



Proposed Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

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

Publication Date: November 22, 2023
Public Review Period: 11/22/23- 12/22/23
State Clearinghouse Number:
Permit Sonoma File Number: **PLP23-0011**
Prepared by: Claudette Diaz at
Phone: (707) 565-7387

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

Project Name: **PLP23-0011 / Hardware Retail Store and Nursery**

Project Applicant/Operator: Ken Cohan/ Ralph Sandborn

Project Location/Address: 26 Bloomfield Road and 1794 Highway 116 South, Sebastopol

APN: 063-040-034 and 063-040-035

General Plan Land Use Designation: Rural Residential (RR) 3-acre density

Zoning Designation: Limited Commercial (LC) Scenic Corridor (SR)

Decision Making Body: Sonoma County Board of Zoning Adjustments (BZA)

Appeal Body: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors (BOS)

Project Description: See Item III, below.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

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

Table 1. Summary of Topic Areas

Topic Area	Abbreviation*	Yes	No
Aesthetics	VIS	X	
Agriculture & Forestry Resources	AG		X
Air Quality	AIR	X	
Biological Resources	BIO	X	
Cultural Resources	CUL	X	
Energy	ENERGY		X
Geology and Soils	GEO	X	
Greenhouse Gas Emission	GHG		X
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	HAZ		X
Hydrology and Water Quality	HYDRO		X
Land Use and Planning	LU		X
Mineral Resources	MIN		X
Noise	NOISE	X	
Population and Housing	POP		X
Public Services	PS		X
Recreation	REC		X
Transportation	TRANS	X	
Tribal Cultural Resources	TCR	X	
Utilities and Service Systems	UTL		X
Wildfire	FIRE		X
Mandatory Findings of Significance	MFS		X

RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

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

Table 2 list the agencies and other permits that will be required to construct and/or operate the project. Leave this section out if there are no permits required.

Table 2.

Agency	Activity	Authorization
Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department (Permit Sonoma)	Requires that grading, septic, and building permits be obtained for development of this site.	
State Water Resources Control Board	Generating stormwater (construction, industrial, or municipal)	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requires submittal of NOI
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Lake or streambed alteration	Fish and Game Code, Section 1600

Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD)	Stationary air emissions	BAAQMD Rules and Regulations (Regulation 2, Rule 1 – General Requirements; Regulation 2, Rule 2 – New Source Review; Regulation 9 – Rule 8 – NOx and CO from Stationary Internal Combustion Engines; and other BAAQMD administered Statewide Air Toxics Control Measures (ATCM) for stationary diesel engines
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and or National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	Incidental take permit for listed plant and animal species	Endangered Species Act
Caltrans Encroachment	Activities within a state highway	

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDING:

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



11/22/23

Prepared by: Claudette Diaz

Date



Expanded Initial Study

Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department

2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95403

(707) 565-1900 FAX (707) 565-1103

I. INTRODUCTION:

The applicant, Ken Cohan, representing Ralph Sandborn, proposes to construct a new hardware retail center, including a 12,260 square foot retail building, a 2,984 square foot nursery structure, and a 4,000 square foot warehouse storage building. A referral letter was sent to the appropriate local, state and federal agencies and interest groups who may wish to comment on the project.

This report is the Initial Study required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The report was prepared by Claudette Diaz, Project Review Planner with the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department, Project Review Division. Information on the project was provided by Ken Cohan. Technical studies were provided by qualified consultants to support the conclusions in this Expanded Initial Study. Technical studies, other reports, documents, and maps referred to in this document are available for review through the Project Planner, or the Permit and Resource Management Department (Permit Sonoma).

Please contact Claudette Diaz, Planner, at (707) 565-7387 for more information.

II. EXISTING FACILITY

The project site is comprised of two parcels, Parcel 1 (APN 063-040-034) approximately 1.50 acres in size, and Parcel 2 (063-040-035) approximately 1.26 acres in size. Parcel 1 is currently vacant, and Parcel 2 is developed with a single-family residence and several accessory structures. The project site is located on the southwest corner of Bloomfield Road and Highway 116 South, Sebastopol. The project site can be accessed by two driveways, one on Highway 116 South, and one on Bloomfield Road.

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes a Use Permit and Design Review application to allow for a new neighborhood retail center consisting of a retail building of 12,260 gross square feet with an adjacent open air roofed garden supply/nursery structure of 2,984 square feet, and a separate warehouse building of 4,000 gross square feet. In addition to the two building structures there will be a trash enclosure and two fire suppression water tanks located above ground. The hours of operation will be 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Sunday with a maximum of 11 employees. The anticipated trip generation is 180 trips/day.

Site Characteristics and Zoning:

The project site is comprised of two parcels, Parcel 1 and Parcel 2, which are proposed to be merged resulting in one parcel approximately 2.76 acres in size. The site is located in unincorporated Sonoma County, approximately 0.50 miles south of the City of Sebastopol, and is zoned Limited Commercial (LC).

Surrounding Land Use and Zoning:

The surrounding parcels are a mix of commercial and residential uses. The neighboring parcels are

zoned Rural Residential (RR), Agriculture and Residential (AR), and Limited Commercial (LC).

Topography:

The site currently drains directly to Foss Creek, except for a small portion to the east which enters an unnamed channel that is a tributary to Foss Creek.

Vegetation:

The site is generally flat and includes non-native grassland and ruderal habitats within developed areas. The back portion of the site is primarily vegetated with non-native grasses, various landscape plants and cultivars, and some oak trees.

Proposed Buildings and Uses:

The proposed development will consist of a retail building of 12,260 square feet with an adjacent open air roofed garden supply/nursery structure of 2,984 square feet, and a separate warehouse building of 4,000 square feet. In addition to the two building structures there will be a trash enclosure and two fire suppression water tanks located above ground.

The hardware store will have a maximum of 10 employees.

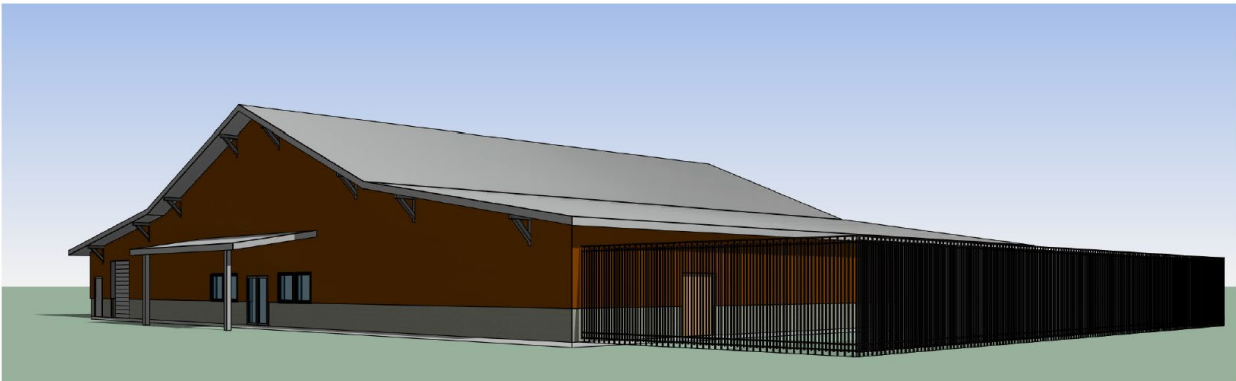
Design Style:

The buildings will be metal with a four-foot-high board formed concrete wainscot with metal panels for walls and metal panel roofing. The windows will be bronze anodized frames with non-reflective glazing.

Figure 1- View from Highway 116



Figure 2- Rear entrance and nursery



Hours of Operation:

The hours of operation will be 7:00 am to 7:00 pm Monday through Saturday and 8:00 am to 6:00 pm on

Sunday.

Parking:

The project as proposed would provide 65 parking spaces on-site, including three ADA-compliant spaces and 13 electric vehicle capable spaces. The project also proposes a total of 13 bicycle parking spaces.

Access:

The project access would include two driveways, one on Highway 116 South approximately 300 feet west of Bloomfield Road and one on Bloomfield Road approximately 150 feet south of the intersection with SR 116. Due to the existing “painted median” on SR 116, movements at this driveway would be limited to right turns in and out.

Water and Septic:

Water will be provided by an existing private on-site well. A new mound septic system (SEP22-0096) is planned to be located to the North of the retail building.

Landscape:

The project site will be fully landscaped with hedges, shrubs, and accent plants along the frontage of the property to screen the site from Highway 116 South. The landscaping plans include a mix of fruit trees, evergreen trees, canopy/street trees, and small flowering/accent trees.

Preliminary Design Review was completed by the Design Review Committee on July 20, 2022 (see Aesthetic section). The DRC approved the plans provided that the final landscaping plans include additional landscaping on the westerly corner of the lot and along the Highway 116 parking frontage.

A total of four (4) protected trees are proposed to be removed to accommodate the proposed project. The removed trees will be mitigated and consistent with the County’s Tree Ordinance.

Construction:

Construction: Project construction is anticipated to occur over 6-8 months with work hours from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm, Monday-Saturday as weather permits, and no construction grading, or heavy construction is to occur during holidays.

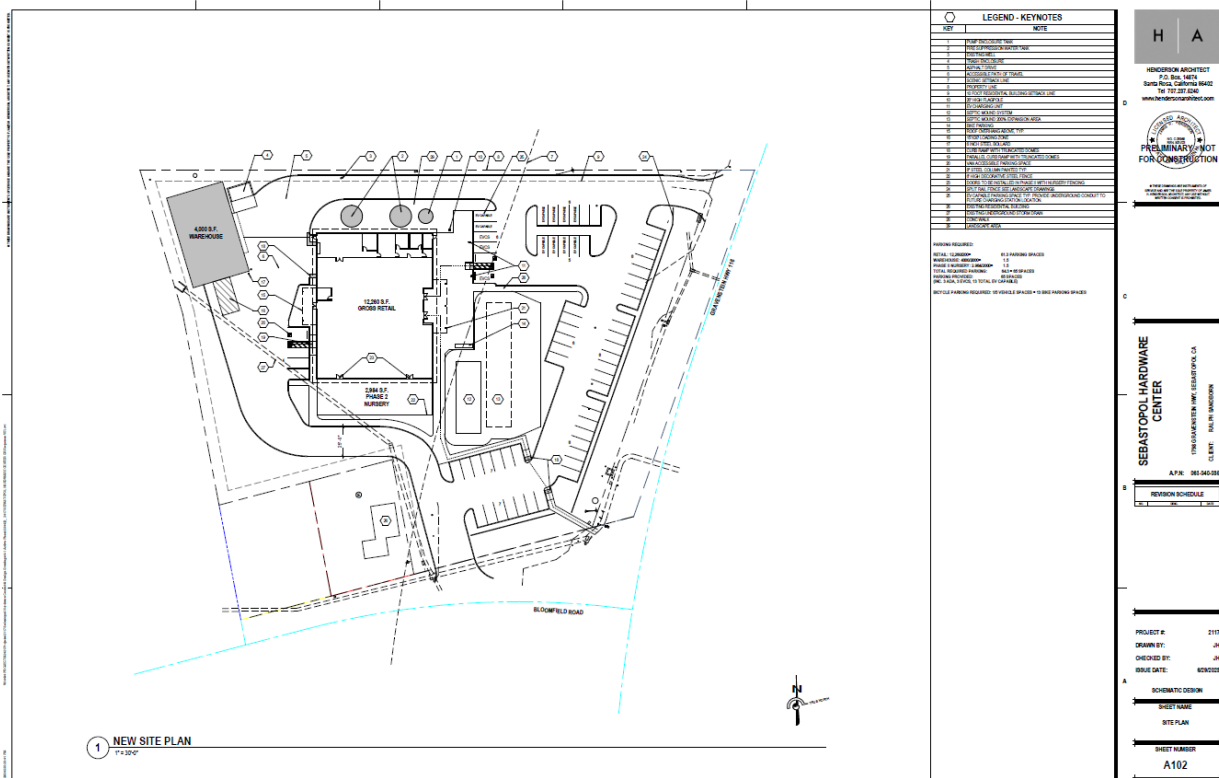
IV. SETTING

The project site is located on the southwest corner of Highway 116 South, at the intersection of Highway 116 South and Bloomfield Road, approximately 0.50 miles south of City of Sebastopol limits. Parcel 1 is currently vacant. Parcel 2 is occupied with an existing single-family residence and accessory structures, proposed to be demolished. The site is generally flat and includes non-native grassland and ruderal habitats within developed areas. The majority of the project site is covered with perennial grasses and trees along the southern border and scattered within the western portion of the site. The back portion of the site is primarily vegetated with non-native grasses, various landscape plants and cultivars, and some oak trees. Part of an ephemeral drainage is located on the southern portion of the site; the drainage originates off-site to the south and parallels the southern property line for approximately 80 feet before it is culverted under the site where it ultimately drains to the east underground and off-site.

Figure 3 - Project Location



Figure 4 - Site Plan



V. ISSUES RAISED BY THE PUBLIC OR AGENCIES

A referral packet was drafted and circulated to inform and solicit comments from selected relevant local, state and federal agencies; and to special interest groups that were anticipated to take interest in the project. As of April 2020, the project planner had received responses to the project referral from the following:

- Sonoma County Environmental Health
- Sonoma County Department of Public Works
- The Northwest Information Center at Sonoma State University
- Permit Sonoma Grading & Storm Water Section
- Permit Sonoma Project Review Health Specialist
- Permit Sonoma Natural Resources Section
- Permit Sonoma Fire and Emergency Services Department and County Fire Official.

The referral responses included several requests for further information and included recommended draft use permit conditions of approval. No responses were received from state or federal agencies.

Tribal Consultation Under AB52

- Assembly Bill 52 notifications were sent to the following Tribes on April 20, 2022:
- Cloverdale Rancheria of Pomo Indians
- Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians
- Lytton Rancheria of California
- Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria
- Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria
- Middletown Rancheria of Pomo Indians of California
- Mishewal Wappo Tribe of Alexander Valley
- Muwekma Ohlone Tribe San Francisco Bay Area

Lytton Rancheria requested additional information on May 4th, 2022. After further review of the Archeological Report, Lytton Rancheria did not seek any further consultation.

No other tribes requested further information or requested formal consultation. As required by County standards, a Condition of Approval has been included to address the potential event of archeological remains being found during construction. (See Cultural Resources section below for additional details.)

Public Comment

Several letters of public comment have been received to date (attached).

VI. OTHER RELATED PROJECTS

No other proposed discretionary projects were identified within the project vicinity as of November 2022.

VII. EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

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

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

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated: The project would have the impact described, and the impact could be significant. One or more mitigation measures have been

identified that will reduce the impact to a less than significant level.

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

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

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

1. AESTHETICS:

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

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

Comment:

The Project is in an area designated as visually sensitive by the Sonoma County General Plan. A portion of the project site is located within a Scenic Corridor. The proposed hardware store, nursery, and storage building will be placed outside of the designated Scenic Corridor, approximately 200 feet from the centerline of Highway 116 South (Gravenstein Highway).

The project is consistent with the Scenic Highway Guidelines for Highway 116, which encourages new development to not restrict the scenic qualities of Highway 116 corridor and that substandard businesses upgrade their appearance.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

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

Comment:

The project is not located on or visible from a state scenic highway. The two officially designated state scenic highways in Sonoma County are Highway 12 and Highway 116, specifically north of the project site¹. The project will be heavily screened by proposed landscaping and is designed to complement the neighboring residential and commercial areas. The project was reviewed by the Design Review Committee (DRC) on July 20, 2022, The DRC requested that the applicant return for final design review with final landscaping plans, lighting plans, signage plans, and to consider architectural changes. The project will return to the Design Review Committee to ensure there the project will not result in any impacts to scenic resources associated with a state scenic highway.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

¹<https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aac> (accessed March 16, 2023)

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

Comment:

The existing visual character of the project site and vicinity is rural residential with some nearby commercial and agricultural operations. The project site is currently visible from Highway 116 South and from Bloomfield Road. The project is located outside of the Scenic Corridor setback, is proposed a 12,260 square foot retail store, a 2,984 square foot nursery, a 4,000 square foot storage building, and associated grading and landscaping.

Using the County of Sonoma's Visual Assessment Guidelines², the project site sensitivity is categorized as "High" because:

The site or any portion thereof is within a land use or zoning designation protecting scenic or natural resources, such as General Plan designated scenic landscape units, coastal zone, community separators, or scenic corridors. The site vicinity is generally characterized by the natural setting and forms a scenic backdrop for the community or scenic corridor. This category includes building and construction areas within the SR designation located on prominent hilltops, visible slopes less than 40 percent or where there are significant natural features of aesthetic value that are visible from public roads or public use areas (i.e., parks, trails etc.). This category also includes building or construction sites on prominent ridgelines that may not be designated as scenic resources but are visible from a designated scenic corridor.

The project's visual dominance would be "Co-Dominant", applied when proposed project elements would be moderate or prominent within the setting, but still compatible with their surroundings. The proposed buildings and other site development would be prominent within the setting but attract attention equally with other landscape features. The project proposes vegetation screening, and the proposed colors and materials would be compatible with the surroundings.

The project's effect on visual character and quality of the site and its surrounding was determined based on the County's Visual Assessment Guidelines, Table 2: Thresholds of Significance for Visual Impacts. The project would be considered to have a significant visual impact that could be reduced to less than significant with mitigation incorporated. The proposed structures are located outside of the Scenic Corridor and propose vegetation screening to reduce visual impacts along Highway 116 South. The proposed lighting will be low mounted, downward casting, and full shielded to prevent glare and will not wash out structures or any portions of the sight. The Design Review Committee will review final landscaping and lighting plans at a later date to ensure the project will not result in any visual impacts.

Table 1 Thresholds of Significance for Visual Impact Analysis Visual Assessment Guidelines

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

² "Visual Assessment Guidelines," Permit Sonoma, April 2023, <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Environmental-Review-Guidelines/Visual-Assessment-Guidelines/>

Significance Level:

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation:

Mitigation VIS-1: Prior to issuance of building permits, an exterior lighting plan shall be submitted for design review. Exterior lighting shall be low mounted, downward casting and fully shielded to prevent glare. Lighting shall not wash out structures or any portions of the site. Light fixtures shall not be located at the periphery of the property and shall not spill over onto adjacent properties or into the night sky. Flood lights are not permitted. All parking lot and streetlights shall be full cut-off fixtures. Lighting shall shut off automatically after closing and security lighting shall be motion sensor activated.

Mitigation Monitoring:

Mitigation Monitoring VIS-1: Permit Sonoma shall not issue the Building Permit until an exterior night lighting plan has been submitted that is consistent with the approved plans and County standards. The Permit and Resource Management Department shall not sign off final occupancy on the Building Permit until a site inspection of the property has been conducted that indicates all lighting improvements have been installed according to the approved plans and conditions. If light and glare complaints are received, the Permit and Resource Management Department shall conduct a site inspection and require the property be brought into compliance or initiate procedures to revoke or modify the permit. (Ongoing)

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

Comment:

The new buildings would introduce new sources of light and glare. However, Mitigation Measure VIS-1 would ensure that proposed lighting would be compatible with the neighboring residential and commercial areas.

Because an exterior lighting plan will be reviewed and approved by Design Review Committee prior to issuance of building permits to ensure compliance with County standards and compatibility with the area, this impact will be less than significant.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant

2. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES:

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

Would the project:

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

Comment:

The project parcel is mapped as Urban and Built-Up Land and Farmland of Local Importance. Therefore, no Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance would be converted to a non-agricultural use.

Significance Level:

No Impact

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

Comment:

The parcel is zoned Limited Commercial (LC), which allows neighborhood serving retail, nurseries, and farm equipment sales. The project site is not subject to a Williamson Act Land Conservation Contract. The project will not conflict with zoning for agricultural use or lands under a Land Conservation contract.

Significance Level:

No Impact

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

Comment:

The project does not contain forest land as defined in PRC Section 4526 and is not in a Timberland Production zoning district. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with or cause a rezoning of any forest land or timberland zoned Timber Production.

Significance Level:

No Impact

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

Comment:

The project is not located on forest land. Therefore, the project will not result in the loss or conversion of forest lands.

Significance Level:

No Impact

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

Comment:

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

Significance Level:

No Impact

3. AIR QUALITY:

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

Would the project:**a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?**Comment:

The project is within the jurisdiction of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), which is currently designated as a nonattainment area for state and federal ozone standards, the state PM 10 standard, and the state and federal PM 2.5 standard. The District has adopted an Ozone Attainment Plan and a Clean Air Plan (2017) in compliance with Federal and State Clean Air Acts. These plans include measures to achieve compliance with both ozone standards. The plans deal primarily with emissions of ozone precursors (nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds, also referred to as Reactive Organic Gases (ROG)). For an individual project, consistency with BAAQMD's significance thresholds is interpreted as demonstrating support for the 2017 Clean Air Plan's goals. As described in the discussion below in Section 3(b), the project would not result in exceedances of BAAQMD thresholds for criteria air pollutants and thus would not conflict with or disrupt the 2017 Clean Air Plan's goal to attain air quality standards.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable Federal or State ambient air quality standard?Comment:

As noted above, the BAAQMD is designated non-attainment for state ozone and PM standards, and for the federal 8-hour ozone and PM2.5 24-hour standards. BAAQMD's most recent CEQA Guidelines from 2022 provide screening criteria for operational and construction emissions that offer lead agencies a conservation indication of whether implementing a proposed project could result in potentially significant criteria air pollutants and precursors impacts that exceed BAAQMD's thresholds of significance. BAAQMD has determined that projects that do not exceed significance thresholds would not generate emissions that are cumulatively considerable.

Construction

Based on the screening criteria in the 2022 CEQA Guidelines, BAAQMD has determined that Home Improvement or Hardware-Paint Stores that are less than 221,000 square feet with construction best management practices incorporated would not result in construction emissions above the BAAQMD's thresholds of significance. The project proposes approximately 19,244 square feet (12,260 square foot retail space, 4,000 square foot warehouse, and 2,984 square foot nursery), a size that falls well below the BAAQMD construction screening levels, and therefore would not exceed BAAQMD or state thresholds, and no additional analysis is warranted.

Operations

Based on the screening criteria in the 2022 CEQA Guidelines, BAAQMD has determined that Home Improvement or Hardware-Paint Stores that are less than 452,000 square feet with construction best management practices incorporated would not result in operational emissions above the BAAQMD's thresholds of significance. The project proposes approximately 19,244 square feet, a size that falls well below the BAAQMD operational screening levels, and therefore would not exceed BAAQMD or state thresholds, and no additional analysis is warranted.

Because the project meets screening criteria for construction and operational emissions and will incorporate BAAQMD's best management practices for construction, it can be conservatively assumed that the project will not exceed significance thresholds and therefore would not generate emissions that are cumulatively considerable.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation:

This impact would be reduced to less than significant by including dust control measures as described in the following mitigation measure:

Mitigation Measure AIR-1:

The following dust control measures shall be included in the project:

- a. All exposed surfaces (e.g., parking areas, staging areas, soil piles, graded areas, and unpaved access roads) shall be watered two times per day.
- b. All haul trucks transporting soil, sand, or other loose material off-site shall be covered.
- c. All visible mud or dirt trackout onto adjacent public roads shall be removed using wet power vacuum street sweepers at least once per day. The use of dry power sweeping is prohibited.
- d. All vehicle speeds on unpaved roads shall be limited to 15 mph.
- e. All roadways, driveways, and sidewalks to be paved shall be completed as soon as possible. Building pads shall be laid as soon as possible after grading unless seeding or soil binders are used.
- f. All excavation, grading, and/or demolition activities shall be suspended when average wind speeds exceed 20 mph.
- g. All trucks and equipment, including their tires, shall be washed off prior to leaving the site.
- h. Unpaved roads providing access to sites located 100 feet or further from a paved road shall be treated with a 6- to 12-inch layer of compacted layer of wood chips, mulch, or gravel.
- i. Publicly visible signs shall be posted with the telephone number and name of the person to contact at the lead agency regarding dust complaints. This person shall respond and take corrective action within 48 hours. The Air District's General Air Pollution Complaints number shall also be visible to ensure compliance with applicable regulations.
- j. Limit the simultaneous occurrence of excavation, grading, and ground-disturbing construction activities
Install wind breaks (e.g., trees, fences) on the windward side(s) of actively disturbed areas of construction. Wind breaks should have at maximum 50 percent air porosity.
- k. Plant vegetative ground cover (e.g., fast-germinating native grass seed) in disturbed areas as soon as possible and watered appropriately until vegetation is established.
- l. Install sandbags or other erosion control measures to prevent silt runoff to public roadways from sites with a slope greater than one percent.
- m. Minimize the amount of excavated material or waste materials stored at the site.
- n. Hydroseed or apply non-toxic soil stabilizers to construction areas, including previously graded areas, that are inactive for at least 10 calendar days.

Mitigation Monitoring AIR-1:

Building/grading permits shall not be approved for issuance by Permit Sonoma staff until the above notes are printed on all construction plans including plans for building and grading.

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

Sensitive receptors include hospitals, schools, convalescent facilities, and residential areas. The project is located in a predominately rural residential area, with some agricultural uses and neighboring commercial uses. The site is surrounded by residential parcels ranging from 0.16 acres in size and 5.78 acres in size. A neighboring limited commercial zoned parcel, approximately 2.37 acres in size, is located across the street on Bloomfield Road and Highway 116 South. The nearest school is located approximately 0.70 miles southwest of the project site.

As discussed in Section 3(b), above, the proposed project is well below the size that can be expected to generate significant emissions during operations or construction. While the project is not expected to significantly increase long-term emissions, project construction could result in a temporary increase in dust emissions. The project is required to implement best management practices during construction to reduce short-term dust emissions generated during construction, and therefore project effects on sensitive receptors would be less than significant.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation:

See Mitigation Measure AIR-1 and Mitigation Monitoring AIR-1 above.

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

Comment:

The project is not an odor generating use, nor located near an odor generating source that may affect the use and would have no odor impact.

Construction equipment may generate odors during project construction; however, construction activities would be short-term, intermittent, and would cease upon completion of project construction. In addition, implementation of Mitigation Measure AIR-1 would reduce construction emissions which could contribute to odor and would not affect a substantial number of people. Therefore, the construction-related odor impact would be less than significant with mitigation described in mitigation measure AIR-1.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation:

Mitigation Measure AIR-1

Mitigation Monitoring:

Mitigation Monitoring AIR-1

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES:

Regulatory Framework

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

Federal

Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA)

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

Section 9 of FESA prohibits the unlawful "take" of any listed fish or wildlife species. Take, as defined by FESA, means "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such action." USFWS's regulations define harm to mean "an act which actually kills or

injures wildlife.” Such an act “may include “significant habitat modification or degradation where it actually kills or injures wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding or sheltering” (50 CFR § 17.3). Take can be permitted under FESA pursuant to sections 7 and 10. Section 7 provides a process for take permits for federal projects or projects subject to a federal permit, and Section 10 provides a process for incidental take permits for projects without a federal nexus. FESA does not extend the take prohibition to federally listed plants on private land, other than prohibiting the removal, damage, or destruction of such species in violation of state law.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA)

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

The Clean Water Act (CWA)

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

Section 404.

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

Section 401.

Any applicant for a federal permit to impact waters of the U.S. under Section 404 of the CWA, including Nationwide Permits where pre-construction notification is required, must also provide to the USACE a certification or waiver from the State of California. The “401 Certification” is provided by the State Water

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

State

California Endangered Species Act (CESA)

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

Fish and Game Code 1600-1602

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

Nesting Birds

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

Non-Game Mammals

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

California Fully Protected Species and Species of Special Concern

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

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

Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

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

Local

Sonoma County General Plan

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

Riparian Corridor Ordinance

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

Valley Oak Habitat (VOH) Combining District

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

Sonoma County Tree Protection Ordinance

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

Project Analysis

Would the project:

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

Comment:

Lucy Macmillan, M.S., environmental scientist, conducted a field survey on December 14, 2021, and October 17, 2022³, to evaluate the potential presence of biological communities, the potential for the site to support special-status plant and wildlife species, and the potential presence of any other sensitive natural resources protected by local, state, or federal laws and regulations. The assessment dated December 2022, found the following:

Special-Status Plants

A native plant inventory was taken during a site visit in December 2021 by a Ms. Anya Perron-Burdick a restoration ecologist and botanist qualified in identifying native California plants and Sensitive Natural Communities. There were no rare plants identified on-site. The majority of the site is developed or disturbed, followed by annual non-native grasses. The rare plant most likely to be present on site is Hayfield tarweed (*Hemizonia congesta* ssp. *congesta*). There was no evidence that Hayfield tarweed was ever present on the project site. The closest observance of Hayfield tarweed to the project site was in 2021 adjacent to vernal pools at Occidental Road and Irwin Lane east of Sebastopol where vernal pools and proper habitat conditions are found.

A small community of willow (*Salix lasiolepis*) considered a California Natural Community/Sensitive Habitat (Code 61.201.01) covering 0.01 acre is associated with the ephemeral drainage on the southern portion of the site. The community will not be impacted by the proposed project therefore no mitigation is required.

Special Status Wildlife Nesting Birds

An abandoned barn owl nest was observed in one of the small sheds on the site during

³ Macmillan, Lucy M.S., "Biological Resources Assessment Sebastopol Hardware Center 1794 Gravenstein Highway South, Sebastopol, Sonoma County, California, APN 063-040-034 and -035", December 2022.

the December 14, 2021, survey. The non-native grasses and various trees on site including native oaks provide potential habitat for a variety of nesting birds. The outbuildings on the site also provide habitat for nesting birds and owls. Birds and raptors are protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (50 CFR 10.13). Their nest, eggs, and young are also protected under California Fish and Wildlife Code (§3503, §3503.5, and §3800). In addition, raptors such as the white-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*) are “fully protected” under Fish and Wildlife Code (§3511). Fully protected raptors cannot be taken or possessed (that is, kept in captivity) at any time. Nesting season for birds in California generally occurs between February 1st and August 15th.

Because the project involves removal of the outbuildings on the site, some tree removal, and paving over existing grasses, there is a potential impact to nesting birds. Potential impacts to nesting birds may be reduced to a less than significant level with Mitigation Measure BIO-1 that would require pre-construction surveys prior to site disturbance, including tree removal.

Special-Status Bats (Roosting Bats)

The trees and outbuildings onsite provide potential habitat for various special-status bat species known to occur in the project region. These species include but are not limited to Townsend’s big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*) and Pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*). These bat species are California Species of Special Concern and may roost in mature trees, snags, crevices, cavities, and foliage within this habitat. Maternity roosting for bats is April through September. Removal of suitable roosts has the potential to impact special-status bat species as well as other common bat species, if present. Likewise, noise, vibration, and dust from activities has the potential to impact maternity roosting bats in nearby habitats, if present.

Renovation/removal/demolition of buildings may cause direct mortality of roosting bats that use the structures, if the structures are removed during seasonal periods of inactivity (maternity season or winter), or without first conducting humane bat eviction or partial dismantling under supervision of a qualified bat biologist experienced with bats using man-made roosts. This impact may be reduced to less than significant impact by implementing Mitigation Measure BIO-2.

American Badger

The American badger (*Taxidea taxus*) is considered a Special of Special Concern by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Badgers are typically found in drier open stages of most shrub, forest, and herbaceous habitats with friable soils. The grasslands on the site provide habitat for the badger. One recently abandoned badger den was observed on southern portion of the site. The den was likely used for foraging as it was not part of an overall “sett” or series of tunnels typically associated with badger denning. Any direct or indirect impacts on the American Badger may be reduced to a less than significant impact by implementing Mitigation Measure BIO-3.

To avoid/minimize direct and indirect impacts on American badger within or immediately adjacent to the proposed project,

Significance Level:

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measures:

Mitigation Measure BIO-1 Nesting Bird Pre-Construction Surveys:

1. To avoid impacts to nesting birds, all construction-related activities (including but not limited to mobilization and staging, clearing, grubbing, vegetation removal, fence installation, demolition, and grading) shall occur outside the avian nesting season (generally prior to February 1 or after August 31). Active nesting is present if a bird is sitting in a nest, a nest has eggs or chicks in it, adults are observed carrying food to the nest, or if the young are dependent on parental care within the nesting territory.
2. If construction-related activities are scheduled to occur during the nesting season (generally February 1 through August 31), a qualified biologist shall conduct a habitat assessment and pre-construction nesting survey for nesting bird species no more than seven (7) days prior to initiation of work. The qualified biologist conducting the surveys shall be familiar with the breeding behaviors and nest structures of birds known to nest in the project site. Surveys

- shall be conducted at the appropriate times of day during periods of peak activity (i.e., early morning or dusk) and shall be of sufficient duration to observe movement patterns. Surveys shall be conducted within the project area and 250 feet of the construction limits for nesting non-raptors and 1,000 feet for nesting raptors, as feasible. If the survey area is found to be absent of nesting birds, no further mitigation would be required. However, if project activities are delayed by more than seven (7) days, an additional nesting bird survey shall be performed.
3. If pre-construction nesting bird surveys result in the location of active nests, site disturbance (including but not limited to equipment staging, fence installation, clearing, grubbing, vegetation removal, fence installation, demolition, and grading) shall be postponed until a qualified biologist establishes a temporary protective buffer around the nest(s). The buffer must be of sufficient size to protect the nesting site from construction-related disturbance and shall be established by a qualified ornithologist or biologist with extensive experience working with nesting birds near and on construction sites. Typically, adequate nesting buffers are up to 75 feet from the nest site or nest tree dripline for small birds and up to 1,000 feet for sensitive nesting birds that include several raptor species known from the region of the project site. The nest buffer, where it intersects the project site, shall be staked with orange construction fencing or orange lath staking. Monitoring, by a qualified biologist, shall be required to ensure compliance with the relevant California Fish and Game Code requirements. Monitoring dates and findings shall be documented. Active nests found inside the limits of the buffer zones or nests within the vicinity of the project site showing signs of distress from project activity, as determined by the qualified biologist, shall be monitored daily during the duration of the project for changes in breeding behavior. If changes in behavior are observed (e.g., distress, disruptions), the buffer shall be immediately adjusted by the qualified biologist until no further interruptions to breeding behavior are detected. The nest protection buffers may be reduced if the qualified biologist determines in coordination with CDFW that construction activities would not be likely to adversely affect the nest. If buffers are reduced, twice weekly monitoring may need to be conducted to confirm that construction activity is not resulting in detectable adverse effects on nesting birds or their young. The qualified biologist and CDFW may agree upon an alternative monitoring schedule depending on the construction activity, season, and species potentially subject to impact. Construction shall not commence within the prescribed buffer areas until a qualified biologist has determined that the young have fledged, or the nest site is otherwise no longer in use.
 4. A report of the pre-construction survey findings shall be prepared by a qualified biologist and submitted to the County prior to the initiation of construction-related activities that have the potential to disturb any active nests during the nesting season. The report shall include recommendations required for establishment of protective buffers as necessary to protect nesting.

Mitigation Monitoring BIO-1:

Permit Sonoma staff will not issue permits for ground disturbing activities between February 1st and August 31st until the site has been surveyed by a qualified biologist to ensure proper fencing and buffers are in place prior to issuance.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2 Roosting Bat Pre-Construction Survey(s):

1. **Prior to tree removal**, a qualified bat biologist shall conduct a habitat assessment for bats. The habitat assessment shall be conducted a minimum of 30 days prior to tree removal and shall include a visual inspection of potential roosting features (e.g., cavities, crevices in wood and bark, or exfoliating bark for colonial species, and suitable canopy for foliage-roosting species). If suitable habitat trees are found, they shall be flagged or otherwise clearly marked, CDFW shall be notified immediately, and tree trimming, or removal shall not proceed without approval in writing from CDFW. Trees may be removed only if: a) presence of bats is presumed, or documented during the surveys described below, in trees with suitable bat habitat, and removal using the two-step removal process detailed below occurs only during seasonal periods of bat activity from approximately March 1 through April 15 and September 1 through October 15, or b) after a qualified bat biologist, under prior written approval of the proposed survey methods by CDFW, conducts night emergence surveys or complete visual examination of roost features that establish absence of roosting bats. Two-step tree removal shall be conducted over two

consecutive days, as follows: 1) the first day (in the afternoon), under direct supervision and instruction by a qualified bat biologist with experience conducting two-step tree removal limbs and branches shall be removed by a tree cutter using chainsaws only. Limbs with cavities, crevices or deep bark fissures shall be avoided, and 2) the second day the entire tree shall be removed.

2. **Prior to structure removal**, a qualified bat biologist shall conduct a habitat assessment and surveys for special status species bats prior to any structure removal. The survey methodology shall include an initial habitat assessment and survey several months before project construction, to facilitate sufficient time to implement the exclusion plan described below, and the types of equipment used for detection. A bat exclusion plan shall be submitted to CDFW for approval if bats are detected during the above survey. The plan shall be implemented prior to project construction and allow bats to leave the structures unharmed. The plan shall: (1) recognize that both the maternity and winter roosting seasons are vulnerable times for bats and require exclusion outside of these times, generally between March 1 and April 15 or September 1 and October 15 when temperatures are sufficiently warm, and (2) identify suitable areas for excluded bats to disperse or require installation of appropriate dispersal habitat, such as artificial bat houses, prior to project construction, and include an associated management and monitoring plan.

Mitigation Monitoring BIO-2:

Prior to the issuance of site development permits, including grading permits that indicate tree removal work, Permit Sonoma staff shall review the results of the pre-construction survey. All measures recommended by the biologist and/or CDFW shall be noted on the final project plans.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3 American Badger Pre-Construction Surveys

To avoid/minimize direct and indirect impacts on American badger within or immediately adjacent to the proposed project as a result of project implementation, the following measures shall be implemented:

1. Within 30 days, but no sooner than 10 days, prior to ground disturbance activities associated with initial project construction, a qualified biologist, familiar with badger life history and who possesses experience with identification of active badger burrows and badger activity patterns shall conduct protocol-level surveys to determine the locations of any active winter or natal American badger dens within 100 feet of proposed ground disturbance areas. Potential badger dens located during the surveys shall be evaluated (typically with remote cameras) to determine activity status.
2. Any natal dens determined to be used by American badger, as identified from the surveys, shall be avoided and a 100-foot buffer shall be established around the dens during ground disturbance activities until it is determined by the qualified biologist that the den is no longer active, and the young are no longer dependent upon the den for survival.
3. If construction occurs during the non-breeding period (typically from June through February) and an individual badger is determined to be using a nonnatal den within 50-feet of the construction footprint construction shall be halted until the badger has left the den on its own accord, as determined by the biologist through monitoring of the den and/or the use of motion detection cameras. Once it is determined that the den is vacant, the den can be excavated and upon confirmation that the den is not occupied, the den can be collapsed and construction can continue.

Mitigation Monitoring BIO-3

Prior to the issuance of site development permits, Permit Sonoma staff shall review the results of the pre-construction survey. All measures recommended by the biologist and/or CDFW shall be noted on the final project plans.

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

Comment:

Ephemeral Drainage

Part of an ephemeral drainage is located on the southern portion of the site; the drainage originates off-site to the south and parallels the southern property line for approximately 80 feet before it is culverted under the site where it ultimately drains to the east underground and off-site.

A 10-foot setback from the ephemeral drainage on the southern property line is proposed. Due to site constraints associated with a scenic resource setback on Highway 116, a greater setback is not achievable. The creek originates off-site and receives flows from lands to the south. Modifications to the southern portion of the property will not significantly alter hydrology to the drainage given it only traverses the site for a short distance before being culverted underground.

A small community of willow covering 0.01 acre is associated with the ephemeral drainage on the southern portion of the site. As shown on Plate 4 this community (*Salix lasiolepis*) is considered a California Natural Community/Sensitive Habitat (Code 61.201.01). The community will not be impacted by the proposed project therefore no mitigation is required.

Significance Level:

No Impact

- c) **Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?**

Comment:

Waters of the U.S. and State, Including Wetlands

Prior to conducting the on-site wetlands assessment within the study area, various background materials relating to the site were reviewed. These include aeriels from Google earth and the Sebastopol USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle. No potential wetlands were observed in the background review. A small section of an unnamed ephemeral drainage was identified south of the southern property boundary line.

Additionally, the Soil Survey of Sonoma County was reviewed to determine if any of the soils on the project site are mapped as hydric soils. The presence of a hydric soil-mapping unit on a project site suggests the presence of potential wetland habitats and therefore is another tool used in wetland identification.

The soil units mapped on the project site are listed as:

- Goldridge fine sandy loam 2 to 9 percent slopes on the southeast corner of the property by Bloomfield Road
- Sebastopol sandy loam 2 to 9 percent slopes on the majority of the property

Of these soil units, Goldridge fine sandy loam is listed as having potential unnamed hydric inclusions in the form of swales. Sebastopol sandy loam is not listed as a hydric soil.

On December 14, 2021, a jurisdictional wetlands delineation was conducted on the project site utilizing the methods and procedures prescribed in the Arid West supplement. The project site was walked to identify and map potential jurisdictional wetland features.

No potential wetlands were identified on the site. Part of an ephemeral drainage is located on the southern portion of the site; the drainage originates off-site to the south and parallels the southern property line for approximately 80 feet before it is culverted under the site where it ultimately drains to the east underground and off-site.

On October 17, 2022, a follow-up delineation was conducted to take data points according to the methods and procedures prescribed in the Corps Arid West Delineation Manual. The only wetland feature identified on site was the ephemeral drainage that may be classified as a wetland within waters where wetland vegetation grows within the channel.

A 10-foot setback from the ephemeral drainage on the southern property line is proposed. Modifications to the southern portion of the property will not significantly alter hydrology to the drainage given it only traverses the site for a short distance before being culverted underground.

Significance Level:
No Impact

d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

See discussion under 4.a and 4.b. above. Construction of the project would not interfere with the movement of any native wildlife species or interfere with known migration corridors. Migratory wildlife corridors generally include riparian areas and connected open space areas. Implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3 would reduce potential impacts to migration corridors.

The project would not infringe on potential habitat connectivity areas and therefore would not substantially interfere with wildlife movement in these corridors.

Significance Level:
Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation:
Mitigation Measure BIO-1, BIO-2, and BIO-3

Mitigation Monitoring:
Mitigation Monitoring BIO-1, BIO-2, and BIO-3

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

Comment:
Chapter 26, Article 88. Sec. 26-08-010 (m) of the Sonoma County Code contains a tree protection ordinance. The ordinance designates 'protected' trees as well as provides mitigation standards for impacts to protected trees.

An Arborist Report⁴ prepared by Chip Sandborn, dated December 15, 2022, amended on March 5, 2023, identified several trees which will be removed for the purposes of the project. The proposed project will require the removal of four protected trees (all tagged and numbered with metal tags). One protected tree to be retained is tree #1 as shown on the site plan. This tree is located on the southwest corner of the property. As mitigation for impacting the trees, the proposed landscape plan for the project includes the planting of (7) Valley Oaks, 24" box size which is 2.8 times the mitigation required by the Sonoma County Tree Ordinance.

Tree #1 is to be retained. It is a 16.2" DBH x 25' tall Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*) with good vigor and good form. It is rooted 1' east of the property line and 10' north of the southwest lot corner. It will have an excellent chance of survival as less than 20% of its available root area will be impacted by construction. Its root protection zone (the radius formed by the furthest extension of its foliage) is completely outside of the building envelope. The limit of disturbance, that portion of root protection zone nearest the building and therefore necessary for access to complete construction, will be fenced off with tree protection fencing (t-post and barbed wire over field fence) 12' west of and parallel to the building.

⁴ Sandborn, Chip, Certified Arborist WE0177A, "Sebastopol Hardware Center South Proposed Development Plan Arborist Report," Sandborn Tree Service, Inc., December 15, 2022, amended on March 5, 2023.

Tree #2 is proposed to be retained. It will join with RPZ of Tree #1 at the point closest to the Storage Building on the east, maintain a 5' separation (for access of construction related activities) from the west side of the Storage Building as it continues north to the north side of its dripline, then west to the property boundary. The Root Protection Zone will be mulched and fenced to the same extent as Tree #1. The 5' separation between the building and the Tree Protective Fencing is the zone of Maximum Root Disturbance and will be mulched with a 6" layer of wood chips which will be covered by ¾" plywood to prevent soil compaction. Prior to construction, clearance pruning, fertilization, mulching and fencing will be performed. Root Zone Protection guidelines from Tree #1 will be performed.

Standard Conditions of Approval will require compliance with the permitting and mitigation requirements of the County's Tree Protection Ordinance and would ensure that tree impacts would be less than significant.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant

f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state Habitat Conservation Plan?

Comment:

Habitat Conservation Plans and natural community conservation plans are site-specific plans to address effects on sensitive species of plants and animals. The project site is not located in an area subject to a habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

Significance Level:

No Impact

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES:

Would the project:

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

Comments:

William Roop, M.A., RPA, of Archeological Resource Service, conducted a cultural resource evaluation of the project site on February 21, 2022⁵. There are no historical resources on the property, therefore there will be no impact.

Significance Level:

No Impact

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

Comment:

On April 20, 2022, Permit Sonoma staff referred the project application to Native American Tribes within Sonoma County to request consultation under AB-52. No requests for consultation were received. Lytton Rancheria of California requested to review the cultural resource study. After further review, Lytton Rancheria of California did not request additional information or consultation.

There are no known archaeological resources on the site, but the project could uncover such

⁵ Roop, William, M.A., RPA, "A Cultural Resource Evaluation of Sebastopol Hardware Center, 1798 Gravenstein Highway (Highway 116 South), Sebastopol, Sonoma County, California", Archaeological Resource Service, February 21, 2022.

materials during construction. The following measures will reduce the impact to less than significant.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation:

See **Mitigation Measure TCR-1 and TCR-2**

Mitigation Monitoring:

See **Mitigation Measure Monitoring TCR-1 and TCR-2**

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

Comment:

There are no known burial sites on the property, but the potential exists for an accidental discovery of human remains during construction. Mitigation Measure TCR-1 will reduce the potential impact to less than significant.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation

See **Mitigation Measure-TCR-1**

Mitigation Monitoring

See **Mitigation Measure Monitoring TCR-1**

6. ENERGY:

Would the project:

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

Comment:

During construction, the proposed project would result in energy consumption through the combustion of fossil fuels in construction vehicles, worker commute vehicles, and construction equipment. No natural gas would be utilized as part of construction. Fossil fuels used for construction vehicles and other energy-consuming equipment would be used during site preparation, grading, paving, and building construction. The types of equipment could include gasoline- and diesel-powered construction and transportation equipment, including trucks, bulldozers, frontend loaders, forklifts, and cranes. Other equipment could include construction lighting, field services (office trailers), and electrically driven equipment such as pumps and other tools.

Limitations on idling of vehicles and equipment and requirements that equipment be properly maintained would result in fuel savings. California Code of Regulations Title 13, Sections 2449(d)(3) and 2485 limit idling from both on-road and off-road diesel-powered equipment and are enforced by the Air Resources Board (ARB). In addition, given the cost of fuel, contractors and owners have a strong financial incentive to avoid wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary consumption of energy during construction.

Other equipment could include construction lighting, field services (office trailers), and electrically driven equipment such as pumps and other tools. Construction shall be limited between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on weekdays, and between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on weekends. As on-site construction activities would be restricted to these hours, it is anticipated that the use of construction lighting would also be similarly limited. Because of the temporary nature of construction and the financial incentives for developers and contractors to implement efficient energy use, the construction

phase of the proposed project would not result in wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary consumption of energy. Therefore, the construction-related impact related to fuel and electricity consumption would be less than significant.

Building operations for the proposed project would involve energy consumption for multiple purposes including, but not limited to, building heating and cooling and, lighting (indoor and outdoor).

The proposed project would be designed and constructed in accordance with CAL Green standards. CAL Green Requirements include building, electricity, and water conservation energy saving measures that are required to be completed as part of the building permitting process. Title 24 standards include a broad set of energy conservation requirements that apply to the structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems in a building.

Compliance with Title 24 standards would ensure that operational energy consumption would not result in the use of energy in a wasteful or inefficient manner. Therefore, the operational impact related to building electricity and natural gas consumption would be less than significant.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

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

Comment:

The proposed project would be required to comply with local energy efficiency standards as defined in County Code Chapter 7 (Building Regulations), which specifies Title 24, Part 6 of the California Code of Regulations, California Energy Code (Building Energy Efficiency Standards), as the County standard for buildings.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

7. GEOLOGY AND SOILS:

Would the project:

a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

- i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.**

Existing geologic conditions that could affect new development are considered in this analysis. Impacts of the environment on the project are analyzed as a matter of County policy and not because such analysis is required by CEQA.

Comment:

The project site is not within a fault hazard zone as defined by the Alquist-Priolo fault maps⁶. The nearest fault is the Rodgers Creek Fault approximately 7 miles east of the project site.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

⁶ California Department of Conservation, Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation, <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/EQZApp/app/>, accessed July 10, 2023.

ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?Comment:

All of Sonoma County is subject to seismic shaking that would result from earthquakes along the San Andreas, Healdsburg-Rodgers Creek, and other faults. The expected relative intensity of ground shaking and damage from anticipated future earthquakes in the project area is categorized as 'Very Strong' according to Figure PS-1a in the Sonoma County General Plan Public Safety Element.⁷

However, by applying geotechnical evaluation techniques and appropriate engineering practices, potential injury and damage from seismic activity can be diminished, thereby exposing fewer people and less property to the effects of a major damaging earthquake. The design and construction of new structures are subject to engineering standards of the California Building Code (CBC), which take into account soil properties, seismic shaking and foundation type. Project conditions of approval require that building permits be obtained for all construction and that the project meet all standard seismic and soil test/compaction requirements. The project would therefore not expose people to substantial risk of injury from seismic shaking.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?Comment:

Strong ground shaking can result in liquefaction, the sudden loss of shear strength in saturated sandy material, resulting ground failure. Areas of Sonoma County most at risk of liquefaction are along San Pablo Bay and in alluvial valleys. According to the Sonoma County General Plan 2020 Public Safety Element, the project site is not located in a designated Liquefaction Hazard Area and is located within a "Very Low Susceptibility" area.⁸

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

iv. Landslides?Comment:

Steep slopes characterize much of Sonoma County, particularly the northern and eastern portion of the County. Where these areas are underlain by weak or unconsolidated earth materials landslides are a hazard. According to the Sonoma County General Plan Public Safety Element the project site is located in a "Few Landslides" Landslide Hazard Area.⁹ The design and construction of all new structure would be subject to engineering standards of the California Building Code (CBC) and County building standards, which would ensure that potential landslide impacts are less than significant.

Significance Level:

⁷ Sonoma County General Plan 2020, Public Safety Element, Figure PS-1a, Earthquake Ground Shaking Hazard Areas, <http://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Long-Range-Plans/General-Plan/Public-Safety-Earthquake-Ground-Shaking-Hazard-Areas/>, accessed July 10, 2023.

⁸ Sonoma County General Plan 2020, Public Safety Element, Liquefaction Hazard Areas Figure PS-1c, <https://permitsonoma.org/longrangeplans/adoptedlong-rangeplans/generalplan/organizationandoverview/publicsafety/publicsafetymaps/publicsafetyearthquakegroundshakinghazardareas>, accessed July 10, 2023.

⁹ Sonoma County General Plan 2020, Public Safety Element, Figure PS-1d, Deep-seated Landslide Hazard Areas, <https://permitsonoma.org/longrangeplans/adoptedlong-rangeplans/generalplan/organizationandoverview/publicsafety/publicsafetymaps/publicsafetydeep-seatedlandslidehazardareas>, accessed July 10, 2023.

Less than Significant Impact

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

Comment:

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

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

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

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

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

Significance Level:

Less than Significant

c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?

Comment:

Although the site would be subject to seismic shaking and other geologic hazards as described in

section 7.a.ii, iii, and iv, the project site is located in a “Very Low Susceptibility” liquefaction area. Therefore, the potential impact from landslides or liquefaction would be less than significant. The design and construction of new structures are subject to engineering standards of the California Building Code (CBC), which consider soil properties, seismic shaking and foundation type. The project would therefore not expose people to substantial risk of injury from seismic shaking.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

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

Comment:

According to the Geotechnical Investigation prepared for the proposed project, the soils are found to be predominately granular and not considered expansive. The sandstone bedrock does not appear to be prone to detrimental shrink and swell cycles. The results of the investigation found the project to be feasible from a geotechnical engineering standpoint provided that the recommendations are incorporated into the design and carried out through the construction of the project. The existing fill and weak native surface soils are weak and compressible and are found to be unsuitable for support of foundations and non-structural slabs-on-grade without geotechnical engineering soil improvement techniques. To provide adequate support for the shallow spread footing and non-structural concrete slab-on-grade support, the weak soils should be improved by sub excavation and recompaction (densification). Implementation of detailed grading and foundation recommendations included in the Geotechnical Investigation would ensure that potential impacts related to expansive soils at the project site would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with mitigations incorporated.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigations Incorporated

Mitigation Measures:

Mitigation Measure GEO-1: All earthwork, grading, trenching, backfilling and compaction operations shall be conducted in accordance with the County Subdivision Ordinance (Chapter 25, Sonoma County Code) and shall incorporate all recommendations identified in the Geotechnical Investigation¹⁰. All construction activities shall meet the California Building Code regulations for seismic safety. Construction plans shall be subject to review and approval of Permit Sonoma prior to the issuance of a building permit. All work shall be subject to inspection by Permit Sonoma and must conform to all applicable code requirements and approved improvement plans prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

Mitigation Monitoring:

Mitigation Monitoring GEO-1: Building/grading permits for ground disturbing activities shall not be approved for issuance by Project Review staff until the above notes are printed on applicable building, grading and improvement plans. The applicant shall be responsible for notifying construction contractors about code requirement.

Mitigation Monitoring GEO-2: Upon completion of the project plans, they shall be reviewed by PJC & Associates, Inc., to determine that the design is consistent with the recommendations in the Geotechnical Investigation.

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

¹⁰ Conway, Patrick J., “Geotechnical Investigation Proposed Hardware Center 1794 Gravenstein Highway South and 26 Bloomfield Road, Sebastopol, California”, PJC & Associates, Inc., December 22, 2021, and revised January 14, 2022.

Comment:

The project site is not in an area served by public sewer. Preliminary documentation provided by the applicant and reviewed by the Permit Sonoma Well & Septic Section indicate that the soils on site could support a septic system and the required expansion area.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

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

Comment:

A Cultural Resources Survey was prepared for the project by professional archaeologists on February 21, 2022.

See Section 5 for a discussion of cultural resources. There are no known paleontological, archaeological or historic resources on the site, but the project could uncover such materials during construction. Mitigation measure TCR-1 will address accidental discovery.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

8. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS:

Would the project:

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

Comment:

Section 15064.4 of the State CEQA Guidelines assists lead agencies in determining the significance of the impacts of GHG emissions. Section 15064.4 gives lead agencies the discretion to assess emissions quantitatively or qualitatively. The CEQA Guidelines do not establish a threshold of significance. Lead agencies are granted discretion to establish significance thresholds for their respective jurisdictions, including looking to thresholds developed by other public agencies or other experts, so long as any threshold chosen is supported by substantial evidence.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District's (BAAQMD) 2022 Justification Report: CEQA Thresholds for Evaluating the Significance of Climate Impacts from Land Use Projects acknowledges that evaluating climate impacts under CEQA can be challenging because global climate change is inherently a cumulative problem, rather than the result of a single source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. With that in mind, the BAAQMD has recommended thresholds of significance as to whether a proposed project would have a "cumulatively considerable" contribution to the significant cumulative impact on climate change.

For land use development projects, the BAAQMD recommends using an approach which evaluates a project based on its effect on California's efforts to meet the State's long-term climate goals. Using this approach, a project that is consistent with and would contribute its "fair share" towards achieving those long-term climate goals can be found to have a less-than-significant impact on climate change under CEQA because the project would, in effect, help to solve the problem of global climate change. Applying this approach, the Air District has analyzed what will be required of new land use development projects to achieve California's long-term climate goal of carbon neutrality by 2045.

Because GHG emissions from the land use sector come primarily from building energy use and from transportation, these are the areas that the BAAQMD evaluated to ensure that a project can and will be carbon neutral. With respect to building energy use, the BAAQMD recommends replacing natural

gas with electric power and eliminating inefficient or wasteful energy usage. This will support California's transition away from fossil fuel-based energy sources and will bring a project's GHG emissions associated with building energy use down to zero as the state's electric supply becomes 100 percent carbon free. With respect to transportation, the BAAQMD recommends that projects be designed to reduce project-generated Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) and to provide sufficient electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure to support a shift to EVs over time.

The BAAQMB has found, based on this analysis, that a new land use development project being built today either must be consistent with a local GHG reduction strategy that meets the criteria under State CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5(b), or must incorporate the following design elements to achieve its "fair share" of implementing the goal of carbon neutrality by 2045:

- A. Projects must include, at a minimum, the following project design elements:
 1. Buildings
 - a. The project will not include natural gas appliances or natural gas plumbing (in both residential and nonresidential development).
 - b. The project will not result in any wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary energy usage as determined by the analysis required under CEQA Section 21100(b)(3) and Section 15126.2(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines.
 2. Transportation
 - a. Achieve a reduction in project-generated vehicle miles traveled (VMT) below the regional average consistent with the current version of the California Climate Change Scoping Plan (currently 15 percent) or meet a locally adopted Senate Bill 743 VMT target, reflecting the recommendations provided in the Governor's Office of Planning and Research's (OPR) 2018 Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA:
 1. Residential projects: 15 percent below the existing VMT per capita
 2. Office projects: 15 percent below the existing VMT per employee
 3. Retail projects: no net increase in existing VMT
 - b. Achieve compliance with off-street electric vehicle requirements in the most recently adopted version of CAL Green Tier 2.

There is currently no applicable local GHG reduction strategy, like an adopted Climate Action Plan, for Sonoma County. Therefore, the project was analyzed under criterion A above, as discussed below.

Buildings: As discussed in the Energy Section 6a, the project proposes a new 12,260 square foot retail building with an adjacent open air roofed garden supply/nursery structure of 2,984 square feet, and a separate warehouse building of 4,000 gross square feet. Plans for the building do not include the use of natural gas appliances or natural gas plumbing. The project will use minimal energy to power lighting for indoor and outdoor uses. The proposed project would be designed and constructed in accordance with CAL Green standards. CAL Green Requirements include building, electricity, and water conservation energy saving measures that are required to be completed as part of the building permitting process. Title 24 standards include a broad set of energy conservation requirements that apply to the structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems in a building. Compliance with Title 24 standards would ensure that operational energy consumption would not result in the use of energy in a wasteful or inefficient manner. Therefore, the operational impact related to building electricity and natural gas consumption would be less than significant.

Transportation: As discussed in the Transportation Section 17b, VMT refers to the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project. The County of Sonoma has not yet adopted specific VMT policies or thresholds of significance. The OPR Technical Advisory identifies several criteria that may be used by jurisdictions to identify certain types of projects that are unlikely to have a significant VMT impact and can be "screened" from further VMT analysis. One of these screening criteria pertains to local-serving retail, which is defined as having fewer than 50,000 square feet of gross floor area. The theory behind this criterion is that while a larger retail project may generate interregional trips that increase a region's total VMT, small retail establishments do not necessarily

add new trips to a region, but change where existing customers shop within the region, and often shorten trip lengths. The proposed project includes 19,244 square feet, which is well below the local-serving retail threshold of 50,000 square feet. Also, the provision of a hardware store at this location may entice customers to make shorter trips to this location rather than to Cotati or Santa Rosa or to the associated Ace Hardware in northern Sebastopol. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the project would have a less-than-significant transportation impact on VMT.

The latest California Green Building Standards Code (CAL Green) was published in 2022 and will go into effect, with any local amendments, on January 1, 2023; the standards were adopted and incorporated into the Sonoma County Building Code (Chapter 7) on November 8, 2022. The 2022 CAL Green Tier 2 requirements for EV charging stations apply to new non-residential buildings and require that off-street EV capable spaces be provided for a new non-residential development project with 10 or more parking spaces (note there are separate EV requirements for residential projects). The project proposes 65 all-weather parking spaces, which will require a number of spaces to be electric vehicle capable and will require a specific number of electric vehicle capable spaces with electric vehicle service equipment (EVSE) to meet CAL Green requirements.

The BAAQMD 2022 guidance does not propose construction-related climate impact thresholds, stating that GHG emissions from construction represent a very small portion of a project's lifetime GHG emissions, and that land use project thresholds are better focused on addressing operational GHG emissions, which represent the vast majority of project GHG emissions. Therefore, construction related GHG would not exceed established thresholds.

Because the project does not propose the use of natural gas, complies with VMT requirements, and will meet 2022 CAL Green requirements for EV charging stations, the project would contribute its "fair share" towards achieving the State's long-term climate goals, and therefore, would have a less-than-significant impact on climate change.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

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

Comment:

The County does not have an adopted Climate Action Plan but has established GHG reduction goals. The project, by implementing current county codes would be consistent with local or state plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases.

Significance Level:

No Impact

9. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS:

Would the project:

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

Comment:

Construction of the project may involve the intermittent transport, storage, use and disposal of potentially hazardous materials, including fuels and lubricants, paints, solvents, and other materials commonly used in construction. During construction activities, any on-site hazardous materials that may be used, stored, or transported would be required to follow standard protocols (as determined by the U.S. EPA, California Department of Health and Safety, and Sonoma County) for maintaining health and safety. Improper transit, storage, or handling of these materials could result in spills. This

potential impact would be reduced to a less than significant level with implementation of standard approved construction methods for handling hazardous materials. Therefore, the potential environmental impact associated with the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials would be less than significant. Household chemicals will be safely transported and stored consistent with all necessary guidelines for retail sale. The project site is subject to inspection by the Sonoma County Fire Prevention and Hazardous Materials Division.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

Comment:

Potential impacts related to construction and operational use of hazardous materials would be minimized through review and oversight of multiple jurisdictional entities requiring permits for use of hazardous materials, as described in 8.a. above. Therefore, the potential impact from accidents involving the use of hazardous materials would be less than significant.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

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

Comment:

The project does not involve the routine use or transport of hazardous materials and there are no schools within 0.25 miles.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

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

Comment:

There are no known hazardous materials sites within or adjacent to the project limits, based on a review of the following databases on July 14, 2023.

1. The State Water Resources Control Board Geotracker database¹¹,
2. The Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor database (formerly known as Calsites)¹², and
3. The California Integrated Waste Management Board Solid Waste Information System (SWIS)¹³.

The closest hazardous materials sites on record is one LUST (Leaking Underground Storage Tank) cleanup site, which is approximately 0.40 miles away from the project site. The LUST site cleanup was completed on May 14, 2004.

¹¹ State Water Resources Control Board Geotracker, "Geotracker", State of California, Accessed July 14, 2023, <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>

¹² Department of Toxic Substances Control Envirostor, "Envirostor", State of California, Accessed July 14, 2023, <https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public>

¹³ California Integrated Waste Management Board Solid Waste Information System, "SWIS", State of California, Accessed July 14, 2023, <https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/Site/Search>

EnviroStor did not list any sites near the project vicinity.

According to SWIS, The Laguna SubRegional Compost Facility is located approximately 1.5 miles south of the project site. The site is currently active and operated by the City of Santa Rosa's Water Department. Due to the distance between this site and the project site, no impacts are expected.

Significance Level:

No Impact

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

Comment:

The site is not within the Airport Referral Area as designated by the Sonoma County Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan.

Significance Level:

No Impact

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

Comment:

The project would not impair implementation of, or physically interfere with the County's adopted emergency operations plan. There is no separate emergency evacuation plan for the County. In any case, the project would not change existing circulation patterns significantly, and would have no effect on emergency response routes. Refer to section 16.e Transportation and Traffic for discussion of emergency access.

Significance Level:

No Impact

13

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

Comment:

According to the Wildland Fire Hazard Area map (Figure PS-1g)¹⁴ in the Sonoma County General Plan, the project site is located in the Local Responsibility Area, over 1 mile away from a State Responsibility Area, and is not designated as Fire Hazard Severity Zone. Projects located in High and Very High Fire Severity Zones are required by state and county code to have a detailed vegetation management plan developed and reviewed by the Sonoma County Fire Prevention Division before a building permit can be issued. This requirement does not apply to this project. However, all construction projects must comply with Sonoma County Fire Safety Ordinance (Chapter 13), with requirements such as installing fire sprinklers in buildings, providing emergency vehicle access, and maintaining a dedicated fire-fighting water supply on-site. Application of County standards reduces the project's potential to expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires to a less than significant level.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

¹⁴ Sonoma County General Plan 2020, Public Safety Element Figure PS-1g.
https://permitsonoma.org/Microsites/Permit%20Sonoma/Documents/Archive/Department%20Information/Cannabis%20Program/_Documents/General-Plan-Map_PS1g.pdf, accessed March 23, 2023.

10. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY:

Would the project:

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

Comment:

The project site is located along Highway 116 and Bloomfield Road will improve a 2.76-acre lot by adding a commercial building with associated driveways and parking lots. Currently all the drainage directly enters Foss Creek, except for a small portion to the east which enters an unnamed channel that is a tributary to Foss Creek. The USGS soil map for the project indicates that the site is under laid with Dibble clay loam which is Hydrologic Soil Group C soil. Group C soils have very moderate infiltration rates ranging between 0.06 to 0.20 in/hr.

The project is designed to implement permanent water quality treatment and volume control Best Management Practices (BMPs) set forth in the 2017 City of Santa Rosa's Storm Water Low Impact Development Technical Manual (SWLID); such Manual requires treatment of all runoff generated by a one inch (1") rainfall event in a 24 hour time period falling on all impermeable surfaces, and the exit off the project site of all such storm water at flow rates similar to predevelopment conditions.

Storm water generated by the project will be treated using two types of BMPs as part of a treatment train. The storm water will first be intercepted by Trash Basket BMPs in all new inlets to remove trash prior to entering the second BMP, rain gardens. The rain gardens will capture and treat the storm water through infiltration to remove smaller particles prior to being discharged to the public storm drain system. The rain garden BMP's will be installed similar to P1 "Roadside Bioretention – No curb and gutter". All bioretention areas, are sized for one hundred percent (100%) treatment and volume capture.

Sonoma County also requires project applicants to prepare a grading and drainage plan (Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control Plan) in conformance with Chapter 11 (Construction Grading and Drainage Ordinance) and Chapter 11A (Storm Water Quality Ordinance) of the Sonoma County Code. The project would involve placement of more than 10,000 square feet of impervious surface area located in an area subject to the North Coast RWQCB Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) Permit. Therefore, it must both meet the requirements of the Sonoma County Storm Water Quality Ordinance and incorporate Low Impact Development (LID) Best Management Practices (BMPs) contained in the City of Santa Rosa and County of Sonoma Storm Water Low Impact Development Technical Design Manual to address construction and post construction water quality requirements. Required inspections by Permit Sonoma staff ensure that all grading and erosion control measures are constructed according to the approved plans.

A Preliminary Stormwater Low Impact Development (SWLID)¹⁵ report was submitted with the project, then reviewed and approved by the Grading and Stormwater Division of Permit Sonoma. A final SWLID submittal will be required prior to issuance of grading or building permits, which will ensure the project will incorporate all LID BMPs.

All of the above requirements and adopted best management practices are specifically designed to maintain potential water quality impacts at a less than significant level during and post construction.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

¹⁵ Stewart, Rachele R, "Initial Storm Water Low Impact Development Plan, Sebastopol Hardware", Carlile Macy, October 31, 2022.

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

Comment:

The project site is located in Groundwater Availability Class 2 Major Natural Recharge area. The site is not located in a priority groundwater basin. The project site is located in Groundwater Basin 1-059 Wilson Grove Formation Highlands. A new well is not proposed but will be monitored as required for new or expanded discretionary commercial uses using well in accordance with General Plan Policy WR-2d and therefore, will result in a less than significant impact.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

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

i. would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?

Comment:

While the project would result in some minor changes to drainage patterns, no river or stream course would be altered. Construction of the proposed project would involve cuts, fills, and other grading. Unregulated grading during construction has the potential to increase soil erosion from a site. Construction grading activities would be subject to a grading permit, which requires installation of adequate stormwater treatment measures to prevent soil erosion during construction, such as silt fencing, straw wattles, and soils discharge controls at construction site entrance(s). Compliance with the County grading regulations is aimed at capturing and treating all project runoff onsite, thereby reducing the potential for soil erosion and sediment delivery from the site. The ordinance requirements and BMPs are specifically designed to maintain water quantity and ensure erosion and siltation impacts are less than significant during and post construction.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

ii. substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;

Comment:

The project will increase the amount of impervious surface area on the site. Prior to grading or building permit issuance, construction details for all post-construction storm water Best Management Practices (BMPs) shall be submitted for review and approval by the Grading & Storm Water Section of Permit Sonoma. Post-construction storm water BMPs must be installed per approved plans and specifications and working properly prior to finalizing the grading or building permits. They shall be designed and installed pursuant to the adopted Sonoma County Best Management Practice Guide. BMPs would prevent the alteration of site drainage or increase in surface runoff and avoid flooding. Project Low Impact Development techniques would include limiting impervious surfaces, dispersing development over larger areas, and creation of storm water detention areas. Post construction storm water BMPs include filtering, settling, or removing pollutants. Through standard permitting requirements, potential flooding impacts are reduced to a less than significant level.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

iii. create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or

Comment:

On-site construction would result in new impervious surface and generation of stormwater. Bioretention swales are proposed to manage stormwater drainage and retain all, if not most, stormwater on the site. The project would require a grading permit, which would not be issued until all required stormwater treatment options have been incorporated in compliance with all applicable standards of the County Code.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant

iv. Impede or redirect flood flows?

Comment:

The project site is not located in a 100-year flood zone or Special Flood Hazard Area, as determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Nor is the site in an area subject to seiche or tsunami. A seiche is a wave in a large enclosed or partly enclosed body of water triggered by an earthquake. The project site is not located near enough to a large body of water or the coastline to be subject to earthquake-triggered waves.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

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

Comment:

The proposed project is not subject to seiche or tsunami. The project site is not located in an area subject to seiche or tsunami. Seiche is a wave in a lake triggered by an earthquake. Mudflow can be triggered by heavy rainfall, earthquakes or volcanic eruption. See discussion of landslide in 6.a. iv. above for areas with high potential for mudflow.

Significance Level:

No Impact

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

Comment:

The project is subject to Chapter 11 (Construction Grading and Drainage Ordinance) and Chapter 11A (Storm Water Quality Ordinance) of the Sonoma County Code and the Sonoma County Storm Water Low Impact Development Guide, all of which include performance standards and Best Management Practices for pre-construction, construction, and post-construction to prevent and/or minimize the discharge of pollutants, including sediment, from the project site.

Significance Level:

No Impact

11. LAND USE AND PLANNING:

Would the project:

a) Physically divide an established community?

Comment:

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

Significance Level:
No Impact

- b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?**

Comment:

The General Plan Land Use designation is Rural Residential (RR) and the Zoning District is Limited Commercial (LC). The parcel has a Rural Residential (RR) General Plan land use designation. The RR land use designated provides for very low-density residential development on lands that have few if any urban services but have access to County maintained roads. The LC zoning district provides areas for retail sales and services necessary for the daily self-sufficiency of urban and rural areas in keeping with their character. The proposed project is consistent with the LC zoning designation in that it provides for neighborhood retail uses, including but not limited to farm equipment and supplies sales and rentals; general retail sales, including hardware stores; and nursery retail sales.

The project site is located along Highway 116 South, which is a designated Scenic Corridor in the General Plan. The Scenic Corridor designation is intended to preserve the many landscapes viewed from rural highways. The Scenic Corridor setback applies to 30 percent of the depth of the lot to a maximum of 200 feet from the centerline of the public roadway. The proposed project is designed to complement the corridor, while placing the proposed 12,260 square foot retail space, the 2984 square foot nursery, and the 4,000 square foot warehouse structure outside of the scenic corridor. The project proposes landscaping and screening along the entire frontage and is discussed in further detail in the *Aesthetics* section.

The project site is located out of the 116 Scenic Highway Corridor Study Guidelines (LG/116) and therefore, not subject to the LG/116 standards.

Significance Level:
No Impact

12. MINERAL RESOURCES:

Would the project:

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

Comment:

According to the Sonoma County Aggregate Resources Management Plan the project site is not located within a known mineral resource deposit area.¹⁶

Significance Level:
No Impact

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

Comment:

The project site is not located within an area of locally-important mineral resource recovery site and the site is not zoned MR (Mineral Resources) (Sonoma County Aggregate Resources Management

¹⁶ County of Sonoma, Aggregate Resource Management Plan 2010, <https://permitsonoma.org/longrangeplans/adoptedlong-rangeplans/aggregateresourcemanagement/mapsanddiagrams>, accessed on July 13, 2023.

Plan, as amended 2010 and Sonoma County Zoning Code). No locally-important mineral resources are known to occur at the site.

Significance Level:

No Impact

13. NOISE:

Would the project:

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

Comment:

An environmental noise and vibration assessment¹⁷ dated June 20, 2022, prepared by Illingworth and Rodkin, Inc., found that the noise associated with the project operations would be below the Sonoma County noise standards for residential properties in the vicinity if mitigated with adequate and appropriately placed noise barriers. Temporary construction noise would be reduced by the implementation of standard best management practices. The primary noise sources associated with the project are parking and on-site vehicle circulation, truck deliveries, operational activities (forklift), and HVAC noise. Parking operations, forklift operations, and delivery operations would need to be mitigated with adequate noise barriers to comply with the Sonoma County Table NE-2 noise thresholds, resulting in a Less-than-Significant Impact.

Construction would be conducted within allowable hours and would occur over a temporary period. Pile driving is not anticipated as a method of construction. With implementation of standard best management practices this would be a Less-than-Significant Impact.

Table 2- (Table NE-2) Maximum Allowable Exterior Noise Exposures for Non-Transportation Noise Sources

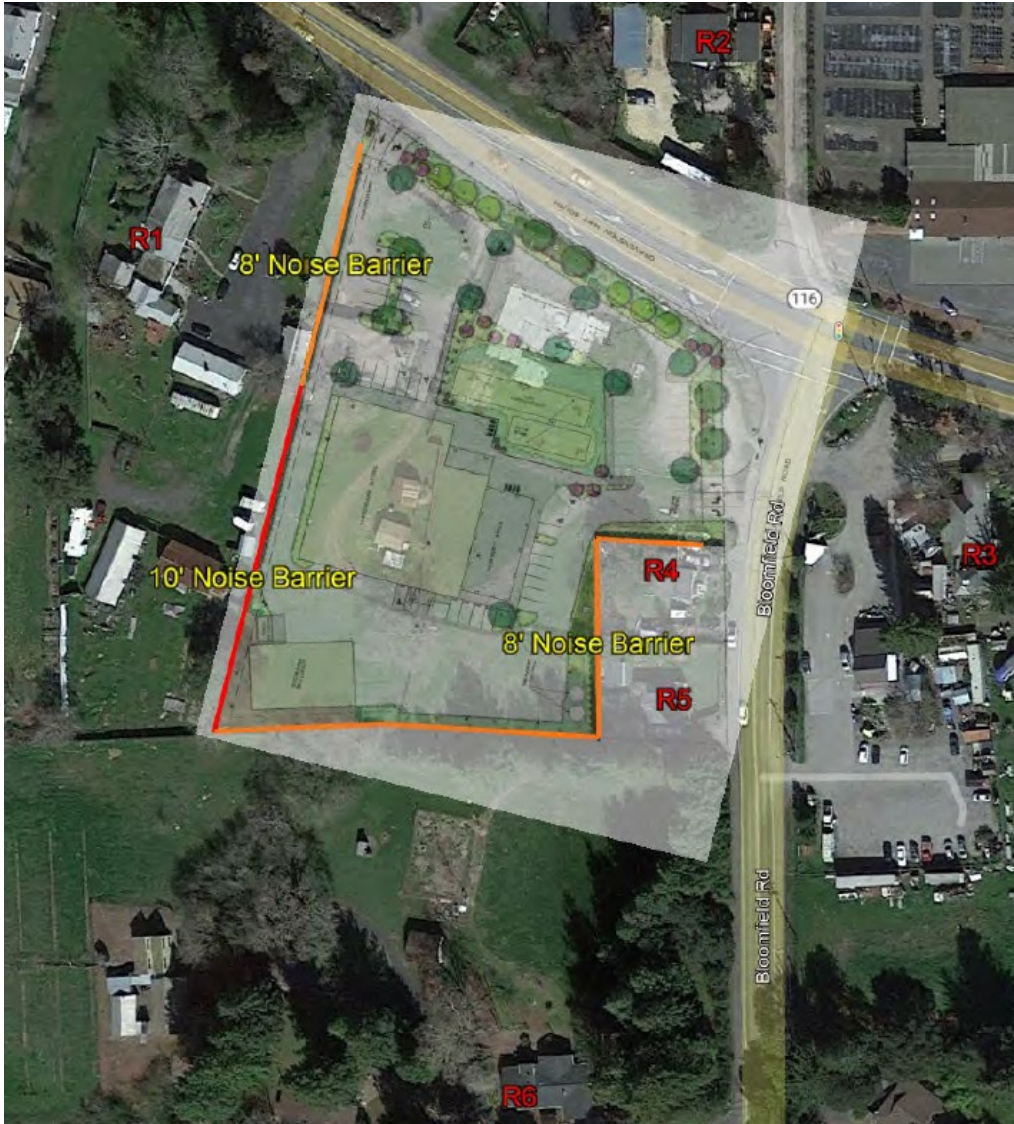
Hourly Noise Metric ¹ , dBA	Daytime (7 a.m. to 10 p.m.)	Nighttime (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.)
L50 (30 minutes in any hour)	50	45
L25 (15 minutes in any hour)	55	50
L08 (4 minutes 48 seconds in any hour)	60	55
L02 (72 seconds in any hour)	65	60
¹ The sound level exceeded n% of the time in any hour. For example,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

To achieve the 55 dBA L25 noise limit on the adjacent residential properties a minimum eight-foot-high noise barrier shall be constructed along the northwest property line of the site, and a minimum eight-foot-high noise barrier shall be constructed along the shared property lines, see Figure 5. These noise barriers would also provide additional attenuation from noise sources occurring in the parking area during normal daily operations. HVAC noise levels would exceed the adjusted Table NE-2 limit by 2 dBA L50 at the nearest property line. An adequate noise barrier that interrupts the line of sight at the nearest property will be constructed on the rooftop of the retail building to shield the nearby property from HVAC noise. The implementation of the mitigation measures would reduce the impact

¹⁷ Thill, Michael S., Micah Black, "Sebastopol Hardware Center Environmental Noise and Vibration Assessment," Illingworth and Rodkin Inc., dated June 10, 2022.

to a less-than-significant level.

Figure 5- Noise Barrier Locations



Significance Level:
Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measure:
Mitigation Measure NOISE-1:

Construction activities for this project shall be restricted as follows:
All plans and specifications or construction plans shall include the following notes:

- a) All internal combustion engines used during construction of this project will be operated with mufflers that meet the requirements of the State Resources Code, and, where applicable, the Vehicle Code. Equipment shall be properly maintained and turned off when not in use.
- b) Except for actions taken to prevent an emergency, or to deal with an existing emergency, all construction activities shall be restricted to the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on weekdays and 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on weekends and holidays. If work outside the times specified

above becomes necessary, the applicant shall notify the PRMD Project Review Division as soon as practical.

- c) There will be no start up of machines nor equipment prior to 7:00 a.m., Monday through Friday or 9:00 am on weekends and holidays; no delivery of materials or equipment prior to 7:00 a.m. nor past 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday or prior to 9:00 a.m. nor past 5:00 p.m. on weekends and holidays and no servicing of equipment past 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, or weekends and holidays. A sign(s) shall be posted on the site regarding the allowable hours of construction and including the developer- and contractors mobile phone number for public contact 24 hours a day or during the hours outside of the restricted hours.
- d) Pile driving activities shall be limited to 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays only.
- e) Construction maintenance, storage and staging areas for construction equipment shall avoid proximity to residential areas to the maximum extent practicable. Stationary construction equipment, such as compressors, mixers, etc., shall be placed away from residential areas and/or provided with acoustical shielding. Quiet construction equipment shall be used when possible.
- f) The developer shall designate a Project Manager with authority to implement the mitigation prior to issuance of a building/grading permit. The Project Managers 24-hour mobile phone number shall be conspicuously posted at the construction site. The Project Manager shall determine the cause of noise complaints (e.g., starting too early, faulty muffler, etc.) and shall take prompt action to correct the problem.

Mitigation Monitoring:

Mitigation Monitoring NOISE-1:

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

Mitigation Measure:

Mitigation Measure NOISE-2:

West and Southeast Property Lines

To achieve the 55 dBA L25 noise limit on the adjacent residential properties, per current General Plan requirements, a minimum eight-foot-high noise barrier shall be constructed along the northwest property line of the site, and a minimum eight-foot-high noise barrier shall be constructed along the shared property lines with the R4 and R5 locations to the southeast. These noise barriers would provide at least 9 dBA of noise reduction and would provide the additional attenuation required to achieve the 55 dBA L25 noise limit on the adjacent residential properties. These noise barriers would also provide additional attenuation from noise sources occurring in the parking area during normal daily operations. The proposed noise barriers should be solid over the face and at the base of the barriers (i.e., no cracks or gaps), and be constructed from materials having a minimum surface weight of 3 lbs./ft.2. Suitable materials include 1-inch nominal thick wood fence boards, masonry block, or concrete.

South Property Line

To achieve the 55 dBA L25 noise limit on the adjacent residential property to the south (R6), per current General Plan requirements, a minimum eight-foot-high noise barrier shall be constructed along the south property line of the site. This noise barrier would provide at least 6 dBA of noise reduction and would provide the additional attenuation required to achieve the 55 dBA L25 noise limit on the adjacent residential property. This noise barrier would also provide additional attenuation from

noise sources occurring during normal daily operations. The proposed noise barrier should be solid over the face and at the base of the barrier (i.e., no cracks or gaps), and be constructed from materials having a minimum surface weight of 3 lbs./ft.². Suitable materials include 1-inch nominal thick wood fence boards, masonry block, or concrete.

Southwest Property Line

Achieving the nighttime L8 noise limit of 55 dBA L8 at the nearest property line (R1) would not be possible due to the close proximity, therefore refuse collection at night should be prohibited. To achieve the 60 dBA L8 daytime noise limit on the adjacent residential property, per current General Plan requirements, a minimum ten-foot-high noise barrier shall be constructed along the southwest property line of the site. This noise barrier would provide at least 8 dBA of noise reduction and would provide the additional attenuation required to achieve the 60 dBA L8 noise limit on the adjacent residential property. This noise barrier would also provide additional attenuation from noise sources occurring during normal daily operations, including delivery trucks and possible forklift noise along the property line and would supersede the 8-foot noise barrier recommended to reduce noise levels from deliveries, forklift, and inventory noise sources. The proposed noise barrier should be solid over the face and at the base of the barrier (i.e., no cracks or gaps), and be constructed from materials having a minimum surface weight of 3 lbs./ft.². Suitable materials include 1-inch nominal thick wood fence boards, masonry block, or concrete.

HVAC

An adequate noise barrier that interrupts the line of sight at the nearest property shall be constructed on the rooftop of the retail building to shield the nearby property (R1) from HVAC noise.

Mitigation Monitoring:

See Mitigation Monitoring NOISE-1

b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Comment:

Construction would occur 25 feet from the nearest residential structure. At this distance, groundborne vibration from construction is not anticipated to generate vibration levels exceeding the 0.3 in/sec PPV vibration limit recommended by the California Department of Transportation.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

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

Comment:

The project is located approximately 8.5 miles south of Charles M. Schulz Sonoma County Airport and 13.5 miles northwest of Petaluma Municipal Airport. The project site is located well outside of each airport's ALUC referral area and 55 dBA CNEL noise contour. Excessive aircraft-related noise would not be expected at the project site.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

14. POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Would the project:

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

Comment:

The project would not include construction of a substantial number of homes, businesses or infrastructure and therefore would not induce substantial population growth.

Significance Level:

No Impact

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

Comment:

No housing will be displaced by the project and no replacement housing is proposed to be constructed.

Significance Level:

No Impact

15. PUBLIC SERVICES:

Would the project:

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

Comment:

Construction of the project would not involve substantial adverse physical impacts associated with provision of public facilities or services and the impact would be less than significant.

Significance Level:

No Impact

i. Fire protection?

Comment:

The proposed project is within the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District. The Gold Ridge Fire Protection District will continue to serve this area, and existing fire protection facilities are anticipated to be adequate. Sonoma County Code requires that all new development meet Fire Safe Standards (Chapter 13). The County Fire Marshal reviewed the project referral and provided conditions of approval to comply with Fire Safe Standards, including fire truck access improvements and fire protection methods such as sprinklers in buildings, alarm systems, extinguishers, vegetation management, hazardous materials management and management of flammable or combustible liquids and gases. None of the conditions required construction of new or expanded fire protection facilities. Therefore, the project would not necessitate or facilitate construction of new fire protection facilities in order to maintain acceptable service ratios or response times.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

ii. Police?

Comment:

The Sonoma County Sheriff would continue to serve this area; existing sheriff protection facilities are anticipated to be adequate. The proposed project does not propose new housing. The estimated 10 new job opportunities would not be anticipated to result in a substantial number of new residents moving to the area and requiring police protection. Therefore, the project would not necessitate or facilitate construction of new police protection facilities resulting in environmental impacts in order to maintain acceptable service ratios or response times.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

iii. Schools?

Comment:

Development fees to offset potential impacts to public services, including school impact mitigation fees, are required by Sonoma County code and state law for new subdivisions and residential developments. No new schools are reasonably foreseeable as a result of this development.

Significance Level:

No Impact

iv. Parks?

Comment:

Sonoma County Code, Chapter 23 requires payment of parkland mitigation fees for all new residential development for acquisition and development of added parklands to meeting General Plan Objective OSRC-17.1 to “provide for adequate parkland and trails primarily in locations that are convenient to urban areas to meet the outdoor recreation needs of the population...” Development fees collected by Sonoma County are used to offset potential impacts to public services, including park mitigation fees. The project will not result in the need for any new park facilities, and demand for parks in general is addressed through fees.

Significance Level:

No Impact

v. Other public facilities?

Comment:

No other public facilities would be adversely impacted by this project. The project site is served by private well and septic.

Significance Level:

No Impact

16. RECREATION:

Would the project:

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

Comment:

The proposed project would not involve activities that would cause or accelerate substantial physical

deterioration of parks or recreational facilities. The project will have no impact on the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities.

Significance Level:

No Impact

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

Comment:

The proposed project does not involve construction of recreational facilities. See item 15.a. above.

Significance Level:

No Impact

17. TRANSPORTATION:

Would the project:

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

Comment:

A Transportation Impact Study (TIS) was completed by W-Trans on January 26, 2023. This study found that the proposed project is expected to generate an average of 179 trips per day, including 20 a.m. peak hour trips and 66 trips during the p.m. peak hour. The study area consists of the intersection of Highway 116 South and Bloomfield Road. Operating conditions during the a.m. and p.m. peak periods were evaluated to capture the highest potential impacts for the proposed project as well as the highest volumes on the local transportation network. Highway 116/Bloomfield Road is a four-way signalized intersection. The eastbound and westbound approaches include protected left-turn phases while the northbound and southbound approaches are controlled with split phasing. The north leg of the intersection is a private road accessing rural residential properties. While the queue in the northbound right-turn lane currently exceeds the available storage length during both peak periods and would continue to do so under future volumes and with project traffic added, the project would have a less-than-significant impact under the County's policies as it would not cause the queue to exceed the storage length and it would not extend the queue into a visually restricted area. Similarly, the queue in the eastbound right-turn lane is expected to exceed the stacking space under future volumes but adding project traffic would have a less-than-significant impact as it would not cause the excess queueing and it would not extend the queue into an area with restricted visibility.

Roadways. The proposed project is expected to generate an average of 179 trips per day, including 20 trips during the a.m. peak hour and 66 during the p.m. peak hour. During peak hour conditions, traffic exiting the project may encounter queues which extend slightly past the project access driveway making it difficult for project-related vehicles to turn onto northbound Bloomfield Road. This is not expected to result in a substantial inconvenience, however, and is typical of operation at driveways near signalized intersections. As described above, a TIS was prepared for the proposed project; therefore, the project would be in compliance with County requirements relative to the roadway system.

Pedestrian Facilities. The most prevalent route for pedestrians would be between the existing Sonoma County Transit stops and the project site. Pedestrians would use existing shoulders and crossings would be served by the existing signalized crosswalks at SR 116/Bloomfield Road. Pedestrian facilities serving the project site are expected to be adequate.

Bicycle Facilities. The Highway Design Manual, Caltrans, 2017, classifies bikeways into four categories:

- Class I Multi-Use Path – a completely separated right-of-way for the exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians with cross flows of motorized traffic minimized.
- Class II Bike Lane – a striped and signed lane for one-way bike travel on a street or highway.
- Class III Bike Route – signing only for shared use with motor vehicles within the same travel lane on a street or highway.
- Class IV Bikeway – also known as a separated bikeway, a Class IV Bikeway is for the exclusive use of bicycles and includes a separation between the bikeway and the motor vehicle traffic lane. The separation may include, but is not limited to, grade separation, flexible posts, inflexible physical barriers, or on-street parking.

In the project area, Class II bike lanes are marked on Bloomfield Road; however, these bike lanes terminate approximately 125 feet south of the intersection with SR 116. These bike lanes extend south approximately one mile.

The (Sonoma) *Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, 2014 Update*, includes recommendations for the following two future bicycle facilities in the study area:

- Class II bike lanes on SR 116 from the Sebastopol City Limits to the SR116/US101 interchange, and
- Petaluma-Sebastopol Trail, an 11.2-mile trail extending from the intersection of SR 116/Bloomfield Road to the City of Petaluma.

In the project area, Class II bike lanes are marked on Bloomfield Road; however, these bike lanes terminate approximately 125 feet south of the intersection with SR 116. With the development of the project frontage, it would be advantageous to ensure that these bike lanes are extended all the way to the intersection. The roadway shoulder along the SR116 frontage and adjacent to the existing right-turn lane is narrow, with a width of less than two feet in some locations. Future implementation of the proposed Class II bike lanes on SR 116 would require slight roadway widening and restriping of the SR 116 approach to Bloomfield Road so that the bike lanes are placed between the through and right-turn lanes as is standard practice. In their comments on the project, Caltrans commented that the public pedestrian path and bike lane are located very close to SR 116, so rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs) were recommended. However, as the project is on one corner of a signalized intersection, use of RRFBs would be inappropriate. Such improvements are therefore not recommended as part of the project.

Consistent with County code requirements, bicycle parking should be supplied at a rate of one space per five required vehicle parking spaces to meet County code requirements. Since 65 vehicle parking spaces are proposed, the proposed project would be required to supply 13 bicycle parking spaces. Compliance with existing County regulations would ensure that impacts related to provision of bicycle facilities would be less than significant.

Transit Facilities.

Existing transit routes are adequate and have sufficient capacity to accommodate project-generated transit trips. Existing stops are within an acceptable walking distance of the site.

The project is consistent with existing and planned pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with any adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding bicycle or pedestrian facilities, and the impact would be less than significant.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant

b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b) (evaluation of transportation impacts of land use projects using vehicle miles traveled)?

Comment:

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b), and applicable starting July 1, 2020, Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) is now the appropriate metric to evaluate transportation impacts of land use projects, superseding use of the measure of traffic congestion (i.e., Level of Service). To assist with implementation of the new CEQA practice, the Sonoma County Transportation Agency (SCTA) is in the process of developing screening and modeling tools for local jurisdictions. In the interim, the Technical Advisory provided by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research may assist local agencies in their analysis of projects.

The OPR Technical Advisory identifies several criteria that may be used by jurisdictions to identify certain types of projects that are unlikely to have a significant VMT impact and can be "screened" from further VMT analysis. One of these screening criteria pertains to local-serving retail, which is defined as having fewer than 50,000 square feet of gross floor area. The theory behind this criterion is that while a larger retail project may generate interregional trips that increase a region's total VMT, small retail establishments do not necessarily add new trips to a region, but change where existing customers shop within the region, and often shorten trip lengths. The Transportation Impact Study¹⁸ for the project, dated January 26, 2023, and prepared by W-Trans, found that the project is anticipated to generate 179 trips per day, including 20 trips during the a.m. peak hour and 66 during the p.m. peak hour. Additionally, the proposed project includes 18,500 square feet, which is well below the local-serving retail threshold of 50,000 square feet. Also, the provision of a hardware store at this location may entice customers to make shorter trips to this location rather than to Cotati or Santa Rosa or to the associated Ace Hardware in northern Sebastopol. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the project would have a less-than-significant transportation impact on VMT.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

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

Comment:

The Transportation Impact Study analyzed sight distance for Highway 116 South and Bloomfield Road.

The project access would include two driveways, one on Highway 116 South approximately 300 feet west of Bloomfield Road and one on Bloomfield Road approximately 150 feet south of the intersection with Highway 116 South. Due to the existing "painted median" on Highway 116 South, movements at this driveway would be limited to right turns in and out.

Highway 116 South

Sight distance at the Highway 116 South (HWY 116) driveway was evaluated based on sight distance criteria contained in the Highway Design Manual published by Caltrans. The recommended sight distance for a driveway is based on stopping sight distance, with the approach travel speeds used as the basis for determining the recommended sight distance. Additionally, the stopping sight distance needed for a following driver to stop if there is a vehicle waiting to turn into a side street or driveway is evaluated based on stopping sight distance criterion and the approach speed on the major street. Because the driveway would be limited to right turns in and out, sight distance to the northwest only was evaluated. For an approach speed of 55 mph, stopping sight distance of 500 feet is needed. Existing sight lines exceed this distance and were found to be adequate.

Bloomfield Road

¹⁸ Weinberger, Steve and Dalene Whitlock, "Transportation Impact Study for Sebastopol Hardware South-Final", W-Trans, January 26, 2023.

In keeping with County policy, sight distance along Bloomfield Road was evaluated based on criteria contained in A Policy on Geometric Design on Highways and Streets published by American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) as well as County Standard 812. Per the County Standard stopping sight distance of 360 feet is needed for the 45-mph speed limit on Bloomfield Road. As the driveway is located on the outside of a curved portion of the roadway, sight lines extend well beyond the 360 feet needed to meet this standard. Sight distance is therefore adequate.

The project would not increase hazards, since it maintains the existing alignment of the roadway. However, hazards to drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians could occur during construction operations. This temporary construction-related impact will cease upon project completion, and the following mitigation will reduce the impact to a level of significance.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation:

Mitigation Measure TRAF-1: Traffic safety guidelines compatible with Section 12 of the Caltrans Standard Specifications, "Construction Area Traffic Control Devices" shall be followed during construction. Project plans and specifications shall also require that adequate signing and other precautions for public safety be provided during project construction.

Mitigation Monitoring:

Mitigation Monitoring TRAF-1: Detailed plans shall be submitted to the Department of Sonoma Public Infrastructure staff and Permit Sonoma's Project Review Division staff for review and approval prior to the issuance of building permits on the site. Installation must take place before final occupancy.

d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

Comment:

The site as designed would provide adequate access and egress as well as circulation for emergency response vehicles. Emergency vehicles would be able to enter the site and circulate through the parking lot using the 25-foot-wide drive aisles. Development on the site must comply with all emergency access requirements of the Sonoma County Fire Safety Code (Sonoma County Code Chapter 13), including emergency vehicle access requirements. Project development plans are required to be reviewed by a Department of Fire and Emergency services Fire Inspector during the building permit process to ensure compliance with emergency access issues. Refer to discussion in item 16(d), above.

Significance Level:

No Impact

e) Result in inadequate parking capacity?

Comment:

The project as proposed would provide 65 parking spaces on-site, including ADA designated parking spaces and EV parking spaces. Section 26-86-010 of the County's Zoning Code indicates that retail stores requires one space is required for every 200 square feet of floor space; nurseries require one space for every 2,000 square feet of floor area; and warehouse/storage use requires one space for every 2,000 square feet of floor area. The project is proposing 65 parking spaces and 13 bicycle parking spaces and therefore meets parking required under Section 26-86-010 of the Sonoma County Code.

Significance Level:

No Impact

18. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES:

Would the project:

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

i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5030.1(k), or

ii) A resource determined by the lead agency. In its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

Comment:

As discussed above in Section 5, Cultural Resources, Permit Sonoma Staff referred the project application to Native American Tribes within Sonoma County. No tribes requested consultation. There are no known archaeological resources on the site, but the project could uncover such materials during construction. Mitigation Measure TCR-1 and TCR-2 will reduce the impact to less than significant.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measures:

Mitigation Measure TCR-1: All building permits, improvement plans, and/or grading permits, involving ground disturbing activities, shall have the following note printed on plan sheets:

“In the event that archaeological resources such as arrowheads, midden or culturally modified soil deposits are discovered at any time during grading, scraping or excavation within the property, all work shall be halted in the established buffer zone (e.g., 50 feet) of the find and Permit Sonoma Project Review staff shall be notified and a qualified archaeologist shall be contacted immediately to make an evaluation of the find and report to Permit Sonoma. In the event cultural resources are discovered, the applicant shall immediately notify the Permit Sonoma Director so they may initiate consultation with the appropriate tribal representative. Examples of artifacts associated with prehistoric sites include modified stone, shell, bone or other cultural materials such as charcoal, ash and burned rock indicative of food procurement or processing activities. Historic artifacts potentially include all byproducts of human land use greater than 50 years of age including trash pits older than 50 years of age. When contacted, a member of Permit Sonoma project review staff and the archaeologist shall visit the site to determine the extent of the resources and to develop and coordinate proper protection/mitigation measures required for the discovery. Permit Sonoma shall refer the mitigation/protection plan to the designated tribal representatives for review and comment. The tribal representative shall determine if the resources discovered are TCR’s. No work shall commence until a protection/mitigation plan is reviewed and approved by Permit Sonoma project review staff and Tribe. Applicant may resolve impacts by modifying projects plans and avoiding area of work. If avoidance is not possible, mitigation may include removal and preservation in accordance with California law. Archaeological evaluation and mitigation shall be at the applicant’s sole expense.

If human remains are encountered, all work must stop within 50 feet of the discovered remains and Permit Sonoma staff, County Coroner, a qualified archaeologist, and any Tribe(s) with interest shall be notified immediately so that an evaluation can be performed. If the remains are deemed to be Native American, the Native American Heritage Commission shall be contacted by the Coroner so that a “Most Likely Descendant” can be designated, and the appropriate provisions of the California Government Code and California Public Resources Code will be followed.”

Mitigation Monitoring TCR-1:

Building/grading permits shall not be approved for issuance by Permit Sonoma Project Review Staff until the above notes are printed on the building, grading and improvement plans and the applicant has demonstrated that necessary arrangements have been made to ensure that the applicant has entered into agreements with one qualified archaeological monitor and one tribal monitor who will be present during all ground-disturbing activities.

Mitigation Measure TCR-2: All grading permits, improvement plans, and building permits, involving ground disturbing activities, shall include the following notes:

“If human remains are encountered, all work must stop in the immediate (50 feet) vicinity of the discovered remains and Permit Sonoma staff, County Coroner, and a qualified archaeologist must be notified immediately so that an evaluation can be performed. If the remains are deemed to be Native American, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) must be contacted by the Coroner so that a “Most Likely Descendant” can be designated and the appropriate provisions of the California Government Health and Safety Code, and California Public Resources Code will be followed.”

Mitigation Monitoring TCR-2:

Building/grading permits shall not be approved for issuance by Permit Sonoma Project Review Staff until the above notes are printed on the building, grading, and improvement plans. Permit Sonoma shall be contacted if human remains are found, and special rules set forth in California Government Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(b) shall apply.

19. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS:

Would the project:

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

Comment:

The project site is not in an area served by public sewer or water. The site will be served by a private on-site sewage disposal system. Plans for a permit for a private on-site sewage disposal system have been approved, finding that the proposed system would have adequate capacity to serve the proposed use. Prior to initiation of the use, Permit Sonoma will verify that the septic system has been installed in accordance with all applicable regulations. Further, compliance with all mitigation measures identified throughout the document will ensure that construction of the septic system will not cause significant environmental effects.

The project will be served by an existing onsite private well, therefore the project will not result in any construction impacts. The project site is located in Groundwater Availability Class 2 Major Natural Recharge area and is not located in a priority a priority groundwater basin.

Significance Level:

No Impact

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

Comment:

The project is served by a private on-site septic system and a private well. The project would not contribute to the need for construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities, see 19(a.) above and Section 10.

Significance Level:

No Impact

- c) **Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?**

Comment:

Refer to response for 19(a), above.

Significance Level:

No Impact

- d) **Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?**

Comment:

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

However, to further reduce the solid waste disposal footprint, as a condition of approval, the applicant

would be required to provide to Permit Sonoma staff a solid waste management plan.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

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

Comment:

Sonoma County has access to adequate permitted landfill capacity to serve the proposed project.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

20. WILDFIRE:

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

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

Comment:

The project site is not located within a State responsibility area (SRA) for fire service and is not within a fire hazard severity zone. In addition, as noted in Section 9(f), the proposed project would not impair the implementation of, or physically interfere with, an adopted emergency response plan and no impact would occur.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

- b) **Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?**

Comment:

The project site would be located on a parcel that is relatively flat and not near any slopes. The proposed project is located in an area that is occupied by a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial uses. Additionally, the project site is located nearly one mile from the State Responsibility Area and is not located within a Fire Hazard Severity Zone. No significant impacts related to wildfire are anticipated.

Significant Level:

No Impact

- c) **Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?**

Comment:

Proposed infrastructure includes an improved and upgraded driveway to provide public access to the project site. The driveway will be designed to meet applicable safety standards to allow for adequate emergency response. Emergency vehicles would be able to enter the site and circulate through the parking lot using the 25-foot-wide drive aisles. The proposed improvements to the parking lot and driveways with turnaround space include will comply with Fire Safe Standards include in the Sonoma County Zoning Code (Chapter 13). Installation and maintenance of the proposed minor infrastructure

improvements are not anticipated to exacerbate fire risk or result in temporary or ongoing environmental impacts.

Significance Level:

No Impact

- d) **Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?**

Comment:

The project site is relatively flat. Based on the lack of slopes present on the project site, the project would not 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.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

21. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE:

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

Comment:

Potential impacts to special status wildlife species and habitat are addressed in Section 4, Biological Resources. Implementation of the required mitigation measures would reduce these potential impacts to a less than significant level.

Evaluation of potential cultural resources in Section 5, Cultural Resources determined that none exist, and no impacts would occur.

Evaluation of potential tribal cultural resources in Section 18, Tribal Cultural Resources, determined that none exist on site. However, during construction, the project could uncover such materials. The implementation of the required mitigation measures would reduce the potential impacts to a less than significant level.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

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

Comment:

The project would contribute to potential cumulative impacts related to aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, transportation, noise, and tribal resources. However, no individual project impacts have been identified in this Initial Study that are cumulatively considerable because the impacts of the project and project specific mitigation measures, when considered with past, other current, and probable future projects, would reduce cumulative impacts to less than significant in accordance with the General Plan.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

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

Comment:

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

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact

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