species of special concern.
- Listed in the California Fish and Game Code as fully protected species (fully protected birds are provided in § 3511, mammals in § 4700, reptiles and amphibians in § 5050, and fish in § 5515).

4.3.1.3 Special-Status Plants

Calflora (2025), CNPS (2025), and the CNDDB (2025) identify 64 special-status plant species as occurring within the vicinity of the Project site. Of the 64 special-status species, 60 species are not expected to occur in the Project site because (1) a lack of specific habitat (e.g., coniferous woodland, chaparral, meadows, seeps, bogs or fens) and/or edaphic requirements (e.g., serpentine, alkaline, volcanic) for the species in question, (2) the geographic range of the species does not overlap the Project site, (3) the species is known to be extirpated from the Project region, (4) the habitats within the Project site are too degraded to reasonably expect any special-status species to occur there and/or (5) is isolated from the nearest known extant populations by development and therefore were excluded from the analysis. However, suitable habitat for four species is present on the Project site and are described in more detail below in Table 4-15. Expanded discussions of special-status species that may be present on the Project site are included after Table 4-15.

Table 4-15. Special-Status Plant Species with Potential to Occur in the Project Site

Common Name (*Scientific Name*)	Listing Status[1]	Habitat	Occurrence in the Project Site
Alder Buckthorn (*Rhamnus alnifolia*)	CRPR 2B.2	Wet meadow edges, seeps, and stream sides (riparian). Blooms May to July.	**May be present.** There is suitable habitat in the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets*. The closest documented occurrence of this species is from Brady's Campground in the Plumas National Forest in 2024, approximately 20 miles northeast of the Project site. There are five other documented observations of this species from Plumas County since 2000 (Calflora 2025, CNPS 2025).

Common Name (*Scientific Name*)	Listing Status[1]	Habitat	Occurrence in the Project Site
Castlegar Hawthorne (*Crataegus castlegarensis*)	CRPR 3	Stream sides in meadows, scrub, and forest (riparian). Blooms May to August.	**May be present.** There is suitable habitat in the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets.* The closest documented occurrence of this species is from Indian Creek near Crescent Falls from 2017, approximately 20 miles north of the Project site. There are three other documented observations of this species from Plumas County since 2000 (Calflora 2025, CNPS 2025).
Obtuse Starwort (*Engellaria obtusa*)	CRPR 4.3	Moist areas in woodland, shaded edges of creeks (riparian). Blooms May to August.	**May be present**. There is suitable habitat in the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets.* The closest documented occurrence of this species is from the South Fork of the Feather River in 2012, approximately 22 miles south of the Project site. There are five other documented observations of this species from Plumas County since 2000 (Calflora 2025, CNPS 2025).
Sheldon's Sedge (*Carex sheldonii*)	CRPR 2B.2	Mesic areas in lower montane coniferous forest, freshwater marshes, swamps, and riparian scrub. Blooms May to August.	**May be Present**. There is suitable habitat in the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets.* The closest documented occurrence of this species is from Poplar Creek near Sloat from 2023, approximately 25 miles southeast of the Project site. There are over 10 other documented observations of this species from Plumas County since 2000 (Calflora 2025, CNPS 2025).

[1]Key to Status Abbreviations: Federally Endangered (FE); Federally Threatened (FT); State Endangered (SE); State Threatened (ST); California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR). CRPR 1A = Plants presumed extinct in California; CRPR 1B = Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere; CRPR 2B = Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere; CRPR 3 = Plants about which information is needed-a review list; CRPR 4 = Plants of limited distribution-a watch list; 0.1 = seriously threatened in California; 0.2 = moderately threatened in California; 0.3 = not very threatened in California.

Alder Buckthorn. Alder buckthorn is a perennial deciduous shrub in the Rhamnaceae (buckthorn family) that is found in California and elsewhere. It occurs within wet meadow edges, seeps, and stream sides riparian) in lower and upper montane coniferous forests. The blooming period for this species extends from May to July. It has a CRPR of 2B.2 (i.e., Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California, But More Common Elsewhere; Moderately threatened in California). It is known from at least 69 occurrences in the last 20 years, from Lassen, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, and Sierra counties. Threats to this species include grazing and road maintenance (CNPS 2025).

Alder buckthorn may be present in the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets*. The closest documented occurrence of this species is from Brady's Camp Campground in the Plumas National Forest in 2024, approximately 20 miles northeast of the Project site. There are five other documented observations of this species from Plumas County since 2000 (Calflora 2025, CNPS 2025).

Castlegar Hawthorne. Castlegar hawthorne is a perennial deciduous shrub in the Rosaceae (rose family) that is found in California and elsewhere. It occurs within stream sides (riparian) in meadows, scrub, and forest. The blooming period for this species extends from May to August. It has CRPR of 3 (Plants which more Information is needed, A Review List). More information is needed on status, rarity, and threats in California. It is known from at least 19 occurrences in the last 20 years from Plumas, Modoc, and Shasta counties. Apparently widespread outside of California. Possibly threatened by logging, grazing, and recreational activities (CNPS 2025).

Castlegar hawthorne may be present in the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets*. The closest documented occurrence of this species is from Indian Creek near Crescent Falls from 2017, approximately 20 miles north of the Project site. There are three other documented observations of this species from Plumas County since 2000 (Calflora 2025, CNPS 2025).

Obtuse Starwort. Obtuse starwort perennial rhizomatous herb in the Caryophyllaceae (pink family) that is found in California and elsewhere. It occurs within moist areas in woodland, and shaded edges of creeks (riparian) in lower and upper montane coniferous forest. The blooming period for this species extends from May to August. It has a CRPR of 4.3 (Plants of Limited Distribution, A Watch List; Not very threatened in California). It is known from at least 29 occurrences in the last 20 years from the Northern Sierra Nevada. It is also found in other counties in Northern California. Potentially threatened by logging, development, fire, trampling, grazing, and hydrological alterations (CNPS 2025).

Obtuse starwort may be present in the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets*. The closest documented occurrence of this species is from the South Fork of the Feather River in 2012, approximately 22 miles south of the Project site. There are five other documented observations of this species from Plumas County since 2000 (Calflora 2025, CNPS 2025).

Sheldon's Sedge. Sheldon's sedge is a perennial rhizomatous herb in the Cyperaceae (sedge family) that is found in California and elsewhere. It occurs within wet areas, including marshes and swamps, in lower montane coniferous forest and riparian scrub. The blooming period for this species extends from May to August. It has a CRPR of 2B.2 (Plants Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California, But More Common Elsewhere; Moderately threatened in California). It is known from at least 39 occurrences in the last 20 years from Plumas, Placer, Lassen, and Modoc counties. Threats to this species include grazing and road maintenance (CNPS 2025).

Sheldon's sedge may be present in the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets*. The closest documented occurrence of this species is from Poplar Creek near Sloat from 2023, approximately 25 miles southeast of the Project site. There are over 10 other documented observations of this species from Plumas County since 2000 (Calflora 2025, CNPS 2025).

4.3.1.4 Special-Status Animals

Based on a review of the USFWS (2025) and CNDDB (2025), eBird (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2025), and Bumble Bee Watch (Xerces Society et al. 2025) databases; as well as species accounts and field guides (Hall 1981, Jennings and Hayes 1994, Shuford and Gardali 2008); the biologists' knowledge of sensitive species; and an assessment of the types of habitats within the Project site at the time of the site visit, it was determined that six special-status wildlife species could potentially occur within the Project site: western bumble bee (*Bombus occidentalis*), willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*), yellow-breasted chat (*Icteria virens*), yellow warbler (*Setophaga petechia*), Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), and western red bat (*Lasiurus frantzii)*.

Additionally, 14 other species may occasionally disperse across, forage, and/or fly over the Project site, but no suitable breeding or roosting habitat is present for these species on the site: monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), American goshawk (*Astur atricapillus*), bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), black swift (*Cypseloides niger*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), grasshopper sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*), loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), long-eared owl (*Asio otus*), northern harrier (*Circus hudsonius*), olive-sided flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*), short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus*), Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), Vaux's swift (*Chaetura vauxi*), and yellow-headed blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*).

Additionally, eight species are known in the Project vicinity but are considered absent or are not expected to occur on the Project site either because preferred habitat is absent, the species is considered extirpated from the Project region, the habitat is too fragmented, or potential dispersal barriers are present: northwestern pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*), foothill yellow-legged frog - Feather River Distinct Population Segment (DPS) (*Rana boylii*), Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog (*Rana sierrae*), southern long-tailed salamander (*Ambystoma macrodactylum sigillatum*), California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*), fisher (*Pekania pennanti*), gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), and Sierra Nevada mountain beaver (*Aplodontia rufa californica*).

This determination is based on an assessment of the presence of essential habitat requirements for the species, habitat connectivity with documented occurrences in the region, and/or the Project site's location within the species' known range of distribution. The legal status and likelihood of occurrence of all special-status animal species considered for their potential occurrence on the Project site are discussed in Table 4-16 and expanded discussions of special-status species that may be present on the Project site follow Table 4-16.

Table 4-16. Special-Status Animal Species with Potential to Occur in the Project Site

Common Name	Listing Status[1]	Habitat	Potential For Occurrence
Invertebrates			
Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*)	FPT	Roosts in wind protected tree groves (eucalyptus, Monterey pine, cypress) with nectar and water sources nearby. Requires milkweeds (*Asclepias* spp.) host plants for breeding.	**Not Expected.** There are no overwintering sites in Plumas County, and monarchs are not expected to breed on the Project site since no *Asclepias* spp. were observed during the field visit in late September. In late winter and early spring, Monarchs migrate inland from coastal overwintering sites across the western United States, including Plumas County (Xerces Society 2025).

Common Name	Listing Status[1]	Habitat	Potential For Occurrence
Western Bumble Bee (*Bombus occidentalis*)	SC	Grassland and scrub habitats with small mammal burrows for nesting and abundant floral resources for foraging.	**May be Present.** There is suitable foraging and nesting habitat in the *Wild Oats and Annual Brome Grasslands* on the Project site. The western bumble bee was historically common throughout California, including the Project region, but has declined throughout much of its' range. The species has not been detected in much of its range since the 1970s and is now considered to only occur in high elevation sites in the Sierra Nevada (Xerces Society et al. 2018). This species was observed in downtown Quincy in 2014, near Butterfly Creek in 2013, approximately 5 miles northwest of the Project site; and near Pine Creek, approximately 10 miles southeast of the Project site in 2021. There are an additional 11 documented occurrences in Plumas County from 2019 to 2024 (Xerces Society et al. 2025).
Reptiles			
Northwestern Pond Turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*)	FPT, CSSC	Slow-moving ponds, streams, storm drain channels, and other wetland habitats. Nest sites are in upland habitats, in clay or silty soils in unshaded areas such as grassland or sparsely vegetated shrubby habitats. Requires basking sites within/adjacent to aquatic habitat.	**Not Expected.** There are no documented occurrences of pond turtle from Plumas County (CNNDB 2025). There is suitable aquatic habitat in the drainage channel and there is potential upland nesting habitat in the *Wild Oats and Annual Brome Grassland* in the Project site, but pond turtle is not expected to occur in the Project site since there are no documented occurrences from Plumas County.
Amphibians			
Foothill Yellow-legged Frog **-** Feather River DPS (*Rana boylii*)	FT, ST	Partially shaded to unshaded, rocky perennial streams and rivers, intermittent creeks, and ponds at low to moderate elevations in Pacific Coast drainages as well as the lower western slopes of the Sierra Nevada mountains. For breeding they require low gradient streams with riffles containing cobble-sized or larger rocks as substrate to be used as egg laying sites.	**Not Expected.** The closest documented observations of foothill yellow-legged frog are from Wapaunise Creek, Spanish Creek, and Rock Creek, as recently as 2017, approximately 4 miles west of Quincy in the Plumas National Forest. There is a historic occurrence from Quincy from 1899, but foothill yellow-legged frogs are considered extirpated from this site (CNNDB 2025). There is no suitable breeding habitat in the drainage channel. However, the drainage channel provides potential foraging and refugia habitat, but since there are no documented occurrences near the Project site, this species is not expected to occur on the Project site.

Common Name	Listing Status[1]	Habitat	Potential For Occurrence
Sierra Nevada Yellow-legged Frog (*Rana sierrae*)	FE, ST	Inhabits lakes, ponds, meadow streams, isolated pools, and sunny riverbanks in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Usually found in or very close to water. Egg-laying sites must be connected to permanent lakes or ponds that do not freeze to the bottom in winter.	**Not Expected.** The closest documented observations of foothill yellow-legged frog are from the Plumas National Forest, including the East Branch of Rock Creek in 2024, approximately 4 miles Southwest of Quincy; Bean Creek in 2024, approximately 7 miles northwest of Quincy; and from near Gasner Creek, approximately 1.5 miles southwest of Quincy in 2020. There are many other documented occurrences from the Plumas National Forest (CNNDB 2025). There is no suitable breeding habitat in the drainage channel. However, the drainage channel provides potential foraging and refugia habitat, but since there are no documented occurrences near the Project site, this species is not expected to occur on the Project site.
Southern Long-tailed salamander (*Ambystoma macrodactylum sigillatum*)	CSSC	Inhabits alpine meadows, high mountain ponds, and lakes in the northern Sierra Nevada south to Garner Meadows and Spicer Reservoir, and in Trinity and Siskiyou counties near the Trinity Alps. It also occurs in southwestern Oregon.	**Absent.** There are no documented occurrences in the Project region and there is no suitable habitat for this species on the Project site (CNDDB 2025).
Birds			
American Goshawk (*Astur atricapillus*)	CSSC (nesting)	Breeds in North Coast Ranges through Sierra Nevada, Klamath, Cascade, and Warner Mountains. Prefers middle and higher elevations, and mature, dense conifer forests. Forages in wooded areas.	**Absent as Breeder.** There is no suitable nesting habitat on the Project site. This species may occasionally fly over the site. There are several documented occurrences for this species from Quincy since 2020 (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2025).
Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)	SE, FP	Breeds in large, old-growth trees or snags. Nest usually located near a permanent water source.	**Absent as a Breeder.** There is no suitable nesting habitat on the Project site. This species may occasionally fly over the site. There are many documented occurrences for this species from Quincy since 2008 (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2025).

Common Name	Listing Status[1]	Habitat	Potential For Occurrence
Black Swift (*Cypseloides niger*)	CSSC (nesting)	Breeds very locally in the Sierra Nevada and Cascade Range. Nests on cliffs behind, or adjacent to, waterfalls in deep canyons. Forages widely over many habitats.	**Absent as a Breeder.** The Project site is not in the known breeding range for this species and there is no suitable breeding habitat on the Project site. However, this species may occasionally forage over the site. This species was observed along Spanish Creek near Feather River College in 2022 (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2025).
California Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*)	FPT, CSSC	An uncommon, permanent resident in dense, old-growth, multi-layered mixed conifer, redwood, and Douglas-fir habitats, from sea level up to approximately 7600 feet. Usually nests in tree or snag cavity, or in broken top of large tree near water. In winter, roosts in oak woodland habitats.	**Absent as a Breeder.** There is no suitable nesting habitat on the Project site. This species may occasionally fly over the site. There are documented occurrences for this species from the Plumas National Forest in the Quincy area (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2025).
Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)	FP	Breeds on cliffs or in large trees (rarely on electrical towers) and forages in open areas.	**Absent as a Breeder.** There is no suitable nesting habitat on the Project site. This species may occasionally fly over the site. There are many documented occurrences for this species from Quincy from 2011 to 2023 (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2025).
Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*)	CSSC (nesting)	Nests and forages in grasslands, meadows, fallow fields, and pastures. Thick cover of grasses and forbs is essential for concealment of nests.	**Absent as a Breeder.** The Project site is not in the known breeding range for this species and there is no suitable breeding habitat on the Project site. However, this species may occasionally forage on the site as a migrant. There is a documented occurrence for this species from 2023 near Quincy Junction Road, approximately 1.25 miles northeast of the Project site (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2025).
Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)	CSSC (nesting)	Nests in tall shrubs and dense trees; forages in grasslands, marshes, and ruderal habitats.	**Absent as a Breeder.** There is potential nesting habitat on the Project site in the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets*, but the Project site is not in the known breeding range for this species. Therefore, this species is absent as a breeder from the Project site. However, this species may occasionally forage on the site as a migrant. There are documented occurrences for this species from 2021 to 2023 along an unnamed tributary to Spanish Creek, approximately 700 feet northeast of the Project site and other locations in Quincy (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2025).

Common Name	Listing Status[1]	Habitat	Potential For Occurrence
Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*)	CSSC (nesting)	Nests in conifer, oak, riparian, pinyon-juniper, and desert woodlands that are either open or are adjacent to grasslands, meadows, or shrublands.	**Absent as a Breeder.** There is potential nesting habitat on the Project site in the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets*, but the Project site is not in the known breeding range for this species. Therefore, this species is absent as a breeder from the Project site. However, this species may occasionally forage on the site as a migrant. There is a documented occurrence for this species from 2021 in Gansner Park, approximately 0.65 miles northwest of the Project site (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2025).
Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)	CSSC (nesting)	Nests on the ground, mostly within patches of dense, often tall, vegetation in undisturbed areas in a wide range of habitats, including freshwater marshes, brackish and saltwater marshes, wet meadows, weedy borders of lakes, rivers and streams, annual and perennial grasslands.	**Absent as a Breeder.** The Project site is not in the known breeding range for this species and there is no suitable breeding habitat on the Project site. However, this species may occasionally fly over the site as a migrant. There are many documented occurrences for this species from 2012 to 2023 in Quincy (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2025).
Olive-sided Flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*)	CSSC (nesting)	Nests in mature forests with open canopies, along forest edges in more densely vegetated areas, in recently burned forest habitats, and in selectively harvested landscapes.	**Absent as a Breeder.** There is no suitable nesting habitat on the Project site. This species may occasionally fly over the site. There are many documented occurrences for this species from Gansner Park, approximately 0.65 miles northwest of the Project site; and from 2009 to 2025 and other locations in Quincy (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2025).
Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*)	CSSC (nesting)	Nests in perennial grasslands, prairies, dunes, meadows and both fresh and saline water wetlands.	**Absent as a Breeder.** The Project site is not in the known breeding range for this species and there is no suitable breeding habitat on the Project site. However, this species may occasionally fly over the site as a migrant. There are documented occurrences for this species from 2025 along an unnamed tributary to Spanish Creek, approximately 700 feet northeast of the Project site; and from 2020 near Quincy Junction Road and Bell Lane, approximately 1.75 miles northeast of the Project site (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2025).

Common Name	Listing Status[1]	Habitat	Potential For Occurrence
Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)	ST	Swainson's hawks in California are strongly associated with riparian habitats, although they also are found in oak woodlands and other open habitats. Prime breeding habitat for Swainson's hawk encompasses riparian draws or clumps of trees surrounded by open grassland or oak savannah for foraging.	**Absent as a Breeder.** The Project site is not in the known breeding range for this species and there is no suitable breeding habitat on the Project site. However, this species may occasionally fly over the site as a migrant. There are documented occurrences for this species from 2022 to 2025 along an unnamed tributary to Spanish Creek, approximately 700 feet northeast of the Project site; and from other locations in the Quincy area (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2025).
Vaux's swift (*Chaetura vauxi*)	CSSC (nesting)	This species is a summer resident of northern California. Breeds in the Coast Ranges from Sonoma County. north, and very locally south to Santa Cruz County and in the Sierra Nevada. Nests in redwood and Douglas-fir habitats with nest-sites in large hollow trees and snags, especially tall, burned-out stubs; occasionally, in chimneys. Forages aerially over many habitats.	**Absent as a Breeder.** There is no suitable nesting habitat on the Project site. This species may occasionally forage over the site. There are many documented occurrences for this species from 2015 to 2021 in the Quincy area (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2025).

Common Name	Listing Status[1]	Habitat	Potential For Occurrence
Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*)	SE	This species breeds in dense riparian and mesic upland thickets, usually near standing water in California, including the American Valley. In the spring and fall, willow flycatchers are common transients throughout California's riparian willow habitats.	**May be Present as a Breeder.** There is potential nesting habitat on the Project site in the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets.* Given that there are nearby observations during the breeding season, this species may be present as a breeder in the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets.* There are documented occurrences for this species from 2022 and 2023 during fall migration along an unnamed tributary to Spanish Creek, approximately 700 feet northeast of the Project site and other locations from 2008 to 2024, including spring and fall migration observations from Gansner Park, approximately 0.65 miles northwest of the Project site; and the Quincy-East Quincy Wastewater Treatment Plant, approximately 0.55 miles northeast of the Project site. There are two observations from the wastewater treatment plant and Gansner Park during the breeding season from 2011 and 2024, respectively (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2025).
Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*)	CSSC (nesting)	An uncommon summer resident and migrant in coastal California and in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. Nests in dense stands of willow and other riparian habitat.	**May be Present as a Breeder.** There is potential nesting habitat on the Project site in the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets.* Given that there are nearby observations during the breeding season, this species may be present as a breeder in the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets.* There are documented occurrences for this species during the breeding season from 2010 to 2024 in Gansner Park, approximately 0.65 miles northwest of the Project site; and near the Quincy-East Quincy Wastewater Treatment Plant, approximately 0.55 miles northeast of the Project site; and from Dillinger Pond, approximately 0.55 miles from the Project site (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2025).

Common Name	Listing Status[1]	Habitat	Potential For Occurrence
Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*)	CSSC (nesting)	Breeds commonly, but locally, east of Cascade Range and Sierra Nevada, and in the Central Valley. Nests in fresh emergent wetland with dense vegetation and deep water, often along borders of lakes or ponds. Nests are always located over water. Forages in emergent wetland and moist, open areas, especially cropland and muddy shores of lakes and ponds.	**Absent as a Breeder.** There is no suitable breeding habitat on the Project site. However, this species may occasionally forage in the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets*. There are documented occurrences for this species from 2021 along an unnamed tributary to Spanish Creek, approximately 700 feet northeast of the Project site; and from 2008 to 2014 from near Quincy-East Quincy Wastewater Treatment Plant, approximately 0.55 miles northeast of the Project site; as well as other locations in the Quincy area (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2025).
Yellow Warbler (*Setophaga petechia*)	CSSC (nesting)	Nests in dense stands of willow and other riparian habitat.	**May be Present as a Breeder.** There is potential nesting habitat on the Project site in the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets.* Given that there are nearby observations during the breeding season, this species may be present as a breeder in the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets.* There are documented occurrences for this species during the breeding season from 2011 to 2025 from the unnamed tributary to Spanish Creek, just northeast of the Project site, including a 2018 observation approximately 100 feet outside of the Project site. There are also many other documented observations for this species from the Quincy area during breeding season (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2025).

Common Name	Listing Status[1]	Habitat	Potential For Occurrence
Mammals			
Townsend's Big-eared Bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*)	CSSC	Townsend's big-eared bat is found throughout California, but the details of its distribution are not well known. This species is found in all but subalpine and alpine habitats and may be found at any season throughout its range. Natural roost habitat includes caves and large basal hollows of large trees. Also, roosts in abandoned buildings or buildings with minimal human activity, mines, and bridges (Kunz 1982, Pierson et al. 2006, Szewczak 2013).	**May be Present.** This species may roost and breed in the old Quincy Lumber & Supply building, which is open in the front and back; and there are numerous other openings on the outside of the building that bats can use to get inside. This species may also roost in the open garage structure. Currently, there appears to be no substantial human activity occurring in the structure other than a small office space, occupied by a business, at the front of the building, which is closed off from the open areas of the building, and for storage of a large RV. There have been 21 documented occurrences of this species from Plumas County since 2001, with the closest occurrence approximately 5 miles northwest of the Project site along Blackhawk Creek Road in 2002 (CNDDB 2025). Even though evidence of roosting bats was not detected during the site visit, the Quincy Lumber & Supply building and open garage structure provides suitable roosting and breeding habit. Therefore, this species may occupy these structures in the future.
Western Red Bat *(Lasiurus frantzii)*	CSSC	The western red bat is locally common in riparian habitats of California, from Shasta County to the Mexican border, west of the Sierra Nevada/Cascade crest, and deserts. The winter range includes western lowlands and coastal regions south of San Francisco Bay. Roost sites are often in tree foliage along the edges of mature riparian habitats. May also roost in urban riparian habitats (Kunz 1982, Pierson et al. 2004, Szewczak 2013, Solick et al. 2020).	**May be Present.** There is one documented occurrence of this species from 2000, approximately 15 miles east of the Project site near Little Grizzly Creek in the Plumas National Forest (CNDDB 2025). Even though there is only one documented occurrence from Plumas County, there is suitable roosting and possible breeding habitat in *the Lemmon's Willow Thickets.* Therefore*,* this species may be present.

Common Name	Listing Status[1]	Habitat	Potential For Occurrence
Fisher (*Pekania pennanti*)	CSSC	Uncommon permanent resident of the Sierra Nevada, Cascades, and Klamath mountains. Occurs in intermediate to large-tree stages of coniferous forests and deciduous-riparian habitats with a high percent canopy closure.	**Absent.** There are six documented observations of this species from Plumas County, five of which are older than 40 years. There is one documented occurrence from 2015, approximately 30 miles northwest from the Project site near Little Grizzly Campground in Plumas National Forest. There is no habitat for this species present or adjacent to the Project site, therefore this species is considered absent from the Project site.
Gray Wolf (*Canis lupus*)	FE, SE	Gray wolves have a circumpolar range including North America, Europe and Asia. The wide range of habitats in which wolves can thrive includes temperate forests, mountains, tundra, taiga, grasslands, and deserts. Most of the known wolf activity and packs occur in the northeastern portion of the state, including Plumas County. Wolf packs can generally have territories of up to 200 square miles. Dispersing wolves can also travel long distances.	**Absent.** Gray Wolves have been confirmed active in the eastern Plumas and southern Lassen County areas, including the Quincy area (Beyem Seyo and Diamond packs). From 2011 to 2024, 132 individual wolves had been detected in California. However, this species is not expected to regularly occur or take up permanent residence in the urban areas of Quincy and is therefore considered absent from the Project site (CDFW 2025b).
Sierra Nevada Mountain Beaver (*Aplodontia rufa californica*)	CSSC	Permanent resident in the Cascade, Klamath, and Sierra Nevada ranges. Populations are localized and uncommon in the Sierra Nevada. Mountain beavers occur in dense riparian-deciduous and open, brushy stages of most forest habitats.	**Absent.** There are 11 documented occurrences of this species from Plumas County since 2000, with the closest occurrence near Deanes Valley Campground in the Plumas National Forest, approximately 9 miles southwest of the Project site in 2000. While the drainage channel and the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* provide marginal habitat for the species, mountain beavers are not expected to make substantial use of these habitats in and adjacent to the Project site due to the urban setting of the Project site. Therefore, this species is considered absent on the Project site.

[1]Key to Status Abbreviations: Federally Listed as Endangered (FE); Federally Listed as Threatened (FT); Federal Candidate for Listing (FC), Federal Proposed Threatened (FPT); State Listed as Endangered (SE); State Listed as Threatened (ST); State Candidate for Listing (SC); State Fully Protected (FP); California Species of Special Concern (CSSC)

Western Bumble Bee. Federal Listing Status: none; State Listing Status: Candidate for Listing. The western bumble bee was historically common throughout California, including the Project region but has declined throughout much of its' range. The western bumble bee has not been detected in much of its range since the 1970s and is now considered to only occur in high elevation sites in the Sierra Nevada (Xerces Society 2018).

The western bumble bee has an annual lifecycle, which means most individuals in the colony live about one year or less and reproductive females are the only individuals that overwinter. Western bumble bee nests have been found in cavities, including abandoned rodent burrows and above ground locations, including in logs among railroad ties. Overwintering sites have generally been found underground, most often in shaded areas near trees as well as in banks without dense vegetation and in areas with tree litter, moss, or in bare patches within short grass. Western bumble bees are generalist foragers and will forage for pollen on both native and non-native plant species. Because they do not depend on any one species, they are excellent pollinators and are known to pollinate many commercial crops. Floral resource availability within a landscape is required for nesting success. However, western bumble bees likely do not require flowering resources in the immediate vicinity of their nests and may forage 300 feet or more from the entrance of the nest (Xerces Society 2018).

This species may forage and nest in the *Wild Oats and Annual Brome Grasslands* vegetation community on the Project site. This species was observed in downtown Quincy in 2014, near Butterfly Creek in 2013, approximately 5 miles northwest of the Project site; and near Pine Creek, approximately 10 miles southeast of the Project site in 2021. There are an additional 11 documented occurrences in Plumas County from 2019 to 2024 (Xerces Society et al. 2025).

Townsend's Big-eared Bat. Federal Listing Status: none; State Listing Status: Species of Special Concern. Townsend's big-eared bat is a medium-sized bat with extremely long, flexible ears, and small yet noticeable lumps on each side of the snout. They are found in a variety of habitats, from forests to desert scrub. They prefer to roost in open caves. However, they will use a variety of other roost types, particularly abandoned buildings or buildings with minimal human activity, mines, tunnels, bridges, and tree cavities. When roosting they prefer large open areas and do not tuck themselves into cracks and crevices like many other bat species. This species is sensitive to disturbance, and it has been documented that they will abandon roost sites after human interference (Zeiner et al. 1988-1990).

Townsend's big-eared bat hibernates throughout its range during winter months when temperatures are between 0°C and 11.5 degrees Celsius (32-53 degrees Fahrenheit). While hibernating, it hangs alone or in small groups in the open, with fur erect to provide maximum insulation and with ears coiled back. These bats emerge late in the evening to forage and are swift, highly maneuverable fliers. Prey items include small moths, flies, lacewings, dung beetles, and sawflies (Zeiner et al. 1988-1990).

Even though evidence of roosting bats in buildings and structures was not detected during the site visits, the Quincy Lumber & Supply building and open garage structure provides suitable roosting and breeding habitat for Townsend's big-eared bat. Therefore, this species may occupy these structures in the future. There have been 21 documented occurrences of this species from Plumas County since 2001, with the closest occurrence approximately 5 miles northwest of the Project site along Blackhawk Creek Road in 2002 (CNDDB 2025).

Western Red Bat. Federal Listing Status: none; State Listing Status: Species of Special Concern. The western red bat is locally common in some areas of California, occurring from

Shasta County to the Mexican border, west of the Sierra Nevada/Cascade crest and deserts. The winter range includes western lowlands and coastal regions south of San Francisco Bay. There is migration between summer and winter ranges, and migrants may be found outside the normal range (Pierson et al. 2004).

The western red bat roosts primarily in tree foliage, especially in cottonwood, sycamore, and other riparian trees or orchards, specifically walnut trees. The bat prefers habitat edges and mosaics with trees that are protected from above and open below with open areas for foraging, including grasslands, shrublands, and open woodlands. They are solitary by nature but will gather in larger nursery roosts during the summer. Known to occur up to 8,250 feet but breeding females primarily occur in low-elevation cottonwood/sycamore and oak dominated riparian habitats, with many breeding records from the Central Valley at elevations below 700 feet (Pierson et al. 2004). Western red bats have also been detected in riparian habitats in urban areas (Krauel and LeBuhn 2016).

This species may possibly roost and possibly breed in the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets*. There is one documented occurrence of this species from 2000, approximately 15 miles east of the Project site near Little Grizzly Creek in the Plumas National Forest. (CNDDB 2025).

Willow Flycatcher. Federal Listing Status: None; State Listing Status: Endangered. Historically, the willow flycatcher nested throughout California wherever thickets of riparian deciduous shrubs, primarily willow (*Salix* spp.) occurred (Grinnell and Miller 1944). The species is typically associated with broad, open river valleys or large mountain meadows with extensive growth of shrubby willows. Dense willow thickets are required for nesting and roosting, while low exposed branches are used for singing posts and hunting perches (Zeiner et al. 1988-1990).

In the last four decades, breeding populations have been extirpated from most of the lower elevation riparian areas in California because of cowbird parasitism and habitat destruction. Habitat destruction and degradation have been caused by a variety of activities including livestock grazing, agricultural, and urban development.

The Willow Flycatcher now occurs only in small numbers as a summer resident, primarily at scattered wet meadows and montane riparian habitats above 4,000 feet in the Sierra Nevada and southern Cascades, and along a few waterways in the arid southwestern portion of the state. The Sierra Nevada–southern Cascades population in California is especially vulnerable, with fewer than 200 pairs remaining. The Little Truckee River watershed and nearby locations in Sierra and Nevada counties represent one of only a few remaining strongholds for the species in California, with a cluster of meadows that collectively retained approximately 30 territories at least until 2000 (Loffland et al. 2022).

In the Sierra Nevada, willow flycatcher breeding season occurs from late May or early June (territory establishment) to the middle of September (fledgling independence). Most young fledge between July 15 and August 31 and fledglings remain in the territory for 2 to 3 weeks post-fledging. The nestling period lasts approximately 14 days. Willow flycatchers feed primarily on insects, many of which have aquatic larval stages (Sanders and Flett 1989).

Willow flycatcher may nest in the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets*. There are documented occurrences for this species from 2022 and 2023 during fall migration along an unnamed tributary to Spanish Creek, approximately 700 feet northeast of the Project site and other locations from 2008 to 2024, including spring and fall migration observations from Gansner Park, approximately 0.65 miles northwest of the project site; and the Quincy-East Quincy

Wastewater Treatment Plant, approximately 0.55 miles northeast of the Project site. There are two observations from the wastewater treatment plant and Gansner Park during the breeding season from 2011 and 2024, respectively (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2025).

Yellow-breasted Chat. Federal Listing Status: None; State Listing Status: Species of Special Concern (nesting). The yellow-breasted chat is a summer resident in California from March to September and breeds from April through August. It mainly breeds in early successional riparian habitat with a well-developed, dense shrub layer and open canopy. It winters in the tropics, where it is found in open scrub and woodland edges in lowland areas. Forages by searching among foliage among dense low tangles or by perching to eat insects and berries. Habitat loss and degradation are most likely the greatest threat to this species (Comrack 2008).

This species may nest in the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets.* There are documented occurrences for this species during the breeding season from 2010 to 2024 in Gansner Park, approximately 0.65 miles northwest of the Project site; and near the Quincy-East Quincy Wastewater Treatment Plant, approximately 0.55 miles northeast of the Project site; and from Dillinger Pond, approximately 0.55 miles from the Project site (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2025).

Yellow Warbler. Federal Listing Status: None; State Listing Status: Species of Special Concern (nesting). The yellow warbler is a widespread neotropical migrant that inhabits wet deciduous forests throughout North America (Lowther et al. 1999). In California, yellow warblers occupy wooded riparian habitats along the coast, on both eastern and western slopes of the Sierra Nevada, and throughout the northern portion of the state (Heath 2008). Their range has remained relatively stable over time, but populations have declined substantially in many localities due to habitat loss and expansion of the brood-parasitic brown-headed cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) (Cain et al. 2003, Heath 2008). The ideal nesting habitat for yellow warblers consists of riparian corridors with dense, shrubby understory and open canopy (Lowther et al. 1999; Cain et al. 2003; Heath 2008). Yellow warblers nest from early May through early August and construct open cup nests in upright forks of shrubs or trees in dense willow thickets or other dense vegetation (Lowther et al. 1999).

This species may nest in the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets*. There are documented occurrences for this species during the breeding season from 2011 to 2025 from the unnamed tributary to Spanish Creek, just northeast of the Project site, including a 2018 observation approximately 100 feet outside of the Project site. There are also many other documented observations for this species from the Quincy area during breeding season (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2025).

4.3.1.5 Nesting Birds

Nesting birds may occur on buildings, trees, shrubs, understory vegetation, and shallow scrapes on bare ground in and around the Project site. All migratory bird species are protected under the California Fish and Game Code.

4.3.1.6 Bat Colonies

Bats tend to forage and roost near freshwater sources. The unnamed drainage provides a perennial source of freshwater within and adjacent to the Project site. Cavities within trees, foliage, tree bark, and structures in and adjacent to the Project site may provide suitable day and maternity roost habitat for many species of bats.

Roost sites play a critical role in mating, hibernation, rearing young, conserving energy, and protection from adverse weather and predators. Selection of roost sites is influenced by distribution and abundance of food resources, risks of predation, as well as the physical attributes of the roost itself. Roost selection is paramount to the success of a species, and the removal of roost habitat could adversely impact the survivorship of a species (Kunz 1982).

Depending upon species, maternity roosts can host from a few to thousands of reproductive female bats that congregate during spring and summer months to give birth and nurse their young. In California, maternity roosts may remain active from April through August. As a potentially uncommon and limited resource, maternity roosts may be the limiting resource for a local population of bats and thus may be essential to the survival of a local bat population. Maternity roosts tend to have sensitivity to disturbance, with documented instances of abandonment even during the presence of flightless young. As bats have a low reproductive rate of typically one pup per year, negative impacts to maternity roosts can have profound impacts on a local population of bats (Szewczak 2013).

The disturbance of roosting habitat of any bat species would be considered significant under CEQA Guidelines. The Project site as well as adjacent areas contain potential suitable roosting habitat for Townsend's big-eared bat and western red bat (see Table 4). Other bat species that may roost in crevices in structures on the Project site include hoary bat (*Aeorestes cinereus*), big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*), silver-haired bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*), California myotis (*Myotis californicus*), small-footed myotis (*Myotis ciliolabrum*), long-eared myotis (*Myotis evotis*), little brown myotis (*Myotis lucifugus*), fringed myotis (*Myotis thysanodes*), long-legged myotis (*Myotis volans*), and Yuma myotis (*Myotis yumanensis*).

4.3.1.7 Sensitive and Regulated Plant Communities and Habitats

Natural communities have been considered part of the Natural Heritage Conservation triad, along with plants and animals of conservation significance, since the state inception of the Natural Heritage Program in 1979. CDFW determines the level of rarity and imperilment of vegetation types; and tracks sensitive communities in its Rarefind database (CNDDB 2025). Global rankings (G) of natural communities reflect the overall condition (rarity and endangerment) of a habitat throughout its range, whereas state (S) rankings reflect the condition of a habitat within California. Natural communities are defined using NatureServe's standard heritage program methodology as follows (CDFG 2007):

- G1/S1: Less than 6 viable occurrences or less than 2,000 acres
- G2/S2: Between 6 and 20 occurrences or 2,000 to 10,000 acres
- G3/S3: Between 21 and 100 occurrences or 10,000 to 50,000 acres
- G4/S4: The community is apparently secure, but factors and threats exist to cause some concern
- G5/S4: The community is demonstrably secure to ineradicable due to being common throughout the world (for global rank) or the state of California (for state rank)

State rankings are further described by the following threat code extensions:

- S1.1: Very threatened
- S1.2: Threatened
- S1.3: No current threats known

In addition to tracking sensitive natural communities, CDFW also ranks vegetation alliances, defined by repeating patterns of plants across a landscape that reflect climate, soil, water, disturbance, and other environmental factors (Sawyer et al. 2009). If an alliance is marked G1-G3, all the vegetation associations within it will also be of high priority (CDFG 2007). CDFW provides the Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program's (VegCAMP) currently accepted list of vegetation alliances and associations (CDFW 2025).

Natural Communities of Special Concern. There are no CDFW classified sensitive natural communities within the Project site.

Sensitive Vegetation Alliances. There is one sensitive vegetation association within the Project site, *Lemmon's Willow Thickets Alliance*, which is classified by CDFW as "G4 S3", which means that this community is at a moderate risk of extirpation throughout its range in California (Figure 4-5).

Waters of the U.S./State. The USACE and RWQCB would need to determine whether the drainage channel meets the definition of Waters of the U.S./State and would also need to determine if impacts to the drainage channel would require a permit. Waters of the State include waters of the U.S. and generally also extend to the top of bank (TOB), but RWQCB may also claim riparian habitat (*Lemmon's Willow Thickets*) that extends beyond the TOB and other areas within the 100-year flood plain (Figure 4-5).

CDFW Stream/Riparian Habitat. As described above under Regulatory Setting, the California Fish and Game Code includes regulations governing the use of, or impacts to, many of the state's fish, wildlife, and sensitive habitats, including the bed and banks of rivers, lakes, and streams. The unnamed drainage and its associated riparian habitat (*Lemmon's Willow Thickets*) are potentially subject to CDFW jurisdiction under Section 1600 et seq. of State Fish and Game Code (Figure 4-5).

Critical Habitat/Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). There is no Critical Habitat or EFH on the Project site.

4.3.2 Regulatory Setting

4.3.2.1 Federal Regulations

4.3.2.1.1 Federal Endangered Species Act

The Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) of 1973, as amended, provides the regulatory framework for the protection of plant and animal species formally listed as endangered or threatened, as well as their designated critical habitats. While proposed and candidate species do not receive full statutory protections under FESA, they may be considered in planning processes to support proactive conservation and regulatory compliance. FESA has the following four primary components: (1) provisions for listing species, (2) requirements for consultation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries), (3) prohibitions against "taking" (i.e., harassing, harming, hunting, shooting, wounding, killing, trapping, capturing, or collecting, or attempting to engage in any such conduct) of listed species, and (4) provisions for permits that allow incidental "take". FESA also discusses recovery plans and the designation of critical habitat for listed species.

Both the USFWS and NOAA Fisheries share the responsibility for administration of FESA. Section 7 requires federal agencies, in consultation with, and with the assistance of the USFWS or NOAA Fisheries, as appropriate, to ensure that actions they authorize, fund, or carry out are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of threatened or endangered species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat for these species. Non-federal agencies and private entities can seek authorization for take of federally listed species under Section 10 of FESA, which requires the preparation of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP).

4.3.2.1.2 U.S. Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The U.S. Migratory Bird Treaty Act (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 the 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. A Department of Interior memo dated April 11, 2025, reinstated a 2017 interpretation of the MBTA (Solicitor's Opinion M-37050) determining that the MBTA does not prohibit accidental or incidental taking or killing of migratory birds. This interpretation does not exclude intentional take.

4.3.2.1.3 Clean Water Act

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

Section 404. As part of its mandate under Section 404 of the CWA, the EPA regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into "waters of the United States" (U.S.). In general, "Waters of the U.S." are navigable waters of the United States; interstate waters; other waters where the use, degradation, or destruction of the waters could affect interstate or foreign commerce; tributaries to these waters that are relatively permanent standing or continuously flowing bodies of water; and wetlands adjacent to and with a continuous surface connection to these waters. Wetlands are defined as those areas "that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions" (33 CFR 328.3(b)). The discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. is prohibited under the CWA except when it complies with Section 404 of the CWA. Enforcement authority for Section 404 was given to the USACE, which it accomplishes under its regulatory branch. The

EPA has veto authority over the USACE's administration of the Section 404 program and may override a USACE decision with respect to permitting.

Substantial impacts to waters of the U.S. may require an Individual Permit. Projects that only minimally affect waters of the U.S. may meet the conditions of one of the existing Nationwide Permits, provided that such permits' other respective conditions are satisfied. A Water Quality Certification or waiver pursuant to Section 401 (see below) of the CWA is required for Section 404 permit actions.

Section 401. Any applicant for a federal permit to impact waters of the U.S. under Section 404 of the CWA, including Nationwide Permits where pre-construction notification is required, must also provide to the USACE a certification or waiver from the State of California. The "401 Certification" is provided by the State Water Resources Control Board through the regional water quality control boards (RWQCB).

The RWQCB issues and enforces permits for discharge of treated water, landfills, stormwater runoff, filling of any surface waters or wetlands, dredging, agricultural activities and wastewater recycling. The RWQCB recommends the "401 Certification" application be made at the same time that any applications are provided to other agencies, such as the USACE, USFWS, or NOAA Fisheries. The application is not final until completion of environmental review under CEQA. The application to the RWQCB is similar to the pre-construction notification that is required by the USACE. It must include a description of the habitat that is being impacted, a description of how the impact is proposed to be minimized, and proposed mitigation measures with goals, schedules, and performance standards. The RWQCB looks for mitigation that is on site and in-kind, with functions and values as good as or better than the water-based habitat that is being removed.

4.3.2.2 State Regulations

4.3.2.2.1 California Endangered Species Act

The California Endangered Species Act (CESA; Fish and Game Code 2050 et seq.) generally parallels FESA. It establishes the policy of the State to conserve, protect, restore, and enhance threatened or endangered species and their habitats. Section 2080 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibits the take, possession, purchase, sale, and import or export of endangered, threatened, or candidate species, unless otherwise authorized by permit or by the regulations. "Take" is defined in Section 86 of the California Fish and Game Code as to "hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill." This definition differs from the definition of "take" under FESA. CESA is administered by CDFW. CESA allows for take incidental to otherwise lawful projects but mandates that State lead agencies consult with CDFW to ensure that a project would not jeopardize the continued existence of a candidate, threatened or endangered species.

4.3.2.2.2 California Fish and Game Code Sections 1600-1607

Sections 1600-1607 of the California Fish and Game Code require that a Notification of Lake or Streambed Alteration 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 Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement (LSAA or SAA), that includes measures to protect affected fish and wildlife resources.

4.3.2.2.3 Native Plant Protection Act

The Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA) was created in 1977 with the intent to preserve, protect, and enhance rare and endangered plants in California (California Fish and Game Code sections 1900 to 1913). The NPPA is administered by CDFW, which has the authority to designate native plants as endangered or rare and to protect them from "take." CDFW maintains a list of plant species that have been officially classified as endangered, threatened, or rare. These special-status plants have special protection under California law, and projects that directly impact them may not qualify for a categorical exemption under CEQA Guidelines.

4.3.2.2.4 Fully Protected Species and Species of Special Concern

The classification of California fully protected (CFP) species was CDFW's initial effort to identify and provide additional protection to those animals that were rare or faced possible extinction. Lists were created for fish, amphibians and reptiles, birds, and mammals. Most of the species on these lists have subsequently been listed under CESA and/or FESA. The Fish and Game Code sections (§5515 for fish, §5050 for amphibian and reptiles, §3511 for birds, §4700 for mammals) deal with CFP species and 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" (CDFW Fish and Game Commission 1998). "Take" of these species may be authorized for necessary scientific research, for relocation to protect livestock, or under a natural community conservation plan (NCCP) or the Project activities qualify for permitting under Section 2080.15 of the California Fish and Game Code. This language makes the CFP designation the strongest and most restrictive regarding the "take" of these species. In 2003, the code sections dealing with CFP species were amended to allow CDFW to authorize take resulting from recovery activities for state-listed species. On July 10, 2023, Governor Newsom signed Senate Bill 147, which allows for permits to take "fully protected" species for certain renewable energy and infrastructure projects (e.g., critical regional or local water agency infrastructure, and certain transportation projects). This law now establishes a permitting process for these species. Under this new law, all permits must be processed pursuant to provisions in the CESA that authorize CDFW to issue incidental permits and require permittees to minimize and fully mitigate impacts to the species. The law also requires permittees to satisfy "conservation standards" that essentially require permittees to exceed typical minimization and mitigation measures associated with permits under CESA.

California species of special concern (CSSC) are broadly defined as animals not listed under FESA or CESA, but which are nonetheless of concern to CDFW because they are declining at a rate that could result in listing or 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 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.

4.3.2.2.5 California Migratory Bird Protection Act

Fish and Game Code section 3513 prohibits taking or possessing all migratory birds (both game and nongame) designated in the MBTA as of January 1, 2025, and any additional migratory bird subsequently designated in the MBTA, except as provided by the Department of the Interior

unless the federal rules or regulations are inconsistent with the Fish and Game Code. Section 3513 ensures that prohibitions against both intentional and incidental take provided under the MBTA as of January 1, 2025, will remain in force in California. CDFW does not cite under federal law, including the MBTA, but may cite acts prohibited by CDFW regulations or Fish and Game Code sections 2000, 3513, or other applicable provisions.

4.3.2.2.6 Nesting Birds

Nesting birds, including raptors, are protected under California Fish and Game Code 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 California Fish and Game Code 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 California Fish and Game Code 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 “take” by CDFW.

4.3.2.2.7 Non-Game Mammals

Sections 4150-4155 of the California Fish and Game Code 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 California Fish and Game Code, in addition to being protected if they are a listed species (e.g., CSSC, CFP, state or federal threatened, or state or federal endangered).

4.3.2.2.8 Sensitive Vegetation Communities

Sensitive vegetation communities are natural communities and habitats that are either unique in constituent components, of relatively limited distribution in the region, or are of particularly high wildlife value. These communities may or may not necessarily contain special-status species. Sensitive natural communities are usually identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by CDFW (i.e., CNDDB) or the USFWS. The CNDDB identifies several natural communities as rare, which are given the highest inventory priority (CNDDB 2025, CDFW 2025).

4.3.2.2.9 Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

The intent of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Porter-Cologne) is to protect water quality and the beneficial uses of water, and it applies to both surface and ground water. Under this law, the State Water Resources Control Board develops statewide water quality plans, and the RWQCBs develop basin plans, which identify beneficial uses, water quality objectives, and implementation plans. The RWQCBs have the primary responsibility to implement the provisions of both statewide and basin plans. Waters regulated under Porter-Cologne, referred

to as “waters of the State,” include isolated waters that are not regulated by the USACE. Projects that require a USACE permit, or fall under other federal jurisdiction, and have the potential to impact waters of the state are required to comply with the terms of the Water Quality Certification Program. If a proposed project does not require a federal license or permit, any person discharging, or proposing to discharge, waste (e.g., soil) to waters of the State must file a Notice of Intent (NOI) or a Report of Waste Discharge and receive either waste discharge requirements (WDRs) or a waiver to WDRs before beginning the discharge.

4.3.2.2.10 State Requirements to Control Construction-Phase Water Quality Impacts

The CWA has nationally regulated the discharge of pollutants to the waters of the U.S. from any point source since 1972. In 1987, amendments to the CWA added section 402(p), which established a framework for regulating nonpoint source storm water discharges under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). The NPDES is a permitting system for the discharge of any pollutant (except for dredge or fill material) into waters of the U.S. In California, this permit program is administered by the RWQCBs. The NPDES General Construction Permit requirements apply to clearing, grading, and disturbances to the ground such as excavation. Construction activities on one or more acres are subject to a series of permitting requirements contained in the NPDES General Construction Permit. This permit requires the preparation and implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that includes Best Management Practices (BMPs) to be implemented during Project construction. The Project sponsor is also required to submit a Notice of Intent with the State Water Resources Control Board Division of Water Quality. The Notice of Intent includes general information on the types of construction activities that would occur on the site.

4.3.2.3 Local Regulations

4.3.2.3.1 Plumas County General Plan 2035

The Judicial Council, acting as the judicial branch of State government, is not subject to local land use regulations; however, the Judicial Council, as lead agency, considers local policies in evaluating whether the Project’s impacts would be significant.

Conservation and Open Space Element

Policy 7.2.1 Habitat Protection. The County shall protect areas that have significant habitat and wetland values, including riparian corridors, wetlands, grasslands, and creeks and rivers, from incompatible rural development. The County shall also support their protection as a method to provide carbon sequestration for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions under applicable State programs.

Policy 7.2.2 Species and Habitat Avoidance. The County shall require new development projects to avoid or minimize adverse impacts to threatened, rare, or endangered species and critical, sensitive habitat, as defined by appropriate local, state, and federal agencies, through proper project location and design. In the event that avoidance is not feasible, the County shall require a “no-net-loss” of these sensitive natural plant or habitat communities. Wildlife habitat will be preserved and managed in a manner that will not lead to the listing of additional species as threatened and endangered or negatively impact listed threatened or endangered species.

Policy 7.2.4 Stream Corridor Development. The County shall only permit new development within stream corridors when there is no lesser environmentally damaging feasible alternative and where the best feasible mitigation measures have been provided to minimize adverse environmental effects. This policy is not intended to affect the cleaning of stream channels to avoid the flooding or erosion of existing developed lands, stream restoration projects or permitted mining operations consistent with CEQA and the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA).

Policy 7.2.6 No Net-Loss of Wetland Habitats. The County shall require new development that is subject to review under CEQA to achieve a "no-net-loss" of wetland habitat through avoidance or appropriate mitigation in consultation with the appropriate resource protection agencies.

Policy 7.2.7 Wetland and Riparian Habitat Buffers. The County shall require new development that is subject to review under CEQA to identify wetlands and riparian habitat areas and designate a buffer zone around each area sufficient to protect these habitats from degradation, encroachment, or loss. As appropriate, criteria for the development of buffer width standards shall be developed in coordination with all appropriate resource agencies, and the County will continue to identify areas as Open Space and Significant Wetlands under the General Plan.

4.3.3 Impacts Analysis

4.3.3.1 Methodology

The biological resources impact analysis is based on information gathered from biological resources databases, including the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB), and the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Online Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants; aerial photography interpretation; an official species list obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information, Planning, and Conservation System (IPaC); and the results of a Biological Resources Report (MIG 2026) conducted for the Project, which is presented in Appendix C.

4.3.3.2 Thresholds of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Project would have a significant impact on biological resources if it would:

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

- 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.
- 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.
- Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance.

4.3.3.3 Topics Not Addressed Further

Conflict with an Adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or Other Approved Local, Regional, or State Habitat Conservation Plan: The Judicial Council, acting as the judicial branch of State government, is not subject to local land use regulations; however, the Judicial Council, as lead agency, considers local policies in evaluating whether the Project's impacts would be significant. The Project site is not within an area covered by an HCP or NCCP, or other approved conservation plan. As a result, the Project would have **no impact** related to a conservation plan and is not addressed further in this EIR.

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

4.3.3.4.1 Special-Status Plants

Outfall Option or Culvert Option

If present, Project activities within the drainage channel and adjacent riparian habitat associated with the implementation of drainage channel management strategies Outfall Option or Culvert Option may affect alder buckthorn, Castlegar hawthorn, Rocky Mountain chickweed, and Sheldon's sedge due to disturbance or destruction of individuals or suitable habitat. Direct impacts could include grading or filling areas supporting these species, trampling, or crushing of plants, and soil compaction. Indirect impacts could include increased mobilization of dust onto plants, which can affect their photosynthesis and respiration, or changes to hydrology supporting these plants due to grading or construction in nearby habitats.

Conservation of alder buckthorn and Sheldon's sedge, which are special-status species and considered fairly threatened in California, is important because even small populations contribute to preserving the genetic resources for these species and ensuring their persistence in Plumas County and the state. For plants on the watchlist or which have limited distribution in California (Castlegar hawthorn and obtuse starwort), conservation of populations of these species is also important since more current and accurate information is still needed on the distribution and ecology of these species. With implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1a through BIO-1c, potential impacts to these species would be reduced to less than significant. Therefore, all potential impacts on special-status plants would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated***.

Mitigation Measures

Impact BIO-1: Project activities could impact special-status plants.

Mitigation Measure BIO-1a: Pre-Activity Focused Survey for Special-Status Plants. Prior to initial ground disturbance in the Project site, and during the appropriate blooming period for each species: alder buckthorn (May - July), Castlegar hawthorn (May - August), obtuse starwort (May - August), and Sheldon's sedge (May - August), focused surveys will be conducted by a qualified plant ecologist within suitable habitat in the Project site and a 50-foot buffer around the Project site, where feasible. A qualified plant ecologist is an individual who has minimum of a BA or BS in biological sciences or related discipline (e.g., environmental sciences) and professional work experience in biological sciences, including a minimum of two survey seasons conducting surveys for each special-status plant species that will be surveyed.

The purpose of the survey will be to assess the presence or absence of special-status species. If no special-status species are found in the Project site or in the 50-foot buffer, then no further mitigation will be warranted. The results of the survey will be documented. If a special-status species is found on the Project site, then Mitigation Measure BIO-1b would be implemented.

Mitigation Measure BIO-1b: Avoidance Buffers. To the extent feasible, and in consultation with a qualified plant ecologist, the Judicial Council and/or its DBE will construct the Project to avoid impacts on all populations of special-status plant species within the Project site or within the identified buffer of the impact area described in Mitigation Measure BIO-1a. Avoided special-status plant populations will be protected by establishing and observing the identified buffer between plant populations and the impact area. All such populations located in the impact area or the identified buffer, and their associated designated avoidance areas, will be clearly depicted on any construction plans. In addition, prior to initial ground disturbance or vegetation removal, the limits of the identified buffer around special-status plants to be avoided will be flagged or fenced. The flagging will be maintained intact and in good condition throughout Project-related construction activities. If avoidance is not feasible, then Mitigation Measure BIO-1c will be implemented.

Mitigation Measure BIO-1c: Provide a Mitigation Plan for Impacts to Special-Status Plants. If the impact on special-status plants cannot be avoided, the Judicial Council shall comply with CDFW's determination of the appropriate measures to mitigate the Project's significant impacts on special-status plants. These measures may include preserving and enhancing existing populations, creation of off-site populations on Project mitigation sites through seed collection or transplantation, and/or restoring or creating suitable habitat in sufficient quantities to mitigate against loss.

4.3.3.4.2 Special-Status Animals

Western Bumble Bee

Outfall Option or Culvert Option

Construction activities, including tree and shrub removal, clearing of downed woody debris, and grading activities could result in the destruction of active nests of western bumble bee, and result in the injury or death of adults, eggs, and larvae. However, with the implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-2a through BIO-2c, potential impacts on western bumble bee would be reduced to less than significant. Therefore, all potential impacts on western bumble bee would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated***.

Mitigation Measures

Impact BIO-2: Project activities could impact western bumble bee.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2a: Pre-construction/Pre-disturbance Survey for Western Bumble Bee. Prior to the start of construction activities, including tree removal, staging of equipment, and/or grading activities, a qualified biologist shall conduct pre-construction surveys for western bumble bee nests. The qualified biologist shall have a degree in biological sciences, or similar degree; knowledge in the life history and ecology of western bumble bee and their identification; and have a minimum of two field seasons of experience conducting focused surveys with positive identification of western bumble bee.

Pre-construction surveys shall entail a minimum of three visual encounter surveys for foraging western bumble bees and their active nests. Surveys should be conducted during the height of the active flight season (April - September) when probability of detection is highest, and in the same year that Project activities are planned to start. These surveys should be spaced 2 to 4 weeks apart to account for variability in resource use and availability. Surveys shall be conducted during dry conditions (i.e., when it is not raining, foggy, or drizzling), when temperatures are above 70° Fahrenheit, and during low wind speeds (i.e., less than 8 miles per hour) (CDFW 2023). If the pre-construction surveys do not identify western bumble bee nests, no additional surveys or mitigation is required. If western bumble bee nests are observed, then Mitigation Measure BIO-2b will be implemented.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2b. Prepare a Habitat Protection Plan for Western Bumble Bee. If western bumble bee nests are detected on the Project site, the qualified biologist shall prepare a plan to protect active nests and surrounding foraging areas and protect potential overwintering habitat within the Project site. The plan shall be implemented as part of the site activities. The plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following measures:

- Fencing or flagging to delineate no-disturbance buffers around active nest sites.
- Construction monitoring during initial ground disturbance activities.
- Avoidance of initial ground disturbance between November and February to protect potential overwintering queen western bumble bees.
- Retaining existing woody debris to support overwintering queen bumble bees.
- Where erosion control and/slope stabilization are required, prescription of seed mix composed of locally native flower species, known to be visited by western bumble bee.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2c. Obtain an Incidental Take Permit. If “take” or adverse impacts to western bumble bee cannot be avoided, then CDFW shall be consulted to determine if a CESA section 2080 Incidental Take Permit (ITP) is required. If an ITP is required, the Project shall comply with any requirements of the ITP.

Willow Flycatcher

Willow flycatchers are protected under CESA. Direct take of a state-listed species is considered a significant impact. Furthermore, willow flycatchers and their nests are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and California Fish and Game Code. Project activities must comply with CESA and the provisions of the MBTA and California Fish and Game Code (i.e., avoid take of protected nesting birds).

Construction Disturbance

Outfall Option or Culvert Option

Construction disturbance during the willow flycatcher breeding season (late May through mid-August) could result in the incidental loss of eggs or nestlings, either directly through the destruction or disturbance of active nests or indirectly by causing the abandonment of nests. In addition, noise and increased construction activity could temporarily alter foraging behavior, potentially resulting in the abandonment of nest sites. However, with the implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-3, project construction impacts on nesting birds would be reduced to less than significant. Therefore, potential construction disturbance impacts on willow flycatcher would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated.***

Mitigation Measures

Impact BIO-3: Project activities could impact nesting willow flycatchers.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3: Pre-Construction/Pre-Disturbance Protocol-level Surveys for Willow Flycatcher

Avoidance. To the extent feasible, construction activities, including mobilization and staging, surveying, clearing, grubbing, vegetation removal, fence installation, demolition, grading, and any other related activities, should be scheduled to avoid the nesting season. If construction activities are scheduled to take place outside the nesting season, all impacts to nesting birds protected under the MBTA and California Fish and Game Code would be avoided. The nesting season for willow flycatcher generally extends from late May through mid-August.

Pre-Construction Protocol-level Surveys. If construction and construction noise will occur within the avian nesting season (from late May to mid-August), all suitable habitats located within the Project's area of disturbance, including staging and storage areas plus a 250-foot buffer around these areas shall be thoroughly surveyed, as feasible, for the presence of active nests. The survey protocol (Bombay et al. 2003) can be found at https://www.birdpop.org/docs/misc/Meadows-A-Willow-Flycatcher-Survey-Protocol.pdf and requires the following:

- A minimum of two separate surveys in one year at each site; one during survey period 2 (June 15-25) and one during either survey period 1 (June 1-14), or survey period 3 (June 26-July 15) to document presence or absence of willow flycatchers in the survey year.
- To be considered a separate survey, visits must be at least 5 days apart; surveys done fewer than 5 days apart are not considered to be in separate survey periods.
- Follow-up visits are required when a flycatcher is detected and suspected but not confirmed to be a willow flycatcher.
- The surveys will be conducted by a qualified biologist. The qualified biologist shall have a degree in biological sciences, or similar degree; knowledge in the life history and ecology of the willow flycatcher and locally common avian species; and have a minimum of two field seasons of experience conducting protocol-level surveys for willow flycatchers with positive identification of willow flycatchers. The qualified biologist will also have the necessary regulatory agency permits and be approved by CDFW to conduct willow flycatcher surveys.

- The results of the surveys shall be documented per the requirements of the protocol.

If the surveys result in the location of active nests, no site disturbance and/or mobilization of heavy equipment (including but not limited to equipment staging, fence installation, clearing, grubbing, vegetation removal, fence installation, demolition, grading, and soil stockpiling), shall take place within 250 feet of willow flycatcher nests unless smaller buffers are determined to be appropriate by the qualified biologist in consultation with CDFW.

Potential Loss of Habitat

Outfall Option

The installation of a stormwater outfall pipe that discharges into the existing drainage channel could impact willow flycatcher nesting and foraging habitat by removing or altering the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets*. The area of vegetation removal would be limited to the stormwater pipeline and outfall construction zone and the loss of vegetation would not significantly reduce the habitat available to willow flycatcher due to the small impact area and the presence of additional nearby nesting habitat. Therefore, the potential loss of habitat impact on willow flycatcher from Outfall Option would be ***less than significant***.

Culvert Option

If the drainage channel is culverted, there would be a permanent loss of the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* along the length of the drainage channel on the property, which may result in the loss of nesting and foraging habitat available to willow flycatcher, if present. Given the availability of higher quality nesting and foraging habitat in the Project region, the loss of willow flycatcher habitat from project removal of Lemmon's Willow Thickets would not be significant. Further, if the Project results in the permanent loss of *Lemmon's Willow Thickets*, CDFW may require additional mitigation for the loss of habitat (see Mitigation Measure BIO-6a). Therefore, the potential loss of habitat impact on willow flycatcher from Culvert Option would be ***less than significant***.

Yellow-breasted Chat, Yellow Warbler, and Other Nesting Birds

All migratory bird species and their nests are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and California Fish and Game Code. Project activities must comply with the provisions of the MBTA and California Fish and Game Code (i.e., avoid take of protected nesting birds).

Construction Disturbance

Outfall Option or Culvert Option

Construction disturbance during the avian breeding season (February 1 - September 15, for most species) could result in the incidental loss of eggs or nestlings, either directly through the destruction or disturbance of active nests or indirectly by causing the abandonment of nests. In addition, noise and increased construction activity could temporarily alter foraging behavior, potentially resulting in the abandonment of nest sites. However, with the implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-4, impacts on nesting birds would be reduced or avoided. Therefore, construction disturbance impacts on yellow-breasted chat, yellow warbler, and other nesting birds would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated***.

Mitigation Measures

Impact BIO-4: Project activities could impact nesting birds, including yellow-breasted chat and yellow warbler**.**

Mitigation Measure BIO-4: Pre-Construction/Pre-Disturbance Survey for Nesting Birds.

Avoidance. To the extent feasible, construction activities, including mobilization and staging, surveying, clearing, grubbing, vegetation removal, fence installation, demolition, grading, and any other related activities, should be scheduled to avoid the nesting season. If construction activities are scheduled to take place outside the nesting season, all impacts to nesting birds protected under the MBTA and California Fish and Game Code would be avoided. The nesting season for most birds in Plumas County extends from February 1 to September 15.

Pre-Construction Surveys. If construction and construction noise occur within the avian nesting season (February 1 - September 15), all suitable habitats located within the Project's area of disturbance, including staging and storage areas plus a 250-foot (passerines) and 1,000-foot (raptor nests) buffer around these areas shall be thoroughly surveyed, as feasible, for the presence of active nests. The surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than 5 days before commencement of any vegetation trimming, site disturbance activities and/or equipment mobilization. If Project activities are delayed by more than 5 days, an additional nesting bird survey shall be performed. Active nesting is present if a bird is building a nest, sitting in a nest, a nest has eggs or chicks in it, or adults are observed carrying food to the nest. The results of the surveys shall be documented.

A qualified biologist is an individual who has minimum of a BA or BS in biological sciences or related discipline (e.g., environmental sciences) and professional work experience in biological sciences, including a minimum of two survey seasons conducting surveys for avian species in the Project region or in other areas with similar habitats.

If pre-construction nesting bird surveys result in the location of active nests, no site disturbance and/or mobilization of heavy equipment (including but not limited to equipment staging, fence installation, clearing, grubbing, vegetation removal, fence installation, demolition, grading, and soil stockpiling), shall take place within 250 feet of non-raptor nests and 1,000 feet of raptor nests, unless smaller buffers are determined to be appropriate by a qualified biologist. If work is required within the buffers, the qualified biologist will assess the level of disturbance from the planned work and determine if a smaller buffer is warranted (e.g., installation of sheet pile with an impact hammer would not warrant a smaller buffer, but minor grading and excavation may warrant a smaller buffer). If the qualified biologist determines that a smaller buffer is warranted, then the planned work may proceed. The qualified biologist will observe the behavior of the nesting bird(s) and/or chicks during the onset of the planned work and if the nesting bird(s) and/or chicks do not show signs of distress then work may resume within the smaller buffer. If the nesting bird(s) and/or chicks show signs of distress, then the planned work will cease within the smaller buffer and work may resume within the original buffer established. The buffer shall remain in place until the chicks have fledged. Monitoring by a qualified biologist will ensure compliance with MBTA and relevant California Fish and Game Code requirements. Monitoring dates and findings shall be documented.

Potential Loss of Habitat

Outfall Option

The installation of a stormwater outfall pipe that discharges into the existing drainage channel could impact the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* by removal of vegetation. The area of vegetation removal would be limited to the stormwater pipeline and outfall construction zone and the loss of vegetation would not significantly reduce the habitat available to yellow-breasted chat, yellow warbler, and other nesting birds due to the small impact area and the presence of additional nearby nesting habitat. Therefore, the potential loss of habitat impact on yellow-breasted chat, yellow warbler, and other nesting birds from Outfall Option would be ***less than significant***.

Culvert Option

If the drainage channel is culverted, there would be a permanent loss of up to 0.3 acres of the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets*, which may result in the loss of nesting and foraging habitat for yellow-breasted chat, yellow warbler, and other nesting birds, if observed nesting in the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets*. Given the availability of higher quality nesting and foraging habitat in the Project region, these impacts will not be significant. However, CDFW may require mitigation for the permanent loss of *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* (see Mitigation Measure BIO-7a). Therefore, the potential loss of habitat impact on yellow-breasted chat, yellow warbler and other nesting birds from Culvert Option would be ***less than significant***.

Migratory Birds

Avian Collisions with Windows

Outfall Option or Culvert Option

Glass windows, including facades, have the potential to cause injury or mortality to birds when birds collide with these surfaces. Birds do not perceive glass as an obstruction and may collide with glass walls or windows when the sky or nearby vegetation is reflected in glass; when transparent glass appears as an unobstructed flight route through the glass; and when birds attempt to access vegetation behind transparent glass such as glass railings (Loss et al. 2014; Sheppard and Phillips 2015). Additionally, interior and exterior lighting, especially when pointed upward, can disorient birds and potentially attract them to buildings, increasing collision risks. These risks are highest for buildings in or near areas of high avian activity or movement, such as migratory corridors, large open spaces, large water bodies, and riparian habitats.

The *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* riparian corridor provides potential habitat for a variety of bird species, which could forage and travel through the Project site given the proximity of the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* to the proposed location of the new building (Figure 4-6, Photo 2). Additionally, if the Project incorporates landscaping with trees, shrubs, and herbaceous vegetation around the building and parking areas, this vegetation will attract birds in the area and increase bird activity around the buildings. Therefore, following construction of the Project, birds using the on-site landscaping and flying between landscaped areas on the site and the unnamed drainage channel riparian corridor may collide with the buildings, resulting in the death of migratory and non-migratory species. Individual special-status bird species are not expected to make use of the landscaping on the Project site; however, all native migratory birds regardless of special-status are protected under the Migratory Bird Protection Act (California Fish and Game Code 3513).

The most common bird strike zone is from the ground to 60 feet, and then again at 500 feet for skyscrapers (Loss et al. 2015) with glazing. Glazing starts to be a hazard to birds at about 24 square feet in size. Since detailed building specifications will be developed during the design-build process, it is conservatively assumed that building glass will not be made with patterns or light reflectance values that would be more visible to birds and thereby reduce the likelihood of collision with the glass.

The Project will be designed and constructed in accordance with the Facilities Standards, which include lighting strategies to reduce glare and light pollution such as LED luminaires compliant with International Dark-Sky Association requirements and exterior lighting levels reduced during nighttime hours of inactive periods. The 2025 California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen) Nonresidential Voluntary Measures (found in Title 24, Part 11, Appendix A5, Section A5.107) include bird-friendly design provisions for new construction and major alterations. These voluntary standards specify that a portion of a building's facade be treated to reduce bird collisions. The Facilities Standards do not incorporate these voluntary measures.

The proposed building will be adjacent to a riparian corridor that may attract a variety of birds including migratory birds, regardless of whether the Project implements drainage channel Outfall Option or Culvert Option. The proposed building could result in a cumulatively significant loss of birds over time when considered alongside other similar buildings in the project area. However, the implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-5 would minimize the loss of birds by window strike impact to less than significant. Therefore, the avian collision with windows impact on migratory birds would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated***.

Mitigation Measures

Impact BIO-5: Glass windows and facades as well as lighting in the newly constructed building could potentially cause injury or mortality to birds through collisions with glass surfaces.

Mitigation Measure BIO-5: Standards for Bird Safe Buildings. The Project shall implement the applicable bird-friendly design standards from the 2025 California Green Building Standards Code A5.107 (ICC 2025), which may include the following building specifications:

- At least 90% of glazing on building elevations between grade and 40 feet high, and at least 60% of glazing above 40 feet above grade will use bird-friendly mitigation strategies.
- Glazing with visual markers shall include, but is not limited to, the following:
  - Etched or fritted glass with patterns of elements on the exterior.
  - Interior or exterior glazing film with 2 × 2 visual markers.
  - Laminated glass with 2 × 2 visual markers, patterned ultraviolet (UV) coating or use of contrasting patterned UV-absorbing and UV-reflecting films.
  - Glass block or channel glass.
  - Developed glazing technologies documented to reduce bird strikes.
- Glazing protected by exterior features that create a visible barrier in front of the glazing, may include, but not be limited to:
  - Horizontal or vertical slats, grills, netting or sunshades.

Additionally, the Project shall implement the applicable bird-friendly design options for landscaping and lighting from the USFWS *Reducing Bird Collisions with Buildings and Buildings Glass Best Practices*, which may include the following:

Lighting

- Avoid unnecessary lighting, including perimeter lighting.
- Install motion sensors on all lights (both interior and exterior) that activate only when people are present.
- Ensure all exterior lighting is "fully shielded", so that all light is only emitted downward below the lowest light emitting part of the fixture.
- Ensure that any lights that are not motion-activated are turned off at night, especially architectural lighting, interior lighting, and lobby or atrium lighting.

Landscaping

- Avoid using glass in supplemental structures (e.g., bus shelters, guard rails, glass walls, etc.). If unavoidable, use glass with visual markers or exterior features listed above.
- Avoid planting trees and shrubs adjacent to, seen through, or reflected in any glass structures. If unavoidable, use glass with visual markers or exterior features listed above.
- Avoid placing indoor plants adjacent to clear glass windows or move them far enough away so that they can't be seen from the outside.

For all measures intended to avoid and minimize the likelihood of bird strikes at the Project, the relevant guidance documents should be consulted for detailed discussion and descriptions of the applicable design specifications.

Additionally, the proposed design specifications to minimize bird strikes will be approved by a qualified biologist with experience in both avian ecology and analyzing bird strike potential from buildings.

Townsend's Big-eared Bat, Western Red Bat, and Bat Colonies

Outfall Option or Culvert Option

Bats may roost in the old Quincy Lumber & Supply building, other structures/buildings, and trees within the Project site. Pre-construction and construction activities, including abatement, demolition, use of heavy equipment, removal of vegetation, and other pre-construction and construction activities may result in injury or mortality of individuals. Additionally, noise from generators, powerpacks, heavy equipment, and other construction activities could result in the disturbance of active maternity or day roosts, disrupt foraging and dispersal behavior of bats, and may result in roost abandonment.

Therefore, Project-related impacts on roosting bats would be considered potentially significant. However, with the implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-6a through BIO-6c, impacts on roosting bats would be reduced to less than significant. Therefore, the impact on Townsend's big-eared bat, western red bat, and bat colonies would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated*.**

Mitigation Measures

Impact BIO-6: Project activities could impact roosting bats and bat colonies.

Mitigation Measure BIO-6a: Avoidance and Minimization of Impacts to Special-Status Bats and Sensitive Bat Colonies. No less than 6 months prior to Project initiation, a habitat assessment for roosting bats shall be conducted for all buildings and trees on the Project site and within 100 feet of the site, as access allows. A qualified bat biologist will conduct the survey and will look for evidence of bat use in buildings and trees.

A qualified bat biologist is defined as a biologist with a degree in biology, ecology, zoology, or related degree, is knowledgeable in life histories of bat species, can correctly identify bat species, has demonstrable experience conducting surveys/assessments with positive findings and mitigation planning (i.e., avoidance, minimization, compensatory) for bats and is familiar with survey protocols, and is knowledgeable of state and federal laws protecting sensitive species.

If evidence of use is observed, or if roost sites are present in areas where evidence of bat use might not be detectable (such as crevices), an evening survey that utilizes bat acoustic detectors will be conducted to determine if bats are roosting on the site, the species, and the location of the roost. The evening survey must be conducted during the appropriate time of year when bats are detectable in the region (March 15 - September 15, or as determined by the qualified biologist). If an active roost of special-status bats, maternity colony, or winter hibernacula of non-special-status bats is detected, construction activities will be modified or revised to avoid disturbance of the roost. If an active roost of special-status bats, maternity colony, or winter hibernacula of non-special-status bats cannot be avoided, removal or disturbance of the roost will be scheduled to take place outside the maternity roost season (April 15 - September 15), and winter hibernacula season (October 15 - March 1). If special-status bats, maternity colony, or winter hibernaculum is detected and construction work cannot be modified or revised to avoid removal or disturbance of the occupied roost, the qualified bat biologist shall develop a bat mitigation plan (see Mitigation Measure BIO-6b).

Mitigation Measure BIO-6b: Bat Mitigation Plan. At a minimum, the bat mitigation plan will include methods for humane bat exclusion, including the timing of the exclusion, type of exclusion devices to be used, and no-disturbance buffers around any sensitive roosts adjacent to the Project area. Acceptable timing for exclusion is September 15 - October 15 or March 1 - April 15. The timing may be adjusted by a qualified biologist based on regional weather patterns.

The bat mitigation plan shall also prescribe replacement bat roost habitat that is specific to the type of roost and the species being displaced. The plan will describe (1) the type of roost habitat being removed, (2) type of replacement habitat structure to be constructed/installed, (3) location of the replacement habitat, (4) performance standards for the use of the habitat by the displaced species, and (5) timeline for monitoring the use of the habitat, and (6) the credentials of the biologist performing/overseeing the exclusion. This plan will be implemented at least 30 days prior to eviction of bats from the roost.

Mitigation Measure BIO-6c: Tree Removal. To minimize impacts on individual roosting western red bats, trees without a maternity colony or winter hibernacula may be removed September 15 - October 15 or March 1 - April 15. Additionally, trees shall be removed when evening temperatures are above 45° F, daytime temperatures are at least 65°F, and there is

no forecasted rain for 48 hours before or after tree removal activities. Once these conditions have been met, the following process shall be followed to remove trees with potential roost habitat.

- Remove trees in two steps over a period of 2 days where portions of the trees containing no habitat are removed on the first day and the remaining portion of the tree with habitat is removed on the second day. All branch removal shall be conducted using chainsaws or similar handheld equipment.
- When removing the tree on the second day, work should be conducted in a sensitive manner, and where reasonably practicable, so that the cut tree is lowered to the ground and left for at least 48 hours to allow any existing bats to leave the tree unharmed.
- A qualified bat biologist shall be present to point out potential roost habitat to the tree removal contractor and to monitor tree removal.

4.3.3.5 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 Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* is classified as a sensitive community by CDFW and may be regulated by the RWQCB and/or CDFW under section 1600 et seq. of the California Fish and Game Code because it is also considered riparian habitat. Permits from the RWQCB and CDFW may require additional conservation and mitigation measures than what are described below.

4.3.3.5.1 Artificial Lighting

Many animals, including special-status species, are sensitive to light cues, which influence their physiology and influence their behaviors, particularly during the breeding season (de Molenaar et al. 2006). It is known that photoperiod (the relative amount of light and dark in a 24-hour period), is an essential cue triggering physiological processes such as growth, metabolism, development, breeding behavior, and molting in birds, mammals, and many other taxa, suggesting that increases in ambient light may interfere with these processes across a wide range of species and result in impacts on wildlife populations (Beier 2006; de Molenaar et al. 2006).

Artificial lighting may also indirectly affect mammals and birds by increasing the nocturnal activity of predators like owls, hawks, and mammals (Negro et al. 2000, Longcore and Rich 2004, DeCandido and Allen 2006, Beier 2006). The presence of artificial light may influence habitat use by rodents and by breeding birds (Beier 2006; de Molenaar et al. 2006) by causing avoidance of well-lit areas, resulting in a net loss of habitat availability and quality.

The Project would introduce outdoor lighting of parking areas and the building exterior in accordance with Facilities Standards. Facilities Standards 16.C.1 Exterior Lighting specifically address outdoor lighting requirements for court facilities such as use of LED with integrated motion controls in parking lot luminaires and reduced lighting during inactive periods with an exemption for nighttime security lighting to minimize light pollution (see Aesthetics section 4.1.2.2). The 2025 CALGreen Nonresidential Voluntary Measures (found in Title 24, Part 11, Appendix A5, Section A5.203) include outdoor lighting provisions for new construction and additions. Facilities Standards specify the CalGreen code regarding light pollution measures

should be considered but the voluntary measures are not required. The type and location of lighting will be determined during the design-build process.

Outfall Option

The *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* on the Project site occur in a narrow band of drainage channel within an urban setting. Under Outfall Option, the existing riparian habitat including the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* sensitive community would remain along the drainage channel and could be illuminated by Project outdoor lighting. If the project includes the installation of lighting that illuminates the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* and riparian area, such lighting could potentially have adverse effects on wildlife species present in these habitats.

As described above, Facilities Standards require LED lights with motion sensors in parking lots and dimmed lighting during inactive periods with an exemption for nighttime security lighting. The Facilities Standards prohibit light emissions beyond the property but do not include restrictions that would specifically prevent illumination of the sensitive vegetation and riparian habitat along the property drainage channel. To avoid significant impact, lighting should be low intensity, directed inward to the Project site rather than directing any lighting toward the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* and drainage channel, and downward toward the ground for any permanent lighting.

CalGreen Code A5.203.1.1.1.1 specifies that newly installed outdoor lighting power shall be no greater than 90% of Allowed Outdoor Lighting Power and shall have a color temperature no higher than 3000K which is consistent with the Dark Sky Association requirements. CalGreen Code A5203.1.1.1.2 specifies that outdoor pole-mounted and arm-mounted luminaires should be installed with tilting not greater than 10 degrees, or the outdoor luminaires shall be installed with arm-mount or tenon-mount capable of tilting less than or within 10 degrees. The Facilities Standards do not incorporate these voluntary measures. With Mitigation Measure BIO-7, implementation of the CalGreen voluntary measures and specification of dimmed lights during inactive periods without exemption would reduce the illumination impact on Lemmon's Willow Thickets and riparian habitats to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the impact of artificial light on sensitive communities and riparian habitat would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated*.**

Mitigation Measures

Impact BIO-7: Under Outfall Option, artificial lighting of building exterior or parking areas may illuminate the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* and drainage channel having adverse effects on riparian habitat.

Mitigation BIO-7: Outdoor Lighting Plan. The Project shall implement an outdoor lighting plan that includes reduced lighting in parking areas during inactive periods specified in Facilities Standards 16.C.1.h.

The outdoor lighting plan shall also incorporate design standards from the 2025 CalGreen Code A5.203, which shall include the following specifications:

- A5.203.1.1.1 Newly installed outdoor lighting power shall be no greater than 90 percent of the Allowed Outdoor Lighting Power, and general hardscape lighting within the scope of Title 24, Part 6, Section 140.7(b)1 shall have a color temperature no higher than 3000K. The Allowed Outdoor Lighting Power calculation is specified in Title 24, Park 6, Section 140.7, Requirements for Outdoor Lighting.

- A5.203.1.1.1.2 Outdoor pole mounted luminaries shall be installed with tilting not greater than 10 degrees, or the outdoor luminaires shall be installed with arm-mount or tenon-mount capable of tilting less than or within 10 degrees.

Culvert Option

If the Project implements Culvert Option in which the drainage channel is culverted, the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* would be removed. With the permanent loss of the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* on the Project site there would be ***no impact*** of artificial lighting on the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* and associated riparian habitat. The loss of vegetation impact of Culvert Option is discussed separately below.

4.3.3.5.2 Loss of Vegetation

Outfall Option

Ground clearance and excavation activities to: install the stormwater outfall pipe that discharges stormwater into the existing drainage channel could impact the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* in the Project area and may require permits from the RWQCB and/or CDFW. Examples of significant permanent impacts that may require CDFW authorization include removal of trees and other woody vegetation, grading, and placement of fill (e.g., rip rap, concrete, shotcrete). Examples of significant temporary impacts that may also require authorization from CDFW include removal of understory herbaceous vegetation, creation of temporary access points, and substantial tree trimming.

Additionally, the presence of Himalayan blackberry, which is classified as highly invasive by Cal-IPC and four other species classified as moderately invasive at the Project site creates a threat of spreading invasive weeds into areas of the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* disturbed by the Project (See Table 4-14 for a complete list of invasive species observed).

If Outfall Option impacts *Lemmon's Willow Thickets*, the area of vegetation removal would be limited to the stormwater pipeline and outfall construction zone. Designing the outfall to minimize or avoid permanent loss of vegetation and replanting the disturbed area after installation would minimize the impact on the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets*. The vegetation loss would mostly be temporary, and any permanent loss of this sensitive community would either be minimal or avoided. Replacement of vegetation through implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-8a and BIO-8c would reduce impacts on the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* to a less-than-significant level. As a result, the impact on sensitive communities under Outfall Option would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated***.

Culvert Option

If Culvert Option for culverting the drainage channel is implemented, ground clearance and excavation activities to install the culvert would result in a permanent loss of up to 0.3 acres of the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* in the Project site and may require permits from the RWQCB and/or CDFW. Replacement of vegetation through implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-8a would reduce impacts to the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* to a less-than-significant level. With implementation of Mitigation Measure 8a, the impact on sensitive communities under Culvert Option would be ***less-than-significant with mitigation incorporated***.

Mitigation Measures

Impact BIO-8: Project activities could potentially impact the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* and riparian habitat.

Mitigation Measure BIO-8a: A Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (HMMP). For Outfall Option or Culvert Option, an HMMP shall be prepared and implemented to replace and protect sensitive native habitats (including aquatic habitat; see below) in the Project site. Onsite restoration will include replacement and/or habitat enhancement ratios at a minimum 1:1 mitigation ratio for temporary and permanent impacts on *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* as well as aquatic habitat. If on-site restoration is not feasible, then offsite in-kind restoration or preservation will also be at a minimum 1:1 mitigation ratio, unless an applicable agency requires a higher or lower restoration or preservation mitigation ratio. Specific recommendations are provided below.

- Identify the responsible parties.
- Describe Project impacts on habitat types and functions and values.
- Identify specific sites for restoration and identify the amount and type of habitat restored in each site.
- Set goals and performance standards for the restoration.
- Set goals and performance standards for the control of invasive weeds with a Cal-IPC Inventory rating of moderate or high.
- Provide a detailed implementation plan, including a schedule for completing and monitoring the restoration, financial assurances, construction drawings for a planting/restoration plan, an irrigation plan if appropriate, and maintenance requirements.
- Specify monitoring requirements and a minimum monitoring period of 5 years, with annual reports.
- Identify contingency and adaptive management measures if restoration does not meet performance standards.

The HMMP may be included with any permit applications to the USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW, and the ultimate details will be refined pending agency comments. Permit requirements related to the HMMP shall be incorporated into the final HMMP that is implemented.

Mitigation Measure BIO-8b: Construction Measures to Minimize Invasive Plant Infestations. For Outfall Option, the following measures shall be taken during construction to minimize invasive plant infestation and potential impacts of invasive plants on sensitive vegetation communities:

- All ground disturbing equipment used adjacent to native habitats will be washed (including wheels, tracks, and undercarriages) both before and after being used at the site. Worker personal gear, including boots, should also be cleaned and clear of plant material prior to entering the work area.
- All seeds and straw materials used on site shall be weed-free rice straw, and all gravel and fill material shall be certified weed free.

- The Project will implement erosion control measures to reduce stormwater runoff which can carry the seed of invasive plants to sensitive vegetation habitats (see below).
- All disturbed soils within sensitive habitats will be stabilized and planted in accordance with the restoration plan prepared for the Project (see Mitigation Measure BIO-8a).
- Soil and vegetation removed from weed-infested areas will not be used in general soil stockpiles and will not be redistributed as topsoil cover for the newly filled areas. All weed-infested soil will be disposed of off-site at a landfill or buried at least 2.5 feet below final grade.

Mitigation Measure BIO-8c: Long-term Riparian Protection Measures. The following measure(s) for the long-term maintenance and avoidance of impacts to the *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* as well as aquatic habitat for Outfall Option will be implemented through an education and notification process for all future Judicial Council site managers such that no vegetation management along the banks of or in the unnamed drainage channel would occur without consultation with a qualified biologist and notification of CDFW if work would occur within the banks of the drainage channel.

4.3.3.6 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

The drainage channel (aquatic habitat) has not been evaluated by USACE for agency determination of whether it meets the definition of Waters of the U.S. Impacts to the drainage channel are potentially subject to jurisdiction by the USACE, RWQCB, and/or CDFW. Permits from the USACE, RWQCB, and/or CDFW may require additional conservation and mitigation measures than what are described below.

Outfall Option

Examples of significant permanent impacts that may require authorization include removal of trees and other woody vegetation, installation of a stormwater outfall, grading, placement of fill (e.g., rip rap, concrete, shotcrete). Examples of significant temporary impacts that may also require authorization include removal of understory herbaceous vegetation, creation of temporary access points, and substantial tree trimming, and degradation of surface or ground water quality due to erosion and transport of fine sediments and contaminants into the channel and downstream aquatic habitat, which could adversely affect fish and wildlife within this habitat.

If the Project implements Outfall Option, implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-8a and BIO-8b and compliance with the requirements to control the discharge of stormwater pollutants under the NPDES Construction General Permit would reduce impacts to potential Waters of the U.S./State to ***less than significant***.

Mitigation Measures

Impact BIO-9: Project activities could potentially impact jurisdictional waters (drainage channel).

See **Mitigation Measures 8a and 8b.**

4.3.3.7 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

Continuous riparian buffers also provide important wildlife migration corridors, which are critical "movement highways" for terrestrial species such as mammals and reptiles as well as for water dependent species such as amphibians and waterfowl. Wildlife corridors play an important role in countering habitat fragmentation. A wildlife corridor is a landscape element which serves as a linkage between historically connected habitats or landscapes that are otherwise separated and is meant to provide avenues along which wildlife can travel, migrate, and find mates; plants can propagate; genetic interchange can occur; populations can move in response to environmental changes and natural disasters; and individuals can re-colonize habitats from which populations have been locally extirpated. Corridors can consist of a sequence of stepping-stones across the landscape (i.e., discontinuous areas of habitat such as isolated wetlands and roadside vegetation), continuous lineal strips of vegetation and habitat (e.g., riparian strips and ridge lines), or they may be parts of larger habitat areas of known or likely importance to local wildlife.

The unnamed drainage channel, including associated riparian habitat may function as a wildlife movement corridor for a variety of terrestrial and aquatic species given its connectivity to tributaries of Spanish Creek. However, since the Project site is surrounded by commercial and residential development and is not adjacent to any natural open space areas, the Project site likely functions as an isolated corridor primarily for wildlife that are commonly found in developed or urban areas. Furthermore, urban adapted species may also breed within and around the Project site, but no regionally important wildlife nursery areas are present in the Project site or would be impacted by the Project.

Grading and other construction activities could restrict some wildlife species from moving between suitable habitat patches during construction within and adjacent to the Project site. In addition, noise and disturbance associated with construction activities could impact habitat connectivity within the site during construction for species that commonly use habitats in the Project site. If dewatering of the unnamed drainage channel is required during construction, the movement of aquatic species will be temporarily impeded during construction. Furthermore, if Project construction also occurred at night, when many nocturnal mammals, reptiles, and amphibians are active, use of the Project site by dispersing nocturnal animals would be limited during construction.

After Project completion, based on the current conceptual plans including the implementation of Outfall Option and Culvert Option for the Project, there would be a permanent loss of dispersal habitat due to the loss of vegetation communities, i.e., *Wild Oats and Annual Brome Grasslands*, but will likely be limited to common species that are regionally abundant. Thus, the restriction of movement across the site during construction and after Project completion is not expected to have a substantial impact on their regional populations. Therefore, impacts on the movement of wildlife would be ***less than significant***.

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

While the Judicial Council is not subject to local land use regulations and ordinances, the Judicial Council considered local policies and ordinances intended to protect biological

resources in evaluating the Project's impacts. Relevant local policies are identified above in section 4.3.2.3.

The Project would not conflict with the Plumas County Conservation and Open Space Element. While the Project Culvert Option proposes the removal of riparian habitat, such removal would not be incompatible with rural development because the drainage channel is already culverted up to the Project's boundary (Policy 7.2.1). With Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-8, the Project will avoid or minimize impacts to threatened, rare, and endangered species, and related habitat, and will not conflict with Policy 7.2.2. The Project is proposed for a previously developed site, and to the extent the drainage might be considered a stream corridor the Project is not new development and does not conflict with Policy 7.2.4 relating to flooding, erosion, and stream restoration projects; and the County has expressed support for Culvert Option (Thorman, Rob, personal correspondence, March 20, 2026). Although Culvert Option would remove wetland habitat along the drainage channel, as described in sections 7.3 and 7.4, that habitat is of limited value and higher quality nesting and foraging habitat already exists in the Project region. Under Mitigation Measure BIO-8a, the Project would provide for no net loss of habitat. If the relevant permitting agency requires additional no-net-loss or habitat enhancement, the Project would comply with any permit conditions. Thus, the Project would not conflict with Policy 7.2.6. Under Outfall Option, which would preserve the riparian habitat, the Project site is already fully developed, and Project development will not encroach further onto the habitat. The existing buffer would remain intact, and the Project would not conflict with Policy 7.2.7. Impacts to special status species and sensitive habitats would also be avoided or minimized through Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-8.

With implementation of these mitigation measures, the Project's impact on biological resources does not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources in the Plumas County General Plan 2035 (Plumas County 2013). This impact would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated***.

Mitigation Measures

> **Impact BIO-10:** Project activities could impact biological resources in conflict with Plumas County General Plan policies.
>
> See **Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-8**.

4.4 Cultural Resources

The analysis in this section considers impacts on historical resources, archaeological resources, and human remains. This section summarizes information presented in the Archaeological Resources Assessment Report prepared for the Project by Basin Research Associates (Basin), dated May 2026 (herein referred to as the Archaeological Resources Report) and the Historic Resources Study prepared for the Project by MIG, dated March 2026 and (herein referred to as the Historical Resources Study or HRS) both of which are presented in Appendix D.

4.4.1 Environmental Setting

4.4.1.1 Historical Setting

4.4.1.1.1 Native American – Pre-Contact Setting

Early occupation of Northeastern California appears to date from 13,400 to 8,850 cal B.P. The lifeway of these mobile, early peoples focused on hunting and the resources offered by lacustrine and marshland environments. Subsequent cultural change and the emergence of regional archaeological patterns appear to have been local responses to available environmental opportunities influenced by climatic change and impacts of other groups/tribes/cultures through time. (Basin Research Associates 2026, p. 5)

Researchers have developed various archaeological chronologies for Northeastern California using limited data usually based on excavation. The archaeological data indicates at least 11,000 years of occupation culminating with the ethnographic Mountain Maidu who occupied villages that persisted until displaced by the influx of EuroAmericans, Chinese, and other parties during the mid-19th century Gold-Rush followed by permanent settlement. (Basin Research Associates 2026, p. 5)

4.4.1.1.2 Post Contact Historic Periods

The post-contact history of the general area can be divided into the Hispanic Period (1769-1848) and the American Period (1848-onward). During the Hispanic Period, Spanish government policy in northwestern New Spain was directed at the founding of presidios (forts), missions, and pueblos (secular towns), with the land held by the Crown. Later, Mexican policy (1822-1846) stressed individual ownership of the land with grants of vast tracts of land to individual citizens. The American Period focused on development and growth, a pattern that continues into the 21st Century. The Project site is located within the American Valley, which later became part of Plumas County. (Basin Research Associates 2026, p. 7)

Hispanic Period (1769-1848)

The northern Sacramento Valley region was explored and lightly settled late in the Spanish-Mexican colonial era. The most northerly Spanish expeditions were the 1820 expedition of Luis Arguello, credited with exploring and naming “El Rio de las Plumas” (the river of feathers), and his 1821 expedition that is known to have proceeded along the west bank of the Sacramento River reaching Cottonwood Creek (15 miles south of present-day Redding) and then following the Trinity, Eel, and Russian rivers. (Basin Research Associates 2026, p. 7)

None of the presidios, missions, secular towns or Spanish or Mexican grants were located within what later became Plumas County.

American Period (1848-Present)

The first wave of settlement in the region occurred during the Gold Rush, beginning in 1848 with a tapering by the mid-1850s. Numerous mining camps sprang up along the Sacramento River and its tributaries, giving rise to permanent towns. The Lassen Emigrant Trail to California dates to 1848 and traveled through what was to become Plumas County to Big Meadows (present-day Lake Almanor) and on to the Sacramento River. By August 1851, the first emigrants were entering California via the Beckwourth Trail, but by 1855 other routes into California superseded the trail. Gold was reportedly discovered on the American Ranch (future Quincy) in the early 1850s. Plumas County was organized in 1854 from part of Butte County and a portion of Lassen County. The Town of Quincy has been the only county seat. (Basin Research Associates 2026, pp. 7-8).

The Town of Quincy was laid out by James H. Bradley, one of the three commissioners instrumental in the creation of Plumas County. In addition, he constructed a building for a temporary courthouse, described as a “rude shake building” in the rear of his hotel placed at 355 Main Street, about a block south and west of the Project site. The first permanent county courthouse was built in 1859 and the current courthouse was built in 1920. (Basin Research Associates 2026, p. 8)

During the 1870s, the area experienced an economic boom from hydraulic mining, attracting large numbers of miners including significant numbers of Chinese immigrants. By 1882 the town was thriving, “surrounded by good farms, and in the midst of a mineral region that is [was] rapidly being developed.” At the time, the town included two hotels (Plumas and Quincy House), seven stores, two livery stables, five saloons, a meat market, wagon shop, several blacksmiths, a shoemaker, barber and jeweler along with a church, school-house, courthouse and jail, post-office, a Wells Fargo & Company express office (including banking), telegraph office, I.O.O.F. hall, Masonic hall, town hall, and a weekly newspaper. A narrow-gauge railroad to Reno, Nevada was anticipated, and at the time travel to Reno relied on stages to Indian Valley and Susanville, by Oroville to La Porte, and to Sierra Valley and Reno. The rich, arable land within American Valley produced wheat, oats, barley, potatoes with a variety of vegetables and stock. Dairies were also an important component. Two sawmills provided the “large quantities of lumber used in building and in the mining claims.” (Basin Research Associates 2026, p. 9)

The completion of the Western Pacific Railroad in 1910 opened opportunities for the timber industry, which became the region’s dominant economic force. The lumber boom saw the relocation of African-Americans from Louisiana to work in the industry from the 1930s-1950s with many of the workers and families remaining after the closure of the mills. (Basin Research Associates 2026, p. 9)

The completion of SR 70 in 1937 connected the town to the Sacramento Valley and fostered subsequent development along the highway and residential growth. The economic shift in the mid-1990s from a historic dependence on timber led to the development of tourism and outdoor recreation. The diversified economy of the town and county includes a focus on government and commercial services, education and the timber industry although with less prominence than in the past due to sustainable forest management policies. The current population of Quincy is approximately 1,600. (Basin Research Associates 2026, p. 9)

4.4.1.2 Historic Resources

The HRS prepared for the Project (Appendix D) included a records review of historic maps and photographs, historical and contemporary digital newspaper articles, online databases and repositories, and Plumas County Assessor's Office records; a field survey conducted on September 25, 2025; and a preliminary assessment of potential historical resources on the Project site.

The buildings and structures within the Project site have not been previously evaluated for historic significance or eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), or any local register of historic resources. One of the buildings on the Project site, the Quincy Lumber & Supply building, is more than 50 years old, the age at which resources are commonly evaluated for their historic importance. The Quincy Lumber & Supply building is mentioned in the Historic Building Inventory list maintained by the Plumas County Museum as "Quincy Lumber & Supply 291 Lawrence Street" with a construction date of 1932. The Historic Building Inventory list maintained by the Plumas County Museum does not provide a determination of historic status for the Quincy Lumber & Supply building.

The Quincy Lumber & Supply building is a wood-frame building that is rectangular in plan with a front-gabled roof that is capped in corrugated metal sheeting; the roof extends approximately one foot beyond the east and west façades and features exposed eaves. The building sits on a concrete slab foundation and features a central aisle that spans the length of the building from the front (south) to the rear (north) façades. The majority of the building was painted red with white trim at an unknown date, and the words "Quincy Lumber & Supply" are painted on the false front and on the roof ridge. The interior of the Quincy Lumber & Supply building features an exposed wood truss system under the roof, and expansive shelving and storage space on either side of the central aisle that rises to three levels in height. The upper levels are accessed via a combination of built-in wood ladders and floating staircases. Suspended plank walkways line the second and third levels on both sides of the aisle. An office is built into the second level of the east bay, featuring a sliding aluminum window and a plywood door. The storage labels remain extant, marking the types and sizes of lumber stacked in each bay; some sections are enclosed with plywood or wood siding. A pedestrian door connects the central aisle to the commercial office space in the east bay of the building.

The square plan building that houses the Feather Publishing Co. was built circa (ca.) 1992-1994. The recreational vehicle storage facility was built ca. 1981 and includes seven bays under a shallow gable roof.

4.4.1.3 Cultural Resources Records Searches

Basin Research Associates conducted a pre-contact and post-contact historic site records and literature search of the California Historical Resources Information System, Northeast Information Center (CHRIS/NEIC) for a one-mile radius extending from the Project site boundary on October 7, 2025. Ascent Environmental completed earlier records searches of the CHRIS/NEIC for a 0.5-mile radius (IC File # NE23-202) on May 12, 2023 and a one-mile radius on January 27, 2025 (IC File NE22-25).

There are no cultural resources studies within or adjacent to the Project site on file with the CHRIS/NEIC. There are 31 studies within a one-mile radius of the Project site.

The records search (October 7, 2025) was negative for recorded archaeological sites, built environment resources, and/or reported cultural resources within or adjacent to the Project site. No precontact sites have been recorded within the one-mile radius search buffer. A total of 16 Historic Era resources have been recorded within one mile of the Project site, including two historic buildings. Post-contact historic archaeological sites include: six trash scatters/deposits; two water ditches (Mill Creek Ditch and Old Powerhouse Pipeline Ditch); two cabin sites; two prospecting pits/adits; the Plumas County Cemetery; and segments of the Beckwourth Trail. The majority of the recorded resources have not been evaluated for the NRHP and/or the CRHR. (Basin Research Associates 2026, p. 10)

4.4.1.4 Archaeological Field Investigation

Basin Research Associates completed an archaeological field review of the Project site on September 25, 2025. Field transects were oriented north-south and spaced 1-2 meters apart in open areas. Visibility was fair, with 50 percent of the surface observable in the areas where hardscape was not present. Observed sediment consisted of yellowish-brown sandy loam with gravels in the northwest and north end of the Project site without hardscape. No native soils, precontact or post-contact historic archaeological material, or culturally modified sediments were observed. (Basin Research Associates 2026, pp. 15-16)

4.4.2 Regulatory Setting

4.4.2.1 Federal Regulations

4.4.2.1.1 National Historic Preservation Act & National Register of Historic Places

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) deals with preservation of historic properties. One of the most important provisions of the NHPA is the establishment of the NRHP, the official federal designation of historical resources. The NRHP is administered by the National Park Service. Nominations are listed if they meet the statutory and regulatory criteria. To be eligible for the NRHP, a property must meet one or more of the following criteria:

a. Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;

b. Are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;

c. Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of installation, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;

d. Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

(36 CFR § 60.4.) Listing in the NRHP does not require specific protection for a property, but it does guarantee consideration of its historical nature in planning for federal or federally-assisted projects (see 54 USC § 306108 [Section 106 of the NHPA]).

4.4.2.2 State Regulations

4.4.2.2.1 California Environmental Quality Act

CEQA requires public agencies to consider the effects of their actions on "historical resources," "unique archaeological resources," and "tribal cultural resources." Pursuant to PRC section 21084.1, a "project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment." Section 21083.2 requires agencies to determine whether proposed projects would have effects on unique archaeological resources. If a unique archaeological resource is also a historic resource, the lead agency must treat it as a historic resource (CEQA Guidelines 14 CCR § 15064.5(c)).

4.4.2.2.2 Historical Resources

"Historical resource" is a term with a defined statutory meaning (PRC § 21084.1; CEQA Guidelines14 CCR § 15064.5[a] and [b]). Per the CEQA Guidelines section 15064.5(a), historical resources include the following:

> (1) A resource listed in or determined to be eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission for listing in the CRHR (PRC § 5024.1).
>
> (2) A resource included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in PRC section 5020.1(k) or identified as significant in a historical resource survey meeting the requirements of PRC section 5024.1(g), will be presumed to be historically or culturally significant. Public agencies must treat any such resource as significant unless the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that it is not historically or culturally significant.
>
> (3) Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California may be considered to be a historical resource, provided the lead agency's determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record. Generally, a resource will be considered by the lead agency to be historically significant if it meets the following criteria for listing in the CRHR (PRC § 5024.1(c)):
>
> > a. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
> >
> > b. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
> >
> > c. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
> >
> > d. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.
>
> (4) The fact that a resource is not listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the CRHR, not included in a local register of historical resources (pursuant PRC § 5020.1(k)), or identified in a historical resources survey (meeting the criteria in PRC § 5024.1(g)) does not preclude a lead agency from determining that the resource may be a historical resource as defined in PRC section 5020.1(j) or 5024.1.

4.4.2.2.3 Non-Unique Archaeological Resources

Under CEQA, archaeological resources are presumed non-unique unless they meet the definition of "unique archaeological resources" (PRC § 21083.2(g)). An impact on a non-unique archaeological resource is not considered a significant environmental impact (PRC § 21083.2(a); CEQA Guidelines 14 CCR § 15064.5(c)(4)).

4.4.2.2.4 Unique Archaeological Resources

Archaeological resources may qualify as "unique archaeological resources" that are not "historical resources." (CEQA Guidelines 14 CCR §15064.5(c)(3)). PRC section 21083.2(g) defines a unique archaeological resource as an artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that, without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it meets any of the following criteria:

1. Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and that there is a demonstrable public interest in that information; or

2. Has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type; or

3. Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

If a project may cause damage to a unique archaeological resource, the lead agency may require reasonable efforts to permit any or all of these resources to be preserved in place or left in an undisturbed state. To the extent that resources cannot be left undisturbed, mitigation measures would be required to the extent feasible (PRC § 21083.2(a-c)).

4.4.2.2.5 California Register of Historical Resources

The CRHR includes cultural resources that must be considered when a government agency undertakes a discretionary action subject to CEQA. The CRHR is administered through the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) that is part of the California State Parks system. A cultural resource is evaluated under four CRHR criteria to determine its eligibility for listing. A resource must be significant in accordance with one or more of the following criteria set forth in the CEQA Guidelines section 15064.5(a)(3) and PRC section 5024.1(c):

1. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of California's history and cultural heritage;

2. It is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;

3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or

4. It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

In addition to meeting one or more of the above criteria, the CRHR requires that sufficient time must have passed to allow a "scholarly perspective on the events or individuals associated with the resource." Fifty years is used as a general estimate of the time needed to understand the historical importance of a resource according to State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) publications. Buildings constructed over 50 years ago and that possess architectural or historical significance may be potential historical resources if they meet the criteria above. Most

resources must meet the 50-year threshold for historic significance; however, resources less than 50 years in age may be eligible for listing on the CRHR if it can be demonstrated that sufficient time has passed to understand their historical importance. The CRHR also requires a resource to possess integrity, which is defined as "the authenticity of a historical resource's physical identity, evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource's period of significance" (14 CCR § 4852(c)). Integrity is evaluated with regard to the retention of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

4.4.2.2.6 California Public Resources Code

*Section 5024***.** PRC section 5024 requires state agencies to make a good-faith effort to protect and preserve all state-owned historical resources under their jurisdiction. Each state agency must submit to the SHPO an inventory of all state-owned historical resources exceeding 50 years of age that are under its jurisdiction. PRC section 5024.5 gives the SHPO the authority to review all efforts made by state agencies, to protect and preserve those resources from development and maintenance projects.

Section 5097. PRC section 5097.5 states that unauthorized removal or destruction of archaeological or paleontological resources on sites located on public lands is a misdemeanor. In this case, "public lands" means lands owned by or under the jurisdiction of the state or any city, county, district, authority, or public corporation or its agent.

PRC sections 5097.9 through 5097.991 (the California Native American Historic Resource Protection Act) establish the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) and its responsibilities with respect to Native American resources. State and local agencies are required to cooperate with the NAHC in carrying out those duties. The NAHC identifies and catalogs places that are of special religious or social significance to Native Americans and known graves and cemeteries of Native Americans on private lands. It also performs other duties to preserve and maintain the accessibility of sacred sites and burials and resolve the treatment of disturbed Native American human remains and burial items. If human remains of Native American origin are discovered, the NAHC is responsible for identifying the person(s) it believes to be the most likely descendant (MLD) of the deceased Native American.

PRC section 5097.98 prohibits obtaining or possessing Native American artifacts or human remains taken from a grave or cairn and sets penalties for such actions.

4.4.2.2.7 California Historical Landmarks

California Historical Landmarks are included in the CRHR. They are buildings, structures, sites, or places that have been determined to have statewide historical significance as (1) the first, last, only, or most significant of its type in the state or within a large geographic region; (2) associated with an individual or group having a profound influence on the history of the state; (3) or a prototype of, or an outstanding example of, a period, style, architectural movement, or construction or is one of the more notable works or the best-surviving work in a region of a pioneer architect, designer, or a master builder.

4.4.2.2.8 California Health and Safety Code

***Section 7050.5*.** Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code sets forth procedures that apply when human remains are encountered during project construction. The code states:

> In the event of discovery or recognition of any human remains in any location other than a dedicated cemetery, there shall be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or

any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent remains until the coroner of the county in which the human remains are discovered has determined, in accordance with Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 27460) of Part 3 of Division 2 of Title 3 of the Government Code, that the remains are not subject to the provisions of Section 27491 of the Government Code or any other related provisions of law concerning investigation of the circumstances, manner and cause of any death, and the recommendations concerning the treatment and disposition of the human remains have been made to the person responsible for the excavation, or to his or her authorized representative, in the manner provided in PRC section 5097.98. The coroner shall make his or her determination within two working days from the time the person responsible for the excavation, or his or her authorized representative, notifies the coroner of the discovery or recognition of the human remains. (California Health and Safety Code § 7050.5[b])

If the coroner determines that the remains are not subject to his or her authority and if the coroner recognizes the human remains to be those of a Native American or has reason to believe that they are those of a Native American, he or she shall contact, by telephone within 24 hours, the Native American Heritage Commission. (California Health and Safety Code § 7050.5(c))

4.4.2.3 Local Regulations

The Judicial Council, acting as the judicial branch of State government, is not subject to local land use regulations; however, the Judicial Council, as lead agency, considers local policies in evaluating whether the Project's impacts would be significant.

Plumas County does not have a local register of historic places that would be relevant to the identification or analysis of potentially significant Project impacts on cultural resources (PRC § 21084.1).

4.4.3 Impacts Analysis

4.4.3.1 Methodology

A record search of the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS), outreach to California Native American Tribes, archival research, and fieldwork was conducted to establish if cultural resources may be present within the Project area and if they would be impacted by the Project. The impact analysis is based on the findings of the Historical Resources Study (HRS) and Archaeological Resources Report prepared for the Project (see Appendix D). As a separate category of resources under CEQA, tribal cultural resources and consultation with California Native American Tribes is discussed in section 4.11.

4.4.3.2 Thresholds of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Project would have a significant impact on cultural resources if it would:

- Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to section 15064.5.
- Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to section 15064.5.

- Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.

4.4.3.3 Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to section 15064.5

The HRS (MIG 2026) assessed the presence of potential historical resources on the Project site in consideration of the historic development patterns and themes in the town of Quincy and the broader region. The HRS focused primarily on the Quincy Lumber & Supply building's potential as a historical resource, because it is the only building on the Project site older than the common threshold of 50 years. The HRS considered the Quincy Lumber & Supply building, and also briefly considered the other buildings and structures on the Project Site, for historical association with specific events and themes, including agriculture; the early development of downtown Quincy; the lumber milling industry in Plumas and Lassen counties; the Diamond Match Company, Atkins Lumber and Supply, and Quincy Lumber & Supply companies; the Feather River Bulletin and the Feather Publishing Co.; and architecture and design.

The HRS provided preliminary screening for potential historical resources on the Project site. The following discussion summarizes the HRS's findings regarding the potential to meet state or national criteria for historic significance. Because the detailed preliminary screening provided substantial evidence for a determination that the Quincy Lumber & Supply building and other potential resources do not meet the NRHP or CRHR criteria, further investigation was not conducted.

4.4.3.3.1 Quincy Lumber & Supply Building

The most important themes that influenced the development of the Project site are the rise of the local lumber industry via the extension of the Western Pacific Railroad and the arrival of the Diamond Match Co. in Lassen and Plumas counties.

In 1937, the Diamond Match Co. built what is now known as the Quincy Lumber & Supply building to serve as storage, retail, and office space for a lumber yard. The Diamond Match Co. operated a much larger and more significant factory and lumber yard in Chico, CA, for several decades and built dozens of similar lumber mills and yards across northern California. The Quincy Lumber & Supply building appears to have been a relatively small-scale retail operation. Although the building was intentionally built to accommodate lumber storage, with oversized doors and open storage systems, this was already a common aesthetic for building and farm supply stores at the time and was not architecturally distinctive. At some point after the 1960s, the building was painted red with white trim and barn-style doors were installed in the storefronts to create a farm or barn motif.

Diamond Match Co. was a prominent national company, with regional headquarters in Chico, that influenced economic and development patterns in Lassen and Plumas counties. However, the Quincy Lumber & Supply building does not appear to represent the scale and scope of that business. Buildings or landscapes that are associated with Diamond Match Co.'s regional hubs in Chico or Sterling City provide better representations of the company's historic operations. Quincy Lumber Company, in east Quincy, appears to have had a larger impact on the lumber industry's development in Quincy. Quincy Lumber Company commenced local operations more than two decades before Diamond Match Co. and was directly connected with the Quincy Junction railway line.

Based on the preliminary research and analysis summarized above, the HRS determined it is unlikely that the Quincy Lumber & Supply building is eligible as a historical resource in state or local registers for its associations with the lumber milling industry, the railroad, or Diamond Match Co. themes. The building is not associated with significant events, people, architecture, or a source of important historical information under the NRHP and CRHR eligibility criteria. Some members of the Quincy community have expressed concern for the Quincy Lumber & Supply building as a local landmark. The particular age or aesthetics of the building do not determine whether the building is historic under CEQA. Chapter 4.1 considers the aesthetic impacts of the Project.

4.4.3.3.2 Feather Publishing Co. Building

The Feather Publishing Co. is a local company that was established in the early 1970s. The company purchased the northernmost parcel of the Project site and constructed a new building to house the administration, sales, and publishing operations of the company ca. 1992-1994. Before Feather Publishing Co. constructed the building at 287 Lawrence Street, the company retained offices on Main Street in downtown Quincy. A marker was placed on a brick building near the intersection of Main Street and Crescent Street in 1978 and a second plaque was added in 1990.

The current Feather Publishing Co. building on the Project site does not represent the impact of the company or any of its publications during its peak years of operation. Feather Publishing Co.'s former offices on Main Street may have qualified as a local or state landmark had they not been demolished in the early 1970s. Furthermore, the Feather Publishing Co. building is less than 50 years old and does not exhibit architectural distinction that would elevate it to exceptional importance under the National Register of Historic Places criteria for evaluation. Therefore, this building is not significant under state or national criteria for historic significance.

4.4.3.3.3 Recreational Vehicle Storage Facility [Carport]

According to the HRS, the recreational vehicle storage facility [carport], built in 1981, does not appear to be associated with any important themes in the development of Quincy or the region, nor does the structure exhibit engineering or architectural distinction. Therefore, this structure is not significant under state or national criteria for historic significance.

4.4.3.3.4 Conclusion

Based on the preliminary analysis completed in the HRS, the HRS concluded that the buildings and structures located on the Project site do not appear significant under state or national criteria for historic significance; and, therefore, the Project site does not contain any potential historical resources. The on-site buildings and structures are not exemplary of any relevant historical themes. Although agricultural and lumber milling were important economic drivers in the region historically, and both the Diamond Match Co. and the Feather Publishing Co. are important regional and local (respectively) institutions, these patterns of development are not represented by any of the extant buildings on site. None of the buildings on the Project site meet the criteria for consideration as historical resources under CEQA. The Project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. This impact would be ***less than significant***. See Executive Summary, Potential Areas of Concern and Issues to be Resolved for additional discussion.

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

As described in section 4.4.1 Environmental Setting, the Project site does not contain known archaeological resources. As described in section 4.1.1 Environmental Setting, the Archaeological Resources Report included a pre-contact and historic site records and literature search of the CHRIS/NEIC for a one-mile radius extending from the Project site boundary, and a field investigation. The CHRIS/NEIC search returned negative results within and adjacent to the Project site, indicating there are no records of known cultural resources located within the boundaries of or adjacent to the Project site. The CHRIS/NEIC search results indicated there are thirteen records of cultural resources located within a one-mile radius of the Project site.

The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) review of the Sacred Lands File (SLF) was positive for sacred sites in the vicinity of the Project. On June 17, 2025, the Judicial Council sent letters by certified mail to the tribes on the NAHC list inviting them to consult pursuant to PRC section 21080.3.1. The tribal outreach conducted in response to the positive SLF search results did not indicate the presence of known cultural resources on the Project site. For a complete analysis of tribal cultural resources, see Chapter4.11.

The field investigation of the site did not identify any native soils, pre-contact or historic archaeological material or culturally modified sediments on the Project site. Basin Research Associates consulted reference materials available online. The review of background documents and field surveys did not uncover any known or recorded archaeologically significant sites, structures, landmarks, or points of interest.

The Archaeological Resources Report came to the following conclusions regarding the potential for the Project to adversely impact archaeological resources based on the CHRIS/NEIC records search, literature review, and field investigation:

- The records search was negative for recorded archaeological sites, built environment resources, or reported resources within the Project site. Two buildings and 14 post-contact historic era resources have been recorded within one mile of the Project site.
- No known Native American ethnographic villages appear to have been located within or adjacent to the Project site.
- No known Hispanic Period expeditions, adobe dwellings, or other structures, features, etc. have been identified in or adjacent to the Project site.
- No known American Period archaeological sites have been recorded or reported within the Project site.
- The archaeological field review of the Project site was negative. No surface indicators of potential archaeological material or culturally modified sediments were observed.
- No unique archaeological resource(s) or historic properties listed in, or eligible for inclusion on the NRHP and/or the CRHR have been identified within or adjacent to the Project site.
- No State of California landmarks or points of interest or local archaeological, historical, and/or architectural resources have been identified within or immediately adjacent to the Project site. (Basin Research Associates 2026, p. 16)

There is a low potential for the discovery of subsurface pre-contact and/or post-contact historic archaeological materials within the Project site due to: (1) the lack of development prior to 1935;

(2) no previous discoveries related to building development and the installation of infrastructure (i.e., water, sewage, communications, etc.) over the past 80-90 years; and (3) the lack of reported and/or recorded pre-contact and post-contact historic archaeological sites within or adjacent to the Project site. Additionally, no pre-contact or post-contact historic resources have been reported during ongoing development and infrastructure maintenance of the area over the past 50 years. Although all available information strongly indicates a low potential for the discovery of significant buried archaeological materials on the Project site, the Archaeological Resources Report determined it is possible that isolated pre-contact and post-contact historic finds may be present within the Project site, and the Project has the potential to expose pre-contact and post-contact historic finds during future demolition and construction activities. (Basin Research Associates 2026, pp. 16-17)

As a general principle, ground-disturbing construction activities have the potential to impact archaeological resources on and adjacent to the Project site by disturbing both surface and subsurface soils. While the Archaeological Resources Report determined there are no known historical or archaeological resources on site through records searches with the CHRIS/NEIC, a literature review, and a field investigation, the presence of unrecorded resources on site cannot be ruled out. A general inference may be made that ground disturbance on or adjacent to the site could produce a unique archaeological discovery, however unlikely. The impacts of such an inadvertent discovery of archaeological resources could be significant.

Mitigation Measure CUL-1 has been incorporated into the Project to require the implementation of protocol for the inadvertent discovery of archaeological resources and reduce the Project's potential impacts on archaeological resources to a less-than-significant level. With implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1, the Project's potential impacts on archaeological resources would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated***.

Mitigation Measures

Impact CUL-1: Ground-disturbing activities associated with building demolition and future development within the Project site could directly or indirectly damage buried and unknown unique archaeological resources pursuant to PRC section 21083.2 and CEQA Guidelines section 15064.5.

Mitigation Measure CUL-1: Protection of Archaeological Resources. Should any pre-contact or post-contact archaeological materials be exposed during ground-disturbing activities, all such activities shall stop within a 50-foot radius of the discovery, and a qualified archaeologist shall be retained to determine whether the find is a unique archaeological resource.

The archaeologist shall perform data recovery on any unique archaeological resource, unless the archaeologist recommends and the Judicial Council determines that other methods of mitigation are more culturally appropriate under the circumstances of the discovery.

4.4.3.5 Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries

The Project could have potentially significant impacts on human remains. While the Archaeological Resources Report determined there are no known historical or archaeological resources on site through records searches with the CHRIS/NEIC and a field investigation, and

no unrecorded resources were discovered during previous site development, the potential for discovery of human remains cannot be ruled out. In the event human remains are discovered on site, the Judicial Council would follow the procedures outlined in California Health and Safety Code section 7050.5 and PRC section 5097.98 (as amended by Assembly Bill 2641) to determine and implement the appropriate course of action for treatment of the find. With implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-2, the Project's potential impacts on human remains would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated***.

Mitigation Measures

Impact CUL-2: Ground-disturbing activities associated with development within the Project site could disturb human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.

Mitigation Measure CUL-2: Protection of Human Remains. If human remains and associated funerary objects are exposed, work within 50 feet of the discovery will be halted and the resource protected in compliance with applicable state law.

The Judicial Council or its designee shall immediately notify the Plumas County Coroner. If the Coroner determines that the human remains are Native American remains, the Coroner shall notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) to determine the Most Likely Descendant (MLD) (Health & Safety Code 7050.5; PRC 5097.98). The Judicial Council of California shall also contact the Mooretown Rancheria of Maidu Indians as requested by the Tribe. Additional statutory requirements apply depending on the nature of the discovery.

4.5 Geology and Soils

This section analyzes the potential impacts of the Project on geologic hazards, soils, and paleontological resources. The analysis is based on two technical reports prepared for the Project: a Geotechnical Engineering and Geohazard Study (Atlas Technical Consultants [Atlas] dated December 15, 2025 and herein referred to as the Geotechnical Report; see Appendix E) and a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report prepared by Geocon Consultants (Geocon), dated June 14, 2023 (herein referred to as the "Phase I ESA"; see Appendix F).

4.5.1 Environmental Setting

4.5.1.1 Regional Geologic Setting

The Project site is located in the northern portion of the Sierra Nevada geomorphic province of California. The Sierra Nevada is an approximately 400-mile-long tilted fault block mountain range. The eastern side of the Sierra Nevada range is characterized by high-elevation, rugged, mountainous terrain with a steep eastern escarpment, while the western side of the range slopes more gently to the west toward the Great Valley. The northern Sierra Nevada crest and surrounding mountains also generally decrease in elevation from south to north with peak elevations of over 14,000 feet in the southern portion of the range to less than 8,000 feet in the northern portion where the Site is located. The Sierra Nevada is bounded by the Great Valley to the west, the Cascade Range to the north, the Mojave Desert to the south, and the Basin and Range to the east. (Geocon 2023)

4.5.1.2 Local Geologic Setting

The Project site is situated in central Quincy within the flood plain area of Spanish Creek, a headwaters tributary of the east branch of the north fork of the Feather River located to the northwest of Quincy. The site is immediately underlain by fill and local recent alluvium deposits along the southern edge of American Valley, which is mapped on the very small scale (1:250,000) California Geological Survey (CGS) Geologic Map of the Chico Quadrangle as Holocene-epoch Lake Deposits associated with the lower valleys. (Atlas 2025)

4.5.1.2.1 Site Topography

The Project site is located in the generally flat-lying American Valley surrounded by mountainous terrain of the northern Sierra Nevada. Elevations on the site range from approximately 3,412 feet above msl in the northwestern portion of the site to approximately 3,420 feet above msl in the southern portion (BKF 2023). The surrounding land surface slopes very gently to the north toward the bottom of the American Valley where Spanish Creek flows through from the west to the east and northeast. (Geocon 2023)

4.5.1.2.2 Site Soil and Groundwater Conditions

Subsurface conditions at the site were explored by performing six borings to depths ranging from 10 to 50 feet below ground surface (bgs), five borings to approximate depths of 11.5 to 41.5 feet bgs and four cone penetration test (CPT) soundings to a maximum depth of approximately 80 feet bgs. Undocumented fill (Af) was encountered onsite from the existing ground surface to depths of approximately 3 to 7 feet. The undocumented fill consists of dry to moist, fine to coarse grained, clayey sand with gravel, silty sand with gravel, and silty gravel with sand. Lake deposits (Ql) were encountered beneath the fill to a maximum explored depth of 50 feet below the existing grade. The lacustrine deposits consist of sandy lean clay with gravel and

sandy lean clay, and loose to very dense clayey gravel with sand, clayey sand with gravel, poorly graded gravel with sand and clay, poorly graded sand with gravel, and sandy silt with gravel. The near-surface clayey soils were found to have a generally low plasticity and low expansion potential but were generally relatively weak. (Atlas 2025)

Bedrock was not encountered in any of the borings or CPT soundings within the depths explored. Free groundwater was encountered in the borings and CPT soundings at depths between 6 and 17 feet below existing grade. Groundwater levels can fluctuate in response to seasonal rainfall, irrigation, broken pipes, or changes in site drainage. (Atlas 2025)

4.5.1.2.3 Expansive Soils

Expansive soils may impact the performance of foundations and site flatwork, as expansive soil pressures may develop that can manifest primarily as seasonal heaving and settlement effects. The expansion potential of the on-site near-surface soils is expected to be very low. (Atlas 2025)

4.5.1.3 Local and Regional Seismicity

The Project site is situated in an area of low to moderate seismic activity but is susceptible to infrequent, major earthquakes in the greater area. According to CGS publications, the site does not lie near any identified Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone. No known active or potentially active fault traces cross the site, and no evidence of surface ground rupture was noted during site reconnaissance performed for the geotechnical report. The probability of fault rupture on site is therefore considered low. (Atlas 2025)

The closest mapped active faults within an Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone are associated with the Honey Lake Fault, located approximately 34 miles northeast of the Project site, and the Fort Sage Fault, located approximately 46 miles east-northeast of the Project site. In addition, the active Cleveland Hills Fault is located approximately 41 miles southwest of the site at its closest point. Local faults in closer proximity to the site are all considered to be inactive or potentially active; these include the Indian Valley Fault and the Mohawk Valley Fault, located approximately 10.3 miles northeast and east of the site, respectively. (Atlas 2025)

The Project site would likely experience low to moderate intensity ground shaking from earthquakes originating from a nearby fault such as the Mohawk Valley Fault. Earthquake intensities would vary depending upon the magnitude of the earthquake, the distance of the site from the causative fault, the type of materials underlying the site and other factors. (Atlas 2025)

4.5.1.3.1 Liquefaction and Dynamic Settlement

Liquefaction generally occurs in saturated, loose granular soil (primarily fine to medium-grained, clean sand deposits) during or after strong seismic ground shaking and is typified by a loss of shear strength in the affected soil layer, thereby causing the soil to flow as a liquid. However, because of the higher inter-granular pressure of the soil at greater depths, the potential for liquefaction is generally limited to the upper 50 feet of the soil. Potential hazards associated with soil liquefaction below or near a structure include loss of foundation support, lateral spreading, sand boils, and areal and differential settlement. Dry sand settlement is a phenomenon where loose, relatively clean sandy soil located above the water table densified from vibratory loading, typically from seismic shaking or vibratory equipment. (Atlas 2025)

Atlas's investigations for the geotechnical report identified some on-site lacustrine soil layers as susceptible to potential seismic settlement through liquefaction or dry sand settlement.

Liquefaction results based on the CPT soundings indicated less than one inch of liquefaction-induced settlement and less than a quarter of an inch of dry settlement. Based on the overall subsurface conditions, such as the encountered soil types and their densities, groundwater level at the site, and the magnitude of a potential seismic event, the geotechnical report's liquefaction analysis indicates there is potential for liquefaction within some relatively loose discontinuous layers at the site. However, the potential for extensive liquefaction that could adversely affect the Project's proposed structures is considered low. (Atlas 2025)

4.5.1.3.2 Lateral Spreading

Lateral spreading involves both vertical and lateral ground movement, with some vertical component, occurring as a result of liquefaction. In addition to liquefaction, a free face or slope is necessary in most cases for lateral spreading to occur. Lateral spreading can occur on relatively flat sites with slopes less than 2 percent under certain circumstances and manifest itself at the ground surface in the form of cracking and settlement. Lateral spreading can occur in areas located within close proximity to an open face which are supported by underlying liquefiable soil under or close to the open face. Under a lateral spreading condition, soils which liquefy lose strength and the slope moves towards the open face. Any structures or improvements located within close proximity to the slope can also move and possibly be destabilized.

The Project site is not in the vicinity of a slope or a free face that can cause lateral spreading during a liquefaction event. Additionally, the potential for the liquefaction of an extensive soil layer at the site is low, as discussed above. Therefore, the geotechnical report determined the potential for lateral spreading at the site is low. (Atlas 2025)

4.5.1.3.3 Subsidence

Withdrawal of groundwater and other fluids (i.e., petroleum and the extraction of natural gas) from beneath the ground surface has been linked to large-scale land subsidence and associated cracking on the surface. Other causes for ground cracking and subsidence include the oxidation and resultant compaction of peat beds, the decline of groundwater levels and consequent compaction of aquifers, hydro-compaction and subsequent settlement of alluvial deposits above the water table from irrigation, or a combination of any of these causes.

The Project site is not located in an area of known subsidence associated with fluid withdrawal such as groundwater or petroleum. Other sources of subsidence are not anticipated. The potential for subsidence at the site is considered low. (Atlas 2025)

4.5.1.4 Paleontological Resources

A "unique paleontological resource or site" is one that is considered significant under the following professional paleontological standards.

The value or importance of different fossil groups varies, depending on several factors: the age and depositional environment of the rock unit that contains the fossils; their rarity; the extent to which they have already been identified and documented; and the ability to recover similar materials under more controlled conditions (such as for a research project). Marine invertebrates generally are common, the fossil record is well developed and well documented, and they would generally not be considered a unique paleontological resource.

According to the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (SVP), fossils are considered scientifically significant if one or more of these five criteria are met:

1. The fossils provide data on the evolutionary relationships and developmental trends among organisms, both living and extinct.
2. The fossils provide data useful in determining the age(s) of the rock unit or sedimentary stratum, including data important in determining the depositional history of the region and the timing of geologic events therein.
3. The fossils provide data regarding the development of biological communities or interaction between paleobotanical and paleozoological biotas.
4. The fossils demonstrate unusual or spectacular circumstances in the history of life.
5. The fossils are in short supply and/or in danger of being depleted or destroyed by the elements, vandalism, or commercial exploitation, and are not found in other geographic locations.

A paleontologically sensitive geologic formation is one that is rated high for potential paleontological productivity (i.e., the recorded abundance and types of fossil specimens, and the number of previously recorded fossil sites) and is known to have produced unique, scientifically important fossils. Exposures of a specific geologic formation at any given project site are most likely to yield fossil remains representing particular species or quantities similar to those previously recorded from that geologic formation in other locations. Therefore, the paleontological sensitivity determination of a rock formation is based primarily on the types and numbers of fossils that have been previously recorded from that formation.

In its "Best Practice Guidelines for Mitigation of Adverse Impacts on Paleontological Resources" (herein referred to as Best Practice Guidelines), the SVP (2025) establishes an eight designation Fossil Prediction Map System (FPMS) that contains criteria used to determine the potential for a geologic unit to contain scientifically significant fossils. The FPMS's assignment criteria for the eight designations and the management recommendations for each designation are presented below.

- *5 = Very High Potential.* Highly fossiliferous geologic units that consistently and predictably preserve scientifically significant fossils.
    - Management concern is very high. Paleontological resource impact evaluations and field surveys by a professional mitigation paleontologist are typically recommended prior to the proposed activity and full-time monitoring may be recommended during ground-disturbing activities in previously undisturbed geologic units, depending on the type and amount of disturbance. Scientifically significant fossils should be collected or avoided by the proposed project.
- *4 = High Potential.* Highly fossiliferous geologic units that preserve scientifically significant fossils, but their concentrations vary and are less predictable than 5.
    - Management concern is high. Paleontological resource impact evaluations and field surveys by a professional mitigation paleontologist are typically recommended prior to the proposed activity and full-time or part-time monitoring may be recommended during ground-disturbing activities in previously undisturbed geologic units, depending on the type and amount of disturbance. Scientifically significant fossils should be collected or avoided by the proposed project.
- *3 = Moderate Potential.* Fossiliferous geologic units that are often marine in origin and in which fossils may be common, but scientifically significant fossils are isolated or sparse.

  - Management concern is moderate. Paleontological resource impact evaluations are recommended. Based on the results, field surveys by a professional mitigation paleontologist may be recommended prior to the proposed activity and full- or part-time monitoring may be recommended during ground-disturbing activities in previously undisturbed geologic units, depending on the type and amount of disturbance. Scientifically significant fossils should be collected or avoided by the proposed project.

- *2 = Low Potential.* Geologic units that are not likely to preserve fossils, including sedimentary deposits that are generally younger than 11,700 years before present, older sedimentary units that only rarely preserve fossils, or units that exhibit physical and chemical alteration (diagenetic changes) that make fossil preservation unlikely.
  - Management concern is generally low. Paleontological resource impact evaluations, surveys, and monitoring are not typically recommended except in rare situations in which isolated scientifically significant fossils are known to be present in the study area.
- *1 = Very Low Potential.* Geologic units that are not likely to contain recognizable fossils including Precambrian units and units that are igneous or metamorphic, excluding air-fall and reworked volcanic ash.
  - Management concerns are very low. Impact mitigation is unlikely to be recommended except in rare circumstances.
- *U = Unknown Potential.* Geologic units that cannot be assigned an informed FPMS designation. This includes units that have not been subject to prior field surveys but that contain lithologies or preserve depositional settings that are known to be conducive to fossil preservation, units that have not been published in the scientific literature, and units in which reports of fossils have not been verified.
  - Management concern is medium to high until a provisional designation is made. Lacking other information, field surveys (entire study area or portion thereof for testing) are normally recommended, especially prior to authorizing a ground-disturbing activity. Based on the survey results, monitoring may be recommended during ground-disturbing activities in previously undisturbed geologic units. Any scientifically significant fossils that are discovered should be collected or avoided by the project.
- *I = Ice or Snow.* Mapped geographic areas where underlying geology is obscured by ice or snow. Predictive potential for fossils is low, but when these areas appear on geologic maps or in GIS data, they may be useful for developing mitigation strategies or management recommendations for a larger analysis area that extends beyond the ice or snow.
  - Although fossils may be preserved in glacial ice, management concerns are generally low, and impact mitigation is only recommended where fossils are known or may be present such as at the foot of a melting glacier.
- *W = Water.* Mapped geographic area where underlying geology is obscured by water. No predictive potential for fossils, but when these areas appear on geologic maps or in GIS data, they may be useful for developing mitigation strategies or management recommendations for a larger analysis area that extends beyond the water or in projects

in which the water is being drained. May need to consider the FPMS designation of the underlying geologic units.

- Management concerns are usually negligible or not applicable. Impact mitigation is unlikely to be necessary except in rare circumstances such as along the waterline (or shore).

As stated previously, the Project site is underlain by undocumented fill and Holocene-age lacustrine deposits. According to the University of California Museum of Paleontology (UCMP) records, there are 75 fossil localities and 217 specimen records in Plumas County. Most recorded paleontological finds in the county are within Jurassic and Tertiary-period localities (UCMP 2025). While several locality records include the Quaternary period, Holocene deposits such as those located at the Project site are typically considered too young to be fossiliferous. Furthermore, although a variety of vertebrate fossils have been recovered from several localities in the county, the rock formations that contain these fossils are more consolidated (such as sandstone) and are older than the Lake Deposits found at the Project site (i.e., Pleistocene epoch [11,800 years B.P.] and older) (UCMP 2025). Therefore, the lacustrine deposits at the Project site are not considered paleontologically sensitive, and have a low potential to yield significant fossils. See section 4.5.3.3 for a discussion of paleontological resources management considerations for the Project.

4.5.2 Regulatory Setting

4.5.2.1 Federal Regulations

4.5.2.1.1 National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act

The National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-124) and creation of the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP) established a long-term earthquake risk reduction program to better understand, predict, and mitigate risks associated with seismic events. The following four federal agencies are responsible for coordinating activities under NEHRP: USGS, National Science Foundation, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the National Institute of Standards and Technology. While changes have occurred in program details in some of the reauthorizations, the four basic NEHRP goals remain unchanged:

(1) Develop effective practices and policies for earthquake loss reduction and accelerate their implementation.

(2) Improve techniques for reducing earthquake vulnerabilities of facilities and systems.

(3) Improve earthquake hazards identification and risk assessment methods, and their use.

(4) Improve the understanding of earthquakes and their effects. Implementation of NEHRP objectives is accomplished primarily through original research, publications, and recommendations and guidelines for state, regional, and local agencies in the development of plans and policies to promote safety and emergency planning.

4.5.2.1.2 Federal Uniform Building Code

The federal Uniform Building Code provides seismic design standards that have been established to reduce structural problems that could occur during major earthquakes. In 1998, the code was revised as follows:

- Upgrade the level of ground motion used in the seismic design of buildings
- Add site amplification factors based on local soil conditions
- Improve the way ground motion is applied in detailed design

4.5.2.2 State Regulations

4.5.2.2.1 Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act (1972)

The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act of 1972 (formerly the Special Studies Zoning Act) regulates development and construction of buildings intended for human occupancy to avoid the hazard of surface fault rupture. In accordance with this law, California Geological Survey (CGS) maps active faults and designates Earthquake Fault Zones along mapped faults. Three basic types of faults exist: active, potentially active, and inactive. Historic- and Holocene-age faults are considered active, Late Quaternary- and Quaternary-age faults are considered potentially active, and pre-Quaternary–age faults are considered inactive. These classifications are qualified by the condition that a fault must be shown to be "sufficiently active" and "well defined" by detailed site-specific geologic explorations to determine that building setbacks should be established. Any project that involves the construction of buildings or structures for human occupancy is subject to review under Alquist-Priolo, and any structures for human occupancy must be located at least 50 feet from any active fault.

4.5.2.2.2 Seismic Hazards Mapping Act

As with the Alquist-Priolo Act, the Seismic Hazards Mapping Act of 1990 (SHMA) (PRC § 2690–2699.6) is intended to reduce damage resulting from earthquakes. The Alquist-Priolo Act addresses surface fault rupture, while the SHMA addresses non-surface fault rupture earthquake hazards, including liquefaction and seismically induced landslides. The SHMA highlights the need to identify and map seismic hazard zones for cities and counties to adequately prepare the safety element of their general plans and to encourage land use management policies and regulations to reduce and mitigate those hazards to protect public health and safety. Cities and counties are required to regulate development within mapped Seismic Hazard Zones.

Under the SHMA, permit review is the primary mechanism by which development can be locally regulated. Specifically, cities and counties are prohibited from issuing development permits for sites within Seismic Hazard Zones until appropriate site-specific geologic and/or geotechnical investigations have been performed and measures to reduce potential damage have been incorporated into the development plans.

4.5.2.2.3 California Building Code

The State of California mandates minimum standards for building design through the California Building Code (CBC) (CCR Title 24). The CBC also specifies standards for geologic and seismic hazards, other than surface faulting to address seismic safety, earthquake-resistant design and construction. These codes are administered and updated by the California Building Standards Commission. CBC specifies criteria for open excavation, seismic design, and load-bearing capacity directly related to construction in California. CBC standards determine building strength based on regional seismic risks and recommended construction specifications to provide building strength above that risk. The 2022 California Building Standards Code (Cal. Code Regs., Title 24) was published July 1, 2022, with an effective date of January 1, 2023.

4.5.2.2.4 California Environmental Quality Act

Treatment of paleontological resources under CEQA is conducted according to guidance from the SVP or other agencies (e.g., U.S. Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service). Appendix G (part VII) of the CEQA Guidelines addresses paleontological resources, stating that a project will generally result in a significant impact on the environment if it will disrupt or adversely affect a paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature, except as part of a scientific study.

4.5.2.2.5 California Public Resources Code

PRC section 5097.5 include requirements for managing paleontological resources. These statutes require reasonable mitigation of adverse impacts to paleontological resources resulting from development on state lands, define the removal of paleontological sites or features from state lands as a misdemeanor, and prohibit the removal of any paleontological site or feature from state land without permission of the applicable jurisdictional agency.

4.5.2.2.6 California Trial Court Facilities Standards

The Facilities Standards chapters 11 and 12 establish architectural and structural criteria to ensure the design of new trial court facilities reflects functional and programmatic needs, adaptability for future technology, the ability to withstand potential damage, and the ability to minimize impact on disruption of building services and operations from disasters and rare events.

4.5.3 Impacts Analysis

4.5.3.1 Methodology

The geology and soil analyses are based on a review of the Project-specific Geotechnical Engineering and Geohazard Study (Appendix E) and a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report (Appendix F).

4.5.3.2 Thresholds of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Project would have a significant impact on geology and soils if it would:

- Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death, involving:
  - Strong seismic ground shaking.
  - Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction.
- Result in significant soil erosion or the loss of topsoil.
- 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.
- Be located on expansive soil, as noted in the 2010 California Building Code, creating significant risks to life or property.

4.5.3.3 Topics Not Addressed Further

Rupture of a Known Earthquake Fault: As stated in section 4.5.1 Environmental Setting, the Project site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone or within or immediately adjacent to the trace of any other known fault. Because the Project site is not located in an Earthquake Fault Zone, the geotechnical report concluded the potential for fault ground rupture and fault creep hazards at the site is negligible (Atlas 2025). Therefore, the Project would have no impact related to risk of fault rupture, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

Landslides: Landslides can occur under a variety of loading conditions, including both static and seismic, but involve sloping ground. The general topography of the Project site as well as the surrounding area is relatively flat. The site is not considered to be prone to landslides. Therefore, the Project would have no impact related to risk of landslides, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

Soils Incapable of Adequately Supporting the Use of Septic Tanks or Alternative Wastewater Disposal Systems: The Project site is currently served by a municipal wastewater system owned and operated by the American Valley Community Services District. The Project site is served by existing wastewater utility infrastructure, including a main in Lawrence Street and utility laterals connected to the existing on-site buildings. Although detailed site design is not currently available, it is assumed all existing sanitary sewer pipelines within the Project site would be replaced and upsized as needed to serve the new courthouse. The Project would not require the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. Therefore, the Project would have no impact related to soil suitability for septic tanks or alternative wastewater systems, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

Paleontological Resources or Unique Geologic Feature: In general, grading and excavation activities have the potential to uncover previously unknown paleontological resources when these activities occur in areas with geologic formations of at least some level of paleontological sensitivity. As described in section 4.5.1. Environmental Setting, some geologic formations are more paleontologically sensitive than others. According to the Geotechnical Report, the Project site is predominantly underlain by recent alluvium deposits along the southern edge of American Valley as Holocene-epoch [Quaternary-age] Lake Deposits associated with the lower valleys (Atlas 2025). Holocene deposits are generally considered too young to be fossiliferous and therefore have little to no paleontological sensitivity (County of Plumas 2012).

The depth of excavation (including cuts and fills) required to construct the new courthouse and associated site improvements would not likely extend beyond 30 feet (Atlas 2025, p. 17). Investigations of the site's subsurface conditions identified undocumented fill at depths between 3 to 7 feet bgs and Lake Deposits beneath the fill to a depth of 50 feet bgs. The proposed courthouse building would not have a subterranean (i.e., basement) level, and construction of the recommended mat foundation with bottom levels bearing entirely on compacted fill or shallow spread footings bearing on improved ground, does not require permanent driven piles, which would involve the disturbance of soils at greater depths (as deep as 100 feet bgs in some cases). Project excavation activities would therefore be confined to fill and Lake Deposits, which are not considered paleontologically sensitive.

According to the SVP's Best Practice Guidelines, the geologic unit underlying the Project site would be assigned the 2 = Low Potential FPMS designation because the geologic unit underlying the Project site consists of sedimentary deposits that are generally younger than

11,700 years before present. Because the geologic unit underlying the Project site would be categorized as having low potential to contain scientifically significant fossils according to the SVP's Best Practice Guidelines and paleontological resource impact evaluations surveys, and monitoring are not recommended for geologic units with the 2 = Low Potential designation, no further analysis of the Project's potential impact on paleontological resources is needed. Therefore, the Project would have no impact related to the loss of a unique paleontological resource or site, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

A unique geologic feature is a major natural element that stands out in the landscape, such as a large and scenic river, gorge, waterfall, volcanic cinder cone, lava field, or glacier. Unique features are considered outstanding examples that are regarded as the best of their kind. According to the geotechnical report, due to the site's location and geology, subsurface soil conditions, groundwater levels, and land use factors, the Project site does not contain unique geologic features (Atlas 2025). Therefore, the Project would have no impact related to the loss of unique geologic features, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

4.5.3.4 Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death, involving strong seismic ground shaking

According to the geotechnical report, the Project site would likely experience low to moderate ground shaking from earthquakes originating from a nearby fault, such as the Mohawk Valley Fault. Earthquake intensities could vary depending upon the magnitude of the earthquake, the distance of the site from the causative fault, the type of materials underlying the site and other factors. Infrequent, major earthquakes in the greater area may also cause shaking but would likely be low in intensity at the site.

The Project intends to construct a new courthouse building that meets regulatory seismic standards. The Project is required by law to comply with seismic safety standards of the CBC. The CBC requires an evaluation of seismic design that is focused on "collapse prevention," meaning that structures are designed for prevention of collapse for the maximum level of ground shaking that could reasonably be expected to occur at a site. Based on the seismic design category, the CBC requires an analysis of slope instability, liquefaction, and surface rupture attributable to faulting or lateral spreading, liquefaction and soil strength loss, and lateral movement or reduction in foundation soil-bearing capacity. The CBC also requires that measures to reduce damage from seismic effects be incorporated in structural design. Measures may include ground stabilization, selection of appropriate foundation type and depths, selection of appropriate structural systems to accommodate anticipated displacements, or any combination of these measures. The Project would be designed to resist the seismic forces generated by earthquake shaking in accordance with the provisions of the most recently adopted version of the CBC.

The Judicial Council will incorporate recommendations contained in the final Geotechnical Report related to appropriate seismic design for the proposed courthouse into the Project design criteria documents to comply with CBC requirements. These recommendations include altering the mechanics of the existing soils to meet performance requirements, which generally include increasing bearing capacity, reducing settlement, and increasing resistance to liquefaction, and appropriate foundation design. The Geotechnical Report concluded that the Project would be feasible from a geotechnical standpoint, provided the recommendations of the report are incorporated into the Project.

Furthermore, because the new courthouse would be engineered to withstand the effects of strong seismic ground shaking based on current building code requirements, the Project would represent a benefit in terms of seismic safety as compared to the existing Quincy courthouse and the existing on-site buildings (i.e. the Feather Publishing Co., Inc. building, the storage facility for boats and recreational trailers, and the Quincy Lumber building). The relocated court staff and users, and current users of the three buildings on the Project site would be better protected against the risk of loss, injury, or death. Therefore, the Project would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects due to strong seismic ground shaking. This impact would be ***less than significant***.

4.5.3.5 Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death, involving seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction

The Geotechnical Report concluded that, based on the Project site's overall subsurface conditions, including the soil types and their densities, the groundwater level at the site, and the magnitude of a potential seismic event, there is potential for liquefaction within some relatively loose, discontinuous layers at the site. However, the potential for extensive liquefaction with which Project structures could interact and cause a significant adverse effect is considered low (Atlas 2025, p. 10). Therefore, the Project is not likely to directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects due to seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction. This impact would be ***less than significant***.

4.5.3.6 Result in significant soil erosion or the loss of topsoil

Based on a review of U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) soil data (NRCS 2026), the Project site's soils consist predominantly of Forgay-Urban land Complex soils with 0 to 5 percent slopes with a relatively small area of Keddie loam with 0 to 2 percent slopes along part of the rear site boundary. Soils in the Forgay-Urban Land complex have a high water permeability/infiltration rate; therefore, the water erosion hazard associated with these types of soils is low. Project-related construction would involve earthmoving activities, including excavating (cuts and fills), trenching, and grading, which would remove existing site improvements and expose underlying soils. Soil disturbance during construction activities would increase the potential for wind erosion during the summer months and water erosion during the winter rainy season.

Because the Project would disturb more than one acre of land, the Judicial Council is required by law to prepare a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and implement site-specific best management practices (BMPs) that are specifically designed to prevent erosion and downstream sedimentation, and to protect water quality, during the construction period. A Notice of Intent, along with a SWPPP and BMPs, must be submitted to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board for approval, in compliance with the statewide National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (Construction General Permit) (Order WQ 2022-0057-DWQ). The Construction General Permit also includes post-construction stormwater performance standards that address water quality and hydromodification protection. Examples of the types of BMPs that could be implemented to reduce construction-related erosion include watering the soil during earthmoving activities, silt fences, staked straw bales/wattles, geofabric, trench plugs, terraces, water bars, soil stabilizers, mulching, and revegetation of disturbed areas. Construction techniques that could be implemented to reduce

the potential for stormwater runoff include minimizing site disturbance, controlling water flow over the construction site, stabilizing bare soil, and ensuring proper site cleanup. The BMPs would also address tracking control, non-stormwater management control (including, but not limited to, dewatering operations, paving and grinding operations, illicit connections/discharge, and non-stormwater discharges) and waste management and materials pollution control (spill prevention and control, solid, liquid, and hazardous waste management, etc.).

The Project must comply with existing state regulations created to avoid or minimize potential soil erosion impacts. Because the Judicial Council and/or its contractor would prepare a SWPPP and implement BMPs designed to control construction-related stormwater runoff and reduce erosion in line with existing state-level regulations, the Project would not result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil. (Long-term impacts from Project operation related to soil erosion are evaluated in section 4.8 Hydrology and Water Quality of this EIR.) This impact would be ***less than significant***.

4.5.3.7 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

As described above, the Project site is not located in a landslide hazard area. The level of hazard from liquefaction risk would be low. Similarly, the risk of lateral spreading is very low.

According to the Geotechnical Report (Atlas 2025), the Project site is underlain by stratified lacustrine deposits consisting of interbedded loose to dense, silty to clayey sands and gravels, and medium stiff to stiff sandy clay. Undocumented fill materials were identified within the uppermost 3 to 10 feet of the subsurface throughout the site. The key geotechnical considerations related to the construction of the Project are the presence of undocumented fill, compressible deposits in the upper 25 feet of the subsurface, and shallow groundwater.

Temporary dewatering may be required to lower and maintain depressed groundwater levels during construction. Remedial grading would be required to reduce the potential stress that would be placed on the proposed building and other proposed improvements from the undocumented fill materials and compressible deposits in the upper subsurface. The Project would remove any loose or soft soil or unsuitable fill soil encountered during construction to expose firm soil and backfilled with engineered fill as recommended in the Geotechnical Report and required in the Project design criteria.

The Geotechnical Report ultimately concluded that the proposed building can be supported on a mat foundation with the bottom levels bearing entirely on compacted fill or shallow spread footings bearing on improved [remediated] ground (Atlas 2025, p. 1). The Geotechnical Report contains in-depth recommendations for site preparation, including removal of unsuitable soil and fill material, import and design of engineered fill, and soil compaction requirements; building foundation design and construction, including seismic design parameters; vehicular pavement, concrete flatwork, and retaining wall design; and utility trench backfilling to be implemented by the Project DBE to reduce the potential for settlement and related geologic hazards (see Appendix E).

The Judicial Council includes the findings from the site-specific Geotechnical Report into the Project design criteria requirements, which would avoid risks to structures and people from construction in unstable soil. Implementation of the recommendations contained within the site-specific Geotechnical Report would ensure the Project complies with the CBC and avoids on- or

off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse due to the presence of unstable soils. This impact would be ***less than significant***.

4.5.3.8 Be located on expansive soil, as noted in the 2010 California Building Code, creating significant risks to life or property

As stated in section 4.5.1 Environmental Setting, the subsurface soils present on the Project site include undocumented fill and lake deposits. The expansion potential of the on-site near-surface soils is expected to be very low. While expansive soils do not appear to be a significant issue at the Project site, expansive soils may impact the performance of foundations and site flatwork, as expansive soil pressures may develop that can manifest primarily as seasonal heaving and settlement effects. The Geotechnical Report provided recommendations for the Project intended to avoid or reduce impacts related to expansive soils (Atlas 2025, p. 14). The Geotechnical Report recommends that, if localized areas of soils with an expansion index greater than 20 are encountered [during site preparation], these materials should be removed to a minimum depth of 2 feet and replaced with compacted fill materials having an expansion index of 20 or less.

The Project geotechnical investigation determined the Project proposal is geotechnically feasible and potential impacts related to on-site expansive soils can be addressed through appropriate Project design. The Project would construct the new courthouse building and associated site improvements consistent with CBC requirements and the recommendations of the geotechnical site investigation. Therefore, this impact would be ***less than significant***.

4.6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

This section analyzes the potential GHG emissions impacts of the Project. The Project will not, by itself, result in climate change; however, cumulative emissions from many projects contribute to global GHG concentrations and the climate system. This section considers the Project's cumulative contribution to the significant cumulative impact of climate change.

4.6.1 Environmental Setting

4.6.1.1 Greenhouse Gases

Gases that absorb and emit infrared thermal radiation (heat) in the atmosphere and affect regulation of the Earth's temperature are known as greenhouse gases (GHGs). There are many compounds present in the Earth's atmosphere which are GHGs, including but not limited to water vapor (H_2O), carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), and nitrous oxide (N_2O). GHGs allow solar radiation (sunlight) to enter the atmosphere freely. When solar radiation strikes the earth's surface, it is absorbed by the atmosphere, land, and ocean surface, or reflected back toward space. The land and ocean surface that has absorbed solar radiation warms up and emits infrared radiation toward space. GHGs absorb some of this infrared radiation and "trap" the energy in the earth's atmosphere. Entrapment of too much infrared radiation produces an effect commonly referred to as the "Greenhouse effect." Human activities since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution (approximately 1750) have increased atmospheric GHG concentrations. Average global surface temperatures have risen as a result of GHG emissions along with other changes in weather patterns.

GHGs that contribute to climate regulation are a different type of pollutant than criteria or hazardous air pollutants because climate regulation 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, climate regulation, and global climate change.

Human production of GHG has increased steadily since pre-industrial times (approximately pre-1880) and atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations have increased from a pre-industrial value of 280 parts per million (ppm) in the early 1800's to 429 ppm in February 2026 (NOAA 2026). The effects of increased GHG concentrations in the atmosphere include increasing temperature, shifts in precipitation patterns and amounts, reduced ice and snow cover, sea level rise, and acidification of oceans. These effects in turn will impact food and water supplies, infrastructure, ecosystems, and overall public health and welfare.

The six common GHGs are described below. These GHGs are the primary GHGs emitted into the atmosphere by human activities.

- *Carbon Dioxide (CO_2)* is released into the atmosphere when fossil fuels (oil, gasoline, diesel, natural gas, and coal), solid waste, and wood or wood products are burned.
- *Methane (CH_4)* is emitted during the production and transport of coal, natural gas, and oil. Methane emissions also result from the decomposition of organic waste in municipal solid waste landfills and the raising of livestock.

- *Nitrous oxide (N_2O)* is emitted during agricultural and industrial activities, as well as during combustion of solid waste and fossil fuels.
- *Sulfur hexafluoride (SF_6)* is commonly used as an electrical insulator in high voltage electrical transmission and distribution equipment such as circuit breakers, substations, and transmission switchgear. Releases of SF_6 occur during maintenance and servicing as well as from leaks of electrical equipment.
- Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and perfluorocarbons (PFCs) are generated in a variety of industrial processes.

GHG emissions from human activities contribute to overall GHG concentrations in the atmosphere and the corresponding effects of global climate change (e.g., 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_2, which has a GWP of one. By comparison, CH_4 has a GWP of 25, which means that one molecule of CH_4 has 25 times the effect on global warming as one molecule of CO_2. Multiplying the estimated emissions for non-CO_2 GHGs by their GWP determines their carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e), which enables a project's combined global warming potential to be expressed in terms of mass CO_2 emissions. GHG emissions are often discussed in terms of metric tons of CO_2e, or $MTCO_2e$.

4.6.2 Regulatory Setting

4.6.2.1 Federal Regulations

4.6.2.1.1 Federal Clean Air Act

On December 7, 2009, the U.S. EPA issued an endangerment finding that current and projected concentrations of the six Kyoto GHGs in the atmosphere (CO_2, CH_4, N_2O, SF_6, HFCs, and PFCs) threaten the public health and welfare of current and future generations. This finding came in response to the Supreme Court ruling in *Massachusetts v. EPA*, which found that GHGs are pollutants under the Federal Clean Air Act. As a result, the U.S. EPA issued its GHG Tailoring Rule in 2010, which applies to facilities that have the potential to emit more than 100,000 $MTCO_2e$. In 2014, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its decision in *Utility Air Regulatory Group v. EPA* (573 U.S. 302), finding that the U.S. EPA may not treat GHGs as an air pollutant for purposes of determining whether a source is a "major" source required to obtain a permit pursuant to the "Clean Air Act's Prevention of Significant Deterioration" or "Title V" operating permit programs. The U.S. EPA's Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program requires facilities that emit 25,000 $MTCO_2e$ or more of GHG to report their GHG emissions to the U.S. EPA to inform future policy decision makers. In September 2025, the EPA proposed amending the Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program to remove reporting obligations for most large facilities, and delay reporting requirements for remaining facilities. The proposed reconsideration is currently undergoing the rulemaking process. In February 2026, the U.S. EPA finalized a rule to rescind the 2009 endangerment finding. Without the endangerment finding, the U.S. EPA does not have the authority to regulate GHG emissions, and therefore the U.S. EPA also rescinded its GHG regulations for light-, medium-, and heavy-duty on-highway vehicles and engines.

4.6.2.2 State Regulations

California Air Resources Board (CARB) is the lead agency for implementing AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act adopted by the Legislature in 2006. AB 32 requires the CARB to prepare a Scoping Plan containing the main strategies that will be used to achieve reductions in GHG emissions in California.

Executive Order B-30-15, 2030 Carbon Target and Adaptation, issued by Governor Brown 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, Governor Brown signed SB 32 and AB 197 on September 8, 2016. Senate Bill 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. Assembly Bill 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."

4.6.2.2.1 CARB Scoping Plan

On December 14, 2017, CARB adopted the second update to the Scoping Plan, the 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan Update (2017 Scoping Plan Update; CARB 2017). The primary objective of the 2017 Scoping Plan Update is to identify the measures needed to achieve the mid-term GHG reduction target for 2030 (i.e., reduce emissions by 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030), as established under Executive Order B-30-15 and SB 32. The 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan identifies an increased need for coordination among State, regional, and local governments to realize the potential for GHG emissions reductions that can be gained from local land use decisions. The third update to the scoping plan, the 2022 Scoping Plan, was released in May 2022 and adopted by CARB in December 2022 (CARB 2022). The plan presents a scenario for California to meet the State goal of reducing GHG emissions 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 and to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045 (CARB 2022).

4.6.2.2.2 Assembly Bill 32 (California Global Warming Solutions Act) and Related GHG Goals

In September 2006, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed AB 32, the California Climate Solutions Act of 2006. AB 32 establishes the caps on statewide greenhouse gas emissions proclaimed in Executive Order (EO) S-3-05 and established the timeline for meeting State GHG reduction targets. The deadline for meeting the 2020 reduction target was December 31, 2020.

As part of AB 32, CARB determined 1990 GHG emissions levels and projected a "business-as-usual" (BAU)[2] estimate for 2020, to determine the amount of GHG emission reductions that would need to be achieved. In 2007, CARB approved a statewide 1990 emissions level and corresponding 2020 GHG emissions limit of 427 million $MTCO_2e$ (CARB 2007). In 2008, CARB adopted its Climate Change Scoping Plan, which projected 2020 statewide GHG emissions

[2] BAU is a term used to define emissions levels without considering reductions from future or existing programs or technologies.

levels of 596 million $MTCO_2e$ and identified numerous measures (i.e., mandatory rules and regulations and voluntary measures) to achieve at least 174 million $MTCO_2e$ of GHG reductions and bring statewide GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 (CARB 2009).

EO B-30-15, 2030 Carbon Target and Adaptation, issued by Governor Brown in April 2015, set a target of reducing GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. To achieve this ambitious target, Governor Brown identified five key goals for reducing GHG emissions in California through 2030:

- Increase renewable electricity to 50 percent.
- Double energy efficiency savings achieved in existing buildings and make heating fuels cleaner.
- Reduce petroleum use in cars and trucks by up to 50 percent.
- Reduce emissions of short-lived climate pollutants.
- Manage farms, rangelands, forests, and wetlands to increasingly store carbon.

By directing State agencies to take measures consistent with their existing authority to reduce GHG emissions, EO B-30-15 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[3] (NASA 2019).

To reinforce the goals established through EO B-30-15, Governor Brown signed SB 32 and AB 197 on September 8, 2016. 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.”

On September 16, 2022, Governor Newson signed into law AB 1279, the California Climate Crisis Act, that codified California’s 2045 carbon neutrality goal and established a GHG emission reduction target of 85% below 1990 levels.

4.6.2.2.3 Judicial Council Sustainability Plan for Trial Court Facilities

The Trial Court Facility Modification Advisory Committee approved the Sustainability Plan for Trial Court Facilities (Sustainability Plan) in December 2020 (Judicial Council 2020b). The Sustainability Plan was developed to assist the Judicial Council with meeting present and future resource needs by reducing trial court facilities’ GHG emissions, energy usage and utility costs and ensuring compliance with state sustainability initiatives. While the Sustainability Plan is not regulatory and does not mandate specific actions, it identifies two overarching goals which would likely also reduce facility GHG emissions:

[3] Two degrees Celsius is considered to be a critical threshold, because that is the incremental increase that is anticipated to cause more than 70 percent of Earth’s coastlines to see sea-level rise greater than 0.66 feet. This increase in sea level would result in increased coastal flooding, beach erosion, salinization of water supplies, and other impacts on humans and ecological systems.

1. Reduce Trial Court Facilities' GHG emissions, energy usage and utility costs, and conserve natural resources.
2. Ensure compliance with State sustainability initiatives in all new construction and major renovation projects.

4.6.2.2.4 California Trial Court Facilities Standards

The Judicial Council adopted Facilities Standards to guide the design and construction of trial court facilities in California. The Facilities Standards address physical durability of facilities, design principles, sustainable design, site design, architectural criteria, and other topics specific to court facilities. Each courthouse has its own specific needs, and each site for a courthouse is different, which requires tailored design solutions. Section 1.D of the Facilities Standards establishes the objectives, design criteria, and performance goals for the planning and design of sustainable trial court buildings in California, including the following that would support strategies to reduce GHG emissions associated with facility construction and operations:

4.6.2.2.5 1. Objectives

a. Architects and engineers shall focus on proven design approaches and building elements that improve court facilities for building occupants and result in cost-effective, sustainable buildings.
b. All new courthouse projects shall be designed in conformance with the Non-residential Mandatory Measures of the current version of the CALGreen (CCR Title 24, Part 11), as well as the current version of the California Energy Code (CCR Title 24, Part 6). All projects shall target 15 percent increased energy efficiency and 12 percent increased water conservation levels as compared to the minimum requirements of Title 24.
c. Implementation of CALGreen Tier 1 Nonresidential Voluntary Measures will depend on a positive net present value result of the Tier 1 LCCA [life cycle cost analysis] design options or Judicial Council LCCA procedure-based design against a code-compliant design.
d. Additionally, all new courthouse projects shall be designed for sustainability to receive certification of the building to the current LEED Silver rating or higher without an increase in the authorized project budget or long-term operating costs.

4.6.2.2.6 2. Design Criteria and Performance Goals (partial list)

2.1 Compliance Requirements and Goals

g. (a) Comply with the current version of the CalGreen Nonresidential Mandatory Measures, (b) Comply with the current version of the California Energy Code, and (c) Comply with the current LEED Silver criteria without increasing the project budget or long-term operating costs.
h. Improve energy efficiency and provide thermal comfort. Optimize the building envelope and develop passive solar strategies. Design energy-efficient HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems. In addition to complying with CALGreen, use whole-building energy model analysis to refine the design so that whole-building energy consumption is permissible for ASHRAE 90.1–compliant court buildings. Whole-building energy models must be optimized to comply with the location-specific California Building Climate Zone.

i. Promote occupant health and well-being in the indoor environment. Provide a connection to natural daylight, optimal lighting and acoustics, and good indoor air quality. Coordinate daylighting with high-efficiency electric lighting and programmable controls.

l. Plan for recycling of materials during construction, demolition, and occupancy. Develop specifications for construction recycling; require contractors to develop a construction waste management plan that identifies companies licensed to recycle materials. Provide collection bins for recyclable materials on each floor and a staging area for materials collection.

2.2 Best Practices

a. Use sustainable building materials. Evaluate the life cycle environmental impacts such as embodied carbon, resource efficiency, and performance of building materials. Seek out nontoxic low- or no-VOC (volatile organic compound) materials from local, renewable, and sustainably acquired resources that minimize waste and pollution from manufacturing, installation, and maintenance. Do not use tropical hardwoods. Do not use materials with hazardous components such as asbestos, lead, and PCBs.

b. Use native and climate-appropriate drought-tolerant plants and trees. Reduce maintenance and irrigation requirements by using native plant species. Explore opportunities to provide habitat for wildlife, including protection and promotion of pollinator habitat, and to restore degraded site areas. Turf is not permitted.

c. (d) Install HVAC, refrigeration, and fire suppression equipment that does not contain the ozone-depleting gases regulated by the Montreal Protocol, specifically chlorofluorocarbons (CFSs) or halons. Specify low global warming potential refrigerants for use in HVAC, refrigeration, and fire suppression systems, as defined in the Regulation for the Management of High Global Warming Potential Refrigerants for Stationary Sources, California Air Resources Board: (1) any refrigerant with a global warming potential value lower than 150, or (2) any refrigerant that is not an ozone-depleting substance (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 17, § 95382). For systems containing florinated greenhouse gases equivalent to more than 500 metric tons of CO2, the design should incorporate an automatic leak detection system. The leak-detection system must alert building maintenance staff, or a service company responsible for maintaining the relevant equipment, if a leak is detected.

The objectives, design criteria, and performance goals for Sustainable Design, along with the balance of the Facilities Standards, is used to guide the Judicial Council and DBE in the development of court facilities, including the Project.

4.6.2.3 Local Regulations

The Judicial Council, acting as the judicial branch of State government, is not subject to local land use regulations; however, the Judicial Council, as lead agency, considers local policies in evaluating whether the Project's impacts would be significant.

4.6.2.3.1 Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District

The NSAQMD has not established threshold of significance regarding GHG emissions, but notes that, pursuant to provisions and precedents stemming from AB32, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions should be quantified for decision-makers and the public to consider (NSAQMD 2024).

4.6.3 Impacts Analysis

4.6.3.1 Methodology

Global climate change is the result of GHG emissions worldwide; most individual projects do not generate enough GHG emissions to independently have a significant effect on global climate change. Thus, the analysis of GHG emissions, including for this Project, is a cumulative analysis focused on whether the Project's contribution to global climate change is cumulatively considerable.

4.6.3.2 Thresholds of Significance

Under CEQA, each lead agency is entitled to establish a threshold of significance for determining whether cumulative impacts on GHG emissions are significant. The CARB Scoping Plan, Facilities Standards, and other materials noted above provide GHG emissions reduction goals, but not standards which establish a threshold of significance. In determining a threshold of significance for the Project, the Judicial Council may consider standards adopted by local and/or regional authorities. The NSAQMD has not adopted a numerical threshold for determining the significance of GHG emissions.

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Project would have a significant impact on greenhouse gas emissions if it would:

- Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment.
- Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases.

To determine whether the Project may cause a cumulatively significant contribution to environmental impacts from GHG emissions, the Judicial Council first evaluated whether the Project would cause an increase in baseline GHG emissions conditions. As provided in the CEQA Guidelines section 15064.4, the Judicial Council has relied on a qualitative analysis of the Project's GHG emissions in relation to existing conditions.

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

The construction and operation of the Project would generate GHG emissions. Construction of the Project would generate equipment exhaust and dust emissions from demolition activities, ground disturbing activities such as site preparation and grading, and the use of gasoline- and diesel-fuel combustion in on- and off-site heavy duty construction equipment, worker vehicle trips, vendor vehicle trips, haul truck trips, and ground disturbing activities. Once operational, the Project would generate GHG emissions from area sources, such as landscaping equipment and the use of consumer products, energy use in the form of embedded emissions in electricity consumption, mobile sources including worker and vendor trips to and from the site, water/wastewater, and solid waste sources. The Project's potential construction and operational GHG emissions were modeled using CalEEMod, Version 2022.1, as described in section 4.2. The Project's total construction emissions, as estimated using CalEEMod V. 2022.1, are shown in Table 4-17.

Table 4-17: Project Construction GHG Emissions

Year	Annual GHG Emissions (MT / Year)				
	CO_2	CH_4	N_2O	Refrigerant (CO_2e)	TOTAL $MTCO_2e$
2028	82.7	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	83.5
2029	208.7	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	209.9
Amortized GHG Estimate(A)	4.9	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	4.9

Source: MIG 2026 (see Appendix B)

(A) Emissions are amortized over the life of the Project, which is presumed to be 30 years.

The Project's operational GHG emissions are shown in Table 4-18.

Table 4-18: Project Operational GHG Emissions (Unmitigated)

Emission Source	GHG Emissions (MT / Year)				
	CO_2	CH_4	N_2O	Refrigerant (CO_2e)	CO_2e
Mobile	1,084	<0.1	<0.1	1.3	1,101
Area	0.3	<0.1	<0.1	--	0.3
Energy	174	<0.1	<0.1	--	182
Water	4	0.1	<0.1	--	8.3
Waste	2	0.2	<0.1	--	6.7
Amortized Construction	4.9	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	4.9
Site Total(A)	1,269	0.4	0.1	1.3	1,303

Source: MIG 2026 (see Appendix B).

(A) Totals may not equal due to rounding.

As shown in Table 4-18, the Project's potential GHG emissions would be approximately 1,303 $MTCO_2e$. The Project's operational GHG emissions presented in Table 4-18 represent the total operational emissions associated with the proposed new courthouse. Once the Project is operational it would support up to 31 operational staff. Based on the Project's estimated annual GHG emissions of 1,303 $MTCO_2e$ (as shown in Table 4-18) and the Project's operational capacity of 31 staff, the Project's annual GHG emissions efficiency metric would be approximately 42.03 $MTCO_2e$ per service population. These emissions and this GHG emissions efficiency are considered to be similar to those of the existing courthouse based on similar operational capacity and typical courthouse land use activities.

It is reasonable to assume the Project's GHG emissions, as estimated using the methodology above, are similar to or lower than those associated with the existing courthouse. Since the Project proposes to construct a new courthouse that would ultimately facilitate already existing courthouse operations for the existing service population, it is reasonable to assume that the Project's GHG emissions efficiency would be similar to or better than that of the existing courthouse. Additionally, the new courthouse would be constructed to much higher efficiency

standards as compared to the County-owned courthouse with existing court operations that are less than a mile away.

Mobile source GHG emissions generated by worker and visitor vehicle trips are expected to be equivalent to those associated with the existing courthouse operations, and overall mobile source GHG emissions would decrease over time as vehicle energy efficiency continues to improve. The Project is not expected to increase vehicle miles traveled.

Therefore, the Project would result in a similar or better overall GHG emissions impacts when compared to existing environmental conditions. This impact would be ***less than significant.***

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

The Project would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions, including the 2022 Scoping Plan. The Scoping Plan does not have any enforceable standards that would be applicable to the project. The Judicial Council's threshold of significance analysis considers and incorporates the applicable plans, policies, and regulations for reducing GHG emissions, and the Project would not exceed that threshold of significance. There is no local GHG reduction plan, and a local plan would not be applicable to the Judicial Council. This impact would be ***less than significant***.

4.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

This section addresses potential impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials associated with historic and current land use of the Project site and surrounding uses. This analysis considers the range and nature of foreseeable hazardous materials, use, storage, and disposal resulting from implementation of the Project and identifies the primary ways that these hazardous materials could expose individuals or the environment to health and safety risks. The potential for impacts on emergency response plans is also addressed in this section.

Service levels by fire personnel and other emergency responders are addressed in Chapter 3 Impacts Found Not to Be Significant; potential hazards and associated impacts related to toxic air contaminant emissions, with the exception of asbestos, are discussed in Section 4.2 Air Quality; potential impacts from geologic hazards are discussed in Section 4.5 Geology and Soils; and potential public health impacts and hazards related to groundwater and flooding are discussed in Section 4.8 Hydrology and Water Quality.

The analysis summarizes information presented in the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report prepared for the Project by Geocon, dated June 14, 2023 (herein referred to as the Phase I ESA; see Appendix F) and the Hazardous Building Material Survey prepared for the Project by Ninyo & Moore, dated April 21, 2026 (herein referred to as the Hazardous Building Material Survey; see Appendix G).

4.7.1 Environmental Setting

For purposes of this section, the term “hazardous materials” refers to both hazardous substances and hazardous wastes. A “hazardous material” is defined by federal regulations as “a substance or material that … is capable of posing an unreasonable risk to health, safety, and property when transported in commerce.” (49 CFR § 171.8).

California Health and Safety Code section 25501 defines a hazardous material as follows:

> Hazardous material means any material that, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical, or chemical characteristics, poses a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety or to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment. Hazardous materials include, but are not limited to, hazardous substances, hazardous waste, and any material which a handler or the administering agency has a reasonable basis for believing that it would be injurious to the health and safety of persons or harmful to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment.

Hazardous wastes are defined in California Health and Safety Code section 25141(b) as wastes that:

> …because of their quantity, concentration, or physical, chemical, or infectious characteristics, [may either] cause, or significantly contribute to an increase in mortality or an increase in serious illness [, or] pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly treated, stored, transported, disposed of, or otherwise managed.

4.7.1.1 Phase I Environmental Site Assessment

Geocon conducted a site reconnaissance and prepared a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (Phase I ESA) for the Project. The Phase I ESA included a review of local, State,

and federal environmental record sources, historical Sanborn fire insurance maps, historical aerial photographs, and historical topographic maps. The site reconnaissance in May 2023 observed site uses and existing conditions for evidence or indications of a recognized environmental condition (REC). The site reconnaissance also included observation of adjoining and adjacent off-site properties and features from the vantagepoint of the Project site and public thoroughfares.

4.7.1.1.1 Historical and Current Uses of the Project Site and Vicinity

The Project site is currently occupied by three buildings (Quincy Paint Center and The2Mic building [Quincy Lumber & Supply building], Feather Publishing Co, Inc., and the recreational vehicle storage facility). Geocon reviewed historical Sanborn fire insurance maps, historical aerial photographs, and topographic maps to inform the Phase I ESA's description of the historical uses of the Project site and the site vicinity.

Historical Sanborn fire insurance maps from 1929 depict the Project site as vacant. Beginning in 1938, the historical Sanborn fire insurance maps depict a lumber yard ("The Diamond Match Company Lumber Yard") consisting of a commercial building (i.e., the current "Quincy Lumber" building) with an associated storage area and parking in the southwestern portion of the Project site. Historical aerial photographs from 1946, 1954, 1962, 1973, and 1977 show minimal changes in site conditions in this time period, including the installation and subsequent removal of an outbuilding northeast of the commercial building. Beginning in 1984, historical aerial photographs depict the existing open-sided, covered storage structure (i.e. the recreational vehicle storage facility) in the southeastern portion of the site and an area of ground disturbance or dumped material in the northern portion of the site. Beginning in 1998, historical aerial photographs depict the existing large commercial building (i.e., the Feather Publishing Co, Inc. building) and associated parking in the northern portion of the Project site. Site conditions have remained largely unchanged since 1998.

The Project site is surrounded by a mix of duplexes and single-family residences and small businesses. An inactive, former wastewater treatment plant is located north of the bike path. Historical Sanborn fire insurance maps, historical aerial photographs, and topographic maps depict a variety of land uses surrounding the site since 1912, which have included dwellings with auto garages, vacant lots, buildings associated with the U.S. Forest Service, a movie theater, a railroad, undeveloped land likely used for livestock grazing, and the previously mentioned sewage disposal facility. According to the historical topographic maps, the sewage disposal facility that previously operated north of the Project site is not listed on any release-related databases. The Sanborn fire insurance maps, historical aerial photographs, and historical topographic maps do not show features or land uses that directly suggest the presence of conditions or features on the Project site or on adjoining and adjacent properties likely to have caused an REC at the Project site.

The age of the Quincy Lumber & Supply building suggests that asbestos-containing materials (ACM) and lead-based paints (LBP) may have been used during construction of the building and during subsequent building maintenance. The potential presence of ACM and LBP in this building is a potential environmental concern for the proposed redevelopment of the Project site.

Currently, a 150-gallon propane above-ground storage tank (AST) is located at the northern side of the recreational vehicle storage facility, a 500-gallon propane AST and a pad-mounted transformer are adjacent to the Feather Publishing Co. building to the northeast, and 200-gallon kerosene AST is located inside the Quincy Lumber & Supply building, and a 120-gallon propane

AST is outside the western side of this building. Other hazardous materials present on site include the following substances documented during the site survey conducted by Geocon: retail-size (5 gallons or less) containers of oil, lubricants, aerosols, and degreasers at 253 Lawrence Street [recreational vehicle storage facility]; retail-size containers of antifreeze, water-miscible press wash, acetone, all-purpose cleaners, aerosols, and cleaning supplies and various quantities of printing plate finisher chemicals, photograph development solution, and printing ink at 287 Lawrence Street [Feather Publishing Co., Inc. building]; retail-size containers of interior and exterior paints, wood stains, lacquers, and painting equipment at 295 Lawrence Street [Quincy Lumber & Supply building]. The Phase I ESA determined the 200-gallon kerosene AST inside the Quincy Lumber & Supply building is an REC for the site as there is a material threat of release due to the lack of secondary containment beneath the AST. Possible releases from underground piping at the Feather Publishing Co., Inc. building, while not an REC, are a potential environmental concern for the site because inks and solvents used to clean printing equipment and leaks from underground piping to a sewer or septic system have the potential to impact soil and groundwater at printing facilities.

In summary, the Phase I ESA found no evidence of controlled recognized environmental conditions (CRECs) or significant data gaps in connection with the Project site or on adjoining properties. A 200-gallon kerosene AST without secondary containment in the interior of the Quincy Lumber & Supply building presents a material threat of release and is considered an REC for the site. Geocon observed no evidence of leakage from the AST. Because the Quincy Lumber & Supply building was constructed sometime prior to 1938, ACMs and LBP may be present in the building; the potential presence of ACMs and LBP on site is an environmental concern for the site. Lastly, the potential of improper onsite disposal (i.e., dumping) of inks and solvents used to clean printing equipment or leaks from underground piping to a sewer or septic system has the potential to impact soil and groundwater at printing facilities like the Feather Publishing Co., Inc. building. While Geocon observed no evidence of improper disposal of these types of materials in the Feather Publishing Co., Inc. building, possible releases from underground piping are a potential environmental concern for the site. See section 4.7.3 for a discussion of the Phase I ESA's recommendations for further action for the Project.

4.7.1.2 Hazardous Building Material Survey

Per the Phase I ESA's recommendations, a Hazardous Building Material Survey was prepared for the Project by Ninyo & Moore, dated April 21, 2026 (see Appendix G). The Hazardous Building Material Survey provides information about the current condition of the onsite buildings and the potential presence of ACM, lead-containing materials (LCM), and polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB)-containing materials (PCB-CM) as it relates to the Project's proposed demolition activities. Ninyo & Moore performed a visual reconnaissance of the buildings; collected samples for potential asbestos content; collected X-Ray fluorescence (XRF) readings of potential LCM; collected suspect LCM samples; collected potential mercury-containing thermostats/switches, PCB-containing items (transformers, light ballasts, etc.), fluorescent light tubes, exit signs, smoke detectors, air conditioning units, and Freon-containing refrigeration systems; submitted all collected samples for laboratory testing; and provided conclusions and recommendations based on the laboratory test results.

Ninyo & Moore collected a total of 77 samples of suspect ACM from the three onsite buildings and transferred the samples to an accredited laboratory for analysis. Based on field observations and the analytical results of bulk samples collected during the survey, ACM were

detected in transite sheet flooring and vinyl sheet flooring in the Quincy Lumber & Supply building. The vinyl sheet flooring (linoleum) is located in the mezzanine area of the building and contains 25% chrysotile [asbestos]. The transite sheet flooring is located on the ground floor of the building under a layer of particle board and contains 75% chrysotile [asbestos]. ACM were found only in the Quincy Lumber & Supply building. (Ninyo & Moore 2026, pp. 8-9)

Ninyo & Moore performed 45 XRF readings of painted surfaces from the three onsite buildings, which measured the lead content of the surfaces in real-time. 19 paint chip samples from inconclusive XRF readings were collected from the suspect painted surfaces of the onsite buildings for testing by an accredited laboratory. Painted surfaces with a reading on 1.0 mg/cm^2 or greater are above the action level and are considered LBP. LCM and LBP were present in the samples and readings. Laboratory testing results indicate the Quincy Lumber & Supply building has LBP on the wood-sashed windows, which are currently painted white and located on the east side of the building. LBP was identified on the window and door trims on the front (south side) of the building. Testing identified LCM in the recreational vehicle storage facility; however, the lead concentration was below the U.S. EPA's detection limit (an amount equal to or in excess of 1 milligram per square centimeter (1.0 mg/cm2), or more than half of one percent (0.5%) by weight (or 5,000 milligrams per kilogram [mg/kg]). (Ninyo & Moore 2026, pp. 11-13)

Ninyo & Moore observed universal wastes within the onsite buildings in the form of light ballasts suspect of PCB (all three buildings), HVAC units suspect of Freon (the Feather Publishing Co., Inc. building only), and exit signs suspect of lead acid or other metal (the Feather Publishing Co., Inc. building only). (Ninyo & Moore 2026, pp. 13-14)

See section 4.7.3 for a discussion of the Hazardous Building Material Survey's recommendations for further action for the Project.

4.7.1.3 Cortese List Record Search

MIG conducted a records search of the State's Cortese List Data Resources in December 2025 (CalEPA 2025). According to the State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) GeoTracker database and Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) EnviroStor database, the Project site is not included on the Cortese List of hazardous materials sites (DTSC 2025, SWRCB 2025). The GeoTracker database shows two former leaking underground storage tank sites (LUSTs) within 1,000 feet of the Project site: (1) the "District Office AV Building/PUSD" site (T0606300047) at 50 Church Street and (2) the "USFS Quincy Forest Service" site (T0606300002) at 159 Lawrence Street. Both LUST sites have a status of "Completed – Case Closed," meaning a closure letter or other formal closure decision document has been issued for each of these sites.

4.7.1.4 Naturally Occurring Asbestos

Naturally occurring asbestos is typically associated with fault zones, and areas containing serpentinite or contacts between serpentinite and other types of rocks. Exposure to asbestos fibers may result in health issues such as lung cancer, mesothelioma (a rare cancer of the thin membranes lining the lungs, chest, and abdominal cavity), and asbestosis (a non-cancerous lung disease which causes scarring of the lungs).

As discussed in section 4.2 Air Quality of this EIR, the NSAQMD submitted a response to the Project NOP requiring the Judicial Council (the "Project applicant") to confirm there is no asbestos-containing soil on the property. The scope of the Phase I ESA did not include testing

the Project site for potential naturally occurring hazards, such as asbestos. Naturally occurring asbestos is typically associated with the presence of ultramafic rock or serpentine. According to the California Geologic Map, the Project site is mapped as “Pz,” or marine sedimentary and metasedimentary rocks (Paleozoic) (California Department of Conservation 2025). This classification of undivided Paleozoic metasedimentary rocks includes slate, sandstone, shale, chert, conglomerate, limestone, dolomite, marble, phyllite, schist, hornfels, and quartzite. The Project site is therefore not located in an area known to contain ultramafic, including serpentine, rocks.

Furthermore, the geotechnical report (Atlas 2025) prepared for the project determined that, due to the Project site’s location and geology, subsurface soil conditions, groundwater levels, and land use factors, and based on readily available maps, the site is not subject to the potential geologic hazard of naturally occurring asbestos.

4.7.1.5 Public Use Airports

The nearest public use airport to the Project site is the Gansner Airport, which is located approximately 0.34-mile north of the site. The Plumas County Airport Land Use Commission (PLALUC) adopted an Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) for Gansner Airport in December 2008. The Gansner Airport ALUCP sets forth land use compatibility policies applicable to future land use and development at and in the vicinity of Gansner Airport for the purpose of protecting the safety and welfare of residents near the airport and users of the airport from aircraft hazards. The Gansner Airport ALUCP establishes general aviation runway safety compatibility zones.

The Project site is located in the Gansner Airport’s Airport Influence Area Safety Compatibility Zone 6, the Traffic Pattern Zone. Zone 6 allows for residential uses, most non-residential uses except outdoor stadiums and similar uses with very high intensities. Children’s schools, large daycare centers, hospitals, and nursing homes are generally not permitted in this zone unless no feasible alternative is available. The Project site is not located within the established noise exposure contours for Gansner Airport. (PCALUC 2008)

4.7.1.6 Emergency Response and Evacuation Planning

The Plumas County Office of Emergency Services (OES) is an agency of the County Administrative Office. OES is responsible for initiating and coordinating disaster and emergency preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation operations within the County. OES develops and maintains various emergency plans, including incident response plans for certain types of incidents and coordinated emergency response plans. During an emergency situation, OES is the designated lead agency and activates the Emergency Operations Center. OES works in concert with other State and local governments and federal agencies to provide for coordinated and effective multi-agency response and relief during emergency situations in the county. OES has prepared and updates on a regular basis the Plumas County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) (OES 2016). See section 4.7.2 Regulatory Setting for a description of the Plumas County EOP.

Primary evacuation routes within the county include SR 89, 70, and 49. SR 89 and SR 70 travel through Quincy in the east/west direction and serve as the primary means of ingress/egress into the town on a regional level.

As of July 2020, 20 fire protection agencies serve locales in Plumas County (County of Plumas 2020). The Quincy Fire Protection District (Quincy FPD) provides fire protection and emergency response services to Quincy and surrounding rural areas in the county (Quincy FPD 2025). Quincy FPD responds to structure fires, wildland fires, medical emergencies, vehicle accidents, and public service calls, including hazardous materials calls, and conducts rescue operations.

Additionally, the Plumas County Environmental Health Department, the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) for the County, operates a Hazardous Materials Management Program that conducts hazardous materials emergency response, planning, pollution prevention, site mitigation and CUPA program implementation activities (Plumas County Environmental Health Department 2025). The Plumas County Environmental Health Department has prepared and recently updated a countywide Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Plan in 2023 (Plumas County Environmental Health Department 2023). The Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Plan is incorporated into the Plumas County EOP as Annex F. See section 4.8.2 Regulatory Setting for a description of this plan.

4.7.1.7 Wildfire Hazards

Fire protection in California is the responsibility of either the federal, state, or local government. On federally owned land, or federal responsibility areas (FRA), fire protection is provided by the federal government, often in partnership through local grants and contracts. In state responsibility areas (SRA), which are defined according to land ownership, population density, and land use, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) has a legal responsibility to provide fire protection. Local responsibility areas (LRA) include incorporated cities and cultivated agriculture lands. In LRAs, fire protection is provided by city fire departments, fire protection districts, or counties, or by CAL FIRE under contract to local government.

The Project site is in a designated LRA, and fire protection for the Project site is provided by the Quincy Fire Protection District. Existing on-site vegetation is minimal. The Town of Quincy is bordered on all sides by SRA-designated lands. The closest SRA to the Project site is located approximately 0.27-mile south near the terminus of East Street (CAL FIRE 2025).

CAL FIRE is required by law to map areas of significant fire hazards based on fuels, terrain, weather, and other relevant factors. These zones, referred to as Fire Hazard Severity Zones (moderate, high, and very high), influence how people construct buildings and protect property to reduce risk associated with wildland fires. The Project site is in an area that is classified by Cal FIRE as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ; CAL FIRE 2025)

4.7.2 Regulatory Setting

Hazardous materials and hazardous wastes are subject to extensive federal, state, and local regulations to protect public health and the environment. These regulations provide definitions of hazardous materials; establish reporting requirements; set guidelines for handling, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous wastes; and require health and safety provisions for workers and the public. The major federal, state, and regional agencies enforcing these regulations are the US EPA; U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA); U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC); California Occupational Safety and Health Administration

(Cal/OSHA); California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES); SWRCB; and the Central Valley RWQCB.

4.7.2.1 Federal Regulations

4.7.2.1.1 Toxic Substances Control Act

The federal Toxic Substances Control Act (1976) and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) established a U.S. EPA-administered program to regulate the generation, transport, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste. The Toxic Substances Control Act addresses the production, importation, use, and disposal of specific chemicals including polychlorinated biphenyls, asbestos, radon, and lead-based paints.

4.7.2.1.2 Resource Conservation and Recovery Act/Hazardous and Solid Waste Act

At the federal level, the principal agency regulating the generation, transport, and disposal of hazardous substances is the EPA, under the authority of the RCRA of 1976. The RCRA established an all-encompassing federal regulatory program for hazardous substances that is administered by the EPA. Under the RCRA, EPA regulates the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous substances. The RCRA was amended by the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments of 1984, which specifically prohibits the use of certain techniques to dispose of various hazardous substances. The EPA has delegated much of the RCRA requirements to the DTSC. The RCRA was amended in 1984 by the Hazardous and Solid Waste Act, which affirmed and extended the "cradle to grave" system of regulating hazardous wastes.

4.7.2.1.3 Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), commonly known as "Superfund," was enacted by Congress on December 11, 1980. This law (42 United States Code 103) provides broad federal authority to respond directly to releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances that may endanger public health or the environment. CERCLA establishes requirements concerning closed and abandoned hazardous waste sites, provides for liability of persons responsible for releases of hazardous waste at these sites, and establishes a trust fund to provide for cleanup when no responsible party can be identified. CERCLA also enabled the revision of the National Contingency Plan. This plan (40 CFR, Part 300) provides the guidelines and procedures needed to respond to releases and threatened releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, and/or contaminants. The National Contingency Plan also established the National Priorities List. CERCLA was amended by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act on October 17, 1986.

4.7.2.1.4 Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act

The Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act, Title III of 1986 is the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act. Facilities are required to report the following items on EPA Form R, the Toxic Chemical Release Inventory Reporting Form: facility identification, off-site locations where toxic chemicals are transferred in wastes, chemical-specific information, and supplemental information.

4.7.2.1.5 Occupational Safety and Health Administration

OSHA's mission is to ensure the safety and health of American workers by setting and enforcing standards; providing training, outreach, and education; establishing partnerships; and

encouraging continual improvement in workplace safety and health. OSHA establishes and enforces protective standards and reaches out to employers and employees through technical assistance and consultation programs. OSHA standards are listed in 29 CFR 1910.

4.7.2.1.6 Federal Lead Safety Regulations

Federal efforts to regulate LBP began with the passing of the LBP Poison Prevention Act in 1971. In 1973, the Consumer Product Safety Commission defined LBP as paint having lead content equal to or greater than 0.5 percent by weight (1.0 mg/cm^2 by XRF) in a dry film of newly applied paint. In 1978, the CPSC lowered the allowable lead levels in new paint to 0.06 percent. HUD developed guidelines relating to HUD facilities that specified lead content of 0.5 percent as an action level in determining the need for corrective action. Federal and state OSHA do not define the amount of lead in paint to a regulatory requirement, rather the activities, or tasks, define when the regulation is in effect. Both federal and state standards use the term "trigger task" activities. In the workplace, employers must make certain assumptions of the exposure levels and comply with regulations based on the level of disturbance rather than the lead level.

Currently, the US EPA stipulates what concentrations of lead in non-volatile components of surface coatings or materials indicate whether a material is considered to be lead-containing. The US EPA stipulates that paint containing an amount equal to or in excess of 1 milligram per square centimeter (1.0 mg/cm2), or more than half of one percent (0.5%) by weight (or 5,000 milligrams per kilogram [mg/kg]), constitute LBP. Coatings with any detectable amount of reported lead would be considered LCM.

4.7.2.1.7 Federal PCB Regulations

The US EPA believes there was widespread use of PCB-CM in buildings constructed or renovated between 1950 and 1980. PCBs were historically used as a plasticizing agent in caulking and glazing materials, as an additive to paints and floor finishes, as a sealant for heating systems and plumbing, and as insulators in electrical equipment. PCBs may be mobile and can migrate directly into adjoining building materials, particularly porous materials such as wood, concrete, and other types of masonry. The manufacture and use of PCBs were banned in the United States in 1976, and PCBs were eventually phased out between 1978 and 1979.

Building materials that were manufactured using PCBs and that contain PCB concentrations greater than or equal to (>) 50 mg/kg are defined as PCB Bulk Product Waste (40 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 761.3 and 761.61). Building materials that contain PCB concentrations less than (<) 50 mg/kg are defined as Excluded PCB Products and may be disposed of as general construction debris. However, it is recommended that laboratory results be provided to the selected disposal facility for final waste classification and acceptance determination.

4.7.2.2 State Regulations

4.7.2.2.1 California Environmental Protection Agency

The California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) was created in 1991. It unified California's environmental authority in a single cabinet-level agency and brought the California Air Resources Board, SWRCB, RWQCB, CalRecycle, DTSC, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, and Department of Pesticide Regulation under one agency. These agencies were placed under the Cal/EPA "umbrella" for the protection of human health and the

environment to ensure the coordinated deployment of state resources. Their mission is to restore, protect, and enhance the environment and ensure public health, environmental quality, and economic vitality.

In 1993, SB 1082 gave the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) the authority and responsibility to establish a unified hazardous waste and hazardous materials management and regulatory program, commonly referred to as the Unified Program. The purpose of this program is to consolidate and coordinate six different hazardous materials and hazardous waste programs, and to ensure that they are consistently implemented throughout the State. The Unified Program is overseen by CalEPA with support from DTSC, Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs), the Office of Emergency Services (OES), and the State Fire Marshal. The six programs are:

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

State law requires county and local agencies to implement the Unified Program. The agency in charge of implementing the program is called the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA). The Plumas County Environmental Health Department is the designated CUPA for the county. In addition to the CUPA, other local agencies help to implement the Unified Program.

4.7.2.2.2 Hazardous Waste Control Act

The Hazardous Waste Control Act is implemented by regulations contained in Title 26 of the California Code of Regulations that describe requirements for the proper management of hazardous wastes. This legislation created the State hazardous waste management program, which is similar to, but more stringent than the federal RCRA program.

The program includes hazardous waste criteria for:

- identification and classification
- generation and transportation
- design and permitting of recycling, treatment, storage, and disposal facilities
- treatment standards
- operation of facilities and staff training
- closure of facilities and liability requirements

The Hazardous Waste Control Act and Title 26 regulations list more than 800 potentially hazardous materials and establish criteria for identifying, packaging, and disposal. Under these regulations, the generator of hazardous waste must complete a manifest that accompanies the material from the point of generation to transportation to the ultimate disposal location, with copies of the manifest filed with DTSC.

4.7.2.2.3 Hazardous Materials Worker Safety Requirements

Occupational safety standards exist in federal and state laws to minimize worker safety risks from both physical and chemical hazards in the workplace. The California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) and the federal OSHA are the agencies responsible for ensuring worker safety in the workplace. Cal/OSHA assumes primary responsibility for developing and enforcing standards for safe workplaces and work practices. Cal/OSHA regulations include requirements for protective clothing, training, and limits on exposure to hazardous materials. Cal/OSHA also enforces occupational health and safety regulations specific to lead (e.g., CCR Title 8, § 1532.1 Lead) and asbestos investigation and abatement. Cal/OSHA standards are generally more stringent than federal regulations.

4.7.2.2.4 California Labor Code (Division 5, Parts 1, 6, 7, and 7.5)

The California Labor Code is a collection of regulations that include regulation of the workplace to ensure appropriate training on the use and handling of hazardous materials and operation of equipment and machines that use hazardous materials. Division 5, Part 1, Chapter 2.5, ensures that employees who are in charge of handling hazardous materials are appropriately trained and informed with respect to the materials they handle. Division 5, Part 7, ensures that employees who work with volatile flammable liquids are outfitted with appropriate safety gear and clothing.

4.7.2.2.5 Department of Toxic Substances Control and Cortese List

DTSC, a department of Cal/EPA, is the primary agency in California for regulating hazardous waste, cleaning up existing contamination, and finding ways to reduce the amount of hazardous waste produced in California. DTSC regulates hazardous waste primarily under the authority of the federal RCRA and the California Health and Safety Code (primarily Division 20, Chapters 6.5 through 10.6, and Title 22, Division 4.5). Other laws that affect hazardous waste are specific to handling, storage, transport, disposal, treatment, reduction, cleanup, and emergency planning.

California Government Code 65962.5 (commonly referred to as the Cortese List) includes the DTSC list of hazardous waste facilities and sites, Department of Health Services lists of contaminated drinking water wells, SWRCB list of sites having UST leaks or a discharge of hazardous wastes or materials into the water or groundwater and lists from local regulatory agencies of sites with a known migration of hazardous waste/material.

4.7.2.2.6 State of California Emergency Plan

California has developed an emergency response plan to coordinate emergency services provided by federal, State, and local governments and private agencies. Response to hazardous material incidents is one part of this plan. The plan is managed by the California Emergency Management Agency, which coordinates the responses of other agencies, including CalEPA, the California Highway Patrol, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and RWQCB.

4.7.2.2.7 Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment

The OEHHA is the lead state agency for the assessment of health risks posed by environmental contaminants. The OEHHA implements provisions of the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 (Proposition 65). Proposition 65 requires the governor to publish, at least annually, a list of chemicals known to the state to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity. The proposition protects California citizens and the state's drinking water sources from

chemicals known to cause cancer, birth defects, or other reproductive harm and informs the public about potential exposures to such chemicals.

4.7.2.2.8 California Department of Transportation and Hazardous Materials Transport

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) manages more than 50,000 miles of California's highway and freeway lanes, provides inter-city rail services, permits more than 400 public-use airports and special-use hospital heliports, and works with local agencies. Caltrans is also the first responder for hazardous material spills and releases that occur on highway and freeway lanes and inter-city rail services.

The California Highway Patrol (CHP), Caltrans, and DTSC have the responsibility for enforcing federal and State regulations and responding to hazardous materials transportation emergencies. Regulations governing hazardous materials transport are included in the California Vehicle Code (Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations), the State Fire Marshal Regulations (Title 19 of the California Code of Regulations), and Title 22, Division 4.5, Chapter 13 of the California Code of Regulations.

Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations establishes regulations for motor carrier transport of hazardous materials. All motor carrier transporters of hazardous materials are required to have a Hazardous Materials Transportation license issued by the CHP. In addition, placards identifying those hazardous materials are being transported must be displayed on the vehicle.

The California Vehicle Code section 31303 requires that hazardous materials be transported via routes with the least overall travel time and prohibits the transportation of hazardous materials through residential neighborhoods. The CHP is authorized to designate and enforce route restrictions for the transportation of hazardous materials.

Transport of hazardous materials can only be conducted under a registration issued by DTSC as outlined by Chapter 13, Division 4.5 of Title 22.6 Identification (ID) numbers are issued by DTSC or EPA for tracking hazardous waste transporters and treatment, storage, and disposal facilities for hazardous materials. The ID number is used to identify the hazardous waste handler and to track waste from point of origin to final disposal. Transporters of hazardous waste must register as a hazardous waste hauler with the DTSC. Each truck, trailer, semitrailer, or container used for shipping hazardous waste must be designed and constructed, and its contents limited, that under conditions normally incident to transportation, there would be no release of hazardous waste to the environment. All material transport takes place under manifest, and compliance with Title 22 requires that transporters take immediate action to protect human health and the environment in the event of a spill, release, or mishap.

4.7.2.2.9 State Water Resources Control Board

The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act of 1969 established the SWRCB and divided the state into nine regional basins, each with a RWQCB. The SWRCB is the primary state agency responsible for protecting the quality of the state’s surface and groundwater supplies, while the regional boards are responsible for developing and enforcing water quality objectives and implementation plans. The Project site is within the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board. The act authorizes the SWRCB to enact state policies regarding water quality in accordance with the U.S. EPA Clean Water Act (CWA) section 303. The SWRCB regulates the handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous substances in construction projects. Permits and/or other action by the SWRCB may be required if contamination of water or soils occurs during the construction associated with the Project. In

addition, the act authorizes the SWRCB to issue Waste Discharge Requirements for projects that would discharge to State waters.

4.7.2.2.10 California Public Resources Code Section 2115.4

PRC section 21151.4 regulates hazardous materials near schools. PRC section 21151.4 prohibits the certification of a DEIR for a project involving the construction or alteration of a facility that might reasonably be anticipated to emit hazardous air emissions or handle extremely hazardous air emissions in a quantity greater than a certain threshold, within one-quarter mile of a school.

4.7.2.3 Local Regulations

The Judicial Council, acting as the Judicial branch of State government, is not subject to local land use regulations; however, the Judicial Council, as lead agency, considers local policies in evaluating whether the Project's impacts would be significant.

4.7.2.3.1 Plumas County Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Plan

The Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Plan, prepared by the Plumas County Environmental Health Department, ensures a coordinated response to emergency situations involving a hazardous materials release; provides operational concepts, management structure, resources, and roles and responsibilities of all agencies charged with responding to and mitigating an incident; provides specific statutory authorities for local, state, and federal agencies, and the private sector; and identifies sources of outside support which might be provided through service contracts or mutual aid. The plan is intended to be read and understood before a hazmat incident occurs and used in conjunction with the Plumas County Emergency Operations Plan prepared by the Plumas County Office of Emergencies Services. The Hazardous Material Emergency Response plan was most recently updated in 2023.

4.7.2.3.2 Plumas County Emergency Operations Plan

The Plumas County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), prepared by the Plumas County Office of Emergency Services (OES), addresses Plumas County's planned response to emergencies associated with natural, man-made and technological disasters. The EOP provides an overview of operational concepts and identifies components of the County's emergency management organization within the Incident Command System, the Standardized Emergency Management System, and the National Incident Management System. The EOP also describes the overall responsibilities of the local, state and federal entities for protecting life and property and assuring the overall well-being of the population. The current iteration of the EOP was adopted in 2016.

4.7.3 Impacts Analysis

4.7.3.1 Methodology

Evaluation of potential impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials was based on a review of documents pertaining to the Project site, including a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment (Geocon 2023), a Hazardous Building Materials Survey (Ninyo & Moore 2026), and a review of publicly available databases maintained by SWRCB, DTSC, and EPA.

The information obtained from these sources was reviewed and summarized to document existing conditions and to identify the potential environmental effects of the Project. In

determining the level of significance, this analysis assumes that development of the Project would comply with relevant federal and state regulations.

4.7.3.2 Thresholds of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Project would have a significant impact on hazards and hazardous materials if it would:

- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.
- 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.
- Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school.
- For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area.
- Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.
- Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.

4.7.3.3 Topics Not Addressed Further

Hazardous Materials Sites Compiled Pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5: The Project site is not included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code section 65962.5 (otherwise known as the Cortese List; CalEPA 2025, DTSC 2025, SWRCB 2025). As discussed in section 4.7.1 Environmental Setting, two former leaking underground storage tank (LUST) sites are located within 1,000 feet of the Project site; however, these hazardous materials sites have been issued closure letters by the lead cleanup oversight agency (Central Valley RWQCB). As such, the Project site's proximity to these two sites does not present a hazard to the public or the environment. Therefore, the Project would have no impact related to risk from hazardous materials sites complied in Government Code section 65962.5, and this issue is not further evaluated in this EIR.

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

The Project consists of the demolition of existing structures and construction of a new courthouse building and associated site improvements, including a new, reconfigured parking lot and landscaping. The Project would not involve the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Use of hazardous materials would be limited to small quantities of fuels and fluids during the construction period and small quantities of chemicals for landscaping, building maintenance, and cleaning. These materials would be stored and used in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.

Given the Project would not involve the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials, and the Project must comply with all applicable local, State, and federal safety codes,

regulations, and programs related to transporting, using, or disposing of small quantities of incidental hazardous materials, this impact would be ***less than significant***.

4.7.3.5 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

The Project consists of the demolition of the existing Quincy Lumber & Supply building, the Feather Publishing Co., Inc. building, the recreational vehicle storage facility, and existing site improvements, and the construction of a new courthouse building and associated site improvements. The Project would not include the use of hazardous materials after Project completion except for small amounts used in landscaping, building maintenance, and cleaning supplies. Project operations would not cause 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.

Hazardous materials, including fuels, oils, solvents, and hazardous building materials, could be accidentally released into the environment during Project demolition and construction activities. As described in section 4.7.1 Environmental Setting, the Phase I ESA prepared for the Project found evidence of RECs in connection with the Project site. A 200-gallon kerosene AST without secondary containment in the interior of the Quincy Lumber & Supply building presents a material threat of release and is considered an REC for the site. While Geocon observed no evidence of leakage from the AST, the Phase I ESA recommends that some form of secondary containment that is at least 110% of the AST capacity be installed beneath the AST.

Because the Quincy Lumber & Supply building was constructed sometime prior to 1938, ACMs and LBP may be present in the building; the potential presence of ACM and LBP on site is an environmental concern for the site. The Phase I ESA includes a recommendation that an ACM and LBP survey should be performed prior to demolition of the Quincy Lumber & Supply building to determine appropriate handling and disposal of demolition debris and to inform workers of the presence of these materials so that the workers can take appropriate health and safety precautions. As described in section 4.7.1, a Hazardous Building Material Survey was prepared for the Project as recommended by the Phase I ESA. The Hazardous Building Material Survey identified ACM, LCM/LBP, and universal wastes in the following buildings/locations:

- ACM is present in the vinyl sheet flooring and transite sheet flooring in the Quincy Lumber & Supply building.
- LBP is present on the wood-sashed windows, which are currently painted white, and on the window and door trims on the east and south sides of the Quincy Lumber & Supply building, respectively.
- Universal wastes are present in the form of light ballasts suspect of PCB (all three buildings), HVAC units suspect of Freon (the Feather Publishing Co., Inc. building only), and exit signs suspect of lead acid or other metal (the Feather Publishing Co., Inc. building only).

Based on the survey results, the Hazardous Building Material Survey provided recommendations for asbestos, lead, and universal wastes abatement to be implemented for the duration of Project demolition and construction activities. Additionally, the Hazardous Building Material Survey cautions that survey activities were limited to above-ground areas of the onsite buildings; therefore, underground utilities, such as suspect cementitious water lines or

suspect insulated/coated gas or electrical lines, were not assessed during survey activities. There is a possibility that additional suspect materials and/or surfaces may be encountered in inaccessible areas (e.g., interstitial wall/ceiling spaces and/or canopy soffits) during demolition activities. For example, un-tested thermal system insulation may be present within wall and ceiling cavities and/or behind plumbing and heating fixtures (e.g., sinks, boilers, and radiators). If Project demolition activities uncover suspect materials and/or surfaces that have not yet been assessed, these materials must be sampled and analyzed for potential asbestos, lead, or PCBs, as applicable.

Improper potential onsite disposal (i.e., dumping) of inks and solvents used to clean printing equipment or leaks from underground piping to a sewer or septic system has the potential to impact soil and groundwater at printing facilities. While Geocon observed no evidence of improper disposal of these types of materials at the Feather Publishing Co., Inc. building, possible releases from underground piping is a potential environmental concern for the site. The Phase I ESA therefore recommends that if during demolition of the Feather Publishing Co., Inc. building and subsequent site grading near the building evidence of a release (i.e., stained soil or chemical odors) is observed, an environmental professional should be consulted to observe the condition and collect samples of the apparently impacted soil for laboratory chemical analysis.

The Project could cause significant impacts related to the potential release of fuels, oil, asbestos, lead, and universal wastes during the removal of on-site ASTs and the demolition of on-site buildings and the potential for ground disturbing activities to encounter and expose construction personnel to potential soil or groundwater contamination associated with on-site printing facilities. The Phase I ESA and Hazardous Building Material Survey recommendations have been incorporated into the Project as Mitigation Measures HAZ-1, HAZ-2, and HAZ-3.

The Project's implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZ-1, Mitigation Measure HAZ-2, and Mitigation Measure HAZ-3 would reduce the potential for and severity of impacts to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the Project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment. This impact would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated.***

Mitigation Measures

Impact HAZ-1: The removal of the existing 200-gallon kerosene AST, which currently does not have any form of secondary containment, during site redevelopment could result in the accidental release of hazardous materials (i.e., kerosene) into the surrounding environment.

Mitigation Measure HAZ-1: Install Secondary Containment for 200-Gallon Kerosene AST. The Project shall install a form of secondary containment that is at least 110% of the AST capacity beneath the 200-gallon kerosene AST currently located inside the Quincy Lumber & Supply building prior to the removal of the AST from the site. The secondary containment shall remain in place as the AST is transported off site.

Impact HAZ-2: Project demolition of the existing onsite buildings has the potential to release ACMs, LCM/LBP, and universal wastes, which could pose a significant hazard to contractors during demolition activities.

Mitigation Measure HAZ-2: Implement Hazardous Building Material Survey Recommendations. The Project shall implement the hazardous building materials abatement measures recommended in the Hazardous Building Material Survey (dated April

21, 2026), as follows. Furthermore, suspect materials and/or surfaces encountered during the planned demolition activities that have not been assessed shall be sampled and analyzed to assess whether they are asbestos, lead, and/or PCB-containing.

Asbestos

The following requirements apply only to those activities that would involve the Quincy Lumber & Supply building:

- The Vinyl Sheet Floorings (Linoleums) located in Area 3 (mezzanine) in rooms 12 and 14 contain 25% Chrysotile. The Transite Sheet Flooring located in Area 2 under a layer of particle board contains 75% Chrysotile. These materials shall not be disturbed by unauthorized personnel.
- Prior to demolition activities which would disturb identified ACMs, a licensed abatement removal contractor shall remove the ACMs. The licensed abatement contractor must maintain current licenses as required by applicable state or local jurisdictions for the removal, transporting, disposal, or other regulated activities.
- Applicable laws and regulations shall be followed, including those provisions requiring notification to regulatory agencies, building occupants, demolition contractors, and workers of the presence of asbestos.
- Although not a regulatory requirement, asbestos abatement monitoring consulting services shall be performed by a third-party environmental consultant, to include oversight of abatement contractor activities to be performed in accordance with the abatement specifications, daily air monitoring, clearances, verification of complete removal of hazardous materials, and preparation of a closeout report summarizing the abatement activities.

Lead

The following requirements apply only to those activities that would involve the Quincy Lumber & Supply building:

- The identified LBP located at the Quincy Lumber & Supply building on the sashed windows located on the east side and the door and window frames/trims located at the store front (south side) of the building shall not be disturbed by unauthorized personnel. All disturbances and removal activities shall be performed by a licensed abatement contractor with certified lead personnel. All lead related removal activities shall be performed in accordance with the Cal/OSHA Lead in Construction Standard, Title 8 CCR 1532.1.
- Proper waste stream categorization is required for lead components which will be removed. Prior to disposal, a composite sample of the representative LCM material shall be analyzed for total lead for comparison with the Total Threshold Limit Concentration in accordance with EPA reference method SW-846. If the concentration of total lead is greater than or equal to 1,000 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg), the LCM waste material must be disposed at a landfill which can receive such wastes. If the concentration is less than 50 mg/kg the sample may be disposed as construction debris, if it is to remain in California. If the total lead result is greater than or equal to 50 mg/kg and less than 1,000 mg/kg, the sample must be further analyzed for soluble lead by the Waste Extraction Test for comparison with the Soluble Threshold Limit Concentration as described in

Title 22 CCR 66261.24a. Additionally, if the result is greater than or equal to 100 mg/kg, the sample must be further analyzed for leachable lead by the Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedure for comparison with the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) limits. Based on the results of the soluble and leachable analysis, the waste material may require disposal as a RCRA-Hazardous waste or non-RCRA- (California-) Hazardous waste.

Universal Wastes

Universal wastes identified in the Hazardous Building Material Survey (Tables 8, 9 and 10) shall be removed and properly recycled or disposed of by the selected abatement contractor during demolition activities. The abatement contractor shall provide proper manifesting for all universal wastes removed and recycled to prove the disposal of all materials was completed in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal requirements.

Impact HAZ-3: The potential for soil and/or groundwater contamination for leaking sewage pipes or historical disposal of inks and solvents associated with on-site printing facilities could present a significant hazard to contractors and the environment during site demolition and grading activities.

Mitigation Measure HAZ-3: Halt Work in the Event of Discovery of Past Hazardous Materials Release. Should any evidence of a past hazardous materials release (i.e., stained soil or chemical odors) be discovered during demolition and grading activities at or near the Feather Publishing Co., Inc., all demolition and site preparation work shall temporarily halt, and the Judicial Council shall consult a qualified firm or individual to observe and collect samples of the impacted soil or groundwater for laboratory chemical analysis and follow-up clean-up action (i.e., a soil and groundwater management plan [SGMP]), if required.

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

The nearest school to the Project site is Quincy School, located approximately 0.27-mile to the southwest of the site at 246 Alder Street (Plumas County Office of Education 2025). The proposed courthouse building would not emit hazardous emissions. Use of hazardous materials would be limited to small quantities of fuels and fluids during the construction period as well as small quantities of chemicals for landscaping, building maintenance, and cleaning. In the event ACMs and LBP are discovered on-site during the pre-demolition survey(s) required by Mitigation Measure HAZ-2, ACMs and LBP may also be handled on site during building demolition. The handling of these materials is subject to Mitigation Measure HAZ-2; applicable, local, state, and federal regulations; and manufacturer's specifications. The potential to expose sensitive receptors, including schools, to airborne pollutants during construction is addressed in section 4.2 of this EIR.

As discussed in Air Quality (section 4.2) unmitigated construction exhaust emissions would have the potential to result in incremental cancerogenic health risk increases that are in excess of the BAAQMD's, SCAQMD's, and SMAQMD's significance threshold of 10 excess cancers per million population, which is the significance threshold the Judicial Council adopted for excess cancer risk. Restrictions on construction equipment as identified in Mitigation Measure AIR-1 would reduce the increased risk to less than the BAAQMD, SCAQMD, and SMAQMD

significance threshold. This impact would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated***.

Impact HAZ-4: Project construction equipment exhaust would occur approximately one-quarter mile from Quincy School and could result in incremental cancerogenic health risk increases.

See Mitigation Measure AIR-1.

4.7.3.7 For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area

The Project site is located approximately one-half mile south of the Gansner Field Airport, a public use airport. The 2008 Gansner Airport ALUCP (PCALUC 2008) sets forth land use compatibility policies applicable to future land use and development at and in the vicinity of Gansner Field Airport. The Project site is located within Safety Compatibility Zone 6, the Traffic Pattern Zone. Zone 6 allows residential uses, most non-residential uses except outdoor stadiums and similar uses with very high intensities. Children's schools, large daycare centers, hospitals, and nursing homes are generally not permitted in this zone unless no feasible alternative is available. The Project proposes the construction of a new courthouse, a non-residential land use that is not directly addressed in Zone 6. The courthouse is most similar to non-residential commercial uses without very high intensity and would be permitted within Zone 6. The courthouse is not similar to childcare, hospitals, and nursing homes where a concern about ambulatory emergency evacuation would be present.

The Gansner Airport ALUCP establishes height restrictions in the airport's Safety Compatibility Zones. Height restrictions are established only for Safety Compatibility Zones 1 through 5. The Project, which would be located in Safety Compatibility Zone 6 and would not be subject to height restrictions under the ALUCP.

In addition to height restrictions, the ALUCP prohibits the construction of new structures that would penetrate the Part 77 Approach Surfaces and structures that would penetrate the Safety Compatibility Surfaces. While Zone 6 does not have height restrictions, should the new courthouse extend more than 200 feet above the ground level, or exceed an imaginary surface extending outward and upward at a slope of 100 to 1 (i.e., 1 ft vertical for every 100 ft horizontal) for a horizontal distance of 20,000 feet from the nearest point on the nearest runway, the Judicial Council, as the Project sponsor, must file a notice with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), as required by the Part 77.9 regulations. Based on the building position as shown in the Conceptual Site Plan (Figure 2-4), the Project building would be developed on the southern half of the property and located approximately 2,000 feet from the Gansner Field Airport runway at its nearest point, At this distance, a building height exceeding 20 feet would penetrate the civil airport imaginary surface and require FAA notification. Under Part 77.17 and Part 17.19 an existing or future object would be an obstruction to air navigation for a civil airport if it exceeds a horizontal plane of 150 feet above the established airport elevation within a 5,000-foot radius. The proposed courthouse would be a single-story building and would not exceed the 40-foot maximum height limit described in the local commercial (C-2) zoning district and would not be considered an obstruction to any imaginary surface for the Gansner Field Airport. The PCALUC reviewed the Project site under consideration for construction of a new

courthouse facility. The ALUC noted the Project site is not impacted by Gansner Field Airport traffic patterns (Runway 07 and Runway 25), which remain north of the Town of Quincy/Town of East Quincy and had no concerns with a two- to three-story building height (PCALUC 2023).

The ALUCP has determined noise compatibility is not expected to be an issue where safety is not already the controlling factor. The Project site is not located within the noise exposure contours established for Gansner Field Airport.

The Project does not propose development that would constitute a physical, visual, or electronic form of interference with the safety of aircraft operations. The Project proposal includes the construction of a new courthouse building with a similar overall building footprint as the combined footprint of the existing on-site buildings. While the new courthouse would constitute a new land use for the site, it would not constitute a substantially more intense type of land use compared to existing conditions. This impact would be ***less than significant***.

4.7.3.8 Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan

Plumas County does not have an emergency evacuation plan. Plumas County's adopted emergency response plan is the Plumas Cunty Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) (2016). The Plumas County EOP constitutes the County's planned response to emergencies associated with natural, man-made, and technological disasters. The EOP establishes the emergency organization of the County and the responsibilities of the local, state and federal entities for protecting life and property and assuring the overall well-being of the population.

Roadways adjacent to the Project site (e.g., SR 70/89 / Lawrence Street) would be utilized during construction for the delivery of materials to the construction site. Should the need for road and lane closures arise during Project construction, the Project contractor would be required to maintain access for emergency vehicles for the duration of construction. Fire access plans shall be reviewed and approved by the County. After Project construction is completed, there would be no impediment to vehicular or emergency vehicle access. Additionally, the Project proposal includes an emergency vehicle and secondary ingress/egress route onto Summerfield Lane, northwest of the proposed courthouse building, at the existing Summerfield Lane dead-end cul-de-sac. This secondary ingress/egress route would ensure adequate emergency access to and from the Project site. Because the Project would not impede vehicular or emergency vehicle access at any point during Project construction or operation, the Project would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with the Plumas County EOP or any other adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. This impact would be ***less than significant***.

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

The Project site is located approximately 0.27-mile north of a state responsibility area (SRA) and is located within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) designated by CAL FIRE. As described further in section 4.13 Wildfire, the new courthouse would be built according to current CFC requirements. Construction of the new courthouse would comply with the building requirements outlined in California Building Code, Chapter 7A. The Project includes fire protection measures such as use of fire-retardant building materials and building fire sprinklers. Additionally, Quincy Fire Station 1 is located 0.2 mile west of the site at 505 Lawrence Street

(County of Plumas 2026); the proximity of the nearest fire station would allow for prompt response in the event of an emergency on site. Therefore, the Project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. This impact would be ***less than significant***.

4.8 Hydrology and Water Quality

This section addresses the potential impacts of the Project on surface water and groundwater quality, groundwater recharge and sustainability, stormwater runoff, and flooding. Impacts related to water supply are discussed in section 4.12 Utilities and Service Systems.

4.8.1 Environmental Setting

4.8.1.1 Regional Hydrology

The Project site is situated within the Upper Feather River watershed, which encompasses 2.3 million acres in the northern Sierra Nevada, where that range intersects the Cascade Range to the north and the Diamond Mountains of the Great Basin and Range Province to the east (Upper Feather River Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) 2016). The watershed drains generally southwest to Lake Oroville, the largest reservoir of the California State Water Project (SWP). The Upper Feather River watershed covers a majority of Plumas County (98%), which covers approximately 72% of the entire watershed (County of Plumas 2012). The Upper Feather River watershed is divided into four main branches [divisions] with respective watersheds: the West Branch, the North Fork, the Middle Fork, and the South Fork of the Feather River. Each of these watershed divisions consists of a number of subwatersheds. The West Branch and South Fork each consist of a single subwatershed, as their watersheds are small and comparatively simple (Upper Feather River RWMG 2016). The Middle Fork is divided into 6 subwatersheds, and the North Fork comprises the remaining 15 subwatersheds. In total, the Upper Feather River watershed includes 23 subwatersheds. The North Fork Feather River watershed division covers the largest drainage area in the watershed, covering approximately 1.4 million acres and contributing a yearly average flow of over 2.3-million-acre feet of water to Lake Oroville (County of Plumas 2012).

At the intersection of the Great Basin, the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and the Cascade Range, the Upper Feather River region supports a diversity of habitats including an assemblage of meadows and alluvial valleys interconnected by river gorges and rimmed by granite and volcanic mountains. The Middle Fork of the Feather River plunges through granite walls and boulders for nearly 80 miles. The North Fork of the Feather River provides water for some of the most important hydroelectric and water supply developments in California, and during winter storm events is ringed by over 50 waterfalls plunging to the river and roadway from the cliffs and tributary streams within the Feather River canyon. (Upper Feather River RWMG 2016)

The amount of precipitation received throughout the county varies geographically. The Sierra Crest (centrally located within the county) acts as a barrier to storm systems between the western and eastern portions of the county. The western side of the Sierra Nevada Mountains receives over 90 inches of precipitation annually while the area east of the Sierra Crest receives 11 inches. Snowpack levels in the county's higher elevation areas serve as natural water reservoirs for surface water that becomes available as the snow melts and drains into the regional waterway system. (County of Plumas 2012)

4.8.1.2 Surface Water Resources

A majority of smaller streams and creeks in the Upper Feather River watershed flow into either the North or Middle Forks of the Feather River. Several of these water courses that flow into the North Fork include the East Branch, Indian Creek, Spanish Creek, Bucks Creek, and Warner

Creek. Lake Almanor is the largest water body in Plumas County and was created by the development of a barrier (dam) across the North Fork of the Feather River. The lake, located in the northwestern section of the county, covers approximately 10.9 square miles. Originally created as a hydroelectric facility, the lake has become a major recreational area. There are numerous smaller lakes and reservoirs scattered throughout the county. (County of Plumas 2012)

The Upper Feather River watershed serves as an important supply of surface water resources. Water has been a valuable export from Plumas County since the State Water Project (SWP) located its main storage facility fed by the Feather River at Lake Oroville. This watershed supplies 3.2-million-acre feet per year for downstream urban, industrial, and agricultural use as part of the SWP and delivers water to 29 agencies. The SWP operates three reservoirs in Plumas County, Antelope Lake, Frenchman Lake, and Lake Davis, which flow into Lake Oroville. (County of Plumas 2012)

4.8.1.3 Project Site Hydrology

The Town of Quincy is located in the flat-lying American Valley surrounded by mountainous terrain of the northern Sierra Nevada. Elevations on the Project site range from approximately 3,412 to 3,420 feet above msl. The nearest surface water feature is an unnamed drainage channel within the Project site along its eastern boundary. The Project site drains to the east, toward the existing drainage channel. The unnamed drainage channel apparently flows northward to join Clear Stream and eventually Spanish Creek, which are tributaries to the East Branch of the North Fork of Feather River. The onsite drainage channel is approximately four to six feet below property elevation. The onsite drainage channel and other water resources in the Project site vicinity are shown in Appendix E, Figure 1.

4.8.1.4 Surface Water Quality

Overall, water quality within the county is considered good. The east side of the county experiences much more erosion than the west side, which greatly affects surface water quality. Quincy is located centrally in the county. Surface water quality impacts in the county result from a variety of common land and water use practices, such as ranching, mining, timber harvest, road construction/maintenance, and rural residential development. (County of Plumas 2012)

The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), in coordination with the US EPA, maintains a list of river and stream stretches that are included on its Clean Water Act section 303(d) list of water quality impaired segments. Listed constituents of concern include but are not limited to mercury, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), copper, temperature, indicator bacteria, and toxicity. Spanish Creek is included on the 303(d) list for indicator bacteria with an estimated total maximum daily load (TMDL) completion date of 2027 (SWRCB 2026a, SWRCB 2026b). The North Fork of the Feather River below Lake Almanor is listed for mercury, PCBs, temperature, and toxicity with estimated TMDL completion dates of 2019 (temperature), 2021 (mercury, PCBs), and 2027 (toxicity) (SWRCB 2026c).

4.8.1.5 Regional Groundwater Quantity and Quality

Plumas County's subsurface geology is complex, with most of the land underlain by volcanic rock, which is relatively impermeable except in places where cracks, fissures and cavities have formed. Consequently, most of the county is not conducive to the formation of large groundwater aquifers. However, several areas, notably the Sierra Valley, contain aquifers of

relatively large capacity. The county contains 14 groundwater basins, which are primarily located in the valleys on the east side of the Sierra Crest. The project site is located in the American Valley groundwater basin (California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Basin No. 5-010), which has a surface area of 6,800 acres (11 square miles) and a storage capacity of 50,000-acre feet (saturated depth interval of 10 to 210 feet), as of 2012. DWR and the Plumas County Environmental Health Department have constructed and maintain monitoring wells in the American Valley groundwater basin to monitor local water quality. Most groundwater basins in the county, including the American Valley groundwater basin, are considered healthy with no significant groundwater declines. (County of Plumas 2012)

The Plumas County Environmental Health Department operates a Water Quality Protection Program that ensures the quality of local water supplies. Program activities include the regulation of various drilling and boring projects as well as monitoring the quality of selected groundwater aquifers. This program is accomplished through regular inspections, bacteriological and chemical sampling, plan checks, permitting, and public education. The Water Quality Protection Program conducts monitoring, lab analysis, long-term trend analysis, investigations, permitting, public education, and emergency/complaint response to ensure that the public and private water supplies in Plumas County comply with California State Law. (Plumas County Environmental Health Department 2025)

Groundwater sustainability in California is managed primarily through the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) (see description in section 4.8.2 Regulatory Setting), which requires the establishment of groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs) for what DWR categorizes as “high” and “medium” priority basins. “High” and “medium” priority basins are those which require the development and implementation of groundwater sustainability plans (GSPs) to protect groundwater in these basins over the long-term. According to DWR, the American Valley groundwater basin (No. 5-010) is categorized as a “very low” priority basin, meaning the formation of a GSA and preparation of a GSP are not required for management of the basin (DWR 2025).

4.8.1.6 Project Site Soils and Groundwater

Undocumented fill (Af) was encountered onsite from the existing ground surface to depths of approximately 3 to 7 feet. The undocumented fill consists of dry to moist, fine to coarse grained, clayey sand with gravel, silty sand with gravel, and silty gravel with sand. Lake deposits (Ql) were encountered beneath the fill to a maximum explored depth of 50 feet below the existing grade. The lacustrine deposits consist of sandy lean clay with gravel and sandy lean clay, and loose to very dense clayey gravel with sand, clayey sand with gravel, poorly graded gravel with sand and clay, poorly graded sand with gravel, and sandy silt with gravel. Free groundwater was encountered during recent (2023, 2025) site investigations at depths between 6 and 17 feet below existing grade. Groundwater levels can fluctuate in response to seasonal rainfall, irrigation, broken pipes, or changes in site drainage (Atlas 2025).

4.8.1.7 Flood Hazards

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), part of the Project site lies within Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) Zone AE, an area subject to inundation by the 1% annual chance flood (100-year flood) event. On the Project site, Zone AE has a base flood elevation (BFE) of 3,412 feet above msl adjacent to the northern site boundary and a BFE ranging from 3,412 to 3,417 along the onsite drainage channel (FEMA 2005). Additionally, a

non-SFHA flood zone, Zone X, occurs on the Project site that includes areas with 0.2% annual chance flood (500-year flood); areas with 1% annual chance flood with average depths of less than 1 foot or with drainage areas of less than 1 square mile; areas protected by levees from 1% annual chance flood. Zone X is located in the western and southwestern portions of the site including the Quincy Lumber and Supply building. The remainder of the site containing the overhead structure as well as the Feather Publishing Co., Inc. building.is not located in a flood zone. FEMA flood zones on and in the vicinity of the Project site are shown in Appendix E, Figure 6.

Based on observational data collected by Plumas County, the drainage directly to the east of the site typically stays within its boundary until the water reaches the drainage to the north of the Project site. The drainage north of the Project site along the bike path is not well defined and may flood during high intensity storms. Flood depths in the SFHA at the north end of the site may range from 12 inches to 18 inches during severe storm events (Thorman, Rob, personal communication, March 12, 2026).

The existing Quincy Lumber & Supply building and a small portion of the existing recreational vehicle storage canopy are located in the non-SFHA flood zone. The existing Feather Publishing Co., Inc. building is not located in a flood zone. The proposed location of the new Quincy courthouse is within the non-SFHA flood zone; a portion of the proposed parking area would be located in the SFHA (Zone AE) flood zone.

Observational records from the Plumas County Department of Public Works indicate flood waters in the onsite drainage channel typically do not breach the top of bank during storm events within the extent of the Project site. During high intensity storms, flood waters breach the top of the channel bank immediately north of the Project site along the existing bike path, and the flood waters back up onto the Project site in an area roughly approximate with the boundaries of the FEMA-designated SFHA. The depth of flood waters during these high intensity storms has in the past reached maximum depths ranging from 12 to 18 inches. The Plumas County Department of Public Works conducts vegetation maintenance in the drainage channel along the bike path (off and north of the Project site) as needed (Thorman, Rob, personal communication, March12, 2026).

4.8.2 Regulatory Setting

4.8.2.1 Federal Regulations

4.8.2.1.1 Clean Water Act

The CWA (33 USC § 1251 et seq.) is the primary federal law that governs and authorizes water quality control activities by the EPA, the lead federal agency responsible for water quality management. By employing a variety of regulatory and non-regulatory tools, including establishing water quality standards, issuing permits, monitoring discharges, and managing polluted runoff, the CWA seeks to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of surface waters to support the protection and propagation of fish, shellfish, wildlife, and recreation in and on the water.

EPA is the federal agency with primary authority for implementing regulations adopted pursuant to the CWA and has delegated the State of California as the authority to implement and oversee most of the programs authorized or adopted for CWA compliance through the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act of 1969, described below.

4.8.2.1.2 Water Quality Criteria and Standards

Pursuant to federal law, EPA published water quality regulations under Volume 40 of the CFR. Section 303 of the CWA requires states to adopt water quality standards for all surface waters of the United States. As defined by the CWA, water quality standards consist of two elements: (1) designated beneficial uses of the water body in question, and (2) criteria that protect the designated uses. Section 304(a) requires EPA to publish advisory water quality criteria that accurately reflect the latest scientific knowledge on the kind and extent of all effects on health and welfare that may be expected from the presence of pollutants in water. Where multiple uses exist, water quality standards must protect the most sensitive use. Section 303(d) requires states to develop lists of the water bodies and associated pollutants that exceed water quality criteria.

4.8.2.1.3 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit Program, Section 402

The NPDES permit program was established as part of the CWA to regulate municipal and industrial discharges to surface waters of the U.S. Federal NPDES permit regulations have been established for broad categories of discharges, including point source municipal waste discharges and nonpoint source stormwater runoff. NPDES permits generally identify limits on the concentrations and/or mass emissions of pollutants in effluent discharged into receiving waters; prohibitions on discharges not specifically allowed under the permit; and provisions that describe required actions by the discharger, including industrial pre-treatment, pollution prevention, self-monitoring, and other activities. The discharge prohibitions and limitations in an NPDES permit are designed to ensure the maintenance of public health and safety, protection of receiving water resources, and safeguarding of the water's designated beneficial uses.

In November 1990, EPA published regulations establishing NPDES permit requirements for municipal and industrial stormwater discharges. Phase I of the permitting program applied to municipal discharges of stormwater in urban areas where the population exceeded 100,000 persons. Phase II of the NPDES stormwater permit regulations became effective in March 2003 and required NPDES permits to be issued for construction activity for projects that disturb between 1 and 5 acres. Phase II of the municipal permit system (i.e., known as the NPDES General Permit for Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems [Small MS4s], required small municipality areas of less than 100,000 persons (hereinafter called Phase II communities) to develop stormwater management programs.

California's RWQCBs are responsible for implementing the NPDES permit system.

4.8.2.1.4 Section 401 Water Quality Certification or Waiver

Under Section 401 of the CWA, an applicant for a Section 404 permit (to discharge dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S.) must first obtain a certificate from the appropriate agency stating that the fill is consistent with the State's water quality standards and criteria. In California, the authority to either grant water quality certification or waive the requirements is delegated by the SWRCB to the nine regional boards. Water quality in Plumas County, including the Project site, is under the jurisdiction of the Central Valley RWQCB.

4.8.2.1.5 Section 303(d) Impaired Waters List

Under section 303(d) of the CWA, states are required to develop lists of water bodies that would not attain water quality objectives after implementation of required levels of treatment by point source dischargers (municipalities and industries). Section 303(d) requires that the state

develop a TMDL for each of the listed pollutants. The TMDL is the amount of loading that the water body can receive and still be in compliance with water quality objectives. The TMDL is also a plan to reduce loading of a specific pollutant from various sources to achieve compliance with water quality objectives. EPA must either approve a TMDL prepared by the state or disapprove the State's TMDL and issue its own. NPDES permit limits for listed pollutants must be consistent with the waste load allocation prescribed in the TMDL. The goal of the TMDL program is that, after implementation of a TMDL for a given pollutant on the 303(d) list, the causes that led to the pollutant's placement on the list would be remediated.

4.8.2.1.6 Federal Emergency Management Agency National Flood Insurance Program

FEMA administers the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP, 42 U.S.C. § 4016(a)) to provide flood insurance to individuals within communities that adopt and enforce NFIP regulations that limit development in floodplains; federally-backed flood insurance is only available within NFIP communities. FEMA also develops and issues Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) that identify which land areas are subject to flooding. Flood hazard zones in the community are identified within the FIRMs, at the minimum, for the 1% annual exceedance probability flood event and sometimes other flood events. The design standard for flood protection covered by the FIRMs is established by FEMA with the minimum level of flood protection for new development determined to be the 1% annual exceedance probability (i.e., the 100-year flood event). As developments are proposed and constructed, FEMA is also responsible for issuing revisions to FIRMs, such as Conditional Letters of Map Revision and Letters of Map Revision through the local agencies that work with the National Flood Insurance Program.

4.8.2.2 State Regulations

4.8.2.2.1 Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Porter-Cologne Act) of 1969 is California's statutory authority for the protection of water quality. Under the Act, the State must adopt water quality policies, plans, and objectives that protect the State's waters for the use and enjoyment of the people. The Act provides authority for the State NPDES program, including provisions for the issuance of NPDES permits and implementation of waste discharge requirements to regulate discharges of stormwater to waters of the State. Regional authority for planning, permitting, and enforcement is delegated to the nine RWQCBs. The RWQCBs are required to formulate and adopt water quality control plans for all areas in the region and establish water quality objectives in the plans. The Porter-Cologne Act sets forth the obligations of the SWRCB and RWQCBs to adopt and periodically update basin plans. The Central Valley RWQCB regulates water quality in Plumas County, including the Project site. The act also requires waste dischargers to notify the RWQCBs of such activities through the filing of Reports of Waste Discharge (RWD) and authorizes the SWRCB and RWQCBs to issue and enforce waste discharge requirements (WDRs), NPDES permits, CWA Section 401 water quality certifications, or other approvals. The RWQCBs also have authority to issue waivers to RWD requirements and WDRs for broad categories of "low threat" discharge activities that have minimal potential for adverse water quality effects when implemented according to prescribed terms and conditions.

4.8.2.2.2 State Water Resources Control Board

SWRCB and its nine RWQCBs administer water rights and enforce pollution control standards throughout the state. SWRCB is responsible for granting water right permits and licenses through an appropriation process following public hearings and appropriate environmental review by applicants and responsible agencies. In granting water right permits and licenses, SWRCB must consider all beneficial uses, including water for downstream human and environmental needs. In addition to granting the water right permits needed to operate new water supply projects, SWRCB also issues water quality-related certifications to developers of water projects under Section 401 of the CWA.

4.8.2.2.3 Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River Basins (Basin Plan)

Basin plans are the regional water quality control plans required by both the CWA and Porter-Cologne Act in which beneficial uses, water quality objectives, and implementation programs are established for each of the nine regions in California. The Basin Plan lays out beneficial uses, water quality objectives, and a program of implementation for achieving water quality objectives for the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River Basins. State and federal laws mandate protecting designated "beneficial uses" of water bodies. State law defines beneficial uses as "domestic; municipal; agricultural and industrial supply; power generation; recreation; aesthetic enjoyment; navigation; and preservation and enhancement of fish, wildlife, and other aquatic resources or preserves" (Water Code § 13050(f)).

Groundwater throughout the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River Basins, unless otherwise designated by the RWQCB, is considered suitable or potentially suitable, at a minimum, for municipal and domestic water supply, agricultural supply, industrial service supply, and industrial process supply. The Basin Plan describes a set of designated beneficial uses for each water body in the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River basins. Beneficial uses help to define the resources, services, and qualities of the aquatic systems. Beneficial uses also serve as a basis for establishing water quality objectives and discharge prohibitions. The Basin Plan contains specific numeric water quality objectives that are applicable to each water body or portions of water bodies. Objectives have been established for ocean waters; inland surface water, enclosed bays, and estuaries; and groundwater. Objectives have also been established for specified beneficial uses. The objectives contain either numeric or narrative standards for a variety of criteria (depending on the type of water) such as sediment, turbidity, pH, dissolved oxygen, temperature, and toxicity. The Basin Plan contains a set of implementation plans, which represent the Central Valley RWQCB's programs and specific plans of action for meeting water quality objectives and protecting beneficial uses.

4.8.2.2.4 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit System

Waste Discharge Requirements for Construction*.* The SWRCB's Statewide Stormwater General Permit for Construction Activity (Construction General Permit) is applicable to all construction activities that would disturb one acre of land or more (SWRCB 2012). Construction activities subject to the Construction General Permit include clearing, grading, stockpiling, and excavation. Dischargers are required to eliminate or reduce non-stormwater discharges to storm sewer systems and other waters.

Through the NPDES and WDR process, SWRCB seeks to ensure that the construction and post-construction conditions at a project site do not cause or contribute to direct or indirect

impacts on water quality (i.e., pollution and/or hydromodification) upstream and downstream, as required by the federal CWA. To comply with the requirements of the Construction General Permit, project applicants must file a notice of intent with the SWRCB to obtain coverage under the permit; prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP); and implement inspection, monitoring, and reporting requirements appropriate to the project's risk level as specified in the SWPPP. The SWPPP includes a site map, describes construction activities and potential pollutants, and identifies best management practices (BMPs) that would be employed to prevent soil erosion and discharge of other construction-related pollutants that could contaminate nearby water resources, such as petroleum products, solvents, paints, and cement. The permit also requires dischargers to consider the use of post-construction permanent BMPs that will remain in service to protect water quality throughout the life of the project. All NPDES permits have inspection, monitoring, and reporting requirements.

Waste Discharge Requirements for Operation. In 1999, EPA promulgated Phase II storm water regulations, which requires the SWRCB to issue NPDES stormwater permits to operators of Small MS4s within "urbanized areas," and to Small MS4s located outside of urbanized areas serving jurisdictions with a population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile and a population of at least 10,000. The SWRCB's Municipal Stormwater Program regulates stormwater discharges from municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) throughout the state. The Municipal Stormwater Program manages the Phase I Permit Program for municipalities of over 100,000 people, Phase II Permit Program for municipalities of less than 100,000 people, and the Statewide Stormwater Permit for Caltrans.

The existing Statewide Phase II Small MS4 Permit was adopted on February 5, 2013, and has been administratively extended since February 5, 2018. Staff is currently in the process of developing the permit reissuance (SWRCB 2026d). Compliance with the Statewide Phase II Small MS4 Permit requires each discharger or group of dischargers to implement a Storm Water Management Plan that is approved by the appropriate Regional Water Quality Control Board. The Phase II Small MS4 Permit requires dischargers to implement controls to reduce pollutants from stormwater discharges to the maximum extent practicable (MEP). The MEP standard requires dischargers to apply BMPs that are effective in reducing or eliminating the discharge of pollutants to waters of the U.S. MEP emphasizes pollutant reduction and source control BMPs to prevent pollutants from entering stormwater runoff.

Under the current Statewide Phase II Small MS4 Permit, Regulated Projects include all projects that create and/or replace 5,000 square feet or more of impervious surface. Regulated Projects must implement measures for site design, source control, runoff reduction, stormwater treatment, and baseline hydromodification management.

Statewide Phase II Small MS4 General Permit Section E.12 Post Construction Storm Water Management Program requires that facilities be designed to evapotranspire, infiltrate, harvest/use, and treat the amount of runoff specified in Numeric Sizing Criteria for Storm Water Retention and Treatment (WQO 2013-0001-DWQ and Amendments, or most current version). In conformance with these requirements, the final Stormwater Control Plan for the Project must identify the hydraulic sizing, type, number, and locations of onsite bioretention facilities and vegetation types and planting depths for biofiltration to provide stormwater detention and treatment in compliance with operational Phase II Small MS4 Permit requirements. Onsite runoff retention capacity shall be designed for the storm event required by the Phase II Small MS4 Permit. All modeling performed for the Stormwater Control Plan shall be undertaken by a registered engineer and conducted to common civil engineering industry standards.

All newly constructed projects shall be designed to meet either a volumetric or flow-based criteria (e.g., capture of runoff from an 85th percentile 24-hour storm runoff event or flow of runoff produced by a rain event equal to two times the 85th percentile hourly intensity as determined from local rainfall records). Projects must implement one or more of the following site design measures to reduce project site runoff:

- Stream Setbacks and Buffers
- Soil Quality Improvement and Maintenance
- Tree Planting and Preservation
- Rooftop and Impervious Area Disconnection
- Porous Pavement
- Green Roofs
- Vegetated Swales
- Rain Barrels and Cisterns

4.8.2.2.5 California Fish and Game Code

Existing stream channels in California are protected under sections 1600-1603 of the California Fish and Game Code. These regulations specify that it is a landowner's responsibility to obtain a state permit before undertaking any modifications within an existing stream channel up to the top of bank. Stream channels are defined by CDFW as exhibiting evidence of scour, having a definable bank, or having or being capable of supporting riparian vegetation. This definition may apply to the unnamed drainage and its associated riparian habitat (*Lemmon's Willow Thickets*) within the Project site. (See section 4.3 Biological Resources for additional discussion of the Project site's existing biological resources and for a description of associated Project impacts.)

4.8.2.3 Local Regulations

The Judicial Council, acting as the judicial branch of State government, is not subject to local land use regulations; however, the Judicial Council, as lead agency, considers local policies in evaluating whether the Project's impacts would be significant.

4.8.2.3.1 Plumas County General Plan 2035

The Conservation and Open Space Element, Public Health and Safety Element, and Water Resources Element of the County's General Plan outline the following policies relevant to hydrology and water quality that are applicable to the Project:

Policy COS 7.3.2 Soil Erosion and Vegetation Protection. For development projects that require earthwork and grading, including cut and fill for roads, the County shall require the developer to minimize erosion and sedimentation, conform to natural contours, maintain natural drainage patterns, minimize impervious surfaces, and maximize the retention of natural vegetation wherever feasible. Specific standards for minimizing erosion and sedimentation shall be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance.

Policy PHS 6.4.7 Limit Surface Runoff. The County shall review development projects to determine that such development can be permitted without alteration of off-site historical flood patterns or contribution to flooding hazards for downstream users. Each project with the potential to create off-site drainage shall be required to submit a plan showing how the impacts of such drainage will be addressed, both on-site and off-site.

Policy PHS 6.5.4 Contamination Prevention. The County shall require new developments to protect soils, air quality, surface water and groundwater from hazardous material contamination associated with site development and construction activities.

Policy W 9.1.2 Groundwater Recharge Area Protection. The County shall require that all projects be designed to maintain or increase the site's pre-development absorption of rainfall (minimize runoff), and to recharge groundwater where appropriate. Implementation would include standards that could regulate impervious surfaces, provide for water impoundments (retention/detention structures), protecting and planting vegetation, use of permeable paving materials, bioswales, water gardens, and cisterns, and other measures to increase runoff retention, protect water quality, and enhance groundwater recharge.

Policy W 9.2.6 Erosion and Sediment Control Measures. The County shall ensure that Best Management Practices to control erosion and sediment will be incorporated into development design and improvements.

Policy W 9.7.1 Natural Stormwater Drainage Courses. The County shall require that natural drainage courses, including ephemeral streams, be retained and protected from development impacts which would alter the natural drainage courses, increase erosion or sedimentation or have a significant adverse effect on flow rates or water quality. Natural vegetation within riparian and wetland protection zones shall be maintained to preserve natural drainage characteristics consistent with the policies provided in the Conservation Element. Storm-water discharges from outfalls, culverts, gutters and other drainage control facilities that discharge into natural drainage courses shall be dissipated so that they make no contribution to additional erosion and, where feasible, are filtered and cleaned of pollutants.

Policy W 9.7.2 Downstream Peak Flows. For new development, the County shall require that peak stormwater discharge not exceed the capacity limits of off-site drainage systems or cause downstream erosion, flooding, habitat destruction or impacts to wetlands and riparian areas.

Policy W 9.7.4 Runoff Quality. The County shall require all drainage systems in new development and redevelopment to comply with applicable state and federal non-point source pollutant discharge requirements.

Policy W 9.7.5 Best Management Practices. The County shall require best management practices in new development and redevelopment to reduce pollutants from entering natural water bodies while allowing stormwater reuse.

4.8.3 Impacts Analysis

4.8.3.1 Methodology

Potential impacts related to hydrology and water quality were evaluated based on a review of publicly available information regarding watersheds, surface waters, groundwater, soil characteristics, flooding hazards, and stormwater control and treatment requirements in the

Project area. The information obtained from these sources was reviewed and summarized to document existing conditions and to identify the potential environmental effects of the Project.

4.8.3.2 Thresholds of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the impact of the Project on hydrology and water quality would be considered significant if it would:

- Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality.
- Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin.
- Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:
  - Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site.
  - Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site.
  - 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.
  - impede or redirect flood flows.
- In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation.
- Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan.

4.8.3.3 Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality

The Project proposes to redevelop approximately 2.86 acres of existing paved and unpaved land to accommodate the new courthouse, drive aisles, and parking areas. The Project site ultimately could drain to several water bodies on the CWA section 303(d) list. Spanish Creek is included on the 303(d) list for indicator bacteria with an estimated TMDL completion date of 2027 (SWRCB 2026e). The North Fork of the Feather River below Lake Almanor is listed for mercury, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), temperature, and toxicity with estimated TMDL completion dates of 2019 (temperature), 2021 (mercury, PCBs), and 2027 (toxicity) (SWRCB 2026e).

4.8.3.3.1 Construction Phase

The Project could impact surface water quality during the construction phase through the accidental release of pollutants (e.g., petroleum products - gasoline, diesel, kerosene, oil and grease), hydrocarbons from asphalt paving, paints, solvents, and litter, or through an increase in sedimentation or turbidity in downstream waterways due to ground disturbance. Construction activities, including excavation and grading associated with the construction of building foundations and parking areas, would disturb sediment that could be transported in stormwater runoff during the winter rainy season. In addition, sediment could be transported via wind,

particularly during the summer months. Sediments may in turn transport other contaminants, such as trace metals, nutrients, and hydrocarbons, that adhere to the surfaces of sediment particles.

Based on the soil investigation conducted for the geotechnical report, groundwater was encountered at depths ranging from 6 to 16 feet bgs (Atlas 2025). According to the geotechnical report, groundwater should be anticipated in excavations. Excavations extending near or below groundwater would require temporary construction dewatering to lower and maintain depressed groundwater levels during construction. A registered civil engineer experienced in dewatering system design would design the dewatering system, which would consist of a system of dewatering wells to lower and maintain the groundwater level below the anticipated depth of excavation. Dewatering rates, water volumes, drawdown time, radius of influence, and equipment requirements shall be considered in the design. Pumping tests to evaluate the hydraulic parameters for the dewatering system design may also be required. The discharge of effluent generated during construction dewatering operations requires coverage under an NPDES permit from the SWRCB (Central Valley RWQCB).

The Project involves more than one acre of land disturbance and is therefore required to obtain coverage under the Construction General Permit. The Construction General Permit process ensures that the construction conditions at a project site do not cause or contribute to direct or indirect impacts on surface water quality. The Construction General Permit includes a numeric, two-part (a project's sediment risk and a project's receiving water risk) Risk Level determination process to assess the threat construction activities may pose to a receiving water body. Construction stormwater dischargers are required to submit risk information using the SWRCB's Stormwater Multiple Application and Report Tracking System (SMARTS) as part of filing a Notice of Intent for coverage under the Construction General Permit. SMARTS then assigns the construction project a combined Risk Level (Risk Level 1, Risk Level 2, or Risk Level 3) based on sediment risk and receiving water risk.

The Construction General Permit requires the preparation of a project-specific SWPPP, which identifies BMPs intended to prevent erosion and sedimentation as well as reduce the potential for spills and other contamination from on-site construction activities. BMPs would address erosion control, tracking control, non-stormwater management control (including, but not limited to, dewatering operations, paving and grinding operations, illicit connections/discharge, and non-stormwater discharges), and waste management and materials pollution control (spill prevention and control, solid, liquid, and hazardous waste management, etc.). Examples of BMPs for construction period erosion and sediment control include sediment control best management practices (i.e., mulching; re-seeding; use of straw wattles, check dams, sediment traps, silt fencing, and sediment basins; placement of rip rap under drain outfalls), damp street sweeping, temporary cover of disturbed land surfaces to control erosion during construction, and utilization of stabilized construction entrances and/or wash racks, among other methods. The Construction General Permit Construction lists all of the minimum BMPs required for a construction project based on its Risk Level.

Implementation of the Project-specific SWPPP required by the NPDES Construction General Permit would reduce potential construction-related water quality impacts to ***less than significant.***

4.8.3.3.2 Operational Phase

Stormwater runoff originating on the Project site currently drains predominantly as sheet flow into the on-site drainage channel with no infrastructure providing stormwater treatment, though the strip of vegetated land between the edge of pavement and the bed of the drainage channel may provide some degree of filtering of sediment and other coarse pollutants. An existing 36-inch stormwater drainpipe and stormwater catch basin are located along the site's Lawrence Street frontage within the SR 70/89 right-of-way. Runoff from the roadway and adjacent paved surfaces is collected in the catch basin, enters the Lawrence Street culvert and then discharges into the drainage channel, which flows northward.

The Project proposes to replace the existing onsite hardscape and pave currently graveled (i.e., pervious) areas in the north (rear) corner of the site and the west portion of the site adjacent to and extending from Summerfield Lane. As such, the Project would increase the amount of impervious surface area on site by approximately 20,050 square feet compared to existing conditions, resulting in a net increase in the volume and velocities of stormwater runoff from the site. Roads and parking lots are prone to contributing oil, grease, metal brake dust, and trash to stormwater runoff. While roof runoff does not typically contribute stormwater contaminants at levels as high as from parking areas, driveways, and access roads, there is still some contribution from airborne deposition of particulate matter. The drive aisles and parking areas and associated stormwater drainage system have the potential to convey the contaminants listed previously and others, including fertilizers and pesticides, to the receiving drainage channel. Untreated, these contaminant sources are likely to adversely impact water quality in the drainage channel and any downstream water bodies. In summary, new development associated with the Project has the potential to increase contaminant discharges to receiving waters from stormwater runoff, including sediment from erosion of the receiving water's channel resulting from increased volumes and velocities of the discharges. These potential changes, if not appropriately managed, can adversely affect water quality.

As described in section 4.8.2 Regulatory Setting, CWA prohibits certain discharges of stormwater containing pollutants except in compliance with an NPDES permit. Regulated Projects must implement measures for site design, source control, runoff reduction, stormwater treatment, and baseline hydromodification management as defined in the Statewide Phase II Small MS4 Permit.

There is no municipal regional Phase II Small MS4 Permit that would apply to the Project site. The Project is considered a Regulated Project under the Statewide Phase II Small MS4 Permit and therefore must meet the requirements of the Permit by implementing post-construction measures incorporating site design and source control measures to keep pollutants out of stormwater, as well as low impact development (LID) standards designed to treat stormwater onsite and provide baseline hydromodification management to the extent feasible.

The goal of LID is to mimic a site's predevelopment hydrology by using design techniques that capture and detain, store, infiltrate, filter, evaporate and transpire the runoff. LID practices include; bioretention facilities or rain gardens, flow-through planters, vegetated rooftops, rain barrels, cisterns, vegetated filter strips, and permeable pavements (SWRCB 2017). Project-specific LID measures must be designed consistent with recommendations from the California Stormwater Quality Association (CASQA) Stormwater BMP Handbook for New Development and Redevelopment or equivalent manual and sized appropriately based on site- and project-specific characteristics.

The Project's proposed stormwater management system would direct stormwater runoff from all impervious surfaces, including roofs, drive aisles, sidewalks, parking stalls, and other hardscape within the site into numerically-sized LID treatment controls such as rain gardens (bioretention areas) and flow-through planters. Once the stormwater runoff passes through the new treatment facilities, the treated runoff would be conveyed to the onsite drainage channel through a network of underground pipes. The new discharge pipe would require an appropriately designed outfall to prevent erosion of the channel bank. Construction would occur below the top of the drainage channel bank and would require permits as described in section 4.3 Biological Resources and later in this chapter.

Hydromodification management, the goal of which is to restrict the volume and velocities of post-development runoff flows from the site to pre-development levels, would be accomplished by reducing runoff through proper site design techniques and through the sizing of the proposed bioretention-based treatment controls (bioretention basins and flow-through planters) and associated discharge infrastructure (risers, subdrains, etc.). Conformance with the design guidance contained in the CASQA Stormwater BMP Handbook for New Development and Redevelopment or equivalent guidance manual for the County would assure the proper design and sizing of these hydromodification management controls.

Project implementation of post-construction LID measures to reduce runoff, treat stormwater, and provide baseline hydromodification management would protect surface water and groundwater quality during the operational phase of the Project. The construction of new onsite stormwater capture and treatment facilities would reduce flows and pollutant loads of stormwater runoff that is discharged to the drainage channel compared to existing conditions, which would result in a net benefit to surface water quality of the onsite drainage channel as well as downstream receiving waters. Because no infiltration-based treatment controls are proposed with the project, the project would not result in pollutants directly entering the groundwater aquifer below the site. The Project would therefore not violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality. This impact would be ***less than significant***.

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

The Project site consists predominantly of hardscape (i.e., buildings and pavement) with a section of unpaved gravel surfaces and ruderal vegetation in the north and northwest portions of the site providing some limited amount of infiltration of stormwater. Project implementation would result in a net increase in the amount of impervious surface area on site as the project proposal includes the installation of new pavement in the northwest portion of the site adjacent to Summerfield Lane and in the rear of the site.

The proposed increase in impervious surface area compared to existing conditions would not be considered substantial. The Project site currently consists largely of hardscape. The additional impervious surface area (approximately 20,050 square feet, or less than one-half acre) that would result from redevelopment of the site would represent a relatively minimal increase over the amount of existing impervious area on site (approximately 76,050 square feet). The Project site would still retain approximately 21,800 square feet of pervious surface area under proposed conditions, although the new biotreatment facilities would not allow infiltration of treated runoff into the underlying aquifer but instead would convey the treated runoff to the on-site drainage

channel. As such, the Project would result in a potential decrease in groundwater recharge at the site, however this incremental reduction is not likely to substantially interfere with groundwater recharge such that the Project would impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin.

The Project would not pump groundwater from an existing or new groundwater well; and, therefore, would not deplete local groundwater supplies through on-site groundwater extraction. The American Valley Community Services District (AVCSD) provides water supply and to the Project site. The AVCSD's water supply is primarily groundwater (AVCSD 2025). The Project may create increased demand for groundwater supplies to serve the Project development compared to existing water demand for the site as described in section 4.12 Utilities and Service Systems. The groundwater basin that provides the AVCSD's groundwater supplies and that underlies the Project site—the American Valley groundwater basin—is categorized by the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) as a very low priority basin. Being a very low priority basin, the American Valley groundwater basin is not currently impacted by groundwater pumping to the extent that a GSA is required for ongoing management of the basin to reduce impacts from groundwater pumping and to ensure the long-term reliability of groundwater supplies. The uses currently occupying the Project site use groundwater supplies provided by the AVCSD. Because groundwater supply reliability and overpumping are not currently concerns for management of the American Valley groundwater basin, the Project's use of groundwater would not adversely affect groundwater supplies or impede sustainable management of the basin.

For these reasons, the Project would neither substantially decrease groundwater supplies nor would the Project interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that it may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin. This impact would be ***less than significant***.

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

The Project site is relatively flat with surface runoff presently draining as sheet flow toward the existing drainage channel along the eastern property boundary. Project construction would slightly alter the site's topography. While proposed cut and fill quantities from the Project are not yet available and will be determined during design-build, the Judicial Council anticipates two to three feet of fill, equivalent to approximately 2,500 cubic yards of material, would be needed to raise the building elevation above existing site elevations. The parking area north of the building would not be elevated. This change in site elevation for the building is considered minor and would not substantially alter the drainage pattern.

The Project development of the site with a courthouse building and parking area would increase the impervious surface area on site by an estimated 20,050 square feet, which would reduce the amount of bare or pervious surface area from which sediments may originate and enter the channel through erosion. Surface drainage from impervious surfaces on the Project site would no longer sheet flow directly to the drainage channel but would instead be collected into an onsite drainage system. The Project must comply with the Statewide Phase II Small MS4 Permit regulations, which require the installation of onsite LID-based facilities to capture and treat stormwater runoff from a project's proposed impervious surface areas. As the site would be

mostly paved, and any bioretention/biofiltration areas would be vegetated, there would be low potential for erosion of the developed site and siltation from onsite sediments discharging into downstream waterways. As a result, development of the Project site with the proposed courthouse building and parking surfaces would not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern through increased impervious surfaces in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on-or off-site.

As described in Chapter 2 Project Description, the site's stormwater runoff would be discharged to the existing drainage channel through one of two approaches to the long-term management of the drainage channel under consideration, which will be selected during the design/build stage of the project. The following analysis addresses the potential erosion or siltation impacts for both options.

Outfall Option

Outfall Option would retain the open drainage channel and construct only a new stormwater runoff outfall pipe and storm drain pump with an outfall into the channel. This new outfall would be located on the central east side of the project site. Outfall Option would not alter the course of the drainage channel but would permanently change the existing channel bank and alter the pattern of stormwater runoff flow entering the drainage channel from distributed sheet flow to concentrated discharge through an outfall pipe. The drainage channel would continue receiving some surface runoff as sheet flow from the unpaved setback area of the Project site along the top of bank and from adjacent properties.

Construction of the outfall would involve activities that could introduce sediment into the drainage or cause siltation through removal of trees and other woody vegetation, soil excavation, and placement of fill (rip rap, concrete, shotcrete, etc.). The proposed discharge of stormwater runoff through an outfall could increase the flow volume or velocity within the existing channel and increase the channel's erosion capacity. Faster flowing waters generally hold the potential to carry a larger mass of sediment than slower flowing waters. The concentration of stormwater flows over loose sediments in the existing drainage channel, could result in increased erosion or sedimentation, either on- or off-site. If not designed properly, operation of the new stormwater outfall could result in erosion of the channel bank at the outfall location or further downstream. The outfall location and design would be determined during the design/build phase of the Project and reviewed by permitting agencies. A hydrologic study of the channel is needed to assess the channel capacity to accommodate Project flow rates and ensure that LID measures installed onsite are sufficiently designed to reduce stormwater discharge flow rates and avoid downstream erosion.

Temporary and permanent impacts to the drainage channel from construction of the new outfall may require Clean Water Act Section 404/Section 401 permits from the USACE and the Central Valley RWQCB, respectively, and/or an LSAA from CDFW prior to Project activities. The outfall structure would be designed in a manner to prevent erosion and scouring by the discharging runoff upon channel entry (e.g., construction of a concrete drainage apron or rip rap for energy dissipation) consistent with industry practice and standard permit requirements. These permits may require separate conservation and mitigation measures.

With implementation of Mitigation Measure HYD-1a, the stormwater drain line and outfall to the existing drainage channel would not substantially alter the drainage pattern, and the increased flow volume from Project impervious surfaces would not occur in a manner that results in

substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site. Therefore, under Outfall Option, the Project impact on erosion or siltation would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated.***

Culvert Option

Culvert Option would involve the permanent alteration of the drainage channel by transforming the existing open channel into a culverted, hardened, and undergrounded channel along its entire length within the Project site boundaries. The new culvert would be connected to the existing culvert under Lawrence Street, convey runoff along the eastern side of the Project site, and discharge the runoff into the open channel along the bike path to the north of the Project site. Flows within the channel would be physically prevented from escaping the culvert within Project site boundaries. Through culverting and hardening the channel, this option may increase the peak velocity of flows in the channel (including existing flows) and potentially result in erosion where the culverted channel would discharge into the open channel immediately north of the Project site.

The design of the drainage culvert, the Project's stormwater connection to this culvert, and any surface drainage controls needed to address sheet flow that may collect along the drainage corridor above the underground culvert would be determined during the design/build phase of the Project.

The construction of the new stormwater outfall would involve temporary or ongoing (maintenance) ground disturbing activities within the drainage channel. Examples of temporary impacts include removal of understory herbaceous vegetation, creation of temporary access points, widening or deepening of the channel, tree trimming, and degradation of surface or ground water quality due to erosion and transport of fine sediments and contaminants into the channel and downstream drainages. These activities would may require authorization from resource agencies (i.e., CDFW, Central Valley RWQCB, and/or USACE).

Should the Judicial Council pursue Culvert Option, a hydrologic study of the drainage channel requirements must be prepared to ensure the new culvert is appropriately sized and designed to accommodate peak flows and prevent downstream erosion and prevent exacerbation of existing flooding (flooding is further discussed in section 4.8.3.6 below). Enclosing the open drainage channel into a culvert may be subject to approval of Clean Water Act Section 401/Section 404 permits from the USACE and Central Valley RWQCB, respectively, and a Lake or Streambed Alternation Agreement (LSAA) from CDFW. These permits may require separate conservation and mitigation measures.

With implementation of Mitigation Measure HYD-1b, the Project's conversion of the open drainage channel to a culvert and the contribution of additional runoff from the Project site would not cause substantial erosion on- or off-site. This impact would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated***.

Mitigation Measures

Impact HYD-1: For both Outfall Option and Culvert Option, Project construction activity within the drainage channel could release sediments into the downstream waters and cause siltation. The discharge of stormwater runoff from the onsite drainage system to the drainage channel could increase peak flow velocity within the drainage channel and cause or exacerbate erosion or siltation either onsite or offsite.

Mitigation Measure HYD-1a: Perform Hydrologic Study for Channel Capacity. For Outfall Option, prior to approving the final design of the onsite bioretention features and initiation of site preparation activities, the Judicial Council shall engage the service of a registered engineer to perform a hydrologic study to evaluate whether the Project would cause a greater on- or off-site flooding compared to existing conditions. Should the hydrologic study demonstrate that the runoff flows contributed by the Project would exacerbate existing flooding, the hydrologic study shall recommend measures to reduce the additional flooding to less than significant. Recommended measures may include an increase in the storage volume of the proposed onsite bioretention features and other measures the engineer determines to be effective to adequately control (i.e., prevent more severe flooding over existing conditions) the increase in peak flows. The Project must incorporate the hydrologic study's recommendations into the design of the proposed onsite bioretention features and site-wide storm drain system.

The Judicial Council shall coordinate the implementation of the recommendations of the hydrologic study with the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board and Plumas County Department of Public Works. The Judicial Council shall obtain all applicable permits required for work within the drainage channel for the design and construction of the new stormwater outfall prior to site preparation activities. These permits may require additional conservation and mitigation measures.

Mitigation Measure HYD-1b: Perform Hydrologic Study for Appropriate Culvert Design. For Culvert Option, prior to approving the final design of the onsite bioretention features and initiation of site preparation activities, the Judicial Council shall engage the service of a registered engineer or qualified hydrologist to perform a hydrologic study to ensure appropriate culvert design and sizing. The new culvert shall be designed such that it accepts the runoff discharging from the existing culvert under Lawrence, from the Project site, and surface runoff from adjacent parcels that currently contribute to the drainage channel. The point of discharge, including the stormwater outfall, to the north of the Project site must be designed such that modeled flow does not cause erosion, exceed the capacity of the receiving channel, or exacerbate onsite or offsite flooding. The design of the culverted channel must account for projected flood hazards and potential backups into the Project's storm drain system.

In conformance with the hydromodification management provisions of the Statewide Phase II Small MS4 Permit, the proposed culverted channel and on-site stormwater management systems that contribute to the culverted channel shall not exceed the existing rate(s) and durations of flow under existing conditions at the point where stormwater leaves the Project site. The Judicial Council shall obtain all applicable permits required for work within the drainage channel for the design and construction of the new culvert prior to site preparation activities. These permits may require additional conservation and mitigation measures.

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

As described above in section 4.8.3.4, the majority of the Project site is covered by impervious surfaces of buildings and pavement as an existing condition. The surface drainage from these

existing impervious surfaces sheet flows directly to the drainage channel. The Project would introduce approximately 20,050 square feet of new impervious surface areas in the north and west portions of the site through the addition of pavement for the new parking areas. Most of the remainder of the site that is currently paved would continue to be paved under Project conditions. These proposed changes in the amount of hardscape on the site would affect the volume and peak discharge rate of stormwater runoff originating on the site. Initial estimates from the Judicial Council indicate the Project may result in an approximate 2.3 cubic feet per second (cfs) increase in the runoff discharge rate during the 25-year storm event.[4]

The Project would construct an onsite storm drainage system that would collect stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces. The Project must comply with the Statewide Phase II Small MS4 Permit, which requires implementing site design, source control, and LID stormwater treatment measures to reduce pollutants, as well as limit Project surface runoff to pre-development baseline runoff rates and volumes (hydromodification management). According to the Judicial Council, the Project's storm drain system would provide on-site retention for the difference in pre- and post-Project runoff flows for a 25-year storm event consistent with Plumas County Department of Public Works standard (Judicial Council 2026).

The Project's storm drain system and its LID measures would offset the impact of the increase in the volume and peak discharge rate of runoff from the Project's impervious surface areas by reducing post-construction Project runoff flows to pre-Project flows up to a 25-year event. The Project's reworking of the site's current stormwater drainage system to add LID measures would likely reduce onsite flooding to some extent by rerouting the runoff that would otherwise pond during flooding events to the new LID features prior to conveyance and discharge into the onsite channel. The Project proposal includes early estimates as to the overall surface area of bioretention features needed to treat and capture runoff from the proposed impervious surface areas. However, conceptual plans and accompanying studies to determine the sizing, design, number, and exact locations of the LID measures such as bioretention features needed to control the volume and peak discharge rates from the impervious surface areas all to meet Statewide Phase II Small MS4 Permit criteria, will be developed during design-build.

The Statewide Phase II Small MS4 Permit requires dischargers to "use non-structural and/or structural measures to replicate the pre-construction water balance (for this General Permit, defined as the volume of rainfall that ends up as runoff) for the smallest storms up to and including the 85th percentile, 24-hour precipitation event (or the smallest precipitation event that generates runoff, whichever is larger).

As described in section 4.8.1.7, flows within the onsite drainage channel overtop the channel banks immediately north of the site where the channel is not well-defined resulting in flooding on the northern portion of the Project site and adjacent parcels. The flood hazard caused by this recurring exceedance in channel capacity is considered an existing adverse condition.

The increase of impervious surface by 20,050 square feet would generate increased surface runoff flows and contribute toward flooding in flood-prone areas of the Project property during storm events exceeding a 25-year intensity. During a 100-year event, the increase in

[4] At the current stage of Project design, the Judicial Council anticipates the storm drain system would be designed for the 25-year storm event, as indicated by Plumas County, the local municipality with jurisdiction.

stormwater runoff from the new impervious surfaces would be approximately 9,500 cubic feet. This increased volume when spread over the existing 100-year flood zone (Zone AE) on- and off-site would have a minimal impact on the base floodplain elevation. Though there would continue to be potential for flooding risk on the Project site, the flows generated by extra impervious surfaces from storms exceeding a 25-year event are unlikely to substantially contribute to downstream flood flows in a manner that changes the inundation area at risk of flooding and the impact on 100-year flood plain elevation.

Hydrologic studies have not yet been performed to evaluate whether the increased peak volume and discharge rate of runoff from the Project site would cause a greater exceedance in channel capacity and exacerbate existing flood hazards during storm events under the two design options for the drainage channel. To prevent the anticipated increases in peak flow volume and rate from exacerbating existing flooding, the Judicial Council must further determine channel capacity during storm events through hydrologic study as a basis of design for the two drainage channel management options under consideration.

Outfall Option

Under Outfall Option, stormwater runoff from the Project site would be discharged to an open drainage channel through an outfall. The stormwater runoff rate and volume discharged to the channel would be increased by the addition of impervious surfaces from site development and the stormwater drainage pattern would be changed from a dispersed sheet flow entering the drainage to surface flows concentrated at the point of discharge. The onsite drainage system would be designed to reduce stormwater runoff to pre-Project flows for a 25-year storm event.

Mitigation Measure HYD-2 would require the Stormwater Control Plan prepared for the proposed storm drain system to meet Statewide Phase II Small MS4 Permit standards and comply with the requirements of the local municipality with jurisdiction. With implementation of Mitigation Measures HYD-2, the Project would adequately capture, control, and treat the runoff generated by the Project's impervious surface areas.

To ensure peak channel capacity is maintained and the Project does not exacerbate existing flooding, the Judicial Council must prepare a channel capacity hydrologic study to evaluate the potential for the Project to contribute runoff flows that would increase the severity of existing flooding, model the differences in pre- versus post-Project exceedance of channel capacity under the design storm scenario(s), and, in the event hydraulic modeling shows an increase in flooding over existing conditions, recommend measures to prevent the projected increase in flooding, which may include improving channel capacity. Other measures to prevent the exacerbation of flooding may include expanding the area and/or depth of bioretention basins included in the design of the onsite stormwater drainage system to increase their storage capacity and temporarily store a larger volume of runoff during storm events. Preparation of a channel capacity hydrologic study required by Mitigation Measures HYD-1a and the proper design of the on-site drainage system capacity required in HYD 2 would ensure that the increased runoff volumes generated from Project impervious surfaces would not exacerbate existing flooding conditions on- or off-site.

It is currently unknown whether the onsite drainage channel undergoes regular maintenance to remove debris and sediment. Should the Project retain the open drainage channel under Outfall Option, there is the potential for debris, sediment, and other materials to accumulate and interfere with the ability of the channel to convey flows without backing up/overtopping the channel banks. To maintain the drainage channel and ensure the channel functions at peak

carrying capacity, the Judicial Council or its contractors should conduct ongoing, routine maintenance activities to remove debris, sediment, and any other materials that would affect channel function. Mitigation Measure HYD-3 would require the Judicial Council or its contractor to prepare a routine maintenance plan requiring periodic debris and sediment removal in the drainage channel.

With implementation of Mitigation Measures HYD-1a, HYD-2, and HYD-3, the impact of Outfall Option on flooding on- and off-site associated with increased surface water flow rates and volumes would be **l*ess than significant with mitigation incorporated*.**

Culvert Option

Under Culvert Option, the open channel would be enclosed in a buried culvert and the stormwater runoff from the Project site would be discharged through a storm drain connection to the culvert. The culvert would need to be designed based on hydrologic study to ensure it has the capacity to receive and convey upstream flows without restriction causing upstream flooding. As described in section 4.8.3.5, the stormwater runoff rate and volume discharged to the channel would be increased by the addition of impervious surfaces from site development and the stormwater drainage pattern would be changed from a dispersed sheet flow entering the drainage to an enclosed drainage channel which could concentrate flows and increase the flow rate and volumes in the downstream drainage channel along the bike path where known flooding occurs. The hydrologic study required in Mitigation Measure HYD-1b above to address erosion would ensure the culvert design is based on modeled drainage flows and would ensure that the capacity would not exacerbate onsite or offsite flooding.

Mitigation Measure HYD-2 would require the Stormwater Control Plan prepared for the proposed storm drain system to meet Statewide Phase II Small MS4 Permit standards and comply with the requirements of the local municipality with jurisdiction. With implementation of Mitigation Measures HYD-1b and HYD-2, the Project would adequately capture, control, and treat the runoff generated by the Project's impervious surface areas and ensure peak channel capacity is maintained by the culvert design to prevent increases in the severity of flooding.

With implementation of Mitigation Measures HYD-1b and HYD-2, the impact of Culvert Option on flooding on- or off-site associated with increased surface water flow rates and volumes would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated***.

Mitigation Measures

Impact HYD-2: The Project proposes new impervious surface areas that have the potential to increase stormwater runoff flow rates and volumes in the onsite open drainage channel (Outfall Option) or culverted drainage channel (Culvert Option) that may cause a greater exceedance in the channel capacity than occurs under existing conditions and exacerbate existing flooding onsite or offsite.

See **Mitigation Measures HYD-1a and HYD-1b.**

Mitigation Measure HYD-2: Incorporate Onsite Drainage Features. For both Outfall Option and Culvert Option, prior to initiating site preparation activities, the Judicial Council and/or its contractor shall develop and finalize the Stormwater Control Plan for the Project's onsite drainage features in compliance with the Statewide Phase II Small MS4 Permit and its standards for regulated projects (E.12Post Construction Storm Water Management Program). The final Stormwater Control Plan shall be designed to incorporate the findings of

the hydrology study undertaken in Mitigation Measure HYD1a for Outfall Option or Mitigation Measure HYD-1b for Culvert Option. All modeling performed for the Stormwater Control Plan shall be undertaken by a registered engineer and conducted to common civil engineering industry standards.

The final Stormwater Control Plan shall demonstrate that the onsite drainage system would retain stormwater runoff from the Project site to the extent that the system prevents an increase in the exceedance of the capacity of the drainage channel (on-site and off-site) and does not exacerbate existing onsite and offsite flood hazards. If the channel capacity hydrologic study required in Mitigation Measure HYD-1a or culvert design hydrologic study required in Mitigation HYD-1b determine increased onsite retention capacity or other measures are needed to prevent the exacerbation of existing flooding, particularly during storm events, the final Stormwater Control Plan and the onsite drainage system must be designed so that the LID features have the capacity to temporarily store the volume of runoff necessary so as to prevent any modeled exceedance in channel capacity over existing conditions from occurring and ensure and the Project does not exacerbate existing onsite and offsite flood hazards.

Impact HYD-3: Under stormwater management Outfall Option, debris and sediment may accumulate in the drainage channel reducing its peak carrying capacity.

Mitigation Measure HYD-3: Long-Term Maintenance of Drainage Channel. If the Project implements Outfall Option and retains the open drainage channel, the Judicial Council or its contractors shall over the life of the Project maintain the drainage channel to ensure it functions at peak carrying capacity. Prior to Project completion, the Judicial Council or its contractors shall develop a routine maintenance plan requiring periodic debris and sediment removal in the drainage channel in consultation with a qualified biologist and in accordance with any permitting approvals required by a resource agency (i.e., the California Department of Fish & Wildlife and the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board). The routine maintenance plan shall specify how frequently the debris and sediment removal activities shall occur and shall establish an inspection schedule to monitor debris and sediment levels and channel capacity. To ensure routine debris and sediment removal activities do not damage or remove riparian vegetation, the routine maintenance plan shall include measures to minimize impacts to riparian vegetation occurring within the banks of the drainage channel.

Over the life of the Project, the Judicial Council or its contractors shall maintain the drainage channel to continuously provide flow capacity for the design storm event determined by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board.

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

The Project would introduce approximately 20,050 square feet of new impervious surfaces, which could introduce non-point source water quality pollutants associated with urban stormwater runoff. Post Project construction, the majority (i.e., approximately 2.2 acres of the site's total 2.86 acres, or approximately 77 percent) of the Project site would be covered by

impervious surfaces with the exception of the bioretention facilities required for compliance with Statewide Phase II Small MS4 Permit requirements and other landscaping. As described previously, the Project proposal includes the use of site design, source control, and LID treatment controls and hydromodification management measures to keep pollutants out of stormwater and reduce operational impacts to water quality.

The Project proposes 20,050 square feet of new impervious surface areas that have the potential to contribute and convey polluted runoff into the onsite drainage channel in absence of properly designed bioretention facilities. Project compliance with existing state-level regulations requiring the preparation of a SWPPP with site-specific BMPs during project construction and the implementation of operational LID measures would ensure the impervious surface areas would not result in substantial pollutants from urban runoff from entering the drainage channel.

The Project site currently generates stormwater runoff from 76,050 square feet of hardscape. that flows untreated to the adjacent drainage channel. Though the Project would increase the impervious surface area by approximately 20,050 square feet (less than one-half acre) all runoff from impervious surfaces would be collected by the onsite drainage system and pre-treated for removal of pollutants prior to discharge. As a result, the Project would reduce pollutants from stormwater runoff and improve the water quality of surface runoff discharged to the drainage channel over existing conditions. The Project's contribution as a source of polluted runoff is ***less than significant.***

The potential for the Project to create or contribute stormwater runoff that would exceed the capacity of the existing drainage system is addressed in section 4.8.3.6 above.

4.8.3.8 Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would impede or redirect flood flows

As described in section 4.8.1.7 Environmental Setting, the Project site is prone to flooding under existing conditions. Flooding on the Project site originates from the confluence of the onsite drainage channel and the drainage channel immediately north of the Project site along the bike path where flows in the channels back up onto the site during storm events. Flooding from this location affects the northern section of the Project property, which is located within the 100-year flood plain (SFHA, Zone AE). Under proposed conditions, the new courthouse building, LID storm drainage measures, and some of the parking areas would be located outside the 100-year flood plain (Zone AE) . A portion of the proposed parking stalls would be located in the SFHA, Zone AE. The Project would not place structures or substantially alter site elevations within the 100-year flood plain (Zone AE) that would impede or redirect flood flows.

According to the Judicial Council, the new courthouse building would be designed to account for potential onsite flooding. Per FEMA National Flood Insurance Program requirements, the finished floor elevation (FFE) of the new courthouse building would be elevated a minimum of one foot above the existing base flood elevation level. The Judicial Council anticipates 2-3 feet of fill to construct the building with a FFE of 3,419 feet.

The increased grade elevation in the west and southwest portion of the site has the potential to redirect Zone X flood waters that would otherwise collect in the proposed location of the building pad. The Project site is located at the northern limit of Zone X. Flood waters at this location are limited to an average depth of less than one foot for a 100-year event. Any flood waters that would be redirected from Zone X due to courthouse construction would likely flow around the

courthouse building to lower elevations toward the north and east portions of the site and into the onsite drainage channel or the drainage channel along the bike path. Based on the conceptual Project design (Figure 2-4), roughly 75 percent (17,325 square feet) of the Project building would be situated within Zone X in the same location as the existing barn structure (roughly 8,800 square feet). The new courthouse building would result in a net increase of 8,525 square feet of building in Zone X that could redirect flood flows further east and north into the Project property. Given that the flood flows at this location have less than 1-foot average depth, the depth of flood waters redirected from the addition of the courthouse building (8,525 cubic feet) dispersed across the remaining unobstructed portion of the Project property would be 1 inch and is not considered substantial.

The Project site currently contains minimal stormwater infrastructure, and the site drains to the onsite drainage channel via sheet flow. The Project would upgrade the site's stormwater infrastructure to provide stormwater collection and conveyance systems, which may include but not be limited to inlets, roof drains, and storm drain lines, to redirect and convey collected runoff to the new bioretention features (see Mitigation Measure HYD-2b). The stormwater drainage system design would be developed during the design-build. The installation of new stormwater infrastructure and potential reconfiguration of the drainage channel under Outfall Option or Culvert Option would have the potential to impede or redirect flood flows occurring on the Project site as discussed below.

Outfall Option

Flooding of the northern portion of the Project site from the adjacent drainage channel is reported to occur as an existing site condition. The intensity of a storm event needed to trigger the onsite flooding is unknown. The Project storm drainage system would be designed to contain runoff from a 25-year storm event and release the runoff at pre-Project flow rates. To the degree that these existing flood flows would be captured by the Project storm drainage system along with runoff generated at the Project site and released back into the drainage channel through the outfall, the downstream channel could continue to flood with floodwaters continuing to back up into the Project site.

The potential for Outfall Option to contribute toward on- and off-site flooding is addressed in section 4.8.3.6. Mitigation Measure HYD-2a requires the Judicial Council to prepare a hydrologic study to evaluate whether the Project would cause a greater exceedance in channel capacity, and thereby exacerbate flooding, compared to existing conditions if the open channel is retained (Outfall Option). Mitigation Measure HYD-2b and Mitigation Measure HYD-2c stipulate that, should the hydrologic study show the Project's contribution of runoff would exacerbate existing flood hazards, the Project's Stormwater Control Plan, including the storage volume of bioretention features and the onsite retention capacity, must be designed to maintain channel flows at or below pre-project conditions to prevent an increase in the severity of flooding in the drainage channel onsite or offsite. Additionally, implementation of Mitigation Measure HYD-3, which requires ongoing channel maintenance such as debris and sediment removal, would maintain channel capacity and function if the open channel is retained. With implementation of these mitigation measures, the Project impact on redirected flood flows would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated.***

Culvert Option

Under Culvert Option, existing flood flows would be captured by the Project storm drainage system along with runoff generated at the Project site and released back into the drainage

channel, which would be enclosed in a culvert. The drainage channel is subject to flooding and its enclosure would convey all flood flows occurring along the channel on the Project property downstream. This could impact downstream flood elevations.

The potential for Culvert Option to contribute toward on- and off-site flooding is addressed in section 4.8.3.6. Mitigation Measure HYD-1 requires the Judicial Council to prepare a hydrologic study to ensure appropriate culvert design and sizing to account for projected flood hazards and potential backups into the Project's storm drain system and does not exceed the capacity of the receiving channel or exacerbate onsite or offsite flooding. Additionally Mitigation Measure HYD-2b and Mitigation Measure HYD-2c stipulate that, should the hydrologic study show the Project's contribution of runoff would exacerbate existing flood hazards, the Project's Stormwater Control Plan, including the storage volume of bioretention features and the onsite retention capacity, must be designed to maintain channel flows at or below pre-Project conditions to prevent an increase in the severity of flooding in the drainage channel onsite or offsite. With implementation of these mitigation measures, the Project impact on redirected flood flows would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated.***

Mitigation Measures

Impact HYD-4: Existing flood flows that occur along the northern portion of the property could be redirected by the Project's stormwater system and contribute to downstream flooding.

See Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-3.

4.8.3.9 In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation.

Tsunamis are long-period sea waves generated by seafloor movements from submarine earthquakes or volcanic eruptions that rapidly displace large volumes of water. Coastal communities along the Pacific Ocean are particularly susceptible to such phenomena. The Project site is not located near a coastal zone and is not within a mapped area on the California Tsunami Hazard Area Maps. Therefore, the potential for damage due to tsunami is considered negligible. Seiches are periodic oscillations in large bodies of water such as lakes, harbors, bays, or reservoirs. The Project site is not located adjacent to any confined bodies of water; therefore, the potential for a seiche to affect the site is negligible. (Atlas 2025)

As described in section 4.8.1 Environmental Setting, the Project site is prone to flooding under existing conditions. Existing flooding is observed to reach between 12 inches and 18 inches along the northern periphery of the Project site.

Outfall Option and Culvert Option

Mitigation Measures HYD-1a-b and HYD-2 would require design of an onsite drainage system that would have capacity to retain stormwater runoff and not exacerbate existing flooding onsite or offsite. Parking lot runoff is a substantial source of polluted urban runoff and would be addressed by water quality treatment required by the Statewide Phase II Small MS4 permit as discussed in section 4.8.3.7.

The Project would not introduce new permanent sources of pollutants on the Project site within the areas subject to inundation by flood hazard. The proposed site design would use the flood prone areas for parking. Vehicles parked in flood areas could become a potential source of pollutants if flood waters rise up into the undercarriage of the vehicles. Given the limited number of parking stalls at the northern end of the Project site in the flood zone, that cars are only

temporarily present on the site during business hours and can be moved to limit exposure to flooded parking areas, and the depth of the flood would be limited to 12-18 inches, the amount of pollutants released from vehicles from inundation would not be considered substantial. Thus, there is not likely to be an increase in the risk of releasing pollutants from the inundation of the Project.

Outfall OptionWith implementation of Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-3 flooding on the Project site would not be exacerbated and the use of flood prone areas for vehicle parking would not have a substantial adverse impact related to the risk of release of pollutants due to Project inundation. This impact would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated***.

Mitigation Measures

> **Impact HYD-5:** Under existing conditions, the Project site is prone to flooding at the north and east areas of the site. The proposed site design would use those areas for parking, which could potentially result in the release of automobile-related pollutants if inundation of the new parking area were to occur.
>
> See Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-3.

4.8.3.10 Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan

As discussed above in this section, the Project would implement construction period and operational stormwater water quality controls to comply with NPDES Statewide Phase II Small MS4 stormwater permit standards and, therefore, would not conflict with or obstruct the Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River Basins (Basin Plan; see section 11.2.2 State Regulations, above). There is no sustainable groundwater management plan (GSP) applicable to the Project. This impact would be ***less than significant***.

4.9 Noise

This chapter includes a description of ambient noise conditions, a summary of applicable regulations related to noise and vibration, and an analysis of the potential impacts resulting from the implementation of the Project.

4.9.1 Environmental Setting

"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. The frequency (pitch), amplitude (intensity or loudness), and duration of noise all contribute to the effect on a listener, or receptor, and whether the receptor perceives the noise as objectionable, disturbing, or annoying.

4.9.1.1 The Decibel Scale (dB)

The decibel scale (dB) is a unit of measurement that indicates the relative amplitude of a sound. Sound levels in dB are calculated on a logarithmic basis. An increase of 10 dB represents a tenfold increase in acoustic energy, while 20 dBs is 100 times more intense, 30 dBs is 1,000 more intense, and so on. In general, there is a relationship between the subjective noisiness, or loudness of a sound, and its amplitude, or intensity, with each 10 dB increase in sound level perceived as approximately a doubling of loudness.

4.9.1.2 Sound Characterization

There are several methods of characterizing sound. The most common method is the "A-weighted sound level," or dBA. This scale gives greater weight to the frequencies of sound to which the human ear is typically most sensitive. Thus, most environmental measurements are reported in dBA, meaning decibels on the A-scale. Human hearing matches the logarithmic A-weighted scale, so that a sound of 60 dBA is perceived as twice as loud as a sound of 50 dBA. In a quiet environment, an increase of three dB is usually perceptible, however, in a complex noise environment such as along a busy street, a noise increase of less than three dB is usually not perceptible, and an increase of five dB is usually perceptible. Normal human speech is in the range from 50 to 65 dBA. Generally, as environmental noise exceeds 50 dBA, it becomes intrusive and above 65 dBA noise becomes excessive. Nighttime activities, including sleep, are more sensitive to noise and are considered affected over a range of 40 to 55 dBA. Table 4-19 lists typical outdoor and indoor noise levels in terms of dBA.

Table 4-19: Typical Outdoor and Indoor Noise Levels

Common Outdoor Activities	Noise Level (dBA)	Common Indoor Activities
	-110-	Rock Band
Jet flyover at 1,000 feet		
	-100-	
Gas lawn mower at 3 feet		
	-90-	
Diesel truck at 50 feet at 50 mph		Food blender at 3 feet
	-80-	Garbage disposal at 3 feet
Noise urban area, daytime		
Gas lawnmower, 100 feet	-70-	Vacuum cleaner at 10 feet
Commercial area		Normal speech at 3 feet
Heavy traffic at 300 feet	-60-	
		Large business office
Quiet urban daytime	-50	Dishwasher next room
Quite urban nighttime	-40-	Theater, large conference room (background)
Quiet suburban nighttime		
	-30-	Library
Quite rural nighttime		Bedroom at night
	-20-	
		Broadcast/recording studio
	-10-	
Lowest threshold of human hearing	-0-	Lowest threshold of human hearing
Source: Caltrans 2013		

Sound levels are typically not steady and can vary over a short time period. The equivalent noise level (L_{eq}) is used to represent the average character of the sound over a period of time. The L_{eq} represents the level of steady 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.

Variable noise levels are values that are exceeded for a portion of the measured time period. Thus, L01 is the level exceeded one percent of the time and L90 is the level exceeded 90 percent of the time. The L90 value usually corresponds to the background sound level at the measurement location.

Noise exposure over the course of an entire day is described by the day/night average sound level, or L_{dn}, and the community noise equivalent level, or CNEL. Both descriptors represent the 24-hour noise impact on a community. For L_{dn}, the 24-hour day is divided into a 15-hour daytime period (7:00 AM to 10:00 PM) and a nine-hour nighttime period (10:00 PM to 7:00 AM) and 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 would contribute as much to the overall day-night average as a 55 dBA daytime sound level. The CNEL descriptor is similar to L_{dn}, except that it includes an additional five dBA penalty beyond the 10 dBA for sound events that occur during the evening time period (7:00 PM to 10:00 PM). The artificial penalties imposed during L_{dn} and CNEL calculations are intended to account for a receptor's increased sensitivity to sound levels during quieter nighttime periods.

4.9.1.3 Sound Propagation

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. Theoretically, the sound level of a point source attenuates, or decreases, by six dB with each doubling of distance from a point source. Sound levels are also affected by certain environmental factors, such as ground cover (asphalt vs. grass or trees), atmospheric absorption, and attenuation by barriers. Outdoor noise is also attenuated by the building envelope so that sound levels inside a residence are from 10 to 20 dB less than outside, depending mainly on whether windows are open for ventilation or not.

When more than one point source contributes to the sound pressure level at a receiver point, the overall sound level is determined by combining the contributions of each source. Decibels, however, are logarithmic units and cannot be directly added or subtracted together. Under the dB scale, a doubling of sound energy corresponds to a three dB increase in noise levels. For example, if one noise source produces a sound power level of 70 dB, two of the same sources would not produce 140 dB – rather, they would combine to produce 73 dB.

4.9.1.4 Noise Effects

Noise effects on human beings are generally categorized as:

- Subjective effects of annoyance, nuisance, and/or dissatisfaction
- Interference with activities such as speech, sleep, learning, or relaxing
- Physiological effects such as startling and hearing loss

Most environmental noise levels produce subjective or interference effects; physiological effects are usually limited to high noise environments such as industrial manufacturing facilities or airports. Such physiological effects occur when the human ear is subjected to extremely high short-term noise levels (i.e., 140 dBA from an explosion) or from a prolonged exposure to high noise environments. For example, to protect workers from noise-induced hearing loss, the U.S. OSHA limits worker noise exposure to 90 dBA as averaged over an 8-hour period (29 CFR 1910.95).

Predicting the subjective and interference effects of noise is difficult due to the wide variation in individual thresholds of annoyance and past experiences with noise; however, an accepted method to determine a person's subjective reaction to a new noise source is to compare it to the existing environment without the noise source, or the "ambient" noise environment. In general,

the more a new noise source exceeds the ambient noise level, the more likely it is to be considered annoying and to disturb normal activities.

Under controlled conditions in an acoustical laboratory, the trained, healthy human ear is able to discern one-dB changes in sound levels when exposed to steady, single-frequency (“pure-tone”) signals in the mid-frequency (1,000–8,000 Hz) range. In typical noisy environments, changes in noise of one to two dB are generally not perceptible. However, it is widely accepted that people are able to begin to detect sound level increases of three dB in typical noisy environments. Further, a five dB increase is generally perceived as a distinctly noticeable increase, and a 10 dB increase is generally perceived as a doubling of loudness that would almost certainly cause an adverse response from community noise receptors.

4.9.1.5 Groundborne Vibration

Vibration is the movement of particles within a medium or object such as the ground or a building. Vibration may be caused by natural phenomena (e.g., earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, sea waves, landslides) or humans (e.g., explosions, machinery, traffic, trains, construction equipment). Vibration sources are usually characterized as continuous, such as factory machinery, or transient, such as explosions.

As is the case with airborne sound, groundborne vibrations may be described by amplitude and frequency; however, unlike airborne sound, there is no standard way of measuring and reporting amplitude. Vibration amplitudes can be expressed in terms of velocity (inches per second) or discussed in dB units in order to compress the range of numbers required to describe vibration. Vibration impacts to buildings are usually discussed in terms of peak particle velocity (PPV) 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. Vibration can impact people, structures, and sensitive equipment. The primary concern related to vibration and people is the potential to annoy those working and residing in the area. Vibration with high enough amplitudes can damage structures (such as crack plaster or destroy windows). Groundborne vibration can also disrupt the use of sensitive medical and scientific instruments, such as electron microscopes.

Common sources of vibration within communities include construction activities and railroads. Groundborne vibration generated by construction projects is usually highest during pile driving, rock blasting, soil compacting, jack hammering, and demolition-related activities. Next to pile driving, grading activity has the greatest potential for vibration impacts if large bulldozers, large trucks, or other heavy equipment are used.

Groundborne noise is noise generated by vibrating building surfaces such as floors, walls, and ceilings that radiate noise inside buildings subjected to an external source of vibration. The vibration level, the acoustic radiation of the vibrating element, and the acoustical absorption of the room are all factors that affect potential groundborne noise generation.

4.9.1.6 Noise Setting

The Project site is located at 253, 287, and 295 Lawrence Street, which serves as SR 70 in Quincy, California. The Plumas County 2035 General Plan EIR Noise section describes the prominent noise sources in Quincy such as vehicle traffic primarily along SR 70, train transportation (Quincy Railroad and BNSF Railroad), aircraft noise (Gansner Field Airport and Hospital Helipad), and stationary sources (Plumas County Fairgrounds and Sierra Pacific

Industries Sawmill and Con-Gen Plant) to a lesser extent. The 2035 General Plan EIR identifies traffic noise levels along the segment of SR 70 between the junction to SR 89 and Portola (where Quincy is located) were at least 65 dB L_{dn} within 100 feet of the roadway. This 100-foot corridor extends into the Project site; Lawrence Street is coextensive with part of SR 70. Typical ambient noise levels at the Project site are therefore considered to be similar to this SR 70 reference noise level.

4.9.1.7 Sensitive Receptors

Noise sensitive receptors are buildings or areas where unwanted sound or increases in sound may have an adverse effect on people or land uses. Hospitals, residential areas, schools, and parks are examples of noise sensitive receptors that could be sensitive to changes in existing environmental noise levels. The noise sensitive receptors in proximity (within 1,000 feet) of the Project site include:

- Single family residential land uses adjacent to the Project site to west and north along Lawrence Street and Summerfield Lane.
- Single family residential land uses approximately 90 feet south of the Project site along Lawrence Street.
- Mobile home residential receptors approximately 220 feet east of the Project site property boundary located in the American Valley Estates mobile home park.

4.9.2 Regulatory Setting

4.9.2.1 Federal Regulations

4.9.2.1.1 Federal Transit Administration

No federal regulations apply to noise or vibration from the Project, but the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) 2018 Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual establishes construction noise guidelines for a general quantitative assessment that recommends modeling typical construction equipment noise levels from the center of a Project site. The FTA document also establishes groundborne vibration annoyance criteria for general assessments. The criteria vary by the type of building being subjected to the vibrations, and the overall number of vibration events occurring each day. Category 1 buildings are considered buildings where vibration would interfere with operation, even at levels that are below human detection. These include buildings with sensitive equipment, such as research facilities and recording studios. Category 2 buildings include residential lands and buildings where people sleep, such as hotels and hospitals. Category 3 buildings consist of institutional land uses with primarily daytime uses. The FTA standards vary for "frequent" events (occurring more than 70 times per day, such as a rapid transit project), "occasional" events (occurring between 30 to 70 times per day), and "infrequent" events (occurring less than 30 times per day). The FTA's vibration annoyance criteria are summarized in Table 4-20.

Table 4-20: FTA Ground-Borne Vibration Impact Criteria for General Assessment

Land Use Category/Type	Impact Level (Velocity Decibels)		
	Frequent Events	Occasional Events	Infrequent Events
Category 1 – Buildings with sensitive equipment	65 VdB	65 VdB	65 VdB
Category 2 – Buildings where people sleep	72 VdB	75 VdB	80 VdB
Category 3 – Institutional buildings	75 VdB	78 VdB	83 VdB
Source: FTA 2018			

4.9.2.2 State Regulations

Caltrans

The California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual provides a summary of vibration criteria that have been reported by researchers, organizations, and governmental agencies (Caltrans 2020). Chapters 6 and 7 of the aforementioned guidance manual summarizes vibration detection and annoyance criteria from various agencies and provides Caltrans' recommended guidelines and thresholds for evaluating potential vibration impacts on buildings and humans from transportation and construction projects. These thresholds are summarized in Table 4-21 and Table 4-22.

Table 4-21: Caltrans' Vibration Threshold Criteria for Building Damage

Structural Integrity	Maximum PPV (in/sec)	
	Transient	Continuous
Historic and some older buildings	0.50	0.12 to 0.2
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 2020		

Table 4-22: Caltrans' Vibration Threshold Criteria for Human Response

Human Response	Maximum PPV (in/sec)	
	Transient	Continuous
Slightly perceptible	0.035	0.01
Distinctly perceptible	0.24	0.04
Strongly perceptible	0.90	0.10
Severe/Disturbing	2.0	0.7 (at 2 Hz) to 0.17 (at 20 Hz)
Very disturbing	--	3.6 (at 2 Hz) to 0.4 (at 20 Hz)
Source: Caltrans 2020		

Land Use Compatibility Guidelines

California Administrative Code, Title 4 presents guidelines for evaluating the compatibility of various land uses as a function of community noise exposure. The state land use compatibility guidelines for land use categories relevant to the Project site and surrounding properties are shown in Table 4-23:

Table 4-23. Land Use Noise Compatibility Guidelines (CNEL/Ldn dbA)

Land Use Category	Normally Acceptable[1]	Conditionally Acceptable[2]	Normally Unacceptable[3]	Clearly Unacceptable[4]
Residential – Low Density Single Family, Duplex, Mobile Homes	<60	55-70	70-75	75-80
Office Buildings, Business Commercial and Professional	<70	Approximately 67-77	>75	

CNEL = Community Noise Equivalent Level; dBA = A-weighted decibels; Ldn= day-night average noise level.

Notes:

1. Specified land use is satisfactory, based on the assumption that any buildings involved are of normal conventional construction, without any special noise insulation requirements.

2. New construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements is made and needed noise insulation features are included in the design. Conventional construction, but with closed windows and fresh air supply systems or air conditioning will normally suffice.

3. New construction or development should generally be discouraged. If new construction or development does proceed, a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements must be made and needed noise insulation features included in the design. Outdoor areas must be shielded.

4. New construction or development should generally not be undertaken.

4.9.2.3 Local Regulations

The Judicial Council, acting as the judicial branch of the State government, is not subject to local land use regulations; however, the Judicial Council, as lead agency, considers local policies in evaluating whether the Project's impacts would be significant.

Plumas County General Plan

The Plumas County 2035 General Plan Update contains the following policies related to noise that may be relevant to the Project:

Policy N 3.1.4 Construction Noise. The County shall seek to limit the potential noise impacts of construction activities on surrounding land uses. The standards outlined below shall apply to those activities associated with actual construction of a project as long as such construction occurs between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on weekends or on federally recognized holidays. Exceptions are allowed if it can be shown that construction beyond these times is necessary to alleviate traffic congestion and safety hazards.

Policy N 3.1.5 Development Surrounding Airports. The County shall require that development around local public-use airports be consistent with the noise standards contained in the approved Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan.

Policy N 3.1.7 Noise Standard Exceptions. The County may allow greater exterior noise levels for some proposed new developments when it is not feasible to reduce noise levels in outdoor activity areas to acceptable noise levels specified in Figure or less using practical application of the best-available noise reduction measures.

Policy N 3.1.11 Noise Study Requirements. When a discretionary project has the potential to generate noise levels in excess of general plan standards, the County shall require the preparation of a noise study. The noise study shall measure or model as appropriate, CNEL and Lmax levels at property lines and, if feasible, receptor locations. Noise studies shall be prepared by qualified individuals using calibrated equipment under currently accepted professional standards and include an analysis of the characteristics of the project in relation to noise levels, all feasible mitigations and projected noise impacts. The Noise Guidebook published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, or its equivalent, shall be used to guide analysis and mitigation recommendations. The noise or acoustic analysis should be the responsibility of the project applicant.

4.9.2.3.2 Plumas County Noise Ordinance

The County does not currently have an adopted noise ordinance, which would be used for code enforcement purposes and addressing noise complaints.

4.9.3 Impacts Analysis

4.9.3.1 Methodology

Available documents including the Plumas County General Plan and General Plan EIR, ordinances, and environmental impact analyses from development projects in the Project area were used to provide baseline noise conditions at the project site and sensitive receptors within the Project vicinity. Sensitive receptors were determined by reviewing aerial photography of the Project vicinity and from site observations. As described in section 4.9.1.6, ambient noise levels at the Project site are assumed to be consistent with the traffic noise levels measured along SR 70 in the Plumas County 2035 General Plan EIR Noise section. In general, the assumed noise levels are theoretical predictions; they do not account for potential reflection or partial shielding, atmospheric or ground absorption, or other excess attenuation factors.

Groundborne vibration levels associated with construction-related activities for the Project were evaluated utilizing typical groundborne vibration levels associated with construction equipment. Potential groundborne vibration impacts related to structural damage and human annoyance were evaluated, taking into account the distance from construction activities to nearby structures and typically applied criteria for structural damage and human annoyance.

4.9.3.2 Thresholds of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Project would have a significant noise impact if it would:

- Generate 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 in other applicable standards of other agencies?
- Generate excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?
- 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, the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

4.9.3.3 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 in other applicable standards of other agencies

The construction and operation of the Project would generate noise and vibration. This section describes the Project's noise sources and the methodologies used to estimate potential Project noise and vibration levels.

4.9.3.3.1 Temporary Construction Noise Levels

The Project involves the demolition of existing commercial structures and the construction of a new, approximately 23,100 square-foot courthouse over an approximately 26-month period. Construction activities would include demolition, site preparation, grading, building construction, paving, and architectural coating work. The Project would generate construction noise from the following sources:

- Heavy equipment operations throughout the Project area. Some heavy equipment would consist of mobile equipment such as a loader, excavator, etc. that would move around work areas; other equipment would consist of stationary equipment (e.g., air compressors) that would generally operate in a fixed location until work activities are complete. Heavy equipment generates noise from engine operation, mechanical systems and components (e.g., fans, gears, propulsion of wheels or tracks), and other sources such as back-up alarms. Mobile equipment generally operates at different loads, or power outputs, and produce higher or lower noise levels depending on the operating load. Stationary equipment generally operates at a steady power output that produces a constant noise level.
- Vehicle trips, including worker, vendor, and haul truck trips. These trips would occur on Lawrence Street and Main Street that provide access to the Project site.

Table 4-24 presents estimated noise levels for the types of equipment that would be used to construct the Project. Potential construction noise levels are presented for worst-case equipment operations at a distance of 50 feet (reference noise level) and at specific distances to sensitive receptors in proximity to the Project's construction work areas (e.g., 25 feet to adjacent residences, the closest sensitive receptors).

Table 4-24: Project Construction Equipment Noise Levels (dBA)

Equipment	Reference Noise Level at 50 Feet (L_{max})[A]	Percent Usage Factor[B]	Predicted Noise Levels (L_{eq}) at Distance[C]					
			25 Feet	50 Feet	100 Feet	200 Feet	250 Feet	300 Feet
Backhoe	80	0.4	82	76	70	64	62	60
Bulldozer	85	0.4	87	81	75	69	67	65
Compressor	80	0.4	82	76	70	64	62	60
Concrete Mixer	85	0.4	87	81	75	69	67	65
Crane	85	0.16	83	77	71	65	63	61
Delivery Truck	85	0.4	86	80	74	68	66	64
Excavator	85	0.4	87	81	75	69	67	65
Front End Loader	80	0.4	82	76	70	64	62	60
Generator	82	0.5	85	79	73	67	65	63
Grader	85	0.4	87	81	75	69	67	65
Man Lift	85	0.2	84	78	72	66	64	62
Paver	85	0.5	88	82	76	70	68	66
Pneumatic Tools	85	0.5	88	82	76	70	68	66
Roller	85	0.2	84	78	72	66	64	62
Scraper	85	0.4	87	81	75	69	67	65
Tractor	84	0.4	86	80	74	68	66	64
Vacuum Truck	85	0.4	87	81	75	69	67	65
Welder	73	0.4	76	70	64	58	56	54

Sources: Caltrans 2013 and FHWA 2010.
Notes:
(A) L_{max} noise levels based on manufacturer's specifications.
(B) Usage factor refers to the amount of time the equipment produces noise over the time period.
(C) Estimate does not account for any atmospheric or ground attenuation factors. Calculated noise levels based on Caltrans 2013: L_{eq} (hourly) = L_{max} at 50 feet – 20log (D/50) + 10log (UF), where: L_{max} = reference L_{max} from manufacturer or other source; D = distance of interest; UF = usage fraction or fraction of time period of interest equipment is in use.

Based on construction equipment information available from Caltrans, typical default heavy-duty off-road construction equipment available on the market may generate noise levels of 88 dBA L_{eq} at a distance of 25 feet (i.e., the approximate distance between the Project site and the nearest sensitive receptor). The analysis presented in this section uses the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) daytime (80 dBA L_{eq}) and nighttime (70 dBA L_{eq}) detailed construction noise analysis criteria to assess whether potential construction activities would result in a substantial temporary increase in noise levels in the vicinity of the Project (FTA, 2018). As described above, the Project could generate temporary construction noise levels of approximately 88 dBA dBA L_{eq} at a distance of 25 feet. At an active construction site, it is not uncommon for two or more pieces of construction equipment to operate at the same time and in close proximity. The concurrent operation of two or more pieces of construction equipment would result in noise levels of approximately 91 dBA at the nearest sensitive receptor. This is considered a potentially significant impact. Implementation of Mitigation Measure NOI-1 would reduce construction noise impact through installation of a noise barrier. With the above

Mitigation Measure NOI-1 incorporated, equipment noise levels are estimated to result in a minimum 11 dBA reduction at adjacent residential properties bordering the project site and result in less-than-significant construction noise levels. Therefore, this impact would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated***.

Mitigation Measures

Impact NOI-1: Construction noise associated with the Project would potentially exceed the FTA's 80 dBA L_{eq} significance thresholds for construction noise at nearby sensitive receptor locations.

Mitigation Measure NOI-1 Construction Noise: To reduce potential construction noise levels at nearby sensitive receptor locations, an 8-foot-tall noise barrier shall be installed during all site preparation, grading, and paving activities that have a line of sight to and occur within 100 feet of an occupied dwelling unit or mobile home. The barrier shall only be required along the portion of the job site perimeter that lies between the active work area and the affected dwelling unit(s). In addition, a temporary barrier shall not be required if a permanent barrier is already present between the work area and the affected dwelling unit. The barrier shall consist of nominal 1.0-inch plywood with a minimum material density of approximately 1.7 pounds per square foot installed. Alternatively, the barrier may consist of commercially available acoustic panels, blankets, etc. that have a minimum sound transmission class (STC) or transmission loss value of 20 dB or higher. The barrier shall be installed at grade or mounted to structures located at grade, such as a K-rail, and be maintained free of openings or gaps (other than weep holes). Construction ingress/egress shall not be permitted through the barrier unless there is no other viable access point due to specific project constraints or other access requirements. The noise barrier may be removed following the completion of all site preparation, grading, and paving activities (i.e., it is not necessary once framing and typical vertical building construction begins provided no other site preparation, grading, or paving work is still occurring in the area).

4.9.3.3.2 Operational Noise Levels

Once operational, the Project would generate noise from both on-site sources (e.g., onsite vehicle parking, garbage collection activities, HVAC equipment, and building maintenance) and off-site sources (e.g., vehicle trips). In general, it takes a doubling of traffic to increase traffic noise volumes by 3 dBA, which is considered an audible increase for exterior noise environments (Caltrans, 2013). As discussed in section 4.10 Transportation, the Project is not expected to result in a doubling of traffic along nearby roadway segments to the project site. Since the Project would result in less than a doubling of daily traffic volumes on roadways used to access the site, it would not result in a substantial, permanent increase in off-site traffic noise levels.

The proposed courthouse building would be a land use similar to an office building, which is not considered a substantial noise generating land use. Accordingly, the Project is not anticipated to generate substantial noise levels onsite. Although the Project could result in new or different noise sources at the Project site, these noise sources would not generate substantial noise levels that exceed local standards or otherwise result in a substantial permanent increase in noise levels in the vicinity of the Project site. This impact would be ***less than significant***.

4.9.3.4 Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels

Construction activities have the potential to result in varying degrees of ground vibration, depending on the specific construction equipment used and activities involved. Vibration generated by construction equipment spreads through the ground and diminishes with increases in distance. The effects of ground vibration may be imperceptible at low levels, result in low rumbling sounds and detectable vibrations at moderate levels and can disturb human activities such as sleep and vibration sensitive equipment at high levels. Ground vibration can also potentially damage the foundations and exteriors of existing structures even if it does not result in a negative human response. Pile drivers and other pieces of high impact construction equipment are generally the primary cause of construction-related vibration impacts. The use of such equipment is generally limited to sites where there are extensive layers of very hard materials (e.g., compacted soils, bedrock) that must be loosened and/or penetrated to achieve grading and foundation design requirements. The need for such methods is usually determined through site-specific geotechnical investigations that identify the subsurface materials within the grading envelope, along with foundation design recommendations and the construction methods needed to safely permit development of a site.

Construction vibration impacts generally occur when construction activities occur in close proximity to buildings and vibration-sensitive areas, during evening or nighttime hours, or when construction activities last extended periods of time. For the Project, these types of equipment would primarily operate during the site preparation, grading, and paving phases. During site preparation and grading activities, large equipment could also, at worst-case, operate within approximately 25 feet of the nearest structure to the north, 40 feet of the nearest structure to the west, 40 feet of the nearest structure to the east, and 60 of the nearest structure to the south (across Lawrence Street). Similarly, most typical construction equipment operations would generally take place in the interior of the site, farther from receptor locations. The ground-borne vibration levels generated by the type of equipment that would be used to construct the Project are shown in Table 4-25.

Table 4-25: Potential Project Construction Vibration Levels

Equipment	Peak Particle Velocity (in/sec)[A]				Velocity Decibels (VdB)[B]			
	25 feet	40 feet	60 feet	100 feet	25 feet	40 feet	60 feet	100 feet
Small bulldozer	0.003	0.002	0.001	0.001	58	51.9	46.6	39.9
Jackhammer	0.035	0.021	0.013	0.008	79	72.9	67.6	60.9
Loaded truck	0.076	0.045	0.029	0.017	86	79.9	74.6	67.9
Large bulldozer	0.089	0.053	0.034	0.019	87	80.9	75.6	68.9
Vibratory Roller	0.21	0.125	0.08	0.046	94	87.9	82.6	75.9

Sources: Caltrans, 2020 and FTA, 2018

(A) Estimated PPV calculated as: PPV(D)=PPV(ref)*(25/D)^1.1 where PPV(D)= Estimated PPV at distance; PPVref= Reference PPV at 25 ft; D= Distance from equipment to receiver; and n= ground attenuation rate (1.3 for competent soils).

(B) Estimated VdB calculated as: VdB(D)=VdB(ref)-30*log(D/25) where VdB(D)= Estimated VdB at distance; VdB(ref)= Reference VdB at 25 ft; D= Distance from equipment to receiver

As shown in Table 4-25, the vibration levels associated with typical construction equipment are dependent on the type of equipment used. For structural damage, the use of typical equipment during construction activities (e.g., bulldozer, jack hammer, trucks etc.) would produce PPV levels up to 0.089 in/sec at 25 feet and the use of a vibratory roller would produce PPV levels up to 0.21 in/sec at 25 feet. These PPV values are below Caltrans' guidelines standards for potential structural damage for the types of buildings south of the Project site, which consist of older residential structures (0.3 in/sec PPV for continuous vibration sources).

For human annoyance and interference responses, the use of typical equipment (e.g., bulldozer, jack hammer, trucks, etc.) would not produce vibrations that exceed Caltrans' strongly perceptible detection threshold (0.1 in/sec PPV for continuous vibration sources) at any structure in the vicinity of the Project. The use of vibration-generating equipment (e.g., vibratory rollers) would produce vibrations that could potentially exceed Caltrans' strongly perceptible detection threshold but would not exceed Caltrans' severe/disturbing threshold (0.17 in/sec PPV for continuous vibration sources). Although some vibration associated with construction activities may be felt by nearby residential properties located to the west, north, and east of the site, this potential vibration effect would not be excessive because it would be infrequent (occurring only when equipment is in full operation, not idling or in low power modes), be intermittent (equipment would not operate in the same location every day and would move around the site so that properties are not exposed to continuous peak vibration levels), and would not damage buildings or structures at any point. The Project, therefore, would not generate substantial or excessive groundborne vibration levels and this impact would be ***less than significant***.

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

The closest airport to the Project site is the Gansner Field Airport, located approximately 0.34 miles north of the Project site. The Project site is located outside the 60 CNEL noise contour

associated with this airport (Plumas County ALUC 2008). The Project site is not located within the vicinity of a private air strip or another airport land use plan and would not expose people working in the Project site to excessive airport-related noise levels. This impact would be ***less than significant***.

4.10 Transportation

This section analyzes the potential impacts of the Project on transportation and the vehicle miles traveled generated by the new courthouse being located at the Project site. It also analyzes Project consistency with adopted plans, ordinances or policy addressing the circulation system, including roadway, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The section also analyzes internal circulation patterns and emergency ingress/egress. The analysis is based on a Transportation Analysis Memo prepared for the Project by Fehr and Peers, dated January 23, 2026, and included as Appendix H.

4.10.1 Environmental Setting

Direct access to the Project site is provided by Lawrence Street / SR 70/89 which is owned and managed by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Lawrence Street is a two-lane, one-way street (westbound) with street parking along each lane as it travels in front of the Project site. Entrance to the Project site is provided by two driveways that each provide ingress and egress and together span most of the site's Lawrence Street frontage. Vehicles exiting the Project site are only allowed to turn right out of the site onto Lawrence Street. Regional access is provided by SR 70 and SR 89. There are existing sidewalks along the frontage of the Project site on Lawrence Street (SR 70/89) and an existing painted crosswalk at Church Street. Summerfield Lane, which will serve as an emergency access point, has no existing pedestrian facilities. There are no existing bicycle facilities on Lawrence Street (SR 70/89) or Summerfield Lane. There is an existing Class I Bike Path north of the Project site. (Fehr & Peers 2026)

The Project site is well served by the Plumas Transit Systems Quincy Local bus route, with three bus stops within 0.25-mile of the site and additional bus stops within 0.5-mile of the site. The Quincy Local bus route serves 17 bus stops in the Plumas area departing from 529 Bell Ln (Drop-In Center) north of Quincy and ending at SR 70 / Mill Creek Rd. The bus serves the existing County Courthouse as well as the new courthouse location on SR 70/Lawrence and provides connections to the East County and North County bus routes, also operated by Plumas Transit Systems. (Fehr & Peers 2026)

4.10.2 Regulatory Setting

4.10.2.1 Federal Regulations

No federal regulations are applicable to transportation in relation to the Project.

4.10.2.2 State Regulations

4.10.2.2.1 Senate Bill 743

On September 27, 2013, SB 743 was signed into law. The California State Legislature found that, with the adoption of the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (SB 375), the State had signaled its commitment to encourage land use and transportation planning decisions and investments that reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and thereby contribute to the reduction of GHG emissions, as required by the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32). SB 743 added Chapter 2.7, Modernization of Transportation Analysis for Transit-Oriented Infill Projects, to Division 13 (§ 21099) of the PRC.

SB 743 fundamentally changed transportation impact analysis as part of CEQA compliance. Specifically, SB 743 removes the use of automobile delay, level of service (LOS), and other similar measures of vehicular capacity or traffic congestion for determining transportation impacts in environmental review. The legislation directed the State of California Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI; formerly Office of Planning and Research) to look at different metrics for identifying transportation impacts and make corresponding revisions to CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines. LCI selected VMT as the preferred metric for assessing passenger vehicle-related impacts. In December 2018, LCI issued revised CEQA Statute & Guidelines, along with a Technical Advisory: On Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA (LCI 2018) to assist practitioners in implementing the CEQA Statute & Guidelines revisions to use VMT as the new metric.

4.10.2.2.2 California Building Code

The State of California provides a minimum standard for building design through Title 24 CCR Part 2, commonly referred to as the CBC. The CBC is updated every three years. It is generally adopted on a jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction basis, subject to further modification based on local conditions. The CBC provides standards for the design of interior site circulation in Chapter 11B, Accessibility to Public Buildings, Public Accommodations, Commercial Buildings, and Public Housing. The CBC provides emergency access standards for fire and emergency equipment on public roadways in Part 9, Appendix D. These standards include specific width, grading, design, and other specifications for roads that provide access for fire apparatuses and indicate which areas are subject to requirements for such access. The CBC also incorporates by reference the standards of the International Fire Code.

4.10.2.2.3 Caltrans Highway Design Manual, Seventh Edition

The Caltrans Highway Design Manual (HDM), Seventh Edition (2020) was prepared for use on the California State highway system. The HDM establishes uniform policies and procedures to carry out the State highway design functions of Caltrans. The HDM contains standards, procedures, and requirements related to geometric design (such as site distance), geometric cross sections, intersections at grade, traffic interchanges, pavement engineering and design, stormwater management and drainage, and bicycle transportation design, among other aspects of highway design and engineering.

4.10.2.2.4 Caltrans Encroachment Permit Application Package and Process

All work performed within State highway right-of-way must conform to all applicable Caltrans standards including but not limited to the Encroachment Permits Manual, Standard Specifications, Standard Plans, Project Development Procedures Manual, Highway Design Manual and Special Provisions. Caltrans requires issuance of an encroachment permit for all proposed activities related to the placement of encroachments within, under, or over the State highway right-of-way. Some examples of work requiring an encroachment permit are utilities, excavations, encroachment renewals, vegetation planting or trimming, surveys, mailboxes, and driveways. Caltrans receives, reviews, and approves encroachment permit requests through its Encroachment Permit Application Package (EPAP) process and Caltrans Encroachment Permit System.

4.10.2.2.5 California Trial Court Facilities Standards

Chapter 1 of the Facilities Standards defines general principles for the design and construction of functional, durable, maintainable, efficient, and secure contemporary court facilities and

defines design criteria and performance goals to be applied as best practices to the Project. In Section 1D, "Sustainable Design," the Facilities Standards contains the following Best Practices related to transportation with regard to court facilities:

> c. Seek opportunities to redevelop existing sites. Develop links to public transit, and create strategies for pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use communities.

Additionally, Chapter 3, "Site Design," of the Facilities Standards, Section 3D, "Integration of Building and Site," requires that trial court facilities prioritize sites that offer robust transportation options – including walking, biking, and transit – and minimize the combined GHG emissions of the building and associated commuter and visitor transportation emissions over the Project's life.

In addition to guidance on transportation issues related to environmental impacts, the Facilities Standards also have guidance for vehicle storage. Section 3.B. Parking requires trial court facilities to study access to and availability of adjacent public parking for staff, visitors, and jurors before determining how to provide parking for each new or expanded court building. Demand for parking spaces at court facilities is not well documented by empirical studies. Limited data indicate a parking demand for all courthouse users except judicial officers ranging from 2 to 4 spaces per 1,000 gross building square feet. While there is no single standard for parking, the Facilities Standards suggest consideration of various factors for on-site parking requirements, including the following:

- The size and location of the courthouse, number of courtrooms, and types of matters to be heard.
- Public transit availability and expected public transit use. Staff parking demands can be reduced through traffic management plans, such as carpooling and public transportation programs.
- The average number of attorneys, visitors, and jurors expected daily; the expected length of stay for each type of parking user.
- Availability of parking within a three- to five-minute walk from the facility.
- The number of employees at the facility; existing employment agreements regarding provision of parking.
- The average number of official vehicles expected daily at the site.

4.10.2.3 Local Regulations

The Judicial Council, acting as the judicial branch of the State government, is not subject to local land use regulations; however, the Judicial Council, as lead agency, considers local policies in evaluating whether the Project's impacts would be significant.

4.10.2.3.1 Plumas County 2035 General Plan

The Circulation Element of the Plumas County General Plan (2023) outlines the following Transportation policies relevant to the Project:

Policy CIR 4.1.3 The County shall require that every parcel created, and all developments are provided with roadway access that will accommodate the permitted density and intensity of development. The requirements for road standards shall be based on the planned density of development and projected traffic volumes as determined by the general plan designation

of areas to be served, and the ability to accommodate emergency response and safe ingress/egress. Uses in industrial areas served by roadways that cannot accommodate all types of industrial uses shall be limited to those uses consistent with road conditions unless conditions are improved.

Policy CIR 4.4.2 Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities in New Development. The County will amend the County Code to include standards for safe pedestrian and bicyclist accommodations, including:

- "Complete Streets" policies that foster equal access by all users in the roadway design.
- Bicycle and pedestrian access internally and in connection to other areas through bikeways and pedestrian paths.
- Safe access to public transportation and other non-motorized uses through construction of dedicated paths.
- Safe road crossings at major intersections, especially for school children and seniors.
- Adequate, convenient and secure bike parking at public and private facilities and destinations in all urban areas.
- Requiring new development and redevelopment projects to include bicycle facilities, as appropriate with the new land use, including bicycle racks or covered, secure parking near the building entrances.

4.10.2.3.2 Plumas County Regional Transportation Plan

The 2025 Plumas County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) was adopted by the Plumas County Transportation Commission (PCTC; PCTC 2025), as required by federal law (CFR 450.300, Subpart B) and State law (CA Government Code § 65080) to conduct long-range planning to establish their region's vision and goals and to clearly identify the region's unique transportation needs. The RTP acts as the basis for transportation planning in the region over a 20-year planning horizon. It is a living document that is required to be updated every 4-5 years so that Plumas County maintains its eligibility for many of the State's funding programs. Each RTP update calibrates the region's needs based on changing demographics, and political, economic, and environmental conditions. The RTP focuses on all modes of transportation including roadway, bicycle and pedestrian, transit, freight, aviation, and rail. The RTP is developed through a cooperative process between PCTC, Caltrans, Tribal governments, stakeholders, and community members.

4.10.2.3.3 Plumas County Active Transportation Program Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan

The Plumas County Active Transportation Program Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan (Alta Planning and Design 2018) focuses on removing barriers to increase walking and biking by improving safety and accessibility. Key goals include installing bicycle racks at public and private facilities, improving paved shoulders, and creating safe routes to schools and community centers. The plan aims to decrease vehicle emissions, improve community health, and make it easier for residents to walk and bike for recreation and daily needs. The plan is part of the broader state-level Active Transportation Program, which consolidates various programs to encourage walking and biking statewide. The overarching goal of the Active Transportation Plan is to

increase the use of active modes of transportation, improve the safety of non-motorized users, and help achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals.

4.10.3 Impacts Analysis

4.10.3.1 Methodology

Potential impacts related to transportation and vehicle miles traveled were analyzed by Fehr and Peers in the Transportation Analysis Memo (Appendix H) consistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b). The LCI provided guidance in a Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA as to how the analysis of VMT could be performed and the CEQA thresholds of significance that could be applied. The guidance in the Technical Advisory is non-binding and states that lead agencies may develop their own specific thresholds.

The Judicial Council has adopted recommendations from the Technical Advisory for the use of determining the CEQA threshold of significance. The Technical Advisory states, “where a project replaces existing VMT-generating land uses, if the replacement leads to a net overall decrease in VMT, the project would lead to a less-than-significant transportation impact.” Therefore, the VMT threshold of significance for the Project is a net-zero change in total VMT.

The Fehr & Peers Transportation Analysis Memo analysis is based on the understanding that the relocation of court operations would result in a shifting of travel patterns and trip characteristics, yet trip generation would remain consistent, given that the Project will provide the same services as the current courthouse. Streetlight Data’s database of “Big Data” location-based services was utilized to collect average weekday trip volume and trip lengths to and from the existing courthouse location.

4.10.3.2 Thresholds of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Project would have a significant transportation impact if it would:

- Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3(b).
- Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment).
- Result in inadequate emergency access.

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

4.10.3.3.1 Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

There are existing sidewalks along the Project frontage on Lawrence Street (SR 70/89) and an existing painted crosswalk at Church Street. The Project would not increase existing hazards to pedestrian travel and does not conflict with any pedestrian facilities plans or programs. There are no existing bicycle facilities on Lawrence Street (SR 70/89). There is an existing Class I Bike Path north of the Project site. The Project proposal does not include changes to this existing

Class I Bike Path, which does not currently provide direct access to the Project site. The Project would not eliminate any existing bikeways.

As discussed in section 4.10.2, Plumas County has adopted plans and policies for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit systems and facilities, including the Plumas County Active Transportation Program Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan (2018) and RTP (2025). The 2025 RTP incorporates prior active transportation project planning contained in the Plumas County Active Transportation Program Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan.

The PCTC's 2025 RTP Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects List includes several long-range (2036-2045) projects anticipated for Lawrence Street. A Class II Bike Lane project on Lawrence Street is anticipated after 2036. A traffic calming project along Lawrence Street to potentially construct high-visibility crosswalks and striped parking spaces and transform Lawrence Street from a 1-way to 2-way road (County of Plumas 2025, p. E17) is also anticipated after 2036. Because these projects are not projected to occur in the near future, it is anticipated that construction of the Project would not coincide, and therefore would not interfere, with these bicycle and pedestrian improvement projects. Although the Project would relocate driveways, it is not anticipated that those facilities will interfere with future planned improvements to Lawrence Street. As stated above, the Judicial Council would incorporate its Facilities Standards related to pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly design and interconnectivity with public transit into future architectural and design details, construction documents, as applicable, and other details required for implementing the Project. While local policies and plans for bicycle and pedestrian facilities do not apply to the Project, the Project would not conflict with bicycle or pedestrian policies, programs, plans, or ordinances in a way that would lead to any significant adverse physical environmental impact.

4.10.3.3.2 Transit Facilities

The Project site is well served by the Plumas Transit Systems Quincy Local bus route, with three bus stops within 0.25-mile of the site and additional bus stops within 0.5-mile of the site. The same bus route serves the existing County Courthouse as well as the Project site. The Quincy Local bus route provides connections to the East County and North County bus routes, also operated by Plumas Transit Systems (PCTC 2025). The RTP includes short-range (1-10 years [2025-2035]) and long-range (11-20 years [2036-2045]) improvements to bus shelters and bus pull-outs throughout the county. Because there are no bus stops along or adjacent to the Project site's street frontage, the Project would not interfere with the implementation of bus stop improvement projects included in the County's Regional Transportation Plan. The Project is not expected to result in increases in ridership on local or regional transit facilities that would cause an exceedance in capacity. The Project proposes employment and public services near existing transit service.

4.10.3.3.3 Roadway Facilities

Regional and local vehicular access to the Project site is provided by SR 70/89, which travels through Quincy including along the site's frontage and connects to neighboring communities. Vehicles accessing the Project site would utilize the existing roadway facilities in Quincy, including SR 70/89 directly and Main Street and other local streets indirectly.

The Project would make adjustments to the existing sidewalk, curb ramps, and cross walk along the site's SR 70/89 / Lawrence Street frontage. The Project would change the existing driveway configuration providing access to the site. The primary point of site ingress/egress would be

provided by a new two-way driveway off Lawrence Street (see Figure 2-4: Conceptual Site Plan). A new, second driveway in the southwest corner of the site off Lawrence Street would serve as an in-custody drive aisle with controlled access. Caltrans would require an Encroachment Permit Application Package (EPAP) and associated coordination for the proposed changes to the street frontage along SR 70/89. Additionally, as part of its State Highway Operation and Protection Program, Caltrans is in the process of developing the Quincy Capital Preventative Maintenance (CAPM) project, which would make improvements to road pavement and other infrastructure within the SR 70/89 ROW (PCTC 2025). The Quincy CAPM project entails improvements to SR 70/89 along the Project site's frontage. The Quincy CAPM project's final plans and specifications and construction are currently anticipated in 2028 and therefore may coincide with construction of the Project. The Judicial Council would coordinate the Project's proposed improvements to the site's SR 70/89 / Lawrence Street frontage with Caltrans through Caltrans's standard EPAP process, which would ensure the Project does not obstruct or interfere with Caltrans policies and programs, including those contained in the Caltrans HDM, Seventh Edition (Caltrans 2020), or the Quincy CAPM project.

The Project would not require any new vehicular transportation facilities, extension of facilities, or expansion of facilities in order to serve the vehicular traffic that would travel and from the new courthouse. The Project would not conflict with adopted plans related to roadway facilities.

4.10.3.3.4 Conclusion

As described in this section, while local policies and plans for the circulation system do not apply to the Project, the Project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, in a way that would lead to any significant adverse physical environmental impact. This impact would be ***less than significant***.

4.10.3.4 Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3(b)

Section 15064.3(b) of the CEQA Guidelines states that vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is the most appropriate measure of travel demand impacts. VMT can be an indicator of potential adverse physical environmental effects. The adverse physical environmental effects associated with Project VMT are analyzed in other chapters of this EIR, including 4.2 Air Quality, 4.5 Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and 4.9 Noise. The Guidelines also clarify that a project's effect on automobile delay shall not constitute a significant environmental impact.

The Project's CEQA Transportation Analysis Memo (Appendix H) includes a VMT analysis to determine whether the proposed relocation of the courthouse would result in a shifting of travel patterns and trip characteristics that would have an impact on VMT. The analysis is based on the understanding that while the relocation of court operations would result in a shifting of travel patterns and trip characteristics, trip generation would remain consistent given that the Project would have the same number of employees and provide the same services as the existing Plumas County Courthouse (Fehr & Peers 2026, p. 1). The CEQA Transportation Analysis Memo used Streetlight Data's database of "Big Data" location-based services to collect average weekday trip volume and trip lengths to and from the existing Plumas County Courthouse location at 520 Main Street. The CEQA Transportation Analysis Memo then used GIS to calculate the expected change in trip lengths and routes to and from the Project site.

To estimate the net change in VMT, the analysis assumed the volume of trips remains the same and would be shifted from the existing site on Main Street to the Project site on Lawrence Street

(SR 70/89). The distance between the trip origin and destination was calculated in GIS using the shortest path trip lengths between block groups and courthouse sites. The GIS analysis determined that the average trip length to and from the existing and proposed courthouse locations are equivalent to the hundredth of a mile. Both the existing average daily VMT associated with Plumas County Courthouse and the average daily VMT that would be generated by the Project would be 4,158 trips, resulting in a net zero change in daily average VMT. Therefore, the Project would result in a negligible change in VMT.

Because the Project would result in a net-zero change in total VMT compared to existing conditions, the Project would not result in a significant VMT impact. The Project would not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3(b). This impact would be ***less than significant***.

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

Access to the Project site is currently provided by two driveways that occupy most of the length of the site's Lawrence Street frontage. The Project proposes to reconfigure the existing vehicular access along Lawrence Street; the Project would remove the existing driveways and construct two new driveways in similar locations along Lawrence Street. The existing driveways each provide both ingress and egress to the site. Under proposed conditions, the new primary driveway would provide ingress and egress and extend along the eastern side of the courthouse to parking lots. The second driveway at the southwest corner of the site would serve as an in-custody drive aisle with controlled access, providing ingress only. The Project also proposes a new driveway from the Project site to Summerfield Lane to provide for emergency access only (ingress/egress). The Project does not propose any changes to the transportation network in the Project site vicinity except for the construction of the new emergency access point from the Project site to Summerfield Lane.

As described above, vehicles would continue to enter and exit the site from Lawrence Street. A clear line of sight must be maintained at all site access points, including the new primary driveway onto Lawrence Street. The proposed driveways along Lawrence Street / SR 70/89 would be designed in accordance with the recommended sight distance and other safety criteria contained in the Caltrans HDM, Seventh Edition (Caltrans 2020). In general, site access point sight distance triangles must be kept free of objects, including signs, aboveground utility boxes, and vegetation, at all site access points.

Any modification to adjacent public sidewalks, streets, access, or other form of encroachment into the Caltrans and County ROW shall be reviewed and approved by the agency or municipality with jurisdiction, either Caltrans for SR 70/89 or the Plumas County Department of Public Works for Summerfield Lane. Any modifications to traffic movement as well as street lighting within the public ROW shall be reviewed by Caltrans for SR 70/89 or the Plumas County Department of Public Works for Summerfield Lane. Caltrans will require the submission of an EPAP for proposed changes to the street frontage along SR 70/89.

Project driveways would be constructed to applicable local, state, and federal standards and reviewed as part of the Caltrans EPAP review process. Circulation paths within the site would be designed in compliance with the California Building Code (§11B-250 Circulation Paths and related sections) and according to the Facilities Standards. Compliance with state-level standards for the design of interior site circulation would reduce the potential for hazardous

interactions between pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles. As such, the Project would not be expected to introduce any hazardous design features.

Project construction-related traffic, including personnel vehicles and large trucks, would interact with other vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians and could create traffic safety hazards at site access points. During the construction period, trucks delivering materials and equipment would travel to and from the Project site along streets in Quincy. The presence of slow-moving, large construction vehicles could obstruct passenger vehicle drivers' field of vision and make turns or passing more hazardous for all roadway users. The creation of potential traffic safety hazards as a result of Project construction would be a potentially significant impact. The Project is required to ensure public safety through the implementation of construction-period traffic management as required by the Plumas County Department of Public Works Road Division for work on Summerfield Lane and Caltrans for work in the SR 70/89 ROW. More specifically, Caltrans requires as part of the EPAP the submission of proposed construction-period traffic safety control plans and methods in the form of State Standard Plans, project-specific traffic control plans, or a combination thereof (Caltrans 2024, Caltrans 2025). The Judicial Council and/or its contractor would therefore be required to submit traffic control plan(s) to minimize or avoid hazards to pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists during Project construction. The implementation of traffic control measures would reduce Project construction traffic safety impacts to less than significant.

The Project could introduce roadway hazards but given points of site ingress and egress and interior site circulation would be designed to meet all applicable local, state, and federal standards, potential roadway hazards during Project operation would be minimized or avoided. The Project could introduce traffic hazards during the construction period; however, the Judicial Council and/or its contractor would prepare and implement a construction traffic control plan(s) that would ensure traffic safety during the construction period. There are no anticipated incompatible roadway uses (e.g., farm equipment) in this urbanized area of Quincy. Therefore, the Project would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible uses. This impact would be ***less than significant***.

4.10.3.6 Result in inadequate emergency access

Emergency vehicle access to the Project site is currently provided by two driveways along the site's Lawrence Street / SR 70/89 frontage. The Project would provide greater emergency access from the Project site than the current configuration at two points: the primary driveway on the Lawrence Street / SR 70/89 frontage and an emergency-only driveway onto Summerfield Lane. The new driveway onto Summerfield Lane would be a dedicated emergency access point. The Project would therefore provide multiple options for emergency vehicle access to and from the Project site. Compliance with the applicable CFC criteria, as adopted and enforced by the local fire department (QFPD), would ensure fire response vehicles have access to all sides of the courthouse building in the event of a structure fire. The fire station most likely to serve the site is the Quincy Fire Station, located on Lawrence Street (SR 70/89), approximately 0.2 miles away from the Project site (Fehr & Peers 2026). While the Project may modify traffic patterns in the vicinity of the site, emergency vehicles would still retain the right to use lights and sirens to indicate to drivers that they need to yield and would be able to access the Project site as needed. For these reasons, the Project would not result in inadequate emergency access. This impact would be ***less than significant***.

4.11 Tribal Cultural Resources

This chapter includes a description of Native American history in Plumas County, a discussion of the presence of any known Native American resources in the Project vicinity, and potential impacts to Native American cultural resources that may result from Project construction.

CEQA requires a lead agency, prior to the release of a negative declaration, mitigated negative declaration, or environmental impact report for a project, to begin consultation with a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of a project if: (1) the California Native American tribe requested to the lead agency, in writing, to be informed by the lead agency through formal notification of projects in the geographic area that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the tribe, and (2) the California Native American tribe responds, in writing, within 30 days of receipt of the formal notification and requests the consultation. CEQA states: “To expedite the requirements of this section, NAHC shall assist the lead agency in identifying the California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area” (PRC § 21080.3.1).

The Judicial Council distributed “Invitations to Consult on Tribal Cultural Resources” via certified mail and e-mail for the Project to the eight tribes identified by the NAHC as potentially traditionally and culturally affiliated with the Project area on June 18, 2025. These notices of an opportunity to consult included a general project description, project location, contact information for the Judicial Council, and notice that pursuant to CEQA tribes must request consultation within thirty days (PRC § 21080.3.1(d)). Emails and phone calls followed the invitation letters to ensure the invitations were received. The Judicial Council did not receive any written requests for tribal consultation. The Judicial Council received a response from the Estom Yumeka Maidu Tribe of the Enterprise Rancheria, which stated the Project site is outside the jurisdiction of the Enterprise Rancheria’s territories; and the tribe, therefore, had no comment on the Project. The Judicial Council received a response from the Mooretown Rancheria of Maidu Indians, which stated the Mooretown Rancheria is not aware of any cultural resources on the Project site. The Mooretown Rancheria requested contact from the Judicial Council if cultural resources are discovered at any point during Project implementation. On August 13, 2025, the Judicial Council sent letters to the tribes informing them that the 30-day window for initiating tribal consultation had closed. The Judicial Council did not receive any information from tribes or the public regarding the existence of tribal cultural resources (TCRs) on which the Project may have a potentially significant impact.

This chapter is based on the tribal consultation outreach, CHRIS/NEIC investigation, Sacred Lands File response from the NAHC, and an Archaeological Resources Assessment Report prepared for the Project by Basin Research Associates, dated May 2026 (herein referred to as the Archaeological Resources Report) (see Appendix D).

4.11.1 Environmental Setting

4.11.1.1 Historical Setting

See section 4.4.1.1 of this EIR for additional information about the Native American pre-contact and ethnographic setting of the Project site and vicinity. No additional Native American cultural or ethnographic information was provided by Native American tribes or the public.

4.11.1.1.1 Native American – Ethnographic Setting

The Project site is within the territory of Native Americans identified as the *Maidu,* also known as the *Mountain Maidu* or *Northeastern Maidu,* who occupied drainages of the American and Feather rivers of the northern Sierra. The Mountain/Northeastern Maidu family of languages is classified as within the California Penutian Stock. The “American Valley” dialect, one of the four Mountain/Northeastern Maidu dialects, would have been spoken in the Project area and vicinity. (Basin Research Associates 2026, p. 6)

The Mountain/Northeastern Maidu lived in mountain valleys with permanent settlements located near water, often near streams or on ridges or knolls with southern exposure. They built along the edges overlooking the valley, with the pine timbered highland on one side of them and the open level on the other in order to avoid the snow and later, mushy meadows. The general Project vicinity appears to have been an "optimal zone" for prehistoric subsistence and settlement. (Basin Research Associates 2026, p. 6)

The American Valley in which the Project site is located was named *Silo-nt-koyo*, that is “Silo valley” or “silo land,” with six known pre-contact villages. Each settlement consisted of two to three houses or six to seven houses for an approximate total of 18-23 within the valley. The pre-contact occupation site nearest to the Project site was *Nukuti* located “where the high school has since been erected,” that is approximately 0.3 mile to the east of the proposed new courthouse location. This village had two to three houses and was not the “most populous village” but had the largest “sweat house” or ceremonial chamber of the four sweat houses/chambers known within the American Valley. Its large size “probably means that the man who had the most authority within the group [the American Valley] and was its spokesman lived here.” (Basin Research Associates 2026, p. 6)

The discovery of gold with the influx of non-native populations, introduced disease, and forced relocations resulted in an extraordinary decline in the population of the Maidu, Konkow, and Nisenan from an estimated 8,000 in 1864 to 1,100 in 1910 and 40 in 1941. (Basin Research Associates 2026, p. 7)

4.11.1.2 Tribal Cultural Resources

As defined in Pub. Res. Code Section 21074(a), TCRs are:

> (1) Sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are either of the following:
>
> (a) Included or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the CRHR; or
>
> (b) Included in a local register of historical resources as defined in subdivision (k) of Section 5020.1.
>
> (2) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Section 5024.1 for the purposes of this paragraph, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

TCRs are further defined under Section 21074(b) and (c) as follows:

(b) A cultural landscape that meets the criteria of subdivision (a) is a TCR to the extent that the landscape is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape; and

(c) A historical resource described in Section 21084.1, a unique archaeological resource as defined in subdivision (g) of Section 21083.2, or a "nonunique archaeological resource" as defined in subdivision (h) of Section 21083.2 may also be a tribal cultural resource if it conforms to the criteria of subdivision (a).

See section 4.4.1.3 of this EIR for a summary of the site records and literature search of the CHRIS/NEIC conducted for the Project. The records search [October 7, 2025] was negative for recorded archaeological sites, built environment resources, and/or reported resources within or adjacent to the Project site. No pre-contact sites have been recorded within a one-mile radius search buffer of the Project site.

4.11.2 Regulatory Setting

4.11.2.1 Federal Regulations

No federal regulations are applicable to tribal cultural resources in relation to the Project.

4.11.2.2 State Regulations

4.11.2.2.1 California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA requires that lead agencies begin consultation with any California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of a proposed project if so requested by the tribe in writing within thirty days of a consultation notice, before the agency releases a negative declaration, mitigated negative declaration, or environmental impact report for a project. The law also specifies, under PRC section 21084.2, that a project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a TCR is considered a project that may have a significant effect on the environment.

Mitigation measures for TCRs must be developed in consultation with the affected California Native American tribe(s) pursuant to PRC section 21080.3.2 or according to PRC section 21084.3. PRC section 21084.3 provides examples of mitigation measures that include avoidance and preservation of TCRs and treating TCRs with culturally appropriate dignity, taking into account the tribal cultural values and meaning of the resource.

4.11.2.2.2 California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5

Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code prescribes specific courses of action that apply when human remains are encountered during project construction. The code states:

> In the event of discovery or recognition of any human remains in any location other than a dedicated cemetery, there shall be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent remains until the coroner of the county in which the human remains are discovered has determined, in accordance with Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 27460) of Part 3 of Division 2 of Title 3 of the Government Code, that the remains are not subject to the provisions of Section 27491 of the Government Code or any other related provisions of law concerning investigation of the circumstances, manner and cause of any death, and the recommendations concerning the treatment and disposition of the human remains have been made to the

person responsible for the excavation, or to his or her authorized representative, in the manner provided in PRC section 5097.98. The coroner shall make his or her determination within two working days from the time the person responsible for the excavation, or his or her authorized representative, notifies the coroner of the discovery or recognition of the human remains. (California Health and Safety Code § 7050.5(b)).

If the coroner determines that the remains are not subject to his or her authority and if the coroner recognizes the human remains to be those of a Native American or has reason to believe that they are those of a Native American, he or she shall contact, by telephone within 24 hours, the Native American Heritage Commission. (California Health and Safety Code § 7050.5(c)).

4.11.2.2.3 Confidentiality of TCR Information

PRC Section 21082.3(c) requires lead agencies to maintain the confidentiality of all records, locations and descriptions of TCRs that are obtained through consultation with a Native American tribe. Other state and federal laws protect the confidentiality of Native American cultural information including Government Code section 7927.005 which exempts records relating to archaeological site information and related reports from disclosure under the California Public Records Act. Under PRC section 21082.3, confidential information about TCR may be included in a confidential appendix to an EIR, with a general summary that protects confidential information provided as part of this analysis.

4.11.3 Impacts Analysis

4.11.3.1 Methodology

A record search of the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS), outreach to California Native American Tribes, archival research, and fieldwork was conducted to establish whether tribal resources may be present within the Project area and if they would be impacted by the Project.

4.11.3.2 Thresholds of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Project would have a significant impact on tribal cultural resources if it would:

- Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in PRC 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:
  - Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in PRC section 5020.1(k), or
  - 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 PRC section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of PRC section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

4.11.3.3 Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in PRC section 21074, and that is listed or eligible for listing in state or local registers of historical resources or determined by the lead agency to be significant

Under CEQA, a resource that is listed in the CRHR or local historic register, or is eligible to be listed, and is significant to a California Native American tribe, is a TCR (PRC § 21074(a)(1)). There are no resources listed or eligible for listing in the CRHR or a local register identified in the Project area.

A resource that is not listed or eligible for listing and which has significance to a California Native American tribe that the Judicial Council determines is a significant resource within the criteria of the CRHR (PRC § 5024.1(c)) is also a TCR (PRC § 21074(a)(2)). As such, lead agencies have a responsibility to evaluate potential TCR against the CRHR criteria, while considering the significance of the resource to Native American tribes, prior to making a determination of a proposed project's impacts to TCRs (PRC § 20174, 5024.1). It is possible for a lead agency to determine that a potential TCR is considered significant to a Native American tribe, but the resource does not meet the criteria in PRC 5024.1(c) and is not a TCR as defined by the state Legislature.

A pre-contact and post-contact historic site records and literature search for the Project site and one-mile radius was completed by staff of the CHRIS/NEIC with negative results (Basin Research Associates 2026). Basin Research Associates consulted reference materials available online. Research also included contact with the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) to conduct a review of the Sacred Lands File (SLF) and a field investigation of the site. The field investigation did not uncover any cultural resources, including archaeologically significant sites, structures, landmarks, or points of interest.

The NAHC review of the SLF was positive for registered tribal cultural resources. However, no additional or clarifying information was provided by a Native American tribe and no Native American tribe requested consultation. Based on the available information, the Judicial Council is unable to determine that the SLF result provides substantial evidence of the existence of a cultural resource with significance to a traditionally or culturally affiliated Native American tribe.

The Archaeological Resources Report determined there are no known historical, archaeological, or tribal cultural resources on the site based on a field survey and through records searches with the CHRIS/NEIC and SLF. No unrecorded resources were discovered during previous site development, and the Judicial Council did not receive any requests for AB 52 consultation. However, the potential for inadvertent exposure of unknown TCRs cannot be ruled out given the general characteristics and history of the area surrounding the Project site. The Archaeological Resources Report provided recommendations related to the protection of historical and archaeological resources which are incorporated into the Project as Mitigation Measures CUL-1 and CUL-2 (see section 4.4 Cultural Resources). Project ground-disturbing activities could result in a significant impact on inadvertently discovered TCRs if the TCRs are not properly evaluated and managed. Mitigation Measure TCR-1 is included to ensure Project demolition and construction activities adhere to protocols for accidental discovery of TCRs. With implementation of Mitigation Measure TCR-1, the Project's potential impacts on TCRs would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated***.

Mitigation Measures

Impact TCR-1: Ground-disturbing activities associated with building demolition and future development within the Project site could directly or indirectly damage unknown, buried tribal cultural resources pursuant to PRC § 20174 and PRC § 5024.1.

Mitigation Measure TCR-1: Protocols for Inadvertent Discovery of Tribal Cultural Resources. The Judicial Council shall require the following steps to be taken, including as a part of all contracts related to construction of the Project, as applicable:

If tribal cultural resources or potential tribal cultural resources are discovered during Project implementation, all activities within a 50-foot radius of the find shall be stopped, the Judicial Council's Project Manager and Tribal Representative(s) from the tribes included on the Native American Heritage Commission's list of Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the Project's geographic area shall be immediately notified. The Tribal Representative(s) shall evaluate the find(s) within 48-hours and make recommendations to the Judicial Council if it meets the definition of a tribal cultural resource (PRC § 21074) and follow the procedures below. The qualified archaeologist shall make recommendations to the Judicial Council, and the Judicial Council will make a determination. Should the Tribal Representative(s) be unable to evaluate the find(s) within this defined period, only the qualified archaeologist shall make the recommendation.

C. If the find(s) does not meet the definition of a tribal cultural resource, a historical resource, or a unique archaeological resource, no further study or protection is necessary prior to resuming Project implementation.
D. If the find(s) does meet the definition of a tribal cultural resource, then it shall be avoided by Project activities and preserved in place, if feasible. The contractor shall implement any measures deemed by the Judicial Council to be necessary and feasible to preserve in place, avoid, or minimize impacts to the tribal cultural resource. If avoidance is not feasible, as determined by the Judicial Council, the Tribal Representative(s), if available, shall make recommendations regarding the culturally appropriate treatment and disposition of such find(s) and significant impacts to such tribal cultural resources shall be mitigated in accordance with the recommendations of the Tribal Representative(s) prior to resuming construction activities within the 50-foot radius.

4.12 Utilities and Service Systems

This chapter includes a description of public utilities and services systems that would serve the Project, an analysis of any utility infrastructure improvements required, and the utility providers' ability to serve the Project.

4.12.1 Environmental Setting

4.12.1.1 Water Supply

Sixty-six percent of Plumas County's water supply is from surface sources while groundwater contributes the remaining supply. Potable groundwater in the county is sourced from privately owned and publicly operated well systems. The majority of groundwater reservoirs occur in the valleys on the east side of the Sierra Crest. In the county, industrial and commercial uses account for 62% of urban water use. Residential water use accounts for the remaining 38% of urban water use. (County of Plumas 2012)

The American Valley Community Services District (AVCSD) provides water supply and wastewater service to the Project site and maintains and operates the water and wastewater utility main infrastructure serving the site. The AVCSD's municipal supply is primarily sourced from groundwater (AVCSD 2025; U.S. EPA 2026).

4.12.1.2 Wastewater

AVCSD also provides sanitary sewer service to the Project area. Wastewater generated in Quincy and East Quincy is treated at the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) located off Spanish Creek Road, approximately 0.5-mile northeast of the Project site. AVCSD operates a gravity collection system, consisting of collector and interceptor lines, transfers wastewater from sewer connections within the AVCSD service area boundaries to a pump station, which pumps wastewater to the American Valley WWTP. Originally constructed in 1981, the WWTP was designed for average dry-weather flows (ADWF) of 0.72 million-gallons-per-day (MGD) and peak wet-weather flows (PWWF) of 1.2 MGD. By 2012, the WWTP was processing an ADWF of up to 1.25 MGD (ENPLAN 2016).

In February 2017, the Quincy Community Services District (QCSD) adopted the Quincy Wastewater Treatment Plant and Effluent Disposal Project Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (2017 IS/MND) and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (2017 MMRP). The 2017 IS/MND evaluated the environmental impacts of improving the wastewater treatment and effluent disposal capabilities of the Quincy WWTP in order to comply with Central Valley RWQCB requirements and to maintain the capacity of the treatment facility to meet current and future demands. In January 2018, the AVCSD was formed after the consolidation and dissolution of the QCSD and the East Quincy Services District (EQSD). The Quincy WWTP is now referred to as the American Valley WWTP. AVCSD has refined the design details of the proposed American Valley WWTP and Effluent Disposal Project (project) and prepared and approved an Addendum for the project. (Ascent Environmental 2020)

4.12.1.3 Stormwater Drainage

Stormwater drainage in Plumas County is managed by the Plumas County Department of Public Works, which owns and maintains over 500 drainage structures in the county. The Department of Public Works is responsible for maintaining, repairing, designing, and constructing county

roads, bridges, and stormwater drainage systems in accordance with local, state, and federal laws/standards and in a manner that maximizes public safety. The Department of Public Works is also responsible for reviewing and approving land development projects as they relate to the county road and drainage systems (County of Plumas 2025). Stormwater drainage in the County is primarily concerned with minimizing erosion and sedimentation to decrease turbidity in downstream waters. To address these concerns, new development is required to avoid increases in off-site stormwater flows, minimize paved surfaces, and construct sedimentation basins.

Stormwater runoff originating on the Project site sheet flows to the drainage channel present along the eastern boundary of the Project site. The unnamed drainage channel flows northward to join Clear Stream and ultimately Spanish Creek, which are tributaries to the East Branch North Fork Feather River.

4.12.1.4 Solid Waste

Solid waste collection and disposal services for Plumas County are provided by the Solid Waste Division of the Plumas County Department of Public Works. The Department of Public Works contracts with two waste collection companies: Feather River Disposal and Intermountain Disposal. Feather River Disposal provides waste and recycling collection services in the town of Quincy. Solid waste collected in Quincy is hauled to the East Quincy Transfer Station and ultimately disposed of at the Lockwood Landfill in Lockwood, Nevada. (County of Plumas 2017)

Waste collection and recycling service for the Project would be provided by Feather River Disposal through contract with the Plumas County Department of Public Works. Solid waste collected from the Project site would be hauled to the East Quincy Transfer Station and ultimately disposed of at the Lockwood Regional Landfill in Lockwood, Nevada. Lockwood Landfill is classified as a Class I & Class III municipal solid waste (i.e., nonhazardous waste) landfill and is permitted to accept municipal solid waste debris, construction and demolition debris, and certain approved special wastes, such as tires (Nevada Division of Environmental Protection 2026a, 2026b; Nevada Division of Environmental Protection 2013). The East Quincy Transfer Station has a maximum daily throughput and capacity of 85 tons of solid waste per day (CalRecycle 2026a). The Lockwood Regional Landfill has a maximum capacity of 302.5 million cubic yards (CY) and accepts approximately 5,000 tons of waste per day (Nevada Division of Environmental Protection 2026). As of a 2010 survey, the landfill contained a waste volume of approximately 32.8 million CY, of which approximately nine million CY were in place prior to 1994 (Nevada Division of Environmental Protection 2026b). As such, the landfill added approximately 23.8 million CY of waste in the 16-year period between 1994 and 2010 and is not likely to exceed its maximum permitted capacity (302.5 million CY) in the 30-year anticipated life of the Project.

4.12.2 Regulatory Setting

4.12.2.1 Federal Regulations

No federal regulations are applicable to utilities and service systems in relation to the Project.

4.12.2.2 State Regulations

4.12.2.2.1 California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989

The California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989, enacted through AB 939 and modified by subsequent legislation, required all California cities and counties to implement programs to reduce, recycle, and compost at least 50 percent of waste by 2000 (PRC § 41780). Later legislation mandated that the 50 percent diversion requirement be achieved every year. A jurisdiction's diversion rate is the percentage of its total waste that is diverted from disposal through reduction, reuse, and recycling programs. The state, acting through the California Integrated Waste Management Board, determines compliance with this mandate. Per capita disposal rates are used to determine if a jurisdiction's efforts are meeting the intent of the act.

4.12.2.2.2 California Green Building Standards (CALGreen) Code Section 5.408.1: Construction Waste Management

The 2022 California Green Building Standards Code, Title 24, Part 11 (CALGreen), Section 5.408.1 requires residential, commercial and industrial construction, or demolition projects over 1,000 square feet must recycle and/or salvage for reuse a minimum of 65 percent of the non-hazardous construction and demolition waste in accordance with sections 5.408.1.1, 5.408.1.2 or 5.408.1.3; or meet a local construction and demolition waste management ordinance, whichever is more stringent.

CALGreen Code section 5.408.1.1 requires the preparation of a Construction Waste Management Plan that identifies the construction and demolition waste materials to be diverted from disposal by efficient usage, recycling, reuse on the project or salvage for future use or sale. The Construction Management Plan also indicates if construction and demolition waste materials will be sorted on-site (source separated) or bulk mixed (single stream), identifies diversion facilities where construction and demolition waste material collected will be taken, and specifies that the amount of construction waste and demolition materials diverted shall be calculated by weight or volume, but not by both.

CALGreen Code section 5.408.1.2 allows the owner or contractor to utilize a waste management company that can provide verifiable documentation that the percentage of construction and demolition waste material diverted from the land fill complies with this section.

CALGreen Code section 5.408.1.3 provides an alternative to the waste stream reduction requirement. The combined weight of new construction disposal that does not exceed 2 pounds per square foot of building area may be deemed to meet the 65-percent minimum requirement, as approved by the enforcing agency.

4.12.2.2.3 California Trial Court Facilities Standards

The Facilities Standards require that new court facilities comply with the current version of the CALGreen Nonresidential Mandatory Measures, the current version of the California Energy Code, and current LEED Silver criteria. In addition, it specifies compliance requirements and goals related to construction waste and waste management:

> l. Plan for recycling of materials during construction, demolition, and occupancy. Develop specifications for construction recycling; require contractors to develop a construction waste management plan that identifies waste minimization and recycling strategies. The construction project shall, at minimum, meet the mandatory waste diversion rates specified in CALGreen at the time of project permitting.

m. Provide collection bins for public refuse and recyclable and organic materials on each floor, as well as a staging area for materials collection.

4.12.2.2.4 Court Facilities: Water Conservation Policy

In 2015, the Judicial Council adopted a water conservation policy (Judicial Council 2015) that provides water conservation best practices for both capital projects and existing courthouse facilities. The following practices would be incorporated into the design of the Project:

1. Water Conservation During Construction.

    a. Capital projects required to remove groundwater (dewater) during construction excavation should make best efforts to recycle or reuse the groundwater collected, if feasible.

    b. Non-potable water should be used for dust control activities, if feasible.

2. Plumbing Fixtures.

    a. Capital projects should install plumbing fixtures that meet or, if possible, exceed the April 2014 California Energy Commission (CEC) or California Green Code standards, whichever are most stringent, if feasible.

3. Landscaping.

    a. Landscaping design that does not include turf/grass should be considered, if feasible.

    b. Landscaped areas should include indigenous and climate-appropriate, drought-tolerant plants and trees, if feasible.

4. Irrigation Systems.

    a. Irrigation systems should target systems using drip and microsprayers only if feasible.

    b. Irrigation systems should include an automated “smart” controller, if feasible.

    c. Irrigation systems should include a water meter, or submeter, separate from building supply, if feasible.

5. Onsite Water Management.

    a. Onsite storm water management practices, where feasible given site limitations, should include water retention basins or other practices to recharge groundwater through natural percolation.

4.12.3 Impacts Analysis

4.12.3.1 Methodology

Potential impacts related to utility and service systems were evaluated based on Project conceptual plans, information provided by the Judicial Council, and a review of publicly available information regarding utility providers and their ability to serve the project. The information obtained from these sources was reviewed and summarized to document existing conditions and to identify the potential environmental effects of the Project.

4.12.3.2 Thresholds of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Project would have a significant impact on utilities and service systems if it would:

- Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunication facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects.
- Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the Project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years.
- 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.
- 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.

4.12.3.3 Topics Not Addressed Further

Comply with Federal, State, and Local Management and Reduction Statutes and Regulations Related to Solid Waste: The Project would comply with all applicable federal, state, and local solid waste statutes and regulations, including CALGreen. Therefore, the Project would have no impact related to compliance with solid waste statutes and regulations, and this issue is not discussed further in this EIR.

4.12.3.4 Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunication facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects

The Project consists of redevelopment that would require new or expanded municipal water, wastewater treatment, storm water drainage, electrical service, and telecommunications service. The Project site is not served by natural gas infrastructure, and natural gas service is currently not available. The utilities providers that currently serve the Project site (see section 4.12.1 Environmental Setting) would provide service to the Project. The Project site is currently served by all wet and dry utilities required to provide service to the new courthouse building, except for stormwater drainage and natural gas service.

The following discussion identifies utilities and service systems required for buildout of the Project and the potential for construction of new or expanded systems to cause significant environmental effects.

4.12.3.4.1 Water Supply

The existing buildings on the Project site are served by potable water lines but all existing water lines within the Project site would be replaced and upsized. The site currently has a 5/8" water meter which would require an upgrade. The Judicial Council anticipates the need for a new 2" to 3" domestic water line pending final Project design plans. The current domestic water lines support three existing buildings that are altogether equal to or slightly greater in size than the proposed gross square footage for the new courthouse building. It is anticipated the existing

water lines serving the existing buildings will be consolidated for the new Project equaling potential capacity needs.

Preliminary domestic water supply calculations estimate the new water supply lateral serving the courthouse building would need to be sized to provide domestic water at a rate of 90 gallons per minute (gpm), and the proposed 3-inch water supply lateral would be sufficient to serve this estimated water supply demand. The existing water supply main in Lawrence Street is an 8-inch main with enough capacity to serve the Project's anticipated water supply demand. Therefore, off-site improvements (i.e., upsizing or upgrading) of the water supply main in Lawrence Street are not anticipated.

The construction of new water supply laterals within the Project site would not cause significant environmental effects. Therefore, the Project's level of impact related to the provision of new and expanded water supply infrastructure would be less than significant.

4.12.3.4.2 Wastewater Collection

The existing buildings on the Project site are served by sanitary sewer lines but all sanitary sewer pipelines within the Project site would be replaced to serve the new courthouse building. The Judicial Council anticipates the need for a new 4-inch sewer lateral line to serve the Project. The point of connection between the new sewer lateral and the existing sanitary sewer main in Lawrence Street may require an upgrade, which would occur within the boundary of the Project site.

Preliminary sanitary sewer load calculations estimate the new sewer lateral serving the courthouse building would need to be sized to accommodate 60 gpm of wastewater flow, and the proposed 4-inch sewer lateral would be sufficient to serve this estimated wastewater generation rate. The existing sewer main in Lawrence Street is an 8-inch main with enough capacity to serve the Project's anticipated wastewater generation. Therefore, off-site improvements (i.e., upsizing or upgrading) of the sanitary sewer main in Lawrence Street are not anticipated.

The construction of the new sewer lateral within the Project site would not cause significant environmental effects. Therefore, the Project's level of impact related to the provision of new and expanded wastewater infrastructure would be less than significant.

4.12.3.4.3 Stormwater Drainage

As discussed in section 4.3 Biological Resources and section 4.8 Hydrology and Water Quality, the Project would construct a new onsite stormwater drainage system with bioretention facilities (e.g., basins, flow-through planters, etc.) and storm drain lines to collect, temporarily retain, and treat stormwater runoff onsite before conveying the treated runoff into the onsite drainage channel via a new stormwater outfall along the channel in eastern portion of the site.

Mitigation is needed to reduce the potentially significant environmental impacts of the construction of Outfall Option and Culvert Option. Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-4, BIO-6, BIO-8, and HYD-1 through HYD-3 would reduce the potentially significant environmental impacts to less than significant. Therefore, the Project's level of impact related to the provision of new and expanded stormwater drainage infrastructure would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

4.12.3.4.4 Electrical Service

The Project would require offsite improvements to upgrade electrical service utility mains and install tie-ins for the new courthouse building. Photovoltaic (PV) solar carport structures over 80 of the parking stalls are planned for future installation. The PV carports would provide a portion of the electricity used to serve the site, in addition to electricity obtained from PG&E. The Judicial Council would coordinate with PG&E to install the utility upgrades needed to provide electrical service for the Project. The installation of new tie-ins would occur in previously disturbed areas within existing public utility easements and is not expected to result in potentially significant environmental impacts. Therefore, the Project's level of impact related to the provision of new and expanded electrical infrastructure would be less than significant.

4.12.3.4.5 Telecommunications

The Judicial Council would coordinate with telecommunications providers (AT&T and Comcast) to provide service to the new courthouse building. The Project would require off-site improvements for tie-in connections to existing telecommunications infrastructure. The installation of new tie-ins would occur in previously disturbed areas within existing public utility easements and is not expected to result in potentially significant environmental impacts. Therefore, the Project's level of impact related to the provision of new and expanded telecommunications infrastructure would be less than significant.

4.12.3.4.6 Conclusion

The construction of stormwater drainage infrastructure could result in physical environmental impacts that are addressed in each topic area section of this EIR, as appropriate. The construction of water supply, wastewater, electrical, and telecommunications infrastructure is not anticipated to have a significant environmental impact. As described above in this section and in section 4.3 Biological Resources and section 4.8 Hydrology and Water Quality, impacts related to the construction or new and expanded stormwater drainage infrastructure needed to serve the Project would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. There are no additional potentially significant or significant impacts associated with construction of the Project beyond those considered throughout the other sections of this EIR. Therefore, the Project's overall level of impact related to the relocation of existing utility infrastructure and construction of new and expanded utility infrastructure, would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated***.

Mitigation Measures

Impact: UTL-1: Construction of stormwater drainage infrastructure under Outfall Option and Culvert Option would alter the hydrology of the drainage channel and biological resources along the eastern property line.

See Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-4, BIO-6 through BIO-8, HYD1 through HYD-3.

4.12.3.5 Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years

The Project would obtain its water supply from the American Valley Community Services District (AVCSD), which currently serves the Project site. AVCSD primarily obtains its municipal water supply from groundwater wells (AVCSD 2025; U.S. EPA 2026). Because the AVCSD does not provide over 3,000 acre-feet of water annually or serve more than 3,000 urban connections, the district is not required to prepare an Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) (California Water

Code §10610-10656 and §10608); therefore, the AVCSD does not have a UWMP, which provides an assessment of the reliability of water supply sources for urban water suppliers throughout California (DWR 2026). In absence of a UWMP, the following discussion is based on the groundwater supply reliability of the groundwater basin from which the AVCSD obtains its municipal supply.

As discussed in section 4.8.3 of this EIR, the groundwater basin that provides the American Valley Community Services District's groundwater supplies and that underlies the Project site—the American Valley groundwater basin—is categorized by the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) as a very low priority basin. Being a very low priority basin, the American Valley groundwater basin is not currently impacted by groundwater pumping to the extent that ongoing management is required to reduce impacts from groundwater pumping and to ensure the long-term reliability of groundwater supplies. The uses currently occupying the Project site use groundwater supplies provided by the AVCSD.

The Project may increase the amount of groundwater demand generated on site as the new courthouse would represent a more intensive land use compared to current uses. However, because the current land uses on site already generate a demand for groundwater and the existing buildings are altogether approximately equal to or slightly greater than the total square footage for the new courthouse, the Project would not create a new demand for groundwater supplies and the net increase in demand for groundwater supplies that may result would be minimal. Furthermore, while the Project may create increased demand for groundwater supplies compared to existing conditions, because groundwater supply reliability and over pumping are not currently concerns for management of the American Valley groundwater basin, the Project's use of groundwater would not serve as a substantial additional source of groundwater demand the AVCSD would need to meet.

In drought conditions, the AVCSD would comply with emergency water conservation regulations enacted by the State Water Resources Control Board, as mandated by State law (AVCSD 2026).

For these reasons, there would be sufficient water supplies available to serve the Project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years. This impact would be ***less than significant***.

4.12.3.6 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

Wastewater flows generated on the Project site would continue to be collected and treated by the AVCSD. As described in section 4.12, wastewater generated by the Project would be conveyed via existing infrastructure to the American Valley WWTP, which treats wastewater flows from Quincy and East Quincy. The American Valley WWTP has an average dry-weather flow (ADWF) treatment capacity of 1.25 million-gallons-per-day (MGD) and peak wet-weather flow (PWWF) treatment capacity of 1.2 MGD. The AVCSD has in place the proposed American Valley WWTP and Effluent Disposal Project, which was originally proposed in 2016 and which the AVCSD has since refined and approved via an approved CEQA Addendum in 2020 following to formation of the AVCSD.

The American Valley WWTP and Effluent Disposal Project (American Valley WWTP project) is intended to improve the wastewater treatment and effluent disposal capabilities of the American

Valley WWTP to comply with Central Valley RWQCB requirements and to maintain the capacity of the treatment facility to meet current and future demands, including future growth project by the Plumas County 2035 General Plan. The American Valley WWTP project's proposed improvements are located primarily within the footprint of the existing WWTP and adjacent pastures, and include the construction of a more effective biofiltration system, an outfall pipeline, a solar PV power generation facility, a UV disinfection system, and improvements to the land disposal system (including the recontouring and construction of berms in the pastures), construction of a new lift station and two pump stations, installation of approximately 20,000 feet of irrigation and effluent return lines, construction of effluent return ditches. The American Valley WWTP project will maintain the capacity of the WWTP to accommodate an ADWF of up to 1.25 mgd and PWWF of up to 4.9 mgd. Hydraulically, the facility will be able to accommodate peak hourly flows of 6.5 mgd. This proposal accommodates anticipated future growth through 2035 as projected in the Plumas County 2035 General Plan. (Ascent Environmental 2020)

The new courthouse would be staffed by 31 full-time employees, which is the maximum allocated staff for the existing Plumas County Courthouse operations under existing conditions (Judicial Council 2025). While the wastewater generation rate for the Project is not yet available and will be determined during design-build, for purposes of this analysis wastewater generation is estimated at 770 gpd assuming 20 gpd per 31 employees and 3 gpd per 50 visitors. Because the Project site is already developed with two buildings that generate wastewater flows that are collected and treated by the AVCSD, it is anticipated that the net increase of the Project to wastewater flows over existing conditions would be less than 770 gpd.

Based on the proposed fixture count for the new courthouse building (Judicial Council 2025), the Project would not require upsizing or improvement to the existing sewer main at Lawrence Street serving the site, meaning the AVCSD's existing sanitary sewer conveyance infrastructure has the capacity to collect and convey wastewater flows that would be generated by the Project. Because the Project site is already developed and generates wastewater flows that are collected by the AVCSD, the Project wastewater generation of 770 gpd would not represent a substantial new source of wastewater flows to the American Valley WWTP for treatment. The Project may result in a net increase in wastewater flow generation due to the intensification of land uses on site; however, the anticipated net increase in wastewater generation is not expected to cause an exceedance in the American Valley WWTP's treatment capacity (i.e., 6.5 mgd peak hourly flows, 1.25 mgd ADWF, and 4.9 mgd PWWF) because the new increase would not be substantial.

The Project would not generate a substantial increase in the amount of wastewater over that which is currently collected and treated by the AVCSD under existing conditions. Furthermore, as stated above, the AVCSD has approved the American Valley WWTP and Effluent Disposal Project to construct improvements to the American Valley WWTP to both maintain the WWTP's existing treatment capacity and accommodate future anticipated growth in the AVCSD service area through 2035. Therefore, the American Vallet WWTP would have adequate capacity to serve the Project's wastewater flows, in addition to the AVCSD's existing commitments. This impact would be ***less than significant***.

4.12.3.7 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

The Project would generate construction-related waste (e.g., carboard, scrap wood, scrap metal, trash, soils, and vegetation) and operational solid waste typically generated by courthouse and related land uses.

The disposal of solid waste generated during the Project's construction period would be conducted in compliance with the CALGreen Code, which requires residential, commercial, and industrial construction or demolition projects over 1,000 square feet to recycle and/or salvage for reuse a minimum of 65 percent of the non-hazardous construction and demolition waste (see section 4.12.2). Additionally, CALGreen Code requires that 100 percent of trees, stumps, rocks, and associated vegetation and soils resulting primarily from land clearing be reused or recycled. The Project's compliance with CALGreen requirements would reduce the fraction of the Project's construction-period waste that goes to landfill through construction debris recycling and waste diversion. Compliance with the CALGreen Code would support the attainment of solid waste reductions.

The new courthouse would be staffed by 31 full-time employees, which is the allocated number of staff for Plumas County Courthouse operations under existing conditions (i.e., in its current location) (Judicial Council 2025). The California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) estimated Plumas County had a 2024 solid waste generation rate of 19 pounds of waste per employee per day (CalRecycle 2026b). Based on this generation rate, the Project could generate approximately 0.3 tons of solid waste per day. The Project site is currently occupied by existing businesses, all of which contribute to the County's waste stream. It is anticipated that the Project would result in a net increase in solid waste generation on site due to the more intensive courthouse land use that would replace the existing businesses.

Solid waste generated on the Project site would continue to be transferred through the East Quincy Transfer Station and ultimately disposed of at the Lockwood Regional Landfill. The Project's anticipated operational waste generation rate of 0.3 tons of solid waste per day, and small amounts of additional solid waste from visitors, would not contribute an increase in solid waste generation that would adversely affect the operations of the East Quincy Transfer Station, which has a maximum daily throughput and capacity of 85 tons, and the Lockwood Regional Landfill which currently accepts 5,000 tons of waste per day and has a maximum capacity of 302.5 million CY, the majority of which is still available.

For these reasons, the Project would not 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 reductions goals or other federal, State, and local management and reduction status and regulations. This impact would be ***less than significant***.

4.13 Wildfire

This section describes the existing wildfire conditions within and around the Project site and evaluates the potential for impacts related to wildfire hazards to occur as a result of development of the Project.

4.13.1 Environmental Setting

Wildfires are a major hazard in Plumas County. Wind, steepness of terrain, and naturally volatile or hot-burning vegetation contribute to wildland fire hazard potential. The principal ingredients of wildfires; fuel in the form of dense vegetation, topography, and weather, combine to make highly hazardous fire conditions throughout much of Plumas County (County of Plumas 2012). The very high fire hazard throughout many county areas makes them unsafe for development and occupancy unless strong fire safety measures are taken. Additionally, several areas under County jurisdiction are without an organized structural fire protection program. However, even where organized protection does exist, fire suppression may be hampered by lack of water and rugged terrain that makes firefighting with heavy equipment very difficult or nearly impossible, resulting in delayed response times.

Wildland fires have previously occurred between June and October, a period commonly referred to as “fire season”. The State of California now regularly experiences wildfires year-round. “Fire season” no longer refers to a limited period in the summer. The current listing of California’s most destructive wildfires shows that 3 of the 10 most destructive wildfires have occurred since 2017 in either November or December. (Plumas County Fire Safe Council 2019)

Wildfire occurs naturally and from human activity. Lightning currently accounts for over 50% of Plumas County’s ignitions per year. Records show that Plumas County averages some of the highest incidence of lighting fires in California. Over time, human caused fires usually increase as increased population and visitation of forested lands lead to development and habituation. The leading causes of human ignitions are debris burning campfires, vehicles, outdoor equipment use, and arson. A significant number of wildfires have undetermined ignitions and can come from firewood cutting, discarded ashes, construction, railroads, and powerlines. (Plumas County Fire Safe Council 2019)

The Plumas National Forest, a federal responsibility area (FRA), encompasses much of Plumas County and therefore much of the County is under federal responsibility for wildfire protection. Historic fire interval in the north Sierra has been increasing with 29 populated communities in Plumas County identified as “at risk” by California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). The Plumas National Forest averages about 170 ignitions per year with 60% of those caused by lighting and 40% from humans (County of Plumas 2012).

Recent large fires in Plumas County and adjacent counties include the 2020 Loyalton Fire (47,629 acres burned), the 2020 North Complex Fire (318,935 acres burned), the 2021 Beckwourth Complex fire (105,670 acres burned), and the 2021 Dixie Fire (963,309 acres burned). The Plumas County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan contains a discussion of fires that have burned in Plumas County.

4.13.1.1 Wildfire Responsibility Areas

Fire protection in California is the responsibility of either the federal, state, or local government. On federally owned land, or FRAs, fire protection is provided by the federal government, often in

partnership through local grants and contracts. In state responsibility areas (SRA), which are defined according to land ownership, population density, and land use, CAL FIRE has a legal responsibility to provide fire protection. CAL FIRE is not responsible for densely populated areas, incorporated cities, agricultural lands, or federal lands. Local responsibility areas (LRA) include incorporated cities and cultivated agriculture lands. In LRAs, fire protection is provided by city fire departments, fire protection districts, or counties, or by CAL FIRE under contract to local government. The Project site is in a designated LRA, and fire protection for the project site is provided by the Quincy Fire Protection District (QFPD). The Fire Hazard Severity Zones within the Quincy LRA are shown in Figure 4-6. The Project site is not located within a SRA, however the Town of Quincy is bordered on all sides by SRA designated lands. (CAL FIRE 2026).

Within the Wildfire and Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), the Plumas County Fire Wise Communities WUI Map, classifies the town of Quincy as an Urban Core (see Figure 4-7). Lands bordering the Town of Quincy are designated WUI Defense Zones Core (County of Plumas 2023). Defense zones are critical areas located at the immediate edge of a community or urban core that serve as a buffer to protect human life and property from wildfires. It is a stretch of strategically managed landscape. Fire suppression resources can access these areas more easily, and they are designed to reduce the intensity of wildfires as they approach developed areas.

4.13.1.2 Quincy Fire Protection District

Fire protection in Plumas County is provided by 19 local fire protection districts. The Project site is served by the QFPD. The QFPD provides fire protection and emergency services to the residents of Quincy and surrounding rural areas in Plumas County, California. The QFPD is a volunteer-based fire department that provides emergency response, medical emergency response, fire prevention, and public safety education services (QFPD 2026). The closest fire station to the project site is Quincy Fire Station 1, located approximately 0.2 miles west at 505 Lawrence Street.

4.13.1.3 Emergency Evacuation

The Plumas County OES is responsible for initiating and coordinating disaster and emergency preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation operations within the County.

Primary evacuation routes within the county include SR 89, 70, and 49. SR 89 and SR 70 travel through Quincy in the east/west direction and serve as the primary means of ingress/egress into the town on a regional level.



Figure 4-6 Fire Hazard Severity Zones

New Quincy Courthouse Project



Source: Esri 2025, USDA 2021

Not to Scale

Figure 4-7 Wildland Urban Interface

New Quincy Courthouse Project

4.13.1.4 Fire Fighting Water Supply

Fire flow in California is measured by determining the flow rate (in gpm) of water from a hydrant at a minimum residual pressure of 20 pounds per square inch (psi). The required fire flow for a building is then calculated based on the building's size and construction type and is used to ensure the water supply meets the needs of firefighters. A 23,100 square-foot, one-story courthouse building would require a fire flow rate of approximately 1,500 gpm.

Firefighting water supply for the Project site is provided by two fire hydrants located on Church Street. The Judicial Council's Criteria Architect conducted fire flow tests on October 02, 2025, for the two hydrants and ran an analysis to determine potential flow requirements per the CFC. Preliminary assessments indicate the hydrants will satisfy the fire flow requirements based on the fire flow test data provided by the local purveyor—the AVCSD—and the building size and type (Kevin Quan, DLR Group, email communication, October 16, 2025).

4.13.2 Regulatory Setting

4.13.2.1 Federal Regulations

No federal regulations are applicable to wildfire in relation to the Project.

4.13.2.2 State Regulations

4.13.2.2.1 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

CAL FIRE has mapped fire threat potential throughout California. CAL FIRE ranks fire threat based on the availability of fuel and the likelihood of an area burning (based on topography, fire history, and climate). The rankings include no fire threat, and moderate, high, and very high fire threat. Additionally, CAL FIRE produced a 2010 Strategic Fire Plan for California that contains goals, objectives, and policies to prepare for and mitigate the effects of fire on California's natural and built environments. CAL FIRE's Office of the State Fire Marshal provides oversight of enforcement of the CFC as well as overseeing hazardous liquid pipeline safety.

4.13.2.2.2 California Fire Code

The CFC is Part 9 of Title 24. Updated every three years, the CFC includes provisions and standards for emergency planning and preparedness, fire service features, fire protection systems, hazardous materials, fire flow requirements, fire hydrant locations and distribution, and the clearance of debris and vegetation within a prescribed distance from occupied structures in wildlife hazard areas.

4.13.2.2.3 California Public Resources Code

California PRC section 4291 states that a building or structure in, or adjoining a mountainous area, forest-covered lands, brush-covered lands, grass-covered lands, or land that is covered with flammable material, shall maintain at all times 100 feet of defensible space from each side and from the front and rear of the structure, but not beyond the property line unless modified by local regulations. The amount of fuel modification necessary to create defensible space shall take into account the flammability of the structure as affected by building material, building standards, location, and type of vegetation. Fuels shall be maintained in a condition so that a wildfire burning under average weather conditions would be unlikely to ignite the structure. This regulation does not apply to single specimens of trees or other vegetation that are well-pruned and maintained so as to effectively manage fuels and not form a means of rapidly transmitting

fire from other nearby vegetation to a structure or from a structure to other nearby vegetation. The intensity of fuels management may vary within the 100-foot perimeter of the structure, the most intense being within the first 30 feet around the structure. Consistent with fuels management objectives, steps should be taken to minimize erosion.

4.13.2.2.4 Fire Safety Standards: California Public Resources Code 4290 and 14 California Code of Regulations (CCR) 1270

These regulations govern roads, driveway width, clearance, turnarounds, signing, and water related to fire safety throughout California. PRC section 4290 is typically implemented through regulation at the county level.

4.13.2.2.5 Wildland-Urban Interface Building Standards: California Government Code §51189

The Office of the State Fire Marshal is required to create building standards for wildfire resistance. Construction of buildings in the wildland-urban interface must use fire-resistant materials to save life and property. As of 2011, the standards relevant to fire-safe construction for all new structures in the SRA are the California Building Code, Chapter 7A and the California Residential Code, Chapter 3, Section R327.

Government Code §51175-51189 Fire Safe Regulations: Minimum fire safety standards gives the State Board of Forestry the authority to adopt regulations for minimum fire safety standards applicable to SRA lands under the authority of the department, and to VHFHSZs starting on July 1, 2021. The Fire Safe regulations are codified in CCR, Title 14 (Natural Resources), Division 1.5 (Department of Forestry), Chapter 7 (Fire Protection) under Subchapter 2 (SRA Fire Safe Regulations). These regulations generally address the following:

c. Standards for signs identifying streets, roads, and buildings.
d. Minimum private water supply reserves for emergency fire use.
e. Fuel modification standards for fuel breaks and greenbelts.
f. Road and driveway standards for emergency fire equipment access and public evacuation.

4.13.2.2.6 California Trial Court Facilities Standards

The California Trial Court Facilities Standards seek to protect life and property from fire through standardization of design, installation, and testing requirements for sprinkler systems based on sound engineering principles, applicable CFC, and field experience. The Facilities Standards set minimum acceptable standards for design and installation of fire protection systems. New technology and alternative arrangements may be applied in accordance with section 104.11 of the CBC on written Judicial Council approval, but they shall not reduce safety levels prescribed by these criteria or by state fire and building codes. The Facilities Standards include criteria for interior finishes, automatic sprinkler systems, fire water tanks, fire hydrants, fire pump requirements, piping requirements, and fire alarm systems.

4.13.2.3 Local Regulations

The Judicial Council, acting as the judicial branch of State government, is not subject to local land use regulations; however, the Judicial Council, as lead agency, considers local policies in evaluating whether the Project's impacts would be significant.

4.13.2.3.1 Plumas County Communities Wildfire Evacuation Preparedness

The Plumas County Sheriff is responsible for all evacuation notices. The Plumas County Office of Emergency Services has completed 28 wildfire evacuation route maps. The evacuation maps show suggested primary and secondary evacuation routes out of the community. Depending on the type of emergency, there may be more than one route out of the area. Direction of travel is dependent on the direction the wildfire is coming from and weather conditions (County of Plumas 2019).

The Quincy Community Wildfire Evacuation Map identifies Chandler Road, Quincy Junction Road, and Quincy La Porte Road as evacuation routes that lead to SR 70 and SR 89, which both lead out of the Town of Quincy (County of Plumas 2019).

4.13.2.3.2 Plumas County Emergency Operations Plan

The 2016 County of Plumas Emergency Operations Plan reflects significant changes over previous plans and incorporates the most recent advances in emergency operations at the local, state and federal levels. The plan is intended to comply with both the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

There are four parts to the County of Plumas Emergency Operations Plan:

Part One is the basic plan. It describes the County's emergency management organization, the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS), the National Incident Management System (NIMS), roles, responsibilities, and administrative practices. It also provides a brief overview of the hazards faced in Plumas County. The basic plan is intended to be general in its application and provide for flexibility during response and recovery.

Part Two consists of an overview of the emergency management organization and how it functions during response and recovery operations. It provides a functional framework to implement SEMS and NIMS, as well as a series of operational checklists designed to provide emergency managers with the basic considerations and actions necessary for effective incident response and recovery. It also provides an overview of public assistance programs.

Part Three contains a glossary of acronyms and definitions used in this plan.

Part Four is functional annexes, a compilation of County plans and hazard specific plans that are sited as references to this Emergency Operations Plan. Included are standard operating procedures (SOP's), memorandums of understanding (MOU's), resource manuals, and agreements that support this plan.

The Emergency Operations Plan presents Wildfire Evacuation Maps that were developed for select Plumas County Communities with potential high fire hazard. These maps contain known structures, water sources, and current road systems for each area and are designed as guidance for primary and secondary evacuation.

4.13.3 Impacts Analysis

4.13.3.1 Methodology

Potential impacts related to wildfire hazard was evaluated based Project conceptual plans, information provided by the Judicial Council, and a review of publicly available information regarding wildfire hazard in the Project vicinity. The information obtained from these sources

was reviewed and summarized to document existing conditions and to identify the potential environmental effects of the Project.

4.13.3.2 Thresholds of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Project would have a significant wildfire impact if it would:

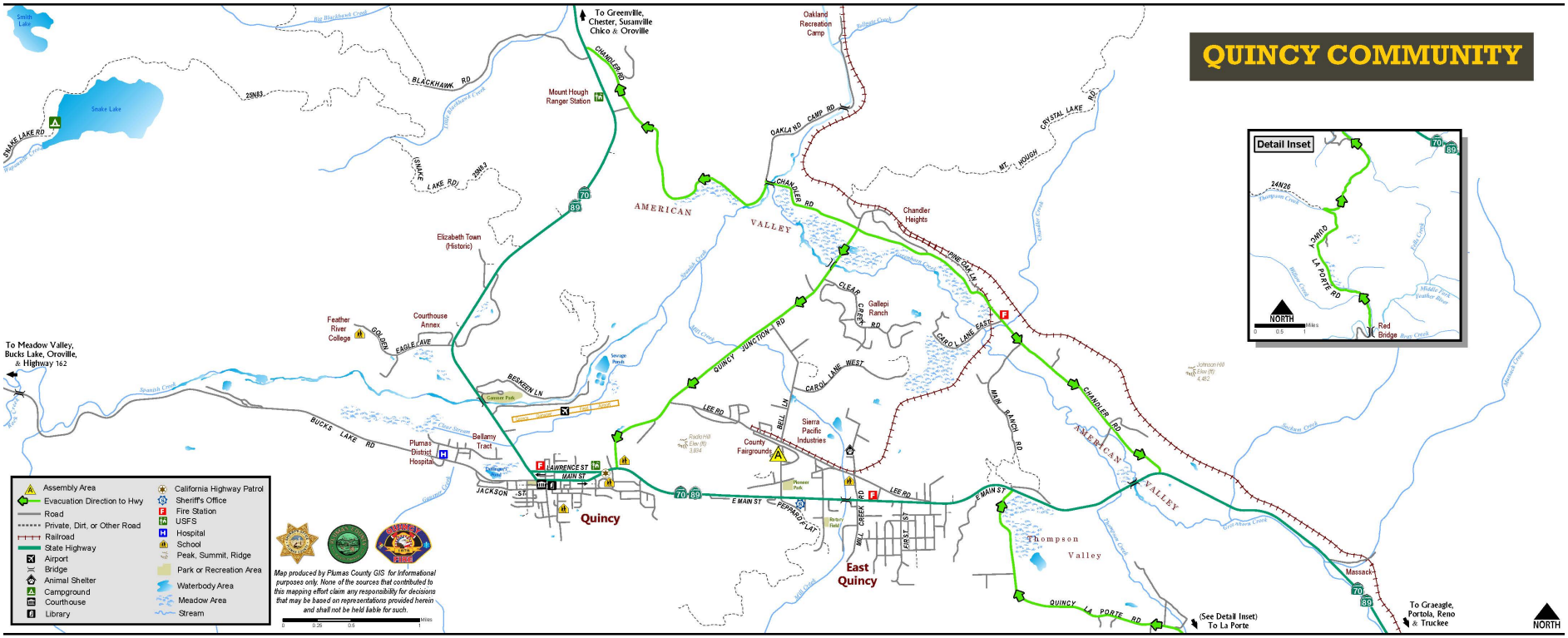
- Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.
- Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose Project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire.
- Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment.
- 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.

4.13.3.3 Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan

The Plumas County Emergency Operations Plan produced an emergency evacuation map for the Quincy area (see Figure 4-9). Figure 4-9 shows the primary evacuation routes within the county which include SR 89, 70, and 49. SR 89 and SR 70 travel through Quincy in the east/west direction and serve as the primary means of ingress/egress into the town on a regional level.

The Project would be located off of SR 70 (Lawrence Street). The Project would change the existing driveway entrance into the site but would otherwise not alter SR 70 in any way. The Project site is currently developed and already experiences some level of traffic into and out of the site. The vehicle traffic added by the Project is discussed in section 4.10 Transportation and is not anticipated to cause safety or traffic congestion impacts. All court staff and users would already be in a nearby location under existing conditions, and there would not be a significant impact on fire emergency egress caused by relocating court services. The Project would not impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan as the Project would not alter the functioning of SR 70 or contribute large volumes of traffic to the roadway.

The Project site contains sufficient land such that construction materials, equipment, and personnel would be staged on site and all construction activities would be confined to the Project site. The Project does not propose any off-site road or infrastructure improvements that would slow or interfere with emergency vehicles. Project construction could require temporary lane closures that could temporarily affect evacuation capabilities of SR 70 in front of the project site. The Project would require an encroachment permit from Caltrans for any temporary construction work, including lane closures. Further, the Project would include adequate on-site emergency access and evacuation route via Summerhill Lane. This impact would be ***less than significant***.



Source: County of Plumas GIS 2026

Figure 4-8 Emergency Evacuation

New Quincy Courthouse Project

4.13.3.4 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

The Project would not exacerbate wildfire risks because it is in an urbanized area on an already developed site. The Project site and surrounding area are relatively flat with minimal landscaping vegetation along the Lawrence Street/SR 70 road frontage. The Project would be designed and constructed according to the current CFC and other applicable regulations to minimize wildfire risk. In addition, standard construction practices, such as on-site fire suppression equipment, would reduce the risk of fire during construction. In addition, the Project facilities would be constructed to higher and more recent building and wildfire resistance standards than the old wooden Quincy Lumber & Supply, Feather Publishing Co., Inc., and carport structures thereby increasing the level of fire resistance. Therefore, the Project would have ***no impact*** on wildfire risk or the exposure to pollutants from wildfire.

4.13.3.5 Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment

The new courthouse would be built according to the current CFC, the CBC including Chapter 7A and the California Residential Code, Chapter 3, Section R327, and Facilities Standards. Although the Project would require new or realigned interties with utilities, they would be within existing disturbed rights of way and would not exacerbate fire risk. The Project would not result in the construction of new roads, emergency water sources, new power lines, or other associated infrastructure that would exacerbate existing fire risk. The Project would have ***no impact***.

4.13.3.6 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

Elevations on the Project site range from approximately 3,415 feet above msl in the northwestern portion of the site to approximately 3,424 feet above msl in the southern portion. The surrounding land surface slopes very gently to the north toward the bottom of the American Valley where Spanish Creek flows through from the west to the east and northeast. (Geocon 2023) The site and surrounding area is essentially flat and is unlikely to experience post-fire slope instability or drainage changes.

Construction activities are not anticipated to change the generally flat slope of the Project site. A minimal change in elevation within the footprint of the courthouse building may be required for flood mitigation, but it will not result in significant risks from flooding, landslides, runoff, post-fire instability, or drainage changes. During operation, on-site coverage and uses would be similar to existing conditions and would not include features that would substantially increase the risk to people or structures of flooding, landslides, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. This impact would be ***less than significant***.

5 Cumulative Impacts

CEQA Guidelines section 15130 requires that an EIR evaluate a Project's cumulative impacts to determine if the Project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable. As defined in section 15355, a cumulative impact consists of two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound to increase other environmental impacts. "The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment that results from the incremental impact of the Project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time" (14 CCR §15355).

The discussion of cumulative impacts must reflect the severity of the impacts, as well as the likelihood of their occurrence; however, the discussion need not be as detailed as the discussion of environmental impacts attributable to the Project alone (14 CCR § 15130(b)). As stated in CEQA, "a project may have a significant effect on the environment if the possible effects of a project are individually limited but cumulatively considerable" (PRC § 21083(b)). "Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of an individual 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 (PRC § 21083(b)(2)). An EIR should not discuss impacts that do not result in part from the Project evaluated in the EIR (14 CCR § 15130(a)(1)). The mere existence of significant cumulative impacts caused by other projects alone shall not constitute substantial evidence that the Project's incremental effects are cumulatively considerable (14 CCR § 15064(h)(4)). The discussion should be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness and should focus on the cumulative impact to which the identified other projects contribute rather than the attributes of other projects that do not contribute to the cumulative impact (14 CCR § 15130(b)).

5.1 Geographic Scope

The geographic scope of the cumulative analysis defines the area within which the Project and related projects may contribute to a specific cumulative impact. The geographic scope for cumulative analysis of each environmental resource varies.

This analysis primarily considers the cumulative impacts of projects proposed in Quincy and East Quincy except for Air Quality, Energy and GHG impacts, which are analyzed on a regional or statewide scale.

Table 5-1 describes the geographic areas to be considered in the cumulative impact analysis for environmental resources to which the Project may contribute to cumulative impacts.

Table 5-1: Geographic Scope for Cumulative Impacts

Environmental Resource Area	Geographic Area
Aesthetics	Local (Project site and public viewpoints in the vicinity)
Air Quality	Regional (Mountain Counties Air Basin)
Biological Resources	Local (Project site and immediate vicinity) and Regional
Cultural Resources	Local (Project site) and Regional (Town of Quincy and Town of East Quincy)

Environmental Resource Area	Geographic Area
Energy	Statewide (State of California energy policies and regulations)
Geology and Soils	Local (Project site and immediate vicinity)
Greenhouse Gases	Statewide (State of California GHG policies and regulations) and Global
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Local (Project site and immediate vicinity)
Hydrology and Water Quality	Local and Regional (locations downstream of the Project site)
Public Services	Local (Project site and immediate vicinity) and Regional (Town of Quincy and Town of East Quincy)
Noise	Local (Project site and immediate vicinity)
Transportation	Local (Roadways in Project site's immediate vicinity) and Regional (VMT added to Plumas County roadways)
Tribal Cultural Resources	Local (Project site)
Utilities and Service Systems	Local (Project site and immediate vicinity) and Regional (Town of Quincy and Town of East Quincy)
Wildfire	Local (Project site and immediate vicinity) and Regional (Town of Quincy, Town of East Quincy, and surrounding wildland areas)

5.2 Cumulative Project List

CEQA Guidelines section 15130(b)(1)(A) identifies two basic methods for establishing the cumulative environment in which a project is considered: the use of a list of past, present, and probable future projects or the use of adopted projections from a general plan, specific plan, or other regional planning document, or a certified EIR for such a planning document. The Project's cumulative analysis uses the "list of projects" approach to identify the cumulative setting.

The planning documents and projects used for the Project's cumulative impact analysis are listed Table 5-2 and presented visually in map format in Figure 5-1 Locations of Cumulative Projects. Probable future projects are those in the Project vicinity that have the possibility of generating a cumulative impact in combination with the Project and either:

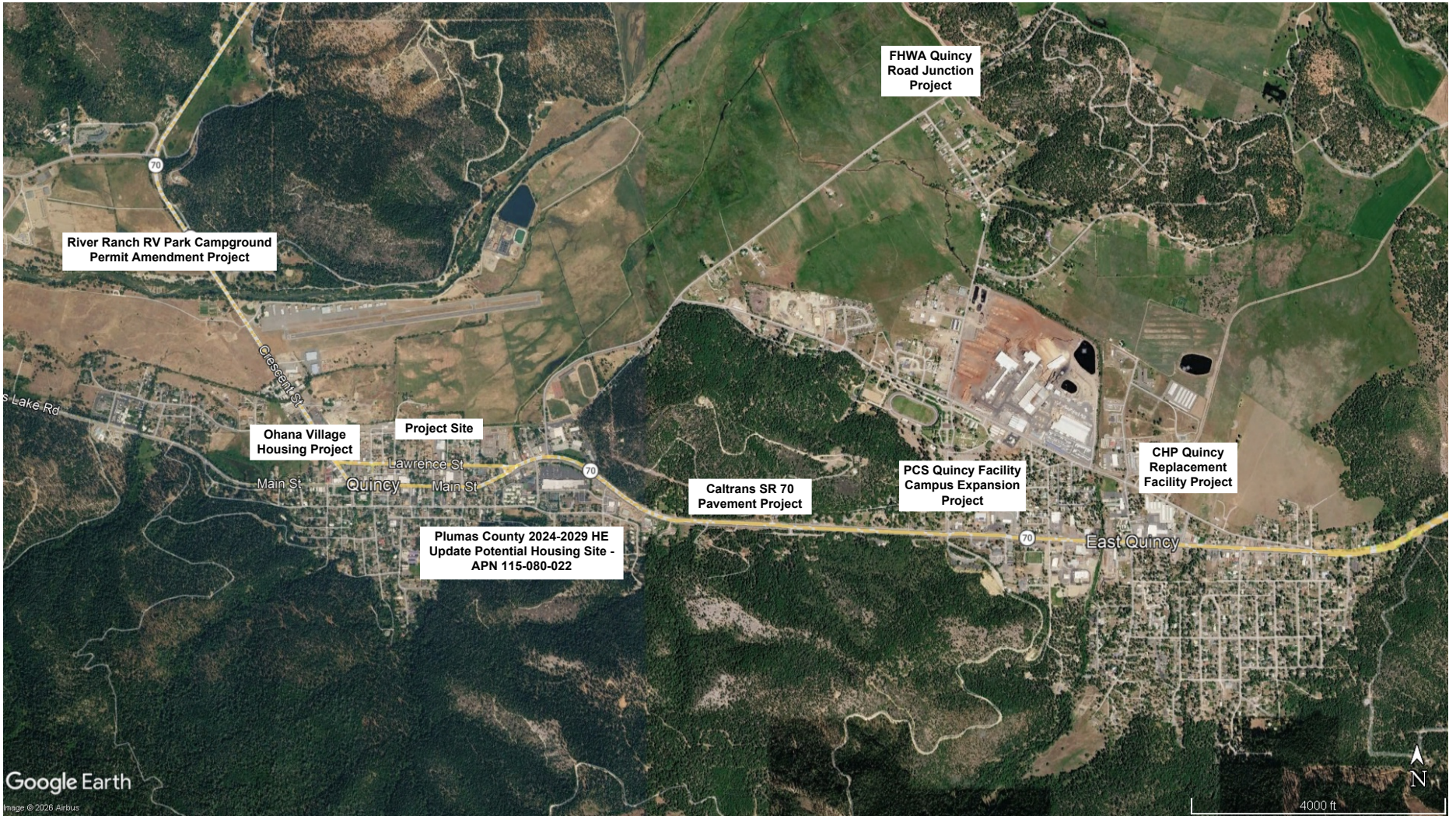
1. Are partially occupied or under construction;
2. Have received final discretionary approvals;
3. Have applications accepted as complete by local agencies and are currently undergoing environmental review;
4. Have been discussed publicly by an applicant or otherwise have become known to the lead agency, provided sufficient information is available about the project to allow at least a general analysis of environmental impacts and an evaluation of the likelihood of implementation.

These plans, projects, and effects are discussed in relevant resource discussions below.

Table 5-2: Projects Included in the Cumulative Impact Analysis

Project/Planning Document Title	Location	Brief Description
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Quincy Junction Road Project	Quincy Junction Road right-of-way from Bell Lane to Chandler Road	The project consists of the widening of one mile of roadway including replacing culverts and installation of new culverts.
River Ranch RV Park Campground Permit Amendment	42331 Highway 70 near Spanish Creek, Quincy	Plumas County Campground Permit Amendment issued August 15, 2025, to allow 19 new RV sites to be added to 31 existing RV sites for a total of 50 sites. Served by American Valley for water and sewer connections.
NorthStar Navigation Center Project – Ohana Village Transitional Housing Component	601 Main Street, Quincy	The Plumas Crisis Intervention & Resource Center's NorthStar Navigation Center Project – Ohana Village Transitional Housing Component will construct 26 detached cabins ranging in size from studio to two-bedroom units in the rear portion of the NorthStar Navigation Center property to serve as emergency transitional housing for housing insecure demographics. The site footprint will support 16 studios, 8 one-bedroom units, and 2 two-bedroom units, with one unit in each category offering ADA access. Multiple buildings will house laundry facilities, resident dining, and an outdoor patio area with a pergola. Community gardens, outdoor play space, and a maintenance unit would complete the site footprint. Plumas County has issued building permits for the project. Construction has not yet begun.
Caltrans SR 70 Pavement Project	SR 70 through Quincy and East Quincy	The project addresses pavement cracking, rutting, and poor ride quality. May address sidewalks, sidewalk ramps, light poles and signage.
Plumas Charter School Quincy Facility Campus Expansion Project (Special Use Permit U 2-23/24-04)	1385 E. Main Street, East Quincy	In 2023, construction of an approximate 14,625 square-foot school facility with classrooms, cafeteria, playground, and eighteen (18) parking spaces for the Plumas Charter School (PCS) was completed at 1425 E. Main Street, East Quincy. This school facility employs fifteen (15) staff and serves up to one hundred and eighty (180) students. The project includes the expansion of the existing PCS campus facilities at 1425 E. Main Street and 1495 E. Main Street to the adjacent parcel located at 1385 E. Main Street in line with Special Use Permit U 2-23/24-04. The proposed expansion would add a 2,100-square-foot modular school facility unit (currently located off site) to 1385 E. Main Street. The modular unit comprises three (3) classrooms, two (2) bathrooms, and an office. The project would be staffed by up to six (6) existing PCS staff members and would have the capacity to serve fifty (50) in the modular unit. The expansion of the school facility proposes eight (8) additional parking spaces in addition to that of the existing fifty-eight (58) parking spaces at 1425 E. Main Street and 1495 E. Main Street.

Project/Planning Document Title	Location	Brief Description
California Highway Patrol (CHP) Quincy Replacement Facility	Lee Road/Alta Avenue intersection, East Quincy. Across the street from the "T" intersection of Alta Avenue with Lee Road.	The project consists of the construction and operation of a replacement CHP Area Office and associated improvements. The project replaces the facility on Main Street. The project would develop approximately 3.8 acres (approximately 163,500 square feet) within the 5-acre site. Approximately 2.8 acres (approximately 122,000 square feet) of the developed project site would be new impervious surfaces; the remainder of the site would be unpaved. The project would include occupied structures, a radio tower, secured and visitor parking areas, enclosures and storage areas/spaces, a fuel island with above-ground fuel tank, utility improvements, and other ancillary improvements. The main office building would likely be approximately 19,200 square feet, automobile service building would be approximately 5,400 square feet, the one-story radio vault building would be approximately 750 square feet, and the property storage building would be approximately 750 square feet. Construction is estimated for completion in 2027.



Source: Google Earth 2026

Figure 5-1 Locations of Cumulative Projects

New Quincy Courthouse Project

This cumulative analysis assumes the adoption of all mitigation measures identified in sections 4.1 through 4.13 to mitigate the Project's impacts. This chapter analyzes whether, after adoption of Project-specific mitigation, the residual impacts of the Project would cause a cumulatively significant impact or would contribute considerably to existing or anticipated (i.e., without the Project) cumulatively significant effects.

5.3 Analysis of Cumulative Impacts

5.3.1 Aesthetics

There are no designated scenic vistas, overlooks, or viewpoints in or near the Project site; therefore, the Project would have no impact on a scenic vista and would not contribute to cumulative impacts on a scenic vista. Likewise, there are no state-designated scenic highways in the vicinity of the Project site. The Project site is not visible from a state scenic highway and would not contribute to cumulative impacts related to damage to scenic resources within a state scenic highway.

The Project is proposed within the urbanized area of the town of Quincy. The site is presently developed with commercial uses, and the proposed courthouse building would be a public facility similar to surrounding commercial and government facilities. While the Judicial Council is not subject to local land use regulations and thus the Project does not conflict with zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality, the Judicial Council has considered local policies, including Plumas County General Plan Policy 7.5.10 related to community character and Policy 7.6.6 related to lighting and the night sky, in the evaluation of the Project's impacts on scenic quality. Because there are no applicable zoning or other regulations that apply to the Project regarding scenic quality, the Project would not result in significant, long-term adverse impact on the visual character and scenic quality of the environment in the Project vicinity. As a result, the Project would have no impact on scenic quality related to conflict with zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality.

As described in Aesthetics section 4.1.3.4, development of the Project would visually change the Project site. The Project would contribute to the cumulative change in the visual character of the surrounding area through the demolition of the existing buildings on the site, including the removal of the Quincy Lumber & Supply building; construction of a modern courthouse; expansion of existing parking areas and pavement to encompass roughly the entire site; introduction of PV carports; removal of existing vegetation on the Project site, and increase of nighttime lighting.

Development of some of the cumulative projects listed in Table 5-2 has the potential to change the visual character of various properties in the vicinity of the Project site. None of the identified cumulative projects would have visual quality impacts through removal of structures with similar visual character to the Quincy Lumber & Supply building. The River Ranch RV Park Campground Permit Amendment Project and the FHWA Quincy Road Junction Project are relatively far from the project site and would not contribute to any of the Projects cumulative aesthetic impacts. Additionally, the Caltrans SR 70 Pavement Project would not result in construction of new structures, so it is assumed that this project would also not contribute to any potential cumulative aesthetic impacts of the Project.

Several projects listed in Table 5-2 could contribute to potential cumulative aesthetic impacts of the Project. The CHP Quincy Replacement Facility Project would develop approximately 3.8

acres (approximately 163,500 square feet) within a 5-acre site, including the construction of structures, a radio tower, secured and visitor parking areas, enclosures and storage areas/spaces, a fuel island with above-ground fuel tank, utility improvements, and other ancillary improvements on the currently vacant site. The EIR prepared for the CHP Quincy Replacement Project concluded this project would have a less-than-significant impact on existing visual character and scenic quality, and no mitigation was required (CHP 2019).

Development of the Plumas Charter School Quincy Facility Campus Expansion Project would add a modular school facility unit and additional parking spaces to a parcel adjacent to the Plumas Charter School Quincy Facility Campus. This project would not significantly alter the visual character of the surrounding area, as the adjacent parcels are already developed with larger school facilities and commercial and public use buildings.

Development of the NorthStar Navigation Center Project – Ohana Village Transitional Housing Component would construct 26 detached cabins, laundry facilities, resident dining, outdoor patio area with a pergola, community gardens, outdoor play space, and a maintenance unit in downtown Quincy. This project would develop the currently vacant rear portion of the NorthStar Navigation Center site, which is located in downtown Quincy and surrounded by parcels developed with similarly sized one- to two-story buildings.

When considered in combination, these projects include the development of new facilities on vacant parcels and expansion of existing facilities. The new and expanded facilities include schools, law enforcement, and housing. Collectively, these projects may change the visual character of the downtown Quincy area. The Project would contribute to that change by removing three older buildings, including the Quincy Lumber & Supply building, and replacing them with a modern courthouse that is integrated into the visual character of the surrounding community as required by the Facilities Standards. Because the Facilities Standards will ensure the design of the new courthouse is integrated into the visual character of the surrounding neighborhood, and the Project removal of the Quincy Lumber & Supply building does not combine with visual quality impacts to the community from other known projects through removing buildings of similar scale, vintage, and visual character, the Project's contribution to any existing or potential future significant cumulative aesthetics impact associated with the development of the cumulative projects included in this analysis would be ***less than cumulatively considerable.***

5.3.2 Air Quality

As described in section 4.2.3, the Project's emissions of criteria air pollutants were compared to the NSAQMD's significance thresholds and determined to be below those thresholds. The NSAQMD confirmed that the significance thresholds described in the land use guidance under Step Three: Emission Thresholds of Significance are cumulatively considerable significance thresholds. Since the Project's emissions were determined to be below the NSAQMD's significance thresholds, the Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable increase in criteria air pollutant emissions. Therefore, the Project impact on air quality would be ***less than cumulatively considerable***.

5.3.3 Biological Resources

The Project site is located within an urbanized area with existing buildings, hardscape, and infrastructure on site. The site contains an onsite drainage channel and riparian habitat

associated with the drainage channel. The Project's demolition and construction activities and potential permanent impacts to the drainage channel would have potentially significant impacts on special-status plants, riparian habitat (*Lemmon's Willow Thicket*), western bumblebee, willow flycatcher, nesting and migratory birds, roosting bats, and jurisdictional waters (the drainage channel itself). The Project's potentially significant biological resources impacts can be reduced to a less-than-significant level with the implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-8.

The cumulative projects considered in this analysis are either located in areas absent of the biological resources affected by the Project (e.g., redevelopment or repaving in the urban core) or would involve minor potential disturbance of vegetation or drainage areas (e.g., additional RV sites and culvert replacement) such that the effects would be limited in geographic scope to the immediate Project area and would not combine with the Project to create a cumulative effect. The Project when combined with the projects considered in this cumulative analysis would not result in substantial impacts to special-status species or sensitive habitats. Therefore, the Project's contribution to cumulative biological resources impacts would be ***less than cumulatively considerable***.

5.3.4 Cultural Resources

Historical and Archaeological Resources

As described in section 4.4 Cultural Resources, the Judicial Council has determined there are no historic buildings located on the Project site. The potentially significant impacts of the Project are limited to the potential for unanticipated discovery of archaeological or human remains. To the extent that the Project may contribute to a cumulative impact on unknown and unanticipated discovery of archaeological or human remains, such cumulative impact would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level by Mitigation Measures CUL-1 and CUL-2. Therefore, the Project's contribution to any potential future significant cumulative impact on archaeological resources, including human remains, associated with the development of the cumulative projects included in this analysis would be ***less than cumulatively considerable***.

5.3.5 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

GHG emissions are not confined to a particular air basin and typically persist in the atmosphere for extensive periods of time—long enough to be dispersed throughout the globe and result in long-term global impacts that contribute to climate change. The Project would not, by itself, result in climate change; however, cumulative emissions from many projects and plans all contribute to global GHG concentrations and the climate system. Accordingly, GHG emissions are inherently cumulative. The Project's cumulative impact on GHG emissions is discussed in section 4.6. The Project would not have a cumulatively considerable contribution to the significant cumulative impact of climate change. As a result, the Project's cumulative level of GHG impact would be ***less than significant***.

5.3.6 Geology and Soils

5.3.6.1 Geology and Soils

Although Plumas County in general is subject to potential regional geological and soils risks, geologic and soils hazards are largely site-specific. The magnitude of risk associated with each

geologic and soils hazards introduced in section 4.5 Geology and Soils is dependent on the site-specific conditions present at each site on the projects list in Table 5-2.

All development in Plumas County, including the Project and the projects considered in this cumulative analysis, is subject to the CBC, which contains engineering and design requirements that are specifically intended to reduce the loss of life and property from seismic hazards and geologic hazards, such as construction in unstable soils, to the maximum extent practicable. The Project would not combine with the projects considered in this cumulative analysis to cause soil instability or other geologic risks or hazards. Therefore, implementation of the Project in combination with the projects considered in this cumulative analysis would not result in a cumulatively significant impact related to seismic or geologic hazards, and the contribution of the Project would be ***less than cumulatively considerable***.

All projects in California that disturb one acre or more of land during construction, which includes the development projects considered in this cumulative analysis, are required by law to prepare a SWPPP and implement site-specific BMPs designed to control construction-related stormwater runoff and reduce erosion. None of the projects considered are anticipated to create or modify soil erosion or stormwater runoff on an ongoing basis that is not otherwise controlled under the conditions of the project's SWPPP. Therefore, implementation of the Project in combination with projects considered in this cumulative analysis would not result in a cumulatively significant impact from construction-related soil erosion, and the contribution of the Project would be ***less than cumulatively considerable***.

5.3.6.2 Paleontological Resources

As discussed in section 4.5 Geology and Soils, the Project would have no impact on paleontological resources because Project excavation activities would be confined to fill and Lake Deposits, which are not considered paleontologically sensitive. Since the Project would have no impact on paleontological resources, it cannot contribute to a cumulatively significant impact. There would be ***no cumulative impact*** related to paleontological resources.

5.3.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials impacts associated with the past or current uses of a project site usually occur on a project-by-project basis and are site-specific rather than regional in nature. The magnitude of risk is dependent on the site-specific conditions present at each specific site. Any hazardous materials uncovered during construction activities would be managed consistent with applicable federal, state, and local laws as well as Mitigation Measures HAZ-1, HAZ-2, and HAZ-3 identified in section 4.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials to limit exposure and clean up the contamination. In addition, the use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials would be managed in accordance with applicable federal and state requirements to limit risk of exposure. Other projects considered in this cumulative analysis that could create similar hazardous material effects during standard construction activities would also be required to comply with measures that would minimize or avoid the exposure of people or the environment to hazardous materials. Therefore, there would be ***no cumulative impact*** associated with hazardous materials use, storage, transport, or accidental spills.

The Project would not have any significant impacts relating to airport land use plans and adopted emergency response/evacuation plans. There would be ***no cumulative impact*** related to these hazards.

5.3.8 Hydrology and Water Quality

5.3.8.1 Water Quality and Flooding

Cumulative development would generally increase the amount of impermeable surface area in the Spanish Creek subwatershed, and could introduce urban pollutants (such as oil, grease, pesticides, fertilizers, and sediment), which can be transported via soil percolation into the groundwater aquifer (if not properly treated), and into surface water bodies via overland flow if the drainage system capacity is exceeded. Such pollutant transport would degrade groundwater and/or surface water quality. The projects considered in this cumulative analysis could also potentially alter drainage patterns and thereby increase the volume and rate of peak flood flows from stormwater runoff, which could exceed stormwater drainage systems and result in upstream or downstream flooding. Buildout of projects considered in this cumulative analysis must comply with state, regional, and local standards related to stormwater management and treatment, including compliance with a SWPPP. These standards include specific requirements for design and sizing of stormwater facilities and runoff pre-treatment via LID features. These standards also ensure that upstream or downstream flooding from alteration of drainages or exceedance of stormwater drainage systems would not occur. The BMPs and other requirements in each project's SWPPP would reduce criteria pollutants to less-than-significant levels.

Though the Project would have potentially significant flooding and inundation impacts, these impacts can be avoided or minimized through the implementation of mitigation measures. The implementation of Mitigation Measure HYD-2, Mitigation Measure HYD-3, and Mitigation Measure HYD-4, and Mitigation Measure HYD-5 would reduce not only site-specific flooding and inundation impacts but also potential flooding and inundation impacts to adjacent parcels and downstream water resources. Figure 5-1 shows the locations of the projects considered in this cumulative impact analysis. None of the projects analyzed in the cumulative impact analysis would contribute storm water runoff to the culverted drainage that travels under SR 70/Lawrence Street and enters an open drainage channel along the Project's eastern side. None of the cumulative impact projects would contribute stormwater runoff to the drainage channel that that could combine with the Project's stormwater runoff and exacerbate existing flooding conditions, or the flow volume in the channel and the engineering calculations needed to be carried out under the HYDRO Mitigation Measures. Therefore, the contribution of the Project to flood hazards and inundation impacts, alteration of drainages, exceedance of stormwater drainage facility capacities, and operational water quality would be ***less than cumulatively considerable***.

5.3.8.2 Groundwater Supply and Sustainability

The projects considered in this cumulative analysis, along with the Project, include new development and redevelopment that would result in the use of additional groundwater resources to meet potable water needs. The Project may create increased demand for groundwater supplies to serve the Project development compared to existing water demand for the site; however, any increase in demand would be marginal, as described in section 4.12 Utilities and Service Systems.

The Project and the cumulative projects included in this analysis would obtain water supply from the AVCSD. The groundwater basin that provides the AVCSD's groundwater supplies—the American Valley groundwater basin—is categorized by the SGMA as a very low priority basin

and therefore is not currently impacted by groundwater pumping to the extent that ongoing management is required to reduce impacts from groundwater pumping and to ensure the long-term reliability of groundwater supplies. Because groundwater supply reliability and over pumping are not currently concerns for management of the American Valley groundwater basin, it is not anticipated that the Project, in addition to the projects included in this cumulative analysis, would result in a cumulatively significant impact on long-term groundwater supply reliability or groundwater basin sustainability. The Project impact on groundwater supply would be ***less than cumulatively considerable*** .

Full buildout of these development projects, including the Project, would result in limited changes to the amount of the impermeable surfaces resulting in a limited decrease in rainfall percolation through the soil and into the groundwater aquifer. The addition of limited amounts of impervious surface area associated with the Project and the list of cumulative projects is not anticipated to significantly affect groundwater recharge. Additionally, the Project and cumulative projects considered in this analysis do not propose the development of new groundwater extraction. Therefore, implementation of the projects considered in this cumulative analysis would not result in a cumulatively significant impact related to groundwater sustainability (including groundwater recharge and groundwater supply), and the contribution of the Project to these impacts would be ***less than cumulatively considerable***.

5.3.9 Noise

For purposes of this cumulative noise and vibration analysis, the geographic context is limited to the extent of potential noise impacts caused by the Project that could combine with other relevant cumulative developments presented in Table 5-1. Although construction and stationary source noise may theoretically be audible far from the source, in practice ambient noise from wind, roadway traffic, and other land uses is substantially louder than equipment operating hundreds or thousands of feet away. Therefore, the geographic context is limited to the area within approximately 1,000 feet of the Project site and the roadways used to travel to and from the site. As shown in Figure 5-1 there are no potential projects within 1,000 feet of the proposed Quincy Courthouse site that would combine with noise effects of the Project. The nearest projects, Ohana Village Housing Project is1,600 feet from the Project site. Temporary construction noise from the Project would be mitigated through incorporation of Measure NOI-1. Operational noise from the Project is not expected to be significant. Noise generated during construction or project operations would not combine with noise generated from these closest potential development sites to create a significant effect. As a result, the contribution of the Project to noise impacts would be ***less than cumulatively considerable***.

5.3.10 Transportation

As required by the Facilities Standards, defined best practices include the development of links to public transit, and creation of strategies for pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use communities. While local policies and plans do not apply to the Project and the Judicial Council is not subject to local land use regulations, there are no significant adverse environmental effects that can be attributed to the Project that are the result of any inconsistency with programs, plans, ordinances, or policies addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadways, bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Therefore, the Project impact on the circulation system would be **l*ess than cumulatively considerable***.

As described in section 4.10, Transportation, one bus route serves Quincy as it loops through town traveling east on Main Street and then through East Quincy and beyond. When the bus returns to Quincy, it travels west on SR 70/Lawrence Street. The same bus route that serves the existing courthouse location would also serve the new courthouse location on Lawrence Street. Because the existing court operations are being relocated, it is anticipated that the Project would not measurably increase transit ridership.

The Project plus other cumulative development listed in Table 5-2 would contribute to transit ridership above current levels. The Plumas Crisis Intervention & Resource Center's NorthStar Navigation Center Project – Ohana Village Transitional Housing Component (26 detached cabins ranging in size from studio to two-bedroom units in the rear portion of the NorthStar Navigation Center property), and the PCS Quincy Facility Campus expansion project could all contribute to increased transit ridership. The impacts of full development of all the projects considered in the cumulative impact analysis combined with the Project's contribution of transit ridership may result in the need to increase transit bus service above existing levels. However, because the Project is a relocation of existing court operations along the same bus line, the Project is not anticipated to significantly contribute to future transit ridership impacts. Therefore, the Project impact on transit service would be ***less than cumulatively considerable.***

The Project VMT analysis determined that there would be no change in VMT to the hundredths of a mile. Since the Project would not have a VMT impact, it cannot contribute to a cumulatively significant VMT impact on transportation.

The Project, in combination with other projects in the vicinity of the Project site, must provide for adequate emergency access. The Project would require review by the California State Fire Marshal, ensuring adequate emergency access and building safety features. Similarly, design and construction documents for cumulative projects included in this analysis must be reviewed and approved for adequate emergency access by the local agency building and fire departments. With the implementation of local agency approval process, individual projects would provide adequate emergency access such that the cumulative impact related to emergency access would be less than significant. Therefore, the Project's contribution to cumulative emergency access impacts would be ***less than cumulatively considerable***.

5.3.11 Tribal Cultural Resources

Because tribal cultural resources are unique and non-renewable, all adverse effects or negative impacts erode a dwindling resource base. For this reason, the cumulative effects of general development in the region on tribal cultural resources are considered significant.

Although tribal cultural resources can encompass features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, none of these resource types were identified on the Project site or immediate vicinity as a result of the NAHC SLF search or tribal outreach pursuant to pursuant to PRC section 21080.3.1. However, because the Project site is situated in an archaeologically sensitive area, there is the potential to encounter unknown TCR during ground disturbing activities. Therefore, the Project could contribute to a cumulative loss of TCR. In the same way, the other projects considered in this cumulative impact analysis could contribute to the cumulative loss of TCR from the disturbance of known or unknown TCR. Those projects would likewise be required to consult with California Native American tribes and adopt measures to avoid or mitigate their impacts to known TCR and inadvertent TCR discoveries. Mitigation Measures TCR-1 and TCR-2 will reduce the

significance of impacts resulting from the inadvertent discovery of TCR and reduce the significance of cumulative impacts resulting therefrom to less-than-significant levels. The Project impact on unknown TCR would be ***less than cumulatively considerable***.

5.3.12 Utilities and Service Systems

The Project would replace existing utility infrastructure onsite and would not generate significant additional demand on utilities as described in detail in section 4.12 Utilities and Service Systems. The Project would have ***no cumulative impact*** related to the extension of existing water, sewer, electrical service, and telecommunications infrastructure needed to serve the Project. The potential for cumulative impacts to biological resources and water resources related to construction of new stormwater infrastructure are described in EIR sections 5.1.5 and 5.1.10.

Water supply for the Project would be provided by the American Valley Community Services District (AVCSD). Existing water demands in the AVCSD are currently met by groundwater supplies. Because the long-term groundwater supply reliability of the American Valley groundwater basin is not of concern, it is anticipated that the AVCSD would continue to be able to serve other cumulative projects included in this analysis and in the AVCSD service area overall. Therefore, sufficient water supplies from AVCSD to serve the Project in addition to existing and planned development would be available under normal, single-dry, and multiple-dry years. Implementation of the projects considered in this cumulative analysis would have a ***less than cumulatively considerable*** impact related to water supply.

Wastewater generated by the Project would be conveyed off site for treatment at the American Valley WWTP. The American Valley WWTP has a maximum ADWF of up to 1.25 mgd and PWWF of up to 4.9 mgd. Hydraulically, the facility can accommodate peak hourly flows of 6.5 mgd. This proposal accommodates anticipated future growth through 2035 as projected in the Plumas County 2035 General Plan. The American Valley WWTP would have adequate capacity to treat wastewater flows generated at buildout of its service area, including flows generated by the Project. Therefore, implementation of the projects considered in this cumulative analysis would have a ***less than cumulatively considerable*** impact related to wastewater service demand.

Implementation of the Project would generate approximately 0.3 tons of solid waste per day that would be disposed of at the Lockwood Regional Landfill. The Lockwood Regional Landfill has a maximum capacity of 302.5 million CY, the majority of which is still available, and has a current throughput of 5,000 tons of waste per day. The estimated 0.3 tons per day of solid waste generated by the Project would be less than one percent of the amount of solid waste received at the landfill per day. The Lockwood Regional Landfill has sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate solid waste disposal needs for the Project and existing and future development considered in this cumulative analysis in its disposal area. Therefore, the Project's contribution to cumulative solid waste service impacts would be ***less than cumulatively considerable***.

5.3.13 Wildfire

As described in section 4.13, the Project would have a less-than-significant impact related to emergency evacuation, exposure of people to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire, result in the installation of infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or

that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment, or expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. The Project site is located in an urbanized area and is served by Lawrence Street/ SR 70 which is identified as an emergency evacuation route for the County. The Project would not alter Lawrence Street/SR 70 and therefore would not impact the identified emergency evacuation route.

The Project site is essentially flat and is not near sloping topography or dense vegetation. The Project does not propose new infrastructure that would result in ongoing impacts to the environment. Because the Project would have no impact on exacerbating wildfire, wildfire pollution, or related infrastructure, it has ***no cumulative impact***.

6 Other CEQA Requirements

6.1 Growth Inducement

6.1.1 Introduction to Growth-Inducing Impacts

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.2(d) requires an examination of the direct and indirect impacts of the Project, including the potential of the Project to induce growth leading to changes in land use patterns, population densities, and related impacts on environmental resources. Specifically, CEQA states that the EIR shall:

> [D]iscuss ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Included in this are projects that would remove obstacles to population growth (a major expansion of a wastewater treatment plant might, for example, allow for more construction in service areas). Increases in the population may tax existing community service facilities, requiring the construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects…also discuss characteristics of some projects that may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. It must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

Direct growth inducement would result if a project involved construction of new housing. Indirect growth inducement would result for example, if implementing a project resulted in any of the following:

- Substantial new permanent employment opportunities (e.g., commercial, industrial, or governmental enterprises); or
- Removal of an obstacle to additional growth and development, such as removing a constraint on a required public utility or service (e.g., construction of a major sewer line with excess capacity through an undeveloped area) or adding new urban development adjacent to undeveloped land.

Growth inducement itself is not an environmental impact, but it may lead to foreseeable environmental impacts. These environmental impacts may include increased demand on other community and public services and infrastructure, increased traffic and noise, degradation of air or water quality, degradation or loss of plant or animal habitats, or conversion of agricultural and open space land to urban uses.

6.1.2 Project Growth-Inducing Impacts

The purpose of the Project is to build a courthouse that is in compliance with regulatory safety, seismic, accessibility codes, and Judicial Council space, safety, and security standards. The Project would move court operations from the existing courthouse to the Project and does not propose to increase services or employees. Additionally, the Project would not expand infrastructure capacities that would support development or community growth outside of the Project site. Therefore, the Project is not considered to be growth inducing. No impact would occur.

6.2 Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

CEQA Guidelines section 15126(a) and (b) require an EIR to discuss the significant environmental effects of the Project and the significant environmental effects which cannot be avoided if the Project is implemented.

6.2.1 Project-Level Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

Chapter 4 of this EIR provides a detailed analysis of all significant and potentially significant environmental impacts from implementation of the Project; identifies feasible mitigation measures, as appropriate, that could avoid or reduce these significant and potentially significant impacts; and presents a determination whether the identified mitigation measures would reduce these impacts to less than -significant levels. In addition, Chapter 5 of this EIR provides an analysis of the significant cumulative impacts resulting from the combined effects of the Project and other lead agencies' planned projects. If a potentially significant or significant impact cannot be reduced to a less than -significant level, it is considered a significant and unavoidable adverse impact.

The Project would not result in project-level significant and unavoidable impacts.

6.2.2 Cumulatively Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

The Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to cumulatively significant impacts that would be significant and unavoidable.

7 Alternatives

7.1 CEQA Requirements for Alternatives Analysis

CEQA requires an evaluation of project alternatives based on the comparative merits of "a range of reasonable alternatives to the Project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives" (14 CCR § 15126.6(a)). Thus, the focus of the alternatives analysis should be on alternatives that both: (1) feasibly accomplish most of the basic objectives of the project, and (2) avoid or substantially lessen one or more significant effects" (14 CCR § 15126.6(c)). Feasible is defined to include the consideration of economic, environmental, social, legal, and technological factors and includes site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, general plan consistency, other plans or regulatory limitations, jurisdictional boundaries, and whether the proponent can reasonably acquire, control, or otherwise have access to alternative sites. Potential alternatives that are infeasible, do not accomplish the Project's basic objectives, or do not lessen a significant environmental effect are not analyzed.

The analysis must also address the "no project" alternative (14 CCR § 15126.6(e)). The "no project" alternative provides a baseline analysis of the environmental conditions that would exist in the absence of the Project to guide informed decision making. If there are existing land uses or planned land uses, the "no project" alternative includes the projected environmental conditions and effects of those land uses. In addition to the "no project" alternative, the analysis must identify the environmentally superior alternative among the alternatives that are not the "no project" alternative. The CEQA Guidelines further state that the range of alternatives is governed by the "rule of reason," which requires consideration only of those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice and to foster informed decision-making and public participation (14 CCR § 15126.6(f)(3)).

This EIR considers a range of alternatives to the Project in accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6.

7.2 Project Objectives

In identifying potentially feasible alternatives to the Project, this chapter considers the ability of alternatives to meet most of the Project's objectives. As described in Chapter 2 Project Description, the objectives for the Project are as follows:

- Provide a permanent, sustainable, safe, and accessible courthouse that improves the public's access to justice and enhances public services.
- Align courthouse spaces and organization with Judicial Council's California Trial Court Facilities Standards.
- Improve security, relieve current space shortfall, and improve operational efficiency and customer service.

7.3 Significant Impacts of the Project

All impacts associated with implementation of the Project could be reduced to a less-than-significant level through compliance with existing regulations and through mitigation imposed

upon the project, as described throughout impact analysis of this EIR. All Project impacts and mitigation measures are identified in Table ES-1 in the Executive Summary chapter.

Potentially significant impacts associated with construction or operation of the Project that can be reduced to less than significant through implementation of recommended mitigation measures include Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Noise, and Utilities and Service Systems.

7.4 Project Site Selection Process

The placement and construction of courthouses is unique. The public expects courts to exhibit dignity and justice, and to be safe and secure while using court services and serving on juries. The accused and victims of criminal and civil offenses may be in close proximity, presenting unique safety and security challenges. Judicial officers make significant decisions with potentially life-altering consequences that cause personal and public reactions which can be targeted at the court. Above all, courts need to be accessible to all people seeking justice.

The Judicial Council follows a carefully outlined site selection process that starts with identifying the amount of space needed in a new courthouse. Then the Judicial Council identifies properties that are for sale at the time the site selection process is being conducted and evaluates each site using standardized evaluation criteria. The Judicial Council report *"Advisory Committee Capital Project Site Selection Report"*, August 9, 2024, describes the site evaluation process in detail. The site selection process occurred from July 2022 to August 2024. The Judicial Council identified 10 potential available sites in the Quincy area on the market at that time and narrowed the evaluation process to two sites. The Site Selection process analyzes sites based on numerous criteria including site size, location, and physical elements; security considerations; neighborhood character; traffic, transportation, and access considerations; image and visibility; local planning requirements; existing site ownership and use; subsurface/geotechnical conditions; seismic conditions; utility infrastructure; budget; and schedule considerations. The primary criteria identified for the site selection were access to justice, ability to meet site programming needs, proximity to justice partners, and economic benefit to the state and community.

Through the investigation of property availability within the town of Quincy a total of 10 prospective properties were initially identified for the Project. The list of prospective properties was developed through discussions with county representatives, searching the State-owned property database, and consultation with real estate brokers to ensure that all property opportunities could be considered for the Project. These prospective sites were evaluated in accordance with the 2009 Site Selection and Acquisition Policy for Judicial Branch Facilities to confirm the site characteristics would support the selection for the Project.

Due to the limited availability of potential sites in and adjacent to the town of Quincy, the list of prospective properties was deliberated from December 2022 to November 2023. Eight potential sites on the initial list were removed due to insufficient size, not meeting the site characteristics, and/or not having a party interested or willing to sell. Two prospective sites remained on the list, the Project site identified in this EIR, and the Stonehouse Tavern, 1918 East Main Street and 56 Mill Creek Road. These two sites were evaluated by the Court Facilities Advisory Committee in more detail. (Judicial Council 2024a)

The Project site was ultimately selected as the preferred location for its proximity (i.e., within walking distance) of the Judicial Council's justice partners (i.e., District Attorney, Public Defender, Probation), location along the main vehicular route (i.e., SR 70/89) through downtown Quincy, available space for parking, civic presence, and proximity to local bus routes. The Site Selection Report did not rank the Stonehouse Tavern site as preferred due to its decentralized location to the downtown core and a less-than-optimal functional arrangement (Judicial Council 2024a).

7.5 Alternatives Considered but Rejected for Detailed Analysis

CEQA requires a brief explanation of the reasons underlying the lead agency's determination to eliminate alternatives from further analysis. Section 7.4, above, describes the elimination of several alternative sites through the site selection process.

A number of alternatives were considered but excluded from further consideration due to a range of reasons, as outlined below. The alternatives that were reviewed and not selected for further evaluation include Renovation of Plumas County Courthouse, Protect the Quincy Lumber & Supply Building / Reduced Building Footprint and Other Alternative Sites in Public Comment. These potential alternatives that were considered but rejected are more fully discussed below.

7.5.1 Renovation of Plumas County Courthouse

The Judicial Council Superior Court operations are presently housed in the Plumas County Courthouse located in Quincy at 520 Main Street. As described in section 2.2, the existing courthouse building is substantially out of compliance with regulatory safety codes and does not meet the Judicial Council space standards. The courthouse building is County-owned and identified by the County General Plan as a candidate historic resource of local importance (Plumas County 2012). The Judicial Council court operations occur within a portion of the courthouse building under a Memorandum of Understanding with the County. The Judicial Council has no right to renovate the building or expand on the courthouse site without the County's consent and cooperation. Renovation of the existing building would require a temporary move into costly swing space during building renovation and then a return move. The renovation would require a sizable expansion to address overcrowding. Given that the Judicial Council has no control over the courthouse building, the renovation would be disruptive to court operations, and the potential limitations of site development and impact on candidate historic resource, the Judicial Council determined this option was infeasible. This alternative has been rejected from further consideration.

7.5.2 Protect Quincy Lumber & Supply Building/Reduced Building Footprint

During the NOP public comment period the Judicial Council received public comment regarding the demolition of the Quincy Lumber & Supply building and the potential to avoid the building by constructing a new courthouse that had a reduced footprint as compared to the Project. A reduced building footprint could be achieved by making the single-story building smaller or by making the new building a two-story building instead of a one-story building (either two stories above ground or a one-story building with a basement as a second floor). There was also a suggestion to make the parking lot smaller.

As part of the early planning process for new courthouses, the Judicial Council conducts detailed space needs analysis to determine the number of courtrooms needed and the size of other areas of the building to calculate the square footage needed for the new building. On August 9, 2024, the Court Facilities Advisory Committee considered a space program of three courtrooms and about 54,000 square feet. The Court Facilities Advisory Committee voted to reduce the space program to two courtrooms, change the size of the project from 54,000 square feet to approximately 23,000 square feet, and pursue a layout in a single-story building to seek a considerable cost savings (Judicial Council 2024b). The New Quincy Courthouse Project reflects a reduced programming space of approximately 23,100 square feet with an approximately 9,600 square-foot outdoor, ground-level access area for loading, in-custody sallyport, and secure parking would be located immediately adjacent to the courthouse building. This space requirement is needed to meet the Project objectives and transfer court operations from the existing courthouse to the Project; a reduced one-story building would not meet Project objectives.

A two-story layout would keep the 23,100 square feet of programming space but would not meet the Project objectives to align with the California Trial Court Facilities Standards, improve security, and improve operational efficiency as well as the Project. The space program is sized to a single level. It holds the building to a grossing factor of 1.24 and combines central holding with courtroom holding. That arrangement works only when the in-custody sallyport, holding and both courtrooms are on the ground level next to the 9,600-square-foot secure access area. The California Trial Court Facilities Standards require separate public, restricted and secure circulation. A second floor or basement would need a separate vertical path for each circulation zone that crosses levels, including a secure elevator for in-custody movement if a courtroom is not on the ground level. The added elevators, stairs and shafts would push the building beyond the program area, add in-custody escort movements, reduce operational efficiency and increase cost. The Court Facilities Advisory Committee reduced the program and directed a single-story layout to bring the Project within budget. A two-story building would work against that direction within a fixed project budget.

In addition to a further reduced building footprint not meeting the Project objectives, it would not reduce a significant environmental impact of the Project. The Judicial Council determined that the Quincy Lumber & Supply building is not a historic resource (see discussion in section 4.4 Cultural Resources and Appendix D). Therefore, avoiding removal of the building would not serve the purpose of avoiding or reducing a significant environmental impact.

Because the reduced footprint to preserve the Quincy Lumber & Supply building would not meet the Project objectives and would not reduce a significant environmental effect, this alternative has been rejected.

7.5.3 Other Alternative Project Locations in Public Comment

During the NOP process (October 15, 2025 to November 17, 2025), the public submitted comments identifying several alternative sites that were available for sale at the time of the NOP comment period as an option to the Project site. The public recommended alternative sites primarily to preserve the Quincy Lumber & Supply building. See section 1.4.1 and Appendix A for the public comments. The sites identified by public comment included parcels for sale on East Main Street, Redberg Avenue, Lee Road, Crescent Street, Orion Way and the Plumas/Sierra Regional Courthouse in Portola.

- Plumas Motor Supply at 85 E Main Street/Lawrence Street
- Armory building at 20 Redberg Avenue (plus adjacent County waste management site or Skips Repair)
- 390 E Main Street
- 1097 Lee Road
- 1986 East Main, closed Little Lots and adjoining auto lot
- 380 East Main, the burned Harlem Club
- 388 Crescent Street, previously Willits Motors
- 550 Orion Way, previously American Valley Aviation
- Plumas/Sierra Regional Courthouse at 600 S. Gulling Street in Portola

Judicial Council staff investigated each of these sites for this EIR Alternative analysis. Its investigation into these parcels concluded the site features do not adequately satisfy the site selection criteria of the Judicial Council's Site Selection Policy. Specific categories evaluated include location/preferences/adjacencies, traffic and transportation, objectives, budget, physical elements, subsurface/geotechnical conditions, seismic conditions/requirements, utility infrastructure/conditions, environment. Therefore, the sites would not meet the basic requirements and objectives for the Project and were rejected for further evaluation.

7.6 Alternatives Analyzed

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6, the rationale for selecting the alternatives presented in this EIR is to attempt to feasibly attain most of the basic Project objectives while avoiding or substantially lessening the significant effects of the Project. Based on the alternative’s analysis, an environmentally superior alternative is to be designated. In general, the environmentally superior alternative is the alternative with the least adverse impacts on the environment. If the environmentally superior alternative is the “no project” alternative, the EIR shall also identify another environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives.

Section 15126.6(d) of the CEQA Guidelines states that alternatives analysis need not be presented in the same level of detail as the assessment of the Project. Rather, the EIR is required to provide sufficient information to allow for meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the Project. If an alternative would cause one or more significant impacts in addition to those of the Project, analysis of those impacts is to be discussed, but in less detail than the Project.

The Project would have potentially significant impacts on Aesthetics (construction lighting), Air Quality (construction emissions), Biological Resources (Waters of the US/wetland, riparian vegetation, special status species), Cultural Resources (unknown archaeological resources), Hazards and Hazardous Materials (building demolition), Hydrology and Water Quality (alteration of drainage channel, and stormwater drainage, and flooding), Noise (construction noise), Tribal Cultural Resources (unknown tribal cultural resources), and Utilities and Service Systems (stormwater drainage). The No Project Alternative presented below is required by CEQA. The other feasible alternatives that would reduce impacts of the Project are the Stonehouse Tavern Project Location Alternative and the Outfall Option Alternative.

7.6.1 No Project Alternative

7.6.1.1 Description

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(e) requires the consideration of a No Project alternative. Under the No Project Alternative, the Project, consisting of the construction of a 23,100 square-foot, one-story courthouse building and supporting landscaping, parking, and utility upgrades would not occur. The Judicial Council would continue to operate in the existing Plumas County Courthouse building for an unknown length of time. The Judicial Council would continue to incur risks and high maintenance costs associated with operating in a building that is substantially out of compliance with regulatory safety, seismic, accessibility codes, and Judicial Council space standards. The Judicial Council would not accomplish its objectives to enhance the Superior Court's ability to serve the public (see section 2.2 in Chapter 2 Project Description). The Judicial Council would not implement one of the court facility capital-outlay projects included in its Trial Court Capital-Outlay Plan and 2019 Revisions to the Plan, which rank the Project in the highest priority group as an immediate need. Eventually, it is likely the Judicial Council would consider a similar project to construct a new permanent state-owned facility in Quincy to address the deficiencies associated with operating in the existing Plumas County Courthouse building.

None of the Project activities would occur including the State's purchase of the Project site, demolition of existing buildings on the Project site, construction activities needed to construct the new building and parking lot, or the relocation of court activities, and the associated impacts.

7.6.1.2 Potential Environmental Impacts

The No Project Alternative would result in no action if the Judicial Council does not approve the Project or a Project alternative. Following are the potential environmental impacts that would result from the No Project Alternative.

7.6.1.2.1 Potential Environmental Impacts Less than those of the Project

The resource areas described below would have a potential environmental impact less than those of the Project.

Aesthetics: Under the No Project Alternative none of the demolition or construction activities would occur on the Project site. The Quincy Lumber & Supply Building, the Feather Publishing Co., Inc. building and the vehicle storage building would remain undisturbed on the site. The existing aesthetics of the Project site and the existing level of night lighting would remain unchanged and therefore the No Project Alternative would have less aesthetic impacts than the Project.

Air Quality (construction and operation): The Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of air quality plans, nor would it generate short-term or long-term emissions that exceed recommended criteria air pollutant thresholds. The Project is not anticipated to significantly increase operational emissions compared to existing conditions. Project-related construction activities would emit TACs that have the potential to result in adverse health risks at sensitive receptor locations near the Project site. Construction activities associated with the Project would generate on- and off-site exhaust emissions, including DPM, in the form of $PM_{2.5}$. To reduce potential $PM_{2.5}$ (and DPM) emissions generated by Project construction activities to below the significance threshold, Mitigation Measure AIR-1 would be incorporated into all appropriate engineering and site plan (e.g., building, grading etc.) documents (see Mitigation Measures). Mitigation Measure AIR-1 requires all mobile diesel construction equipment greater

than 50 horsepower meet U.S. EPA and CARB Tier IV final emission standards. This measure is estimated to reduce construction related $PM_{2.5}$ emissions by approximately 59%, thus rendering the Project's potential adverse health risks from construction activities a less-than-significant impact.

Under the No Project Alternative, none of the Project construction emissions as described in Chapter 4.2 Air Quality and summarized above would occur and the operational emissions associated with a new building would not occur. Emissions associated with vehicle traffic travel to and from the courthouse facilities would remain the same as under existing conditions, so the vehicle emissions associated with Project operation would be very similar to the No Project Alternative. Because the No Project Alternative would eliminate Project construction emissions and emissions associated with a new building, it would have less air quality impacts than the Project.

Biological Resources: As described in Chapter 4.3 Biological Resources, the Project would have potentially significant impacts to special status plant and animal species, to birds from avian collisions with windows, to roosting bats from the demolition of the existing on site buildings, result in an increase in night lighting that could impact wildlife use of the riparian corridor along the drainage channel, result in the removal of 0.3 acres of *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* under Culvert Option, and could potentially impact jurisdictional waters (drainage channel), particularly under Culvert Option where the open drainage channel would be culverted. All potentially significant impacts to biological resources would be mitigated to less than significant with the implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-8.

Under the No Project Alternative none of the impacts to biological resources associated with Project construction and the changes to the drainage channel would occur. The drainage channel and associated riparian corridor would remain in its existing condition, there would be no loss of *Lemmon's Willow Thicket* or potential modification of the open drainage channel and potential impact to jurisdictional waters. Thus, the No Project Alternative would eliminate the Project impacts to biological resources and have less biological resource impacts than the Project.

Cultural Resources: There are no identified cultural resources on the Project site. As described in Chapter 4.4 Cultural Resources, Mitigation Measures CUL-1 and CUL-2 are identified to reduce potential Project impacts associated with unexpected discovery of cultural resources. The No Project Alternative would eliminate potential Project impacts to unknown cultural resources because no construction activities would occur on the Project site.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions (construction and operation): As described in Chapter 4.6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions, the Project would generate GHG emissions from construction which would be less than significant and no mitigation is required. Project GHG emissions from operational activities have been conservatively estimated to be no greater than the emissions associated with the existing court facility and are considered less than significant. Under the No Project Alternative none of the Project construction GHG emission would occur. Thus, the No Project Alternative would eliminate Project construction emissions. GHG emissions associated with existing court operations in the Plumas County courthouse building would continue.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials: As described in Chapter 4.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials, the Project would not involve the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials, impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response or

evacuation plan, and it would not expose people to significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires.

The Project could cause significant impacts related to the potential release of fuels, oil, asbestos, lead, and universal wastes during the removal of on-site ASTs and the demolition of on-site buildings and the potential for ground disturbing activities to encounter and expose construction personnel to potential soil or groundwater contamination associated with on-site printing facilities. The Phase I ESA and Hazardous Building Material Survey recommendations have been incorporated into the Project as Mitigation Measures HAZ-1, HAZ-2, and HAZ-3.

The Project's construction activities could generate emissions of diesel particulate matter (DPM) that have the potential to disperse and result in adverse health risks at sensitive receptor locations near the Project site. A health risk assessment was prepared as part of the CEQA review and determined that Project construction could generate emissions of DPM that could pose an adverse health risk to residential receptors adjacent to the project site, however implementation of Mitigation Measure AIR-1 would reduce this impact to less than significant.

Under the No Project Alternative, none of the Project construction activities would occur so the risk of exposure to hazards during demolition of the existing buildings on site would be eliminated. Additionally, the Project's construction emissions of DPM that have the potential to result in adverse health risks at sensitive receptor locations near the Project site would not occur. Thus, the No Project Alternative would eliminate Project impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials.

Hydrology and Water Quality: As described in Chapter 4.8 Hydrology and Water Quality, the Project would have potentially significant impacts on stormwater runoff volume and quality and the functioning of the drainage channel with increased stormwater runoff and a new stormwater runoff outfall. Culvert Option, which calls for culverting the open drainage channel would also have potentially significant impacts. All potentially significant impacts to hydrology and water quality would be mitigated to less-than-significant levels with implementation of Mitigation Measures HYD-1 through HYD-3.

Under the No Project Alternative none of the potential short-term construction water quality impacts would occur, nor would the stormwater runoff volumes change from existing conditions, potentially exacerbating existing flooding conditions. The open drainage channel would remain as it is and would not potentially be culverted (Culvert Option) and no stormwater outfall would be installed. The No Project Alternative would eliminate the Project impacts on hydrology and water quality.

Noise: As described in Chapter 4.9 Noise, the Project would have potentially significant impacts on noise during project construction and Mitigation Measure NOI-1 is identified to reduce the impact to less than significant. None of the Project construction noise impacts would occur under the No Project Alternative. The Project site would remain in its current condition, and the courthouse function would not bring new noise to the Project site under operational conditions. The No Project Alternative would have less noise impacts than the Project.

Tribal Cultural Resources: No TCR were identified on the Project site. As described in Chapter 4.11, Mitigation Measure TCR-1 is identified to reduce potential Project impacts associated with unexpected discovery of TCR. The No Project Alternative would eliminate potential Project impacts to unknown TCR because no construction activities would occur on the Project site.

Utilities and Service Systems: As described in Chapter 4.12 Utilities and Service Systems, the Project would connect to existing utility and service systems similar to the existing development on the Project site. The Project would construct a new stormwater drainage system that would affect the drainage channel. Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-4, BIO-6 through BIO-8, and HYD-1 through HYD-3 address the environmental impacts associated with drainage channel modifications. The No Project Alternative would eliminate all construction activities associated with the Project and would eliminate all the new utility infrastructure improvements and connections that need to occur under the Project. Utility usage would remain the same as under existing conditions. Thus, the No Project Alternative would reduce impacts related to utility infrastructure and operational usage.

7.6.1.2.2 Potential Environmental Impacts Similar to those of the Project

The resource areas listed below would have a potential environmental impact similar (or equal) to those of the Project.

Transportation: As described in Chapter 4.10 Transportation, Superior Court of California, Plumas County operations are currently provided at the Plumas County Courthouse, located at 520 Main Street in Quincy. The Project relocates court operations approximately 0.2 miles northeast of the existing location to the Project site. The Project does not expand existing court activities and would have the same number of employees as the existing court operation. The Transportation impact analysis for the Project is based on the understanding that the relocation of court operations would result in a shifting of travel patterns and trip characteristics, yet trip generation would remain consistent, given that the Project will provide the same services as the current courthouse. The Transportation impact analysis determined that the average trip lengths between the existing and proposed courthouse were equivalent and the Project-related change in VMT is negligible. Thus, the No Project Alternative and the Project would have similar VMT impacts.

Wildfire: As described in Chapter 4.13 Wildfire, the existing Plumas County Courthouse where the Superior Court functions are currently housed is in the same Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone and same WUI as the Project site. The No Project Alternative would expose employees and visitors to the courthouse to the same potential wildfire hazards as the Project. The new courthouse building constructed under the Project would meet current State building code requirements and Facilities Standards for buildings within high fire hazard severity zones and the WUI but this would not substantially change the exposure hazards for users of the new courthouse versus the Plumas County Courthouse. Since the existing courthouse is not constructed to modern standards, the Project may better mitigate wildfire risk and related hazards for court employees and users than the No Project Alternative.

7.6.1.2.3 Potential Environmental Impacts Greater than those of the Project

The No Project Alternative would have potentially greater Geology and Soils impacts than the Project because the historic Plumas County Courthouse does not meet current seismic standards and could potentially “Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including risk of loss, injury, or death involving: ii) strong seismic ground shaking, and iii) seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction.”

Geology and Soils: As described in Chapter 4.5 Geology and Soils, the Project would be designed and constructed according to current CBC seismic requirements, Facilities Standards, and the Project specific geotechnical report recommendations (see section 4.5 Geology and

Soils and Appendix E). Following these requirements, the Project would have less-than-significant impacts related to geology and soils. A new courthouse facility constructed under the Project would be more seismically stable and resistant to damage than the existing Plumas County courthouse and thus may reduce substantial adverse effects related to strong seismic ground shaking and seismic-related ground failure.

7.6.2 Stonehouse Tavern Project Location Alternative

7.6.2.1 Description

The Judicial Council reviewed the Stonehouse Tavern as a potential courthouse site during its 2023 site selection process described in section 7.4. The site was formally scored and approved by the Administrative Director for consideration as an alternate site and submitted to the State Public Works Board alongside the Project site (Feather Publishing Co, Inc.).

The Stonehouse Tavern site is located in East Quincy and comprises two parcels: APN 116-172-011 (0.94 acres; zoned Periphery Commercial [C-2]) at 1918 E Main Street and APN 116-172-012 (1.16 acres; zoned Multi-Family Residential [M-R]) at 56 Mill Creek Road. Vehicle access is from Main Street and Mill Creek Road. A 10-foot-wide easement occurs along the west edge of the site. Existing conditions of the site along with a conceptual demolition plan and new courthouse site plan are presented in Figure 7-1. Existing permanent and temporary structures on the site would be demolished and vegetation primarily consisting of pine trees would be cleared. Based on the available site area and access, parking, and setback requirements, the Judicial Council determined site could accommodate a building footprint of 17,010 square feet, which would require either increased floor levels to achieve the preferred programming space of the new courthouse (23,100 square feet) or reduced parking below court facilities requirements to create the additional space for a larger single-story building footprint. The Stonehouse Tavern's decentralized location in East Quincy is a more remote distance from most justice partners; however, the Stonehouse Tavern site meets most of the basic Project objectives and is therefore considered as an alternative.

7.6.2.2 Potential Environmental Impacts

Following are the potential environmental impacts that would result from the Stonehouse Tavern Project Location Alternative.

7.6.2.2.1 Potential Environmental Impacts Less than those of the Project

Biological Resources. The Stonehouse Tavern site is developed with a commercial building, residential structures, temporary structures and unpaved driveways and parking areas. Over 20 trees, primarily pine, occur scattered throughout the site with minimal or no understory vegetation (Figure 7-1). A preliminary biological review of the site (Ascent Environmental 2023) noted the likely absence of sensitive natural communities and lack of jurisdictional waters or wetlands. Due to site development, it is likely that herbaceous plants within the site are non-native species. Special-status nesting birds and/or bats may be potentially present and require survey and mitigation if present similar to the Project. Given the absence of riparian and aquatic habitat on the Stonehouse Tavern site, Project development at this location would avoid impacts related to riparian habitat that would otherwise occur under the Project. As a result, the Stonehouse Tavern Project Location Alternative would have less unmitigated impact on biological resources than those of the Project described in Chapter 4.3 Biology.



Aerial view and photographs of Stonehouse Tavern alternative site location.



Source: Judicial Council 2024

Figure 7-1 Stonehouse Tavern Project Location Alternative

Hydrology and Water Quality. The Stonehouse Tavern site does not have aquatic features. There are no flood zones with mapped elevations on this site. The FEMA flood map for the Stonehouse Tavern site identifies the site as Zone X, which is an area subject to 0.2 percent annual chance flood hazard, 1 percent annual chance with average depth less than one foot, or drainage areas of less than one square mile. As such, there is less flooding risk associated with this property than the proposed Project site, which has an onsite drainage channel subject to flooding. The Stonehouse Tavern alternative site would provide stormwater drainage through utility line connections and would not discharge directly to an existing drainage channel. As such, under this alternative, there would be no outfall constructed to an open channel or need for culverting a drainage channel segment as proposed by the Project. This alternative would not require a hydrologic study to address exacerbated flooding potential on or offsite and would have less potential to create siltation, sediment, or erosion impacts. As a result, the Stonehouse Tavern Project Location Alternative would have less unmitigated impact on hydrology and water quality resources than those of the Project described in Chapter 4.8 Hydrology.

7.6.2.2.2 Potential Environmental Impacts Similar to those of the Project

Development of the Stonehouse Tavern site would have impacts similar to the proposed Project for most of the environmental impact categories assessed in Chapter 4. Visual character of the property would be changed in a similar way with the construction of a new courthouse building highly visible along Main Street (aesthetics). Construction of a two-story building with a smaller footprint at this location is expected to have similar equipment operations to the Project. Temporary construction related impacts would occur on adjacent sensitive receptors from construction lighting (aesthetics) and equipment operation (air quality and noise). The potential for undiscovered cultural and tribal cultural resources would remain the same as for the Project. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report (Geocon 2023) identified a 200-gallon kerosene AST needing secondary containment, the potential for ACMs and LCPs to be present in existing structures, and the presence for lead and termiticides to be present in shallow soil around the structures, which is a hazard and hazard materials impact level similar to the Project. Project demand for utility services would remain the same at the Stonehouse Tavern site location; however, this location may require new sanitary sewer and storm drain connections. The Stonehouse Tavern site is located within the same fire hazard severity zone as the Project site and therefore wildfire risk impacts would remain the same; however, the Stonehouse Tavern site is located 2 miles further from the QFPD station than the proposed Project location.

7.6.2.2.3 Potential Environmental Impacts Greater than those of the Project

Cultural Resources. The Stonehouse Tavern was constructed in 1938 and is listed in the State Office of Historic Preservation's (OHP) Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD) as having been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 2001, through a process under Section 106 of the federal National Historic Preservation Act. Normally, a property that has been determined eligible for listing in the NRHP must also be included in the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR). However, the CRHR database does not list the Stonehouse Tavern as an historical resource. There is uncertainty whether the Stonehouse Tavern is actually eligible for inclusion in the NRHP and should therefore be included in the CRHR. For the purposes of this alternatives analysis only, the Judicial Council conservatively assumes that the Stonehouse Tavern is an historical resource for CEQA purposes based on the information in the BERD. Demolition of the Stonehouse Tavern for development of the Project would be a significant and unavoidable cultural resource impact. As a result, the Stonehouse

Tavern Project Location Alternative would have a greater impact on cultural resources than those of the Project described in Chapter 4.4 Cultural Resources.

Land Use and Planning. The Stonehouse Tavern site comprises two parcels with different land use designations. The Stonehouse Tavern parcel is zoned Periphery Commercial (C-2) and the parcel with residential structures is zoned Multi-Family Residential (M-R). Plumas County zoning specifies that public service facilities shall be permitted in both the C-2 and M-R zones subject to the issuance of a special use permit. Thus, Project construction of a courthouse facility at this location would be consistent with the zoning use designations on the two Stonehouse Tavern site parcels. Project development on the residential parcel would result in the loss of an occupied residential housing unit in the Quincy community. As a result, the Stonehouse Tavern Project Location Alternative would have a greater impact on land use and planning than those of the Project described in Chapter 3.3 Land Use and Planning.

Other Potentially Greater Impacts. As noted above, the anticipated ground-floor building footprint that the Stonehouse Tavern site could accommodate is approximately 17,010 square feet. Even with the scope of the Project reduced to approximately 23,100 square feet, not all of the court's needed space could be accommodated in a single-story building. Thus, there are potential environmental impacts associated with the added infrastructure needed to support a second floor which may include impacts to geology and soils from deeper foundation elements, noise from installing pilings or similar foundations, aesthetic impacts from a taller facility, and other impacts. A geological hazards assessment would need to be prepared for this alternative site and its recommendations would be incorporated into the project design. Additionally, constructing a building with an excavated basement or second floor would significantly increase the cost of construction and decrease the feasibility of locating the Project on the Stonehouse Tavern site. Vehicle miles traveled (transportation) may be increased due to its shift in location 2.4 miles further from the current downtown location for court employees and most justice partners but would be closer to the Sheriff's Office and Jail. An increase in vehicle miles traveled would result in greater GHG emissions.

7.6.3 Outfall Option Alternative

7.6.3.1 Description

As described in Project Description section 2.3 and analyzed in Biological Resources section 4.3.3 and Hydrology and Water Quality section 4.8.3, the Judicial Council is considering placing the open drainage channel in a fully enclosed culvert within the Project site (Culvert Option) to reduce future maintenance obligations, associated with an open drainage channel (Outfall Option). While Culvert Option is the Judicial Council's preferred option from a maintenance standpoint, the biological resource impact analysis determined that culverting the open drainage channel may remove 0.30 acres of *Lemmon's Willow Thickets,* including aquatic habitat and riparian vegetation. This design option may face additional review and requirements from resources agencies (i.e., USACE, RWQCB, and/or CDFW) when applying for permits. Because this design option would result in the loss of *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* and aquatic habitat, the resource agencies may not issue permits for it. Therefore, this EIR fully analyzed the potentially significant impacts of Outfall Option and Culvert Option to provide the Judicial Council with a reasoned choice among the alternatives. While Culvert Option (installing a culvert) is the preferred option, Outfall Option (retain open drainage channel) is considered to be part of the

Project. This alternatives analysis provides further information to inform the final choice between Outfall Option and Culvert Option.

The Outfall Option Alternative would have exactly the same environmental impacts as the Project, except for the biological resource impacts associated with culverting the open drainage channel. This alternative would reduce impacts on wetlands, riparian vegetation and potential impacts on species of special concern that may use the vegetation along the top of the banks for foraging or nesting that may otherwise occur under Culvert Option. When implementing the Outfall Option, the channel would remain open and the vegetation along the top of the channel bank would remain but the biological resources impacts of constructing a new stormwater runoff outfall in the drainage channel would still occur. The Judicial Council would be obligated to maintain the channel and implement all mitigation measures (BIO-1 through BIO-8 and HYD-1a, HYD-2, and HYD-3) as described in Chapter 4.3 Biological Resources and Chapter 4.8 Hydrology and Water Quality. The Outfall Option Alternative would achieve all the Project objectives.

7.6.3.2 Potential Environmental Impacts

Following are the potential environmental impacts that would result from the Outfall Option Alternative.

7.6.3.2.1 Potential Environmental Impacts Less than those of the Project

Biological Resources: The Outfall Option Alternative would eliminate the biological resource impacts associated with culverting the drainage channel as proposed under Culvert Option including the loss of wetlands, 0.30 acres of *Lemmon's Willow Thickets* and riparian vegetation, and loss of potential foraging and nesting habitat for species of special status birds and the Western bumble bee. The biological resource impacts associated with the construction of a new stormwater runoff outfall pipe would still occur and mitigation measures needed to address impacts related to the stormwater runoff outfall pipe construction would still be needed. The Outfall Option Alternative would reduce the Project's biological resource impacts associated with Culvert Option (culverting the channel).

7.6.3.2.2 Potential Environmental Impacts Similar to those of the Project

The difference between the Project and the Outfall Option Alternative is that the Judicial Council would not culvert the open drainage channel running along the east side of the Project site, reducing impacts to biological resources as described above. All other Project impacts would remain the same as described in Chapter 4, including Aesthetics, Air Quality, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Noise, Transportation, Tribal Cultural Resources, Utilities and Service Systems, and Wildfire. All mitigation measures reducing Project impacts to the resources listed above would still be required.

7.6.3.2.3 Potential Environmental Impacts Greater to those of the Project

The Outfall Option Alternative would not have any potential environmental impacts greater than those of the Project.

7.7 Environmentally Superior Alternative

The Outfall Option Alternative is considered the environmentally superior alternative because it would reduce impacts on biological resources compared to the Judicial Council's preferred

Culvert Option. All other impacts would be the same as the Project's identified impacts. The Outfall Option Alternative would meet all the Judicial Council's stated objectives. The Outfall Option Alternative is environmentally superior to the Stonehouse Tavern Alternative, because the Stonehouse Tavern is assumed to be an historical resource and the impacts to it would be significant and unavoidable. Because the Outfall Option Alternative reduces impacts to biological resources, has the same environmental impacts in all other areas as the Project, and meets all Project objectives it is considered the environmentally superior alternative.

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