16.0
Effects Found to be Less than Significant

CEQA allows a lead agency to limit the detail of discussion of environmental effects that are not potentially significant (PRC Section 21100, CCR Section 15128). Environmental issue areas scoped out of the EIR are listed below with a brief explanation of why there would not be an impact to these resource areas or why there would be a less than significant impact.

16.1 Aesthetics

Thresholds of Significance Questions Deemed Not Applicable

A significant environmental effect related to aesthetics would occur if the project would result in any of the following:

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

There are no state designated scenic highways in Humboldt County. U.S. Highway 101 is designated as an eligible state scenic highway (California Department of Transportation 2024) and is located approximately 0.3 miles west of the project site. Therefore, implementation of the project would not result in damage to scenic resources within a state scenic highway.

Thresholds of Significance

A significant environmental effect related to aesthetics would occur if the project would result in any of the following:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- 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 points.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality; or
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

Effects on a Scenic Vista

The General Plan EIR states that important scenic vistas and resources in Humboldt County include those that are visible from major public roadways and public areas and that contain views of the coast, forests, open space or agricultural lands, as well as views of historic districts, landmarks, and cultural sites (p. 3.16-5).

Implementation of the project would not obstruct views of forests or the coast because neither of these scenic resources are visible from the site due to its distance from the nearest forests (and intervening developed and natural features that block such views) and the coast. The site is not within a historic district nor are there landmarks whose views could be impacted as a result of the project. There are no adjacent open space areas and no agricultural lands whose views could be obstructed by future development of the project site, which is surrounded by developed commercial and residential uses. The project allows for the type of development (i.e., residential, office and commercial) that is anticipated for the site in the General Plan and considered as part of the General Plan EIR evaluation of impacts on scenic vistas.

For these reasons that the project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

Conflict with Regulations Governing Scenic Quality

The project site is located within an urbanized area. The proposed rezoning action would result in the principal existing residential and commercial zoning classifications being replaced with the Mixed Use (Urban) classification or MU1. Individual development proposed within the project site will be required to comply with the development regulations for the MU1 zone found in Humboldt County Code section 314-98, subsection 9.1. Regulations in this section that relate to aesthetics address landscaping, outdoor lighting and minimization of off-site light splay, parking areas and screening of such areas, and glare minimization. The Q-Zone regulations include a range of form-based development guidance to address, among other considerations, visual effects of development. Prior to approval of building permits for future individual projects, each will be reviewed for consistency with Q-Zone regulations designed to address visual quality of development. For these reasons, the proposed project would not conflict with regulations governing scenic quality.

New Light or Glare That Conflicts with Applicable Zoning Regulations

Existing light sources in the area include exterior lighting from on-site commercial uses, adjacent residences and commercial uses, and vehicle headlights from motorists driving along the local roadways. The proposed project would introduce new sources of light and glare.

Although the proposed project would introduce new lighting, the proposed uses are similar to existing residential and commercial uses within the site. Lighting for new development must also be designed to conform to uniform lighting development standards in the County Code that are intended to ensure that lighting is compatible with the existing setting and shielded to minimize light splay onto adjacent properties. A lighting plan is required to ensure that these standards are met. Lighting standards that apply specifically in areas zoned Mixed Use, as would be the project site, are found in Section 314-9, subsection 9.1.1.2, Outdoor Lighting, and 9.1.1.5.5, Glare. Section 5.6, Lighting, in the Q-Zone regulations, also includes specific lighting standards that address permitted lighting intensity, fixture height, shielding and off-site glare minimization. Consistency of new development projects with the light and glare standards noted above would be reviewed prior to approval of building permits for individual future projects.

Given that new developments must be designed with lighting regulations designed to minimize lighting impacts within Mixed Use districts, light and glare impacts would be less than significant.

Life Plan Humboldt

The Life Plan project will be required to meet the same aesthetics and design related development regulations as would all other development within the project site. Like other future projects within the site, the Life Plan project will comply with all development regulations, standards and policies governing aesthetic quality and lighting. The Life Plan project would not result in new or more severe impacts than have been identified for the project as a whole.

16.2 Agricultural and Forestry Resources

Thresholds of Significance

A significant environmental effect related to agricultural and forestry resources would occur if the project would result in any of the following:

- 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 nonagricultural use?
- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?
- Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?

- Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?
- Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

Convert Farmland or Conflict with Agricultural Zoning

The California Department of Conservation's California Important Farmland Finder does not address farmland classifications in Humboldt County. However, the Humboldt County WebGIS indicates that the project site contains Prime Agricultural Soils, more specifically designated as "Prime AG Soil – Ar5," Prime AG Soil – Ar6," and "Prime AG Soil – Hk4" (Humboldt County 2024a). Although Prime Agricultural Soils are present on the project site, historically, no agricultural production activities have occurred on the site. The nearest parcels zoned for agricultural uses are located approximately 0.3 miles northeast of the site.

The project site is considered an urban infill location that is surrounded by urban development on all sides (residences and commercial to the north, residences to the east and west, and residences and commercial to the south). Given that the site is not in agricultural use, is surrounded by urban uses within an urban infill context, is zoned for urban uses and wetlands conservation (R-2, R-3, C-2 and WR), and is designated by the General Plan for residential, mixed-use, commercial, and public facilities, the proposed project would not result in the conversion of land that could feasibly or practically be utilized for or planned for agricultural production.

None of the land within or adjacent to the site are designated resource lands under Williamson Act contract (Humboldt County 2024a). Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.

Forest Resources

According to the County General Plan EIR, there are 1.9 million acres of forested land in Humboldt County, and of that total, 1.7 million acres are considered suitable for timber production. Approximately one million acres in Humboldt County are designated as Timber Production Zone (TPZ) (Humboldt County 2017a). However, the project site is not within a Timber Production Zone and current zoning is not associated forest land or timberland use.

The site does not contain forest land and, therefore, the proposed project would not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

Life Plan Humboldt

The Life Plan Humboldt project would develop a portion of the project site that has and is currently proposed for urban development. The circumstances for its development are the

same as identified for the project as a whole regarding conversion of agricultural land and or loss of forestry resources. The Life Plan Humboldt project would not result in new or more severe impacts on agricultural and forestry resources than described above for the project as a whole.

16.3 Geology and Soils

Paleontological resources are addressed in Section 7.0, Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources.

Thresholds of Significance Questions Deemed Not Applicable

A significant environmental effect related to geology and soils would occur if the project would result in any of the following:

- Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving landslides?

According to the Humboldt County WebGIS, slopes on the project site are less than 15 perfect and there are no historic landslides at or within the proximity of the project site (Humboldt County 2024). Additionally, the U.S. Geological Survey's U.S. Landslide Inventory mapping does not identify McKinleyville as being a location where landslides would occur (U.S. Geological Survey 2024a). Therefore, it is not likely that landslides are an issue to be addressed and, therefore, this topic will not be discussed further.

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

All future individual development projects proposed within the site will connect into existing sanitary sewer lines within the area. Septic tanks and alternative wastewater disposal systems will not be used. Therefore, this topic will not be discussed further.

Thresholds of Significance

A significant environmental effect related to geology and soils would occur if the project would result in any of the following:

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

    1) 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?

2) Strong seismic ground shaking?

3) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

- Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?
- Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?
- Be located on expansive soil, creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?
- Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

Earthquake Fault Zones

Humboldt County is located within the two highest seismic risk zones specified by the California Building Code (Humboldt County 2017a). The project site is located approximately 0.3 miles east of the Mad Rive Fault and approximately 0.8 miles west of the McKinleyville Fault, both of which are delineated as Alquist-Priolo Fault Zones (California Department of Conservation 2024). Due to the site's proximity to these two Alquist-Priolo Fault Zones, it is possible that adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault may occur associated with individual future development projects within the project site.

General Plan Policy S-P11 states that new development may be approved only if it can be demonstrated that the proposed development will neither create nor significantly contribute to, or be impacted by, geologic instability or geologic hazards. Additionally, General Plan Policy S-P7 states that the application and enforcement of state adopted building codes and Alquist-Priolo requirements to new construction shall be implemented. Humboldt County Code Chapter 6, Geologic Hazards, requires that geologic hazards regulations be applied throughout Humboldt County for those projects that fall within the County's land use and development jurisdiction, including the proposed project. Table 1, Geologic Hazards Land Use Matrix, found within Section 336-5 of the Humboldt County Code, identifies the type of report that is required (engineering geologic and/or soil engineering reports) based on the land use. Future individual development projects within the project site will be required to prepare the appropriate site-specific geotechnical report as specified in Table 1 and implement the recommendations identified within the report in order to reduce the potential impacts associated with earthquake faults.

Compliance with the abovementioned General Plan policies as well as the Humboldt County Code would ensure that future individual projects proposed within the project site would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault.

Seismic Ground Shaking and Liquefaction

As indicated above, the project site is located within one mile from the east and west of two earthquake fault zones. Therefore, it is anticipated that seismic ground shaking would occur at the project site and could directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death. According to the Humboldt County WebGIS, the project site is not located within an area of significant potential liquefaction hazard (Humboldt County 2024), but its susceptibility to seismic shaking could have potential to induce liquefaction. Future individual projects proposed within the project site would be required to prepare site-specific geotechnical reports, based on the land uses identified within Table 1 of Section 336-5 of the Humboldt County Code. These site-specific geotechnical reports will address the potential for seismic ground shaking and liquefaction, and provide recommendations for construction. Future individual development projects will be required to implement these recommendations, if provided, to ensure that impacts associated with seismic ground shaking and liquefaction are less than significant.

Soil Erosion

Site preparation and construction activities for future individual projects proposed within the project site would expose soil surfaces to erosion. Therefore, compliance with General Plan Policy WR-P10 would be required, which states that all projects requiring a grading permit shall comply with performance standards adopted by ordinance and/or conditioned to minimize erosion and discharge of sediments into surface runoff, drainage systems, and water bodies consistent with best management practices and non-point source regulatory standards. General Plan Policy WR-S7 also states that ministerial and discretionary projects shall conform to grading ordinance standards for erosion and sediment control. Projects are also required to comply with McKinleyville Community Plan Policy 3310.12, which lists multiple erosion and sediment control measures that shall be incorporated into development design and improvements. Additionally, Humboldt County Code Section 331-14 states that all projects requiring building, grading, and development permits shall adhere to the listed erosion and sedimentation control standards during project construction, which include, but are not limited to, minimizing soil exposure during the rainy season; retain trees and natural vegetation to stabilize hillsides, retain moisture, reduce erosion, minimize siltation and nutrient runoff and preserve scenic qualities; and vegetate and mulch denuded areas to protect them from winter rains. This code section also requires a site-specific erosion and sediment control plan to be prepared and submitted with any development application which involves grading or related activities and is subject to the review and approval of the Chief Building Official.

For future individual development projects that disturb one acre or more of soil, the preparation of a storm water pollution prevention plan will also be required. Although a stormwater pollution prevention plan is primarily aimed at water quality, it is another mechanism routinely applied by jurisdictions that helps minimize the risk of erosion, in part because it requires an erosion control plan with the incorporation of best management practices to control erosion during construction. These practices focus on erosion control, stormwater runoff control, sediment control, and "good housekeeping" measures. Required compliance with the Humboldt County Code and applicable General Plan and McKinleyville Community Plan policies would minimize risks associated with soil erosion.

Unstable and Expansive Soils

The soil stability and expansive properties on the site are unknown at this time. Future individual development projects proposed on the project site will be required to demonstrate that the proposed development will neither create nor significantly contribute to, or be impacted by, geologic instability or geologic hazards (General Plan Policy S-P11). As noted above for seismic shaking and liquefaction hazards, to ensure impacts associated with unstable soils are less than significant, future individual projects proposed within the project site would be required to prepare site-specific geotechnical reports, based on the land uses identified within Table 1 of Section 336-5 of the Humboldt County Code. These site-specific geotechnical reports will address site soil instability and expansive properties, if present, and provide recommendations for construction.

Life Plan Humboldt

The Life Plan Humboldt project would be subject to conformance with the same state and local uniformly applied development standards as apply to the entire Town Center project site. These regulations will serve to reduce impacts associated with seismic and geologic hazards, including preparing a site-specific geotechnical report to identify any geologic hazards that may be present on the project site. Additionally, the Life Plan project will prepare and submit a site-specific erosion and sediment control plan and a stormwater pollution prevention plan, as required by Humboldt County Code and discussed above. The Life Plan Humboldt project would not result in new or more severe impacts than have been discussed above for development of the project site as a whole.

16.4 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Thresholds of Significance

A significant impact associated with hazards and hazardous materials would occur if implementation of the project would:

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

- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?
- Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?
- 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, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?
- Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?
- Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?
- 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 a public-use airport, result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?

Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

Hazardous Materials Hazards, Accidental Release, Emissions Near Schools

Public health and safety impacts associated with hazardous materials must be considered in the context of the types of land uses being proposed and their associated need for using, storing and transporting hazardous materials, and in the context of the substantial regulatory requirements promulgated by the state and federal governments designed to reduce associated impacts.

As discussed in Section 4.0, Project Description, the purpose of MU1 zoning is to provide for pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use development, typically consisting of a combination of commercial, office, and higher density residential uses. These use types typically do not involve the need for transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials of a type, volume or acute hazard that poses substantial risk to public health or safety.

Regarding accidental release of hazardous materials, hazards during construction can occur through demolition of existing, structures that may contain lead or asbestos, or when the site soils are known to be contaminated due to past agriculture or industrial use or from underground storage of hazardous materials. As discussed in Section 4.0, Project Description, it is assumed that no demolition of existing buildings would occur with project implementation and if such were to be proposed in the future, associated hazards would be evaluated at that time. The vacant portion of the site west of Central Avenue has not been actively used for agricultural production in at least 20 years (Google Earth 2024) and there is no evidence that

has been used for industrial activities over time. Per the Q-Zone regulations, no industrial uses, or other uses that might otherwise commonly use, store, handle or dispose significant quantities of hazardous materials are likely to be allowed within the project site.

The project site is located within one-quarter mile of McKinleyville Middle School. However, as noted above, the project does not involve land use types typically associated with high risk of releasing hazardous materials into the environment.

A litany of state and federal regulations has been promulgated to reduce public health and safety risks from transport, use, storage and disposal of hazardous materials. New development within the site would be required to conform with these uniformly applied regulations, which would function as mitigation for reducing public health and safety and environmental impacts from hazardous materials. Representative examples of these regulations include:

- Resource Conservation and Recovery Act - regulations establish criteria for identifying, packaging, and labeling hazardous wastes; prescribe the management of hazardous wastes; establish permit requirements for hazardous waste treatment, storage, disposal, and transportation; and identify hazardous wastes that cannot be disposed of in ordinary landfills.
- California Department of Toxic Substances Control Regulations – the department implements federal hazardous materials regulations at the state level through regulating hazardous waste, cleaning up existing contamination, reducing the amount of hazardous waste produced in California, and managing handling, storage, transportation, disposal, treatment, reduction, cleanup, and emergency planning for hazardous waste. The department also maintains of hazardous waste facilities and sites, contaminated drinking water wells, sites listed by the State Water Resources Control Board as having underground storage tank leaks or a discharge of hazardous wastes or materials into the water or groundwater, and sites with a known migration of hazardous waste/material to minimize potential release of such materials. These regulations are covered under Chapter 6.95 of the California Health and Safety Code, Article 1, Hazardous Materials Release Response and Inventory Program (Sections 25500 to 25520), and Article 2, Hazardous Materials Management (Sections 25531 to 25543.3).

  Title 19 of the California Code of Regulation (CCR) establishes minimum statewide standards for hazardous materials business plans. These plans must include the following: 1) a hazardous material inventory in accordance with Sections 2729.2 to 2729.7, emergency response plans and procedures in accordance with Section 2731, and 3) training program information in accordance with Section 2732. Business plans should contain basic information regarding the location, type, quantity, and health risks of hazardous materials stored, used, or disposed of in the State.

At the County level, the hazardous materials business plan requirements are implemented by the Humboldt County Environmental Health Department. Future business within the project site that propose to store hazardous materials or generate hazardous wastes must obtain permits from the department, including for above ground and underground storage tank construction, removal, modification, and operation. Businesses that plan to store or handle 55 gallons, 500 pounds, or 200 cubic feet of hazardous waste for 30 days or more at any time in the course of a year; store any amount of hazardous waste, category 1 or 2 pesticides, or explosives; and/or handle extremely hazardous substances must comply with permit requirements designed to reduce associated safety hazards prior to receiving occupancy permits.

- California Occupational Safety and Health Administration – the agency is primarily responsible for worker safety related to the handling and use of chemicals in the workplace. California Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards are generally more stringent than federal regulations. The employer is required to monitor worker exposure to listed hazardous substances and notify workers of exposure (8 CCR 337–340). The regulations specify requirements for employee training, availability of safety equipment, accident-prevention programs, and hazardous substance exposure warnings (8 CCR 5192 outlines standards for the preparation of Health and Safety Plans. Training requirements identified in California Code of Regulations Title 8, Section 5192(e) state that all employees working on site (such as but not limited to equipment operators, general laborers, and others) exposed to hazardous substances, health hazards, or safety hazards, and their supervisors and management responsible for the site shall receive training meeting the requirements of this subsection before they are permitted to engage in hazardous waste operations that could expose them to hazardous substances, safety, or health hazards, and they shall receive review training as specified in this subsection.
- Hazardous Materials Transportation Regulations – California has adopted U.S. Department of Transportation regulations for the intrastate movement of hazardous materials. State regulations are contained in 26 CCR. In addition, the State regulates the transportation of hazardous waste originating in the state and passing through the state as found in 22 California Code of Regulations Division 4.5, Chapter 11. The California Highway Patrol and the California Department of Transportation have primary responsibility for enforcing federal and State regulations and responding to hazardous materials transportation emergencies.

In summary, the use types that would be allowed within the project are typically not sources of significant public health or safety risk from hazardous materials, and regardless, would be regulated under a diverse set of federal and state laws designed to reduce hazards from transport, use, handle, storage and disposal of such materials. Consequently, the project would have less than significant impacts on public health and the environment from these activities.

Hazardous Materials Site and Risk of Hazardous Materials Release

New development planned on sites that are known to be contaminated with hazardous materials from past use of those sites can cause risks to public health and safety if, through site preparation and ground disturbance activities, the materials are released into the environment. The following lists of hazardous material sites were reviewed to determine if any are located within the project site:

- Hazardous Materials Waste and Substances Sites from the Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor Database (Department of Toxic Substances Control 2024;
- Leaking Underground Storage Tank Sites from the State Water Board's GeoTracker Database (State Water Resources Board 2024);
- Solid Waste Disposal Sites Identified by Water Board with Waste Constituents Above Hazardous Waste Levels Outside the Waste Management Unit (California Environmental Protection Agency 2024a);
- "Active" Cease and Desist Order and Cleanup and Abatement Orders from Water Board (California Environmental Protection Agency 2024b); and
- List of hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action pursuant to Section 25187.5 of the Health and Safety Code, identified by the Department of Toxic Substances Control (California Environmental Protection Agency 2024c).

No portion of the project site is included on any of these lists with exception to the Leaking Underground Storage Tank Sites from the State Water Board's GeoTracker Database. There are five leaking underground storage tank clean-up sites located within the project site - Tetrault McKinleyville Rocket Station at 2260 Central Avenue; Central BP and Central BP Service Station at 2160 Central Avenue; the Arcata Fire Protection District McKinleyville Fire Station at 2149 Central Avenue; and UNOCAL #5313 at 1980 Central Avenue. However, all of these cases regarding hazards and or remediation have been completed and closed for more than ten years (State Water Resources Board 2024). There are no known hazardous materials within the proposed project site, therefore no requirement or trigger for additional environmental review. The project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.

Emergency Access

The *County of Humboldt Emergency Operations Plan Humboldt Operational Area* (Humboldt County Sheriff's Office 2015) ("emergency operations plan") provides the framework for agencies to respond to any emergency requiring multiagency participation and/or activation of the County Emergency Operations Center. The emergency operations plan does not identify specific evacuation routes and is instead used as a resource document to determine the most

appropriate evacuation routes based on the nature and extent of the hazard. However, the emergency operations plan states that U.S. Highway 101 is the main north and south corridor in the county. Additional main transportation arteries are State Routes 36, 96, 255, and 299. State Route 299 is the main roadway from the county to the east and connects to Interstate 5 at Redding.

The project site is located near, but not adjacent to U.S. Highway 101, and is not near any of the other abovementioned roadways. Access to U.S. Highway 101 from the project site is indirectly available via the School Road, Murray Road, and Airport Road interchanges, each of which can be accessed from the project site via multiple routes. The proposed project would not physically interfere with use of any emergency evacuation routes, nor would it impair the implementation of the adopted emergency operations plan.

Wildland Fire Hazard

The project site is not located within a wildfire hazard area (California Department of Forestry and Fire 2024). Therefore, impacts associated with wildland fire risk would be less than significant.

Airport Operations Hazards

The California Redwood Coast - Humboldt County Airport is located approximately 1.6 miles to the north (Google Earth 2024) of the project site. According to Figure 1-2 of the *Final Humboldt County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan* ("ALUCP"), which is shown in this EIR as Figure 11-2, California Redwood Coast-Humboldt County Airport Area of Influence., a small portion of the project site near the Railroad Drive/Central Avenue intersection) is within Review Area 1, while the remainder of the site is within Review Area 2.

Review Area 1 represents the area in which the policies and compatibility criteria in the Compatibility Plan associated with noise and safety apply. Review Area 2 represents the area in which airspace protection and overflight notification policies of the Compatibility Plan are applicable. These policies are listed in Section 3.4, Airspace Protection Compatibility Policies, and Section 3.5, Overflight Notification Policies, of the ALUCP. The intent of the ALUCP airspace protection policies is to reduce the risk of harm to people and property that might arise from an aircraft accident (e.g., tall structures). The overflight notification policies are for areas within which aircraft flights to and from the airport occur frequently. Development within the project site will be required to comply with the policies identified in the abovementioned sections of the ALUCP.

Table 3-2, Safety Compatibility Criteria, within the ALUCP indicates that residential, commercial, and office land uses are all compatible with those listed in Safety Zone 6; a portion of the northern area of the site is located within this zone as shown in Figure 4.2, Safety Compatibility

Policy may in the ALUCP. These uses are acceptable without safety-related conditions (noise, airspace protection, and/or overflight limitations may apply) (Humboldt County Airport Land Use Commission 2021).

Compatibility Plan Policy GP-4 identifies land use actions for projects located in an AIA that are subject to review by the Humboldt County Airport Land Use Commission for compatibility with the Compatibility Plan. Two actions relevant to the proposed project suggest that some types of future individual projects within the site may be subject to Airport Land Use Commission review – planned unit developments of more than five units, and building permit applications for projects having a valuation greater than $1,000,000. Given this requirement as well as the requirement that future projects comply with applicable policies listed in Sections 3.4 and 3.5 of the ALUCP, and that the proposed uses are all acceptable uses within Safety Zone 6, impacts associated with safety hazards for people residing or working in the project area would be less than significant.

Life Plan Humboldt

The Life Plan Humboldt project is a common land use project type whose need for use, handling, storage and disposal of hazardous materials is similar to the development types proposed for the remainder of the project site. Its construction and operation are subject to compliance with the same County policies and regulations, and state and federal hazardous materials regulations as other future development within the site as described above. Similarly, the Life Plan Humboldt project must be consistent with the airport Compatibility Plan as would all other development within the site as a means to reduce airport operations related safety impacts. Consequently, the Life Plan project would not result in new or more severe hazards impacts than identified for the project as a whole.

16.5 Land Use and Planning

Thresholds of Significance

A significant environmental effect related to Land Use and Planning would occur if the project would result in any of the following:

a) Physically divide an established community

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

Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

The McKinleyville Community Plan calls for development of a viable Town Center. This is envisioned as mixed-use development that reduces dependence on the automobile and

encourages pedestrian and bicycle travel. This configuration provides for a complete and integrated community containing housing, shops, workplaces, schools, parks and civic facilities essential to the daily life of the residents. The scale is designed so that housing, jobs, shopping, recreation and other activities are within easy walking distances of each other. This area is also intended to serve as a community focal point by providing an activity center and a place for formal and informal social/community interaction. Parks and civic facilities have already been established within the Town Center Area. The focus of the proposed ordinance is to create a mixed-use environment where there is a higher density of residential units to support a commercial core for the community.

The proposed Town Center ordinance is implementing the community plan so it will not physically divide an established community. There will be pedestrian and bicycle connections across the site connecting the site to the surrounding area and connecting across the site.

The town center plan will not cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. The Town Center has several different land uses including Medium Density Residential, Mixed Use, Commercial, and Public Facilities. The overall density is aggregated over the entire town center site. The Mixed-Use Land use is intended for lands in central areas of urban communities where the presence of public utilities and a sufficient population base allows the development of pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use (commercial, office, and residential) development. The maximum residential density is 16 dwelling units per acre and the maximum allowable FAR (Floor to Area Ratio) is 3. It is expected that in areas of the Town Center the density of areas designated Mixed-Use will exceed 16 units per acre, but this will be off set by the area designated Medium Density Residential that will be set aside for wetlands. The overall density of the area will not be exceeded. This also incorporates the understanding that the County recently adopted the Residential Commercial use type which allows a density of 30 units per acre in commercial areas. This essentially creates the potential for mixed-use development in commercial zones with a residential density of 30 units per acre.

Life Plan Humboldt

The conclusion presented above for the entire project site is germane to the Life Plan Humboldt project. Implementation of the Life Plan project would not result in new or more severe impacts associated with Land Use and Planning than are addressed above for the proposed project as a whole.

16.6 Mineral Resources

Thresholds of Significance

A significant environmental effect related to mineral resources would occur if the project would result in any of the following:

- Result in loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?
- Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated in a local general plan, specific plan, or other land-use plan?

Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

The General Plan describes Humboldt County as having a wealth of mineral resources, with current mineral resource production focused on sand, gravel, and rock extraction and processing. The nearest rock extraction site to the project boundary is located approximately one mile south, along the Mad River (Humboldt County 2017, Figure 10.1). There are no other known mineral resources or recovery sites located within the project boundary (U.S. Geological Survey 2024b). Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and residents of the state, nor would the project result in the loss of availability of locally important mineral resource recovery sites delineated in a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan. Its mineral resources impacts would be less than significant.

Life Plan Humboldt

The conclusion presented above for the entire project site is germane to the Life Plan Humboldt project. Implementation of the Life Plan project would not result in new or more severe impacts associated with mineral resources than are addressed above for the proposed project as a whole.

16.7 Parks and Recreation

Thresholds of Significance

A significant impact associated with parks and recreational facilities would occur if implementation of the project would:

- 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?

- 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?

Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

The McKinleyville Community Services District provides parks and recreation services to residents in McKinleyville. According to its *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* (McKinleyville Community Services District 2019), McKinleyville residents have access to 538 acres of parkland and open space, of which about 191 acres are in McKinleyville. The Community Plan requires three acres of park per 1,000 new residents. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan uses the state and County adopted general standard of three park acres for every 1,000 residents. The same parkland ratio is required in Section 314-110 of the County Code regarding parkland dedication requirements for proposed subdivisions.

The proposed project is projected to generate 6,122 new residents. Using the same ratio, the proposed project would generate a demand for approximately 18.4 acres of parkland (6,122 residents/1,000) x 3.0 acres. That demand would occur in the future if and when applications for individual residential projects are submitted and considered by the County.

The Community Plan contains a policy stating that all new residential development is to offer to dedicate park land or must pay a park impact fee for public parks sufficient to achieve certain standards associated with parkland acreage to population ratios. As noted above, County Code Section 314-110, Parkland Dedication, requires that residential subdivisions offer to dedicate land to a public or private non-profit agency for public park or recreation use or pay in-lieu fees to provide an appropriate contribution to public parks or recreation, pursuant to the Quimby Act (Government Code section 66477). The Quimby Act (California Government Code Section 66477) states that “the legislative body of a city or county may, by ordinance, require the dedication of land or impose a requirement of the payment of fees in lieu thereof, or a combination of both, for park or recreational purposes as a condition to the approval of a tentative or parcel map.” Requirements of the Quimby Act apply only to the acquisition of new parkland and do not apply to the physical development of new park facilities or associated operations and maintenance costs. The County collects impact fees for both parks and recreation.

The increase in demand for park and recreation facilities could result in environmental impacts if future residential project developers elect to construct new park facilities within the boundaries of their respective projects. Such impacts would be primarily related to construction activities, as the operations of park facilities generally do not generate potentially significant environmental impacts. Impacts of constructing new park facilities within the site would be similar to those for constructing other forms of proposed development, including residential uses, commercial uses, and office uses. The impacts of such construction are addressed in the

individual environmental topic sections of this EIR. These construction effects include, but are not limited to: generating criteria air emissions, adversely affecting biological resources (particularly wetlands, special status species, and sensitive natural communities), potentially damaging buried cultural resources, adversely affecting water quality, and generating short-term noise. Where such construction impacts have been identified as potentially significant, mitigation measures in this EIR and required conformance with uniformly applied development regulations and standards would reduce the impacts to less than significant.

An increase in demand for park and recreation facilities could also result in environmental impacts if new facilities need to be constructed at existing park/recreation sites to accommodate demand. Use of nearby park and recreation facilities is likely to increase as the Town Center site builds out.

Pierson Park is within the Town Center. It was dedicated to be a vital component of the Town Center. The park property is approximately 8.9 acres, and the community library, sheriff's substation and park area consist of approximately 7.3 acres supporting playgrounds, a large turf area for multi-use activities, a gazebo and BBQ area, picnic tables, restrooms, bocce ball courts and horseshoe pits, a community garden, skateboard facility, area for future development and a parking area. The McKinleyville Activity Center, which includes a gymnasium, bleachers, and indoor sporting equipment, is located within Pierson Park.

Other nearby park and recreation facilities would be available to new Town Center residents. Hiller Park is located less than one-half mile west of the project site and is directly accessible from Hiller Road. The park is 36 acres. It includes playgrounds, trails, a dog park, botanical garden, picnic and BBQ area, picnic tables, restrooms and a parking area. The Hiller Sports Complex, a 19-acre active recreation facility, is located adjacent to Hiller Park. It includes Little League fields, a softball field, a softball/Babe Ruth Baseball Field, a minor softball field and two collegiate-sized soccer fields, as well as a snack bar, restrooms, and parking area.

There is public open space serving McKinleyville including the 599-acre tract of the Community Forest located along the eastern boundary of McKinleyville south of Murray Road.

A new neighborhood park is being constructed near the intersection of Washington Avenue and School Road. This will be directly accessible by the planned trail that will cross through the Town Center.

The approximately 14-acre area of the project site reserved for wetland restoration/preservation would serve as a passive park amenity. The Q-Zone regulations also call for creating a small pocket park that would incorporate a small group of redwood trees that are located behind the existing shopping center. These project design features/amenities will be valuable associated resources for future site residents.

Park facilities and open space in McKinleyville are owned and managed by the McKinleyville Community Services District. Park fees collected by the County are transmitted to MCSD to fund needed park improvements, expansions or new facilities. Over time as the proposed project increases demand for existing park and recreation facilities, the MCSD may consider improvements to existing park and recreation facilities to help meet that demand. Constructing and operating new amenities within existing park and recreation sites could give rise to environmental impacts. The type, location, size, timing, etc., of such improvements, if necessary, cannot be known at present. Therefore, potential impacts of such improvements cannot currently be evaluated. MCSD would define improvement projects in the future. If MCSD were to determine that such projects have potential to cause adverse environmental impacts, MCSD would prepare CEQA documentation to evaluate this potential and identify migration measures to reduce the significance of such impacts. Similarly, if MCSD were to determine in the future that one or more new parks were needed to help meet demand of the project and other future cumulative development in the community, CEQA documentation would be prepared once park location(s), improvements, etc. are defined.

The existing facilities meet the foreseeable demands for the development of the Town Center and payment of park fees under provisions of the Quimby Act allow for future expansion of facilities.

Life Plan Humboldt

The Life Plan Humboldt project is considered a commercial use. Though it would include "residents", its contribution to demand for parkland would likely be nominal. The project includes amenities designed to address the recreation needs of its senior population. The Life Plan project would not result in new or more severe impacts from the need to construct new parks or recreation facilities than would the proposed project as a whole.

16.8 Wildfire

Thresholds of Significance

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

- Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?
- Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of wildfire?

- Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?
- Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

The Town Center site is located within Very Low and Low Wildfire Hazard areas. The criteria used in this assessment include fuelscape, recurrence interval, structures and other parameters. Humboldt County has a Fire Safe Council which implements a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, a comprehensive plan to inspire and guide actions to mitigate the potential for wildfire loss in Humboldt County communities, including McKinleyville.

The project site is not located within or near a state responsibility area or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection 2024). The nearest state responsibility area is approximately 0.4 miles east of the site and the nearest very high fire hazard severity zone is more than 16 miles east of the site. Therefore, this topic will not be discussed further.

Life Plan Humboldt

Given that the Life Plan Humboldt project is, like the rest of the project site, not located in an area associated with wildland fire, it would not have new or more serve wildland fire impacts than described above for the project as a whole.