



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Bay Delta Region
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GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



January 19, 2023

Patrick Kelly
City of Mill Valley
26 Corte Madera Avenue
Mill Valley, CA 94941
PKelly@cityofmillvalley.org

Subject: 1 Hamilton Drive Affordable Housing Development, Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report, SCH No. 2022120597, City of Mill Valley, Marin County

Dear Mr. Kelly:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) reviewed the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the 1 Hamilton Drive Affordable Housing Development Project (Project) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and CEQA Guidelines.

CDFW is providing the City of Mill Valley as the Lead Agency, with specific detail about the scope and content of the environmental information related to CDFW's area of statutory responsibility that must be included in the EIR (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15082, subd. (b)).

CDFW ROLE

CDFW is a **Trustee Agency** with responsibility under the CEQA for commenting on projects that could impact fish, plant, and wildlife resources (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.; Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15386). CDFW is also considered a **Responsible Agency** if a project would require discretionary approval, such as a permit pursuant to the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) or Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA), the Lake and Streambed Alteration (LSA) Program, and other provisions of the Fish and Game Code that afford protection to the State's fish and wildlife trust resources. Pursuant to our authority, CDFW has the following concerns, comments, and recommendations regarding the Project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION

The Project site is located at 1 Hamilton Drive, Accessor Parcel Number (APN) 030-250-01, in the City of Mill Valley, Marin County, and encompasses approximately 1.8 acres. The Project objective is the construction and development of up to 50 affordable housing units including the removal of an existing parking lot and restroom facilities and the construction of 65 parking spaces, new public restrooms, and vehicle

Patrick Kelly
City of Mill Valley
January 19, 2023
Page 2 of 10

charging stations. Development activities will include removal of approximately 40 trees, approximately 20 of which are coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*).

The CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15000 et seq.) require that the EIR incorporate a full Project description, including reasonably foreseeable future phases of the Project, that contains sufficient information to evaluate and review the Project's environmental impact (CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15124 & 15378). Please include a complete description of the following Project components in the Project description:

- Footprints of permanent Project features and temporarily impacted areas, such as staging areas and access routes.
- Area and plans for any proposed buildings/structures, ground-disturbing activities, fencing, paving, stationary machinery, landscaping, and stormwater systems.
- Operational features of the Project, including level of anticipated human presence (describe seasonal or daily peaks in activity, if relevant), artificial lighting/light reflection, noise, traffic generation, and other features.
- Construction schedule, activities, equipment, and crew sizes.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

California Endangered Species Act and Native Plant Protection Act

Please be advised that a CESA Incidental Take Permit (ITP) must be obtained if the Project has the potential to result in "take" of plants or animals listed under CESA or NPPA, either during construction or over the life of the Project. Issuance of a CESA ITP is subject to CEQA documentation; the CEQA document must specify impacts, mitigation measures, and a mitigation monitoring and reporting program. If the Project will impact CESA listed species, such as those identified in **Attachment 1**, early consultation is encouraged, as significant modification to the Project and mitigation measures may be required in order to obtain a CESA ITP.

CEQA requires a Mandatory Finding of Significance if a project is likely to substantially restrict the range or reduce the population of a threatened or endangered species (Pub. Resources Code, §§ 21001, subd. (c) & 21083; CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15380, 15064, and 15065). Impacts must be avoided or mitigated to less-than-significant levels unless the CEQA Lead Agency makes and supports Findings of Overriding Consideration (FOC). The CEQA Lead Agency's FOC does not eliminate the Project proponent's obligation to comply with CESA.

Patrick Kelly
City of Mill Valley
January 19, 2023
Page 3 of 10

Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement

CDFW will require an LSA Notification, pursuant to Fish and Game Code sections 1600 et. seq. for Project activities affecting lakes or streams and associated riparian habitat. Notification is required for any activity that will substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow; change or use material from the bed, channel, or bank including associated riparian or wetland resources; or deposit or dispose of material where it may pass into a river, lake or stream. Work within ephemeral streams, washes, watercourses with a subsurface flow, and floodplains are subject to notification requirements. **Review of hydrological data and topographic maps indicates that parcel APN 030-250-01 contains at least four streams; work within these streams or their associated riparian areas would warrant an LSA Notification.** CDFW, as a Responsible Agency under CEQA, will consider the CEQA document for the Project. CDFW may not execute the final LSA Agreement until it has complied with CEQA as a Responsible Agency.

Nesting Birds

CDFW also has authority over actions that may disturb or destroy active nest sites or take birds. Fish and Game Code sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 protect birds, their eggs, and nests. Migratory birds are also protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Fully Protected Species

Fully Protected species, including any listed in **Attachment 1**, may not be taken or possessed at any time except for collecting these species for necessary scientific research, relocation of the bird species for the protection of livestock, or if they are a covered species whose conservation and management is provided for in a Natural Community Conservation Plan (Fish & G. Code, §§ 3511, 4700, 5050, & 5515).

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The EIR should provide sufficient information regarding the environmental setting (“baseline”) to understand the Project’s, and its alternative’s (if applicable), potentially significant impacts on the environment (CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15125 & 15360).

CDFW recommends that the CEQA document prepared for the Project provide baseline habitat assessments for special-status plant, fish and wildlife species located and potentially located within the Project area and surrounding lands, including, but not limited to, all rare, threatened, or endangered species (CEQA Guidelines, § 15380). The EIR should describe aquatic habitats, such as wetlands or waters of the U.S. or State, and any sensitive natural communities or riparian habitat occurring on or adjacent to the Project site (for sensitive natural communities see: <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/>

Patrick Kelly
City of Mill Valley
January 19, 2023
Page 4 of 10

[VegCAMP/NaturalCommunities#sensitive%20natural%20communities](#)), and any stream or wetland set back distances the City of Mill Valley may require. Fully protected, threatened or endangered, candidate, and other special-status species and sensitive natural communities that are known to occur, or have the potential to occur in or near the Project site, include, but are not limited to, those listed in **Attachment 1**.

Habitat descriptions and the potential for species occurrence should include information from multiple sources: aerial imagery, historical and recent survey data, field reconnaissance, scientific literature and reports, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information, Planning, and Consultation System, California Aquatic Resource Inventory, and findings from “positive occurrence” databases such as California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB). Based on the data and information from the habitat assessment, the EIR should adequately assess which special-status species are likely to occur on or near the Project site, and whether they could be impacted by the Project.

CDFW recommends that prior to Project implementation, surveys be conducted for special-status species with potential to occur, following recommended survey protocols if available. Survey and monitoring protocols and guidelines are available at: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Survey-Protocol>.

Botanical surveys for special-status plant species, including those with a California Rare Plant Rank (<http://www.cnps.org/cnps/rareplants/inventory/>), must be conducted during the blooming period within the Project area and adjacent habitats that may be indirectly impacted by, for example, changes to hydrological conditions, and require the identification of reference populations¹. More than one year of surveys may be necessary based on environmental conditions. Please refer to CDFW protocols for surveying and evaluating impacts to special-status plants available at: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Plants>.

IMPACT ANALYSIS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The EIR should discuss all direct and indirect impacts (temporary and permanent) that may occur with implementation of the Project (CEQA Guidelines, § 15126.2). This includes evaluating and describing impacts such as:

- Encroachments into riparian habitats, wetlands or other sensitive areas;
- Potential for impacts to special-status species;

¹ CRPR 1B plants are considered rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere. Further information on CRPR ranks is available in CDFW’s Special Vascular Plants, Bryophytes, and Lichens List (<https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=109383&inline>) and on the California Native Plant Society website (<https://www.cnps.org/rare-plants/cnps-rare-plant-ranks>).

Patrick Kelly
City of Mill Valley
January 19, 2023
Page 5 of 10

- Loss or modification of breeding, nesting, dispersal and foraging habitat, including vegetation removal, alternation of soils and hydrology, and removal of habitat structural features (e.g., snags, roosts, vegetation overhanging banks);
- Permanent and temporary habitat disturbances associated with ground disturbance, noise, lighting, reflection, air pollution, traffic or human presence; and
- Obstruction of movement corridors, fish passage, or access to water sources and other core habitat features.

The CEQA document should also identify reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Project vicinity, disclose any cumulative impacts associated with these projects, determine the significance of each cumulative impact, and assess the significance of the Project's contribution to the impact (CEQA Guidelines, §15355). Although a project's impacts may be insignificant individually, its contributions to a cumulative impact may be considerable; a contribution to a significant cumulative impact – e.g., reduction of available habitat for a special-status species – should be considered cumulatively considerable without mitigation to minimize or avoid the impact.

Based on the comprehensive analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the Project, the CEQA Guidelines direct the lead agency to consider and describe all feasible mitigation measures to avoid potentially significant impacts in the EIR, and/or mitigate significant impacts of the Project on the environment (CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15021, 15063, 15071, 15126.2, 15126.4 & 15370). This includes a discussion of impact avoidance and minimization measures for special-status species, which are recommended to be developed in early consultation with CDFW, USFWS, and the National Marine Fisheries Service. These measures can then be incorporated as enforceable Project conditions to reduce potential impacts to biological resources to less-than-significant levels.

ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

CEQA requires that information developed in EIRs and negative declarations be incorporated into a database which may be used to make subsequent or supplemental environmental determinations (Pub. Resources Code, § 21003, subd. (e)). Accordingly, please report any special-status species and natural communities detected during Project surveys to CNDDDB. The CNDDDB online field survey form and other methods for submitting data can be found at the following link:

<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Submitting-Data>. The types of information reported to CNDDDB can be found at the following link:

<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Plantsand-Animals>.

FILING FEES

Patrick Kelly
City of Mill Valley
January 19, 2023
Page 6 of 10

CDFW anticipates that the Project will have an impact on fish and/or wildlife, and assessment of filing fees is necessary (Fish & G. Code, § 711.4; Pub. Resources Code, § 21089). Fees are payable upon filing of the Notice of Determination by the Lead Agency and serve to help defray the cost of environmental review by CDFW.

If you have any questions, please contact Alex Single, Environmental Scientist, at (707) 799-4210 or Alexander.Single@wildlife.ca.gov; or Melanie Day, Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisory), at (707) 210-4415 or Melanie.Day@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:
Erin Chappell
B77F9A6211EF486
Erin Chappell
Regional Manager
Bay Delta Region

Attachment 1: Special-Status Species

ec: State Clearinghouse # 2022120597

Patrick Kelly
 City of Mill Valley
 January 19, 2023
 Page 7 of 10

ATTACHMENT 1 Special-Status Species

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status
Amphibians and Reptiles		
<i>Rana draytonii</i>	California red-legged frog	FT, SSC
<i>Rana boylei</i>	foothill yellow-legged frog - north coast DPS	SSC
<i>Dicamptodon ensatus</i>	California giant salamander	SSC
<i>Emys marmorata</i>	western pond turtle	SSC
Birds		
<i>Rallus obsoletus obsoletus</i>	California Ridgway's rail	FE, SE, FP
<i>Laterallus jamaicensis coturniculus</i>	California black rail	FP, ST
<i>Athene cunicularia</i>	burrowing owl	SSC
<i>Geothlypis trichas sinuosa</i>	saltmarsh common yellowthroat	SSC
<i>Melospiza melodia samuelis</i>	San Pablo song sparrow	SSC
Plants		
<i>Castilleja affinis</i> var. <i>neglecta</i>	Tiburon paintbrush	FE, SE, CRPR 1B.2
<i>Arenaria paludicola</i>	marsh sandwort	FE, SE, CRPR 1B.1
<i>Pentachaeta bellidiflora</i>	white-rayed pentachaeta	FE, SE, CRPR 1B.1
<i>Holocarpha macradenia</i>	Santa Cruz tarplant	FT, SE, CRPR 1B.1
<i>Hesperolinon congestum</i>	Marin western flax	FT, ST, CRPR 1B.1
<i>Calochortus tiburonensis</i>	Tiburon mariposa-lily	FT, ST, CRPR 1B.1
<i>Pleuropogon hooverianus</i>	North Coast semaphore grass	ST, CRPR 1B.1

Patrick Kelly
 City of Mill Valley
 January 19, 2023
 Page 8 of 10

<i>Trifolium amoenum</i>	two-fork clover	FE, CRPR 1B.1
<i>Triquetrella californica</i>	coastal triquetrella	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Fissidens pauperculus</i>	minute pocket moss	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Polemonium carneum</i>	Oregon polemonium	CRPR 2B.2
<i>Chloropyron maritimum</i> ssp. <i>palustre</i>	Point Reyes salty bird's-beak	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Eriogonum luteolum</i> var. <i>caninum</i>	Tiburon buckwheat	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Polygonum marinense</i>	Marin knotweed	CRPR 3.1
<i>Gilia millefoliata</i>	dark-eyed gilia	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Quercus parvula</i> var. <i>tamalpaisensis</i>	Tamalpais oak	CRPR 1B.3
<i>Stebbinsoseris decipiens</i>	Santa Cruz microseris	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Amorpha californica</i> var. <i>napensis</i>	Napa false indigo	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Arctostaphylos virgata</i>	Marin manzanita	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Kopsiopsis hookeri</i>	small groundcone	CRPR 2B.3
<i>Calystegia purpurata</i> ssp. <i>saxicola</i>	coastal bluff morning-glory	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Arctostaphylos montana</i> ssp. <i>montana</i>	Mt. Tamalpais manzanita	CRPR 1B.3
<i>Lessingia micradenia</i> var. <i>micradenia</i>	Tamalpais lessingia	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Cirsium andrewsii</i>	Franciscan thistle	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Hemizonia congesta</i> ssp. <i>congesta</i>	congested-headed hayfield tarplant	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Plagiobothrys glaber</i>	hairless popcornflower	CRPR 1A
<i>Microseris paludosa</i>	marsh microseris	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Navarretia rosulata</i>	Marin County navarretia	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Silene scouleri</i> ssp. <i>scouleri</i>	Scouler's catchfly	CRPR 2B.2

Patrick Kelly
City of Mill Valley
January 19, 2023
Page 9 of 10

<i>Streptanthus batrachopus</i>	Tamalpais jewelflower	CRPR 1B.3
<i>Helianthella castanea</i>	Diablo helianthella	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Horkelia tenuiloba</i>	thin-lobed horkelia	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Gilia capitata</i> ssp. <i>chamissonis</i>	blue coast gilia	CRPR 1B.1
<i>Dirca occidentalis</i>	western leatherwood	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Fritillaria lanceolata</i> var. <i>tristulis</i>	Marin checker lily	CRPR 1B.1
<i>Calamagrostis crassiglumis</i>	Thurber's reed grass	CRPR 2B.1
<i>Streptanthus glandulosus</i> ssp. <i>pulchellus</i>	Mt. Tamalpais bristly jewelflower	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Streptanthus glandulosus</i> ssp. <i>niger</i>	Tiburon jewelflower	CRPR 1B.1
<i>Cirsium hydrophilum</i> var. <i>vaseyi</i>	Mt. Tamalpais thistle	CRPR 1B.2
Fishes		
<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>	Central Valley winter Chinook salmon	FE, SE
<i>Oncorhynchus kisutch</i>	Coho salmon – central California coast Evolutionarily Significant Unit	FE, SE
<i>Hypomesus pacificus</i>	Delta smelt	FT, SE
<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>	Central Valley spring Chinook salmon	FT, ST
<i>Spirinchus thaleichthys</i>	longfin smelt	FC, ST
<i>Eucyclogobius newberryi</i>	tidewater goby	FE
<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>	Central Valley steelhead	FT
<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>	Central California Coast winter Steelhead	FT
<i>Lavinia symmetricus symmetricus</i>	Central California roach	FT
<i>Acipenser medirostris</i>	green sturgeon - southern DPS	FT, SSC
<i>Cottus gulosus</i>	riffle sculpin	SSC
<i>Entosphenus tridentata</i>	Pacific lamprey	SSC

Patrick Kelly
 City of Mill Valley
 January 19, 2023
 Page 10 of 10

<i>Acipenser transmontanus</i>	white sturgeon	SSC
<i>Lampetra ayersi</i>	river lamprey	SSC
<i>Pogonichthys macrolepidotus</i>	Sacramento splittail	SSC
<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>	Central Valley late-fall Chinook salmon	SSC
<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>	Central Valley fall Chinook salmon	SSC
<i>Lampetra richardsoni</i>	western brook lamprey	SSC
<i>Lavinia symmetricus subspecies</i>	Tomales roach	SSC
Insects		
<i>Bombus occidentalis</i>	western bumble bee	SC
<i>Icaricia icarioides missionensis</i>	mission blue butterfly	FE
<i>Danaus plexippus plexippus</i>	monarch - California overwintering population	FC
Mammals		
<i>Reithrodontomys raviventris</i>	salt-marsh harvest mouse	FP, FE, SE
<i>Enhydra lutris nereis</i>	southern sea otter	FP, FT
<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>	Townsend's big-eared bat	SSC
<i>Antrozous pallidus</i>	pallid bat	SSC
<i>Taxidea taxus</i>	American badger	SSC

FP = state fully protected under Fish and Game Code; FE = federally listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA); FT = federally listed as threatened under ESA; SE = state listed as endangered under CESA; ST = state listed as threatened under CESA; SSC = state Species of Special Concern; CRPR = California Rare Plant Rank, DPS = Distinct Population Segment