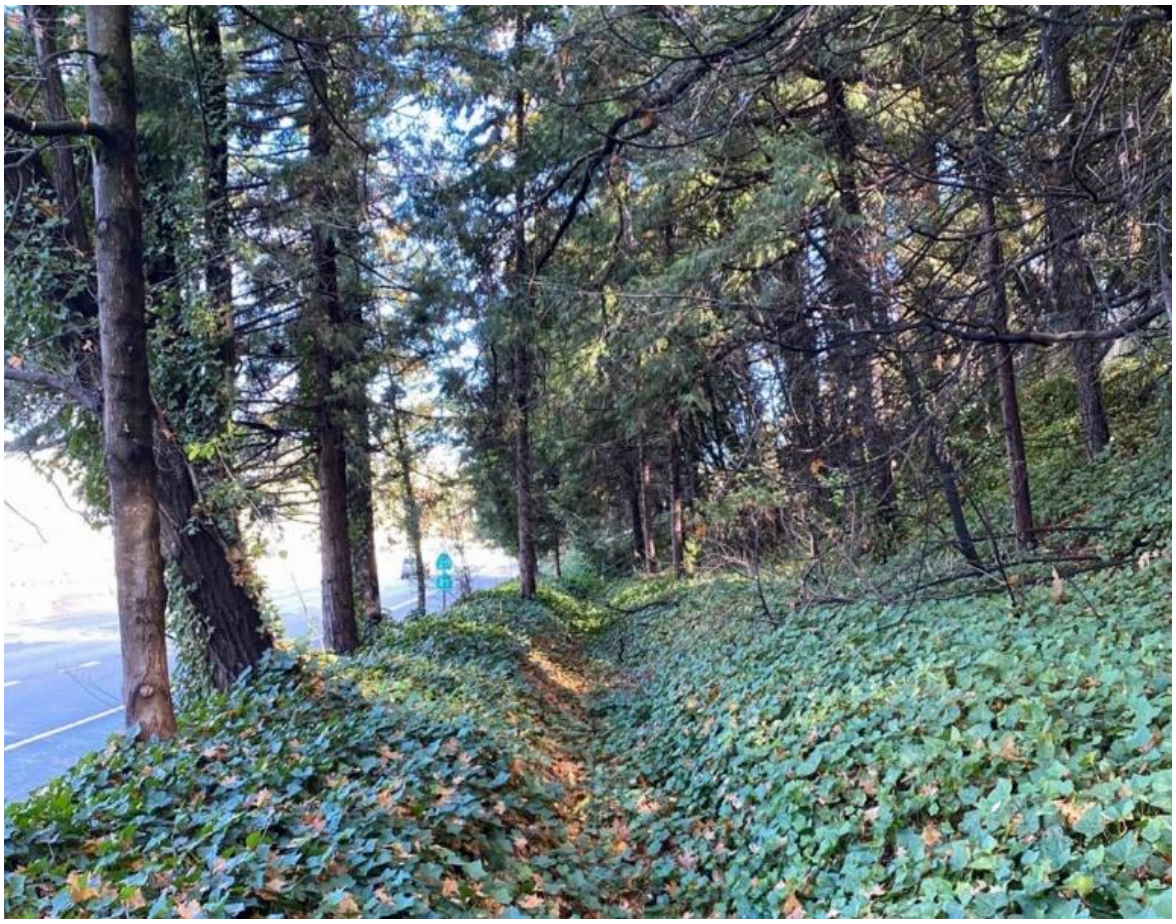
Wolf Creek Trail Project

City of Grass Valley

Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration



GRASS VALLEY
A PLACE TO LIVE AND THRIVE

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT S2S

April 2023

Table of Contents

LIST OF APPENDICES

ACRONYM LIST

A

AB	Assembly Bill
ADL	Aerially Deposited Lead
APE	Area of Potential Effect

B

BCR	Biological Constraints Report
BMP	Best Management Practice
BSA	Biological Study Area

C

CalFire	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNEL	Community Noise Equivalent Level
CRPR	California Rare Plant Ranks
CWA	Clean Water Act

D

DBH	Diameter at Breast Height
DGS	Department of General Services
DVBE	Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise

E

EIR	Environmental Impact Report
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area

F

FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FESA	Federal Endangered Species Act
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
FTE	Full Time Equivalent

G

GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIS	Geographic Information System

H

HMA	Hot Mix Asphalt

L

LID	Low Impact Development

M

MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MM	Mitigation Measure
MME	Mineral Management Element
MND	Mitigated Negative Declaration
MRZ	Mineral Resource Zone
MUTCD	Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

N

NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NCCFD	Nevada County Consolidated Fire District
NID	Nevada Irrigation District
NOA	Naturally Occurring Asbestos
NOI	Notice of Intent
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NSAQMD	Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory

O

OES	Office of Emergency Services
OHWM	Ordinary High-Water Mark
OPR	Office of Planning and Research

P

PG&E	Pacific Gas & Electric Co.
PM	Particulate Matter
PPV	Peak Particle Velocity
PRC	Public Resource Code

R

ROG	Reactive Organic Gasses
ROW	Right of Way
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board

S

SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resource Control Board

T

THPO	Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
TTLC	Total Threshold Limit Concentration

U

UAIC	United Auburn Indian Community
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey

V

VHFHSZ	Very High Severity Fire Hazard Zone

W

WCCA	Wolf Creek Community Alliance
WDID	Waste Discharge Identification
WPA	Works Project Administration

I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Background Summary

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15063 (Initial Study), the City of Grass Valley (City) has prepared this Initial Study to assess the potential environmental impacts of the Wolf Creek Trail project. On the basis of the Initial Study, the City finds that the proposed project will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment and will not require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report. Therefore, this Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared as the appropriate level of environmental review in accordance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines Sections 15063 and 15070 et. seq.

Public and Agency Review

This Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration will be circulated for a **30-day** public and agency review commencing **April 20, 2023.** Copies of this Initial Study and cited references may be obtained at the City of Grass Valley at the address noted below. Written comments on this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration may also be addressed as noted below.

Project title: Wolf Creek Trail Project

Lead agency name and address

City of Grass Valley
125 E. Main Street
Grass Valley, CA 95945

Contact person, phone number, and e-mail

Bjorn Jones, City Engineer
125 East Main St.
Grass Valley, CA 95945
(530) 274-4353
bjornj@cityofgrassvalley.com

I.1 Project Location and Site Description

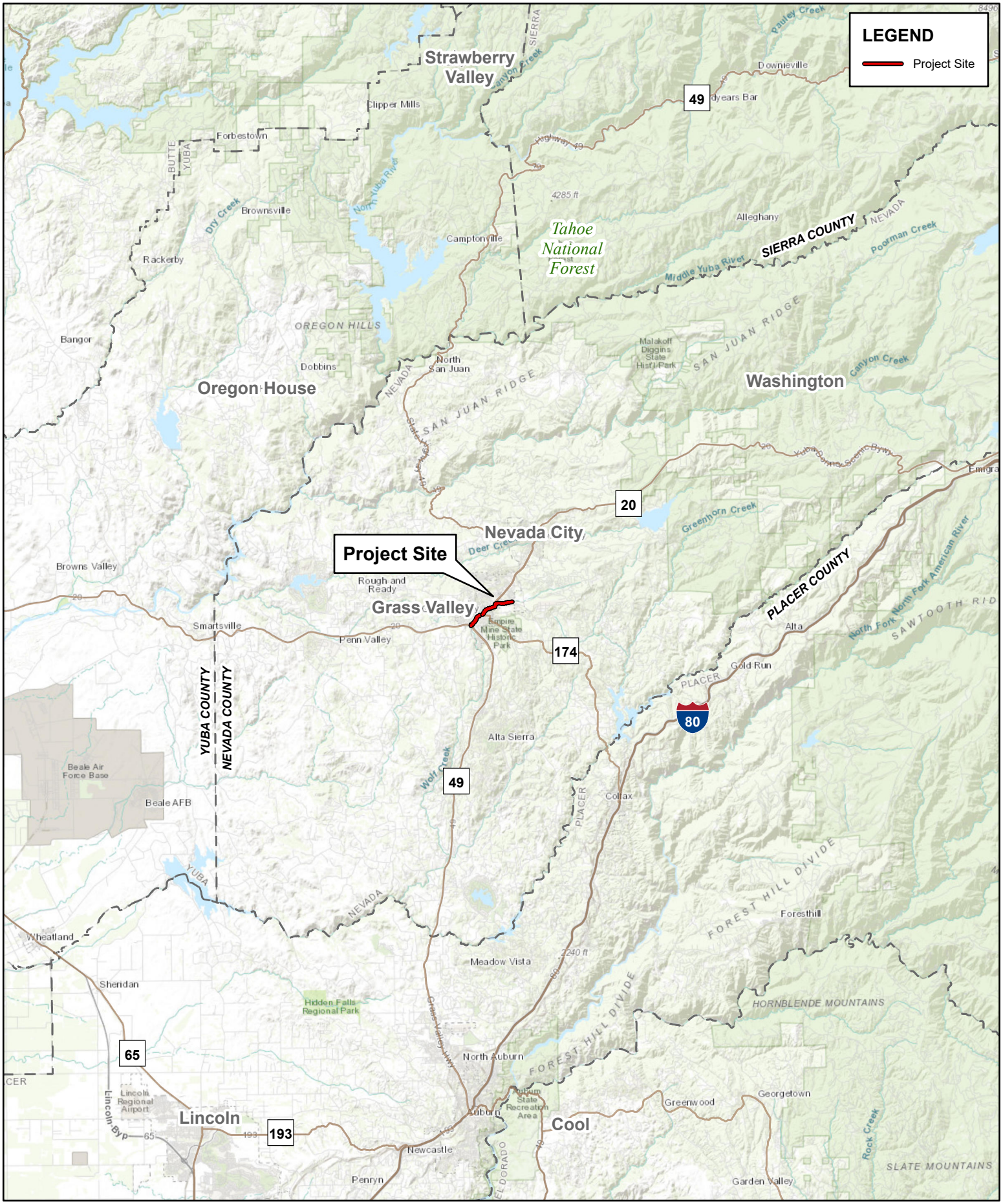
The Wolf Creek Trail ("proposed project") is an approximately 2.3-mile trail that roughly follows the alignment of Wolf Creek through the City of Grass Valley from its southern limits to the northeast corner of town. The trail, as currently proposed, is located entirely within existing public right of way, primarily in City right of way with portions of the trail situated in California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

right of way. The project site is located in Section 26, Township 16N, Range 8E Mt. Diablo Base Meridian on City of Grass Valley 7.5-minute USA quadrangle (**Figure 1: Vicinity Map** and **Figure 2: Project Location Map**). Approximate coordinates at its center are 39° 13' 13" north and -121° 03' 15" west.

The general environmental setting of the site is indicative of the Grass Valley Foothill habitat, and includes Ponderosa Pine, Sierra Mixed Conifer, Riparian, Landscaped, and Developed habitat. The site slopes are generally minor, being less than 10% with some steeper slopes primarily where grading has occurred.

Surrounding Land Uses

The project is predominantly in areas of developed residential, commercial, and light industrial uses but also includes undeveloped habitat (Riparian, Ponderosa Pine, and Sierra Mixed Conifer habitat). The project area is located adjacent to and on the eastern side of SR 49.

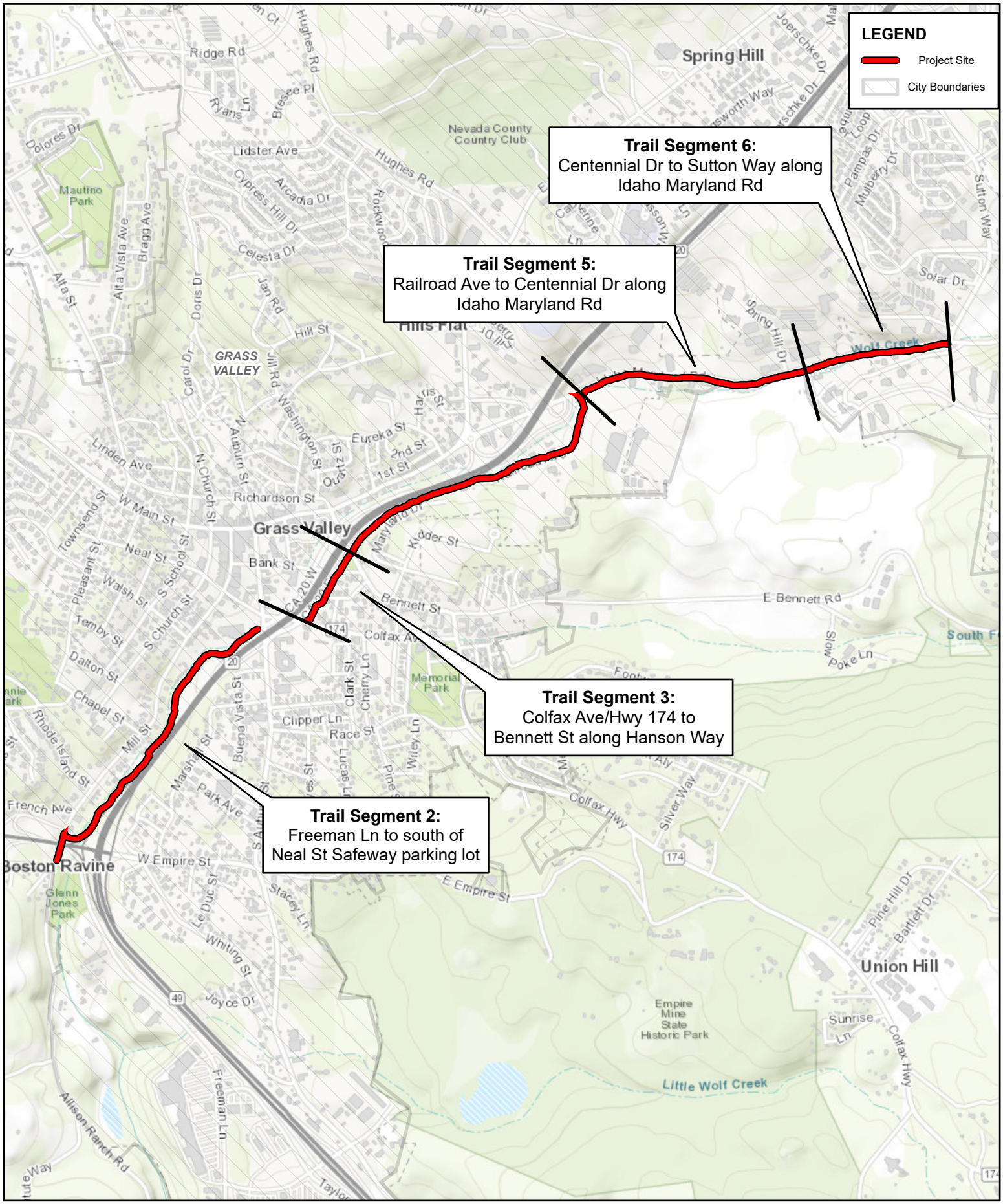


2246 Camino Ramon
San Ramon, CA 94583
(925) 362-3041

N

0 2 4 8
Miles

Figure 1: Vicinity Map
Wolf Creek Trail



2246 Camino Ramon
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(925) 362-3041

N

0 0.13 0.25 0.5 Miles

Figure 2: Project Location Map
Wolf Creek Trail

Project Objective

The community of Grass Valley is confined by the valley topography. Once one considers the historic narrow streets, the flow of Wolf Creek, foothill topography and the SR- 20/49 freeway alignment, it is easy to understand the challenges pedestrians and cyclists have with navigating through town conveniently and safely. The Wolf Creek trail looks to add the primary spine for pedestrians and cyclists to move through the valley using one of the nicest assets the valley has to offer: Wolf Creek.

Once in place, the community and visitors will have a convenient option for non-motorized travel through Grass Valley and along Wolf Creek. Today much of Wolf Creek is inaccessible and hidden. In the future, with the trail following the creek, Wolf Creek will become a much more prominent component for people that live and visit Grass Valley.

Additional benefits of the project include the increased use of multi-modal transportation methods stemming from trail use, which will serve to reduce vehicular traffic, Vehicle Miles Traveled, improve air quality, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions; recreational and associated health and well-being benefits from use of the trail; and additional focus on the restoration of degraded reaches of Wolf Creek.

Project sponsor's name and address

Surf to Snow Environmental Resource Management, Inc.
2246 Camino Ramon
San Ramon, CA 94583
Derek Hitchcock, Senior Environmental Project Manager
Phone: 925-718-6275/ Email: derek.hitchcock@s2serm.com

I.2 Project Description

The Wolf Creek Trail is envisioned as a multi-use trail that roughly follows the alignment of Wolf Creek through the City of Grass Valley from its southern limits to the northeast corner of the City (**Figure 1**). The trail will be separated from vehicular traffic to the greatest extent feasible and extend an existing 1.2-mile section that currently ends at Freeman Lane and Allison Ranch Road (Segment 1). The Wolf Creek Trail ("proposed project") is an approximately 2.3-mile trail that would complete Segments 2-6 lengthening the trail up to Sutton Way (**Figure 2 & Figure 3A-3E: Proposed Project)** and is located entirely within City and Caltrans right of way (ROW).

As the proposed project trail will be traversed by all forms of non-motorized transportation users, each section of the trail will provide full access for cyclists and pedestrians alike. As a Class I Bikeway, typically called multi-use or shared use path, both bikes and pedestrians use a completely separated right of way to travel in both directions with cross flow minimized. Other facilities like sidewalks or bike lanes can only be utilized by one type of user and typically only in one direction. The goal would be that all types of users be able to use the trail, including not only pedestrians and cyclists, but joggers, roller-bladers, parents with strollers, scooters and skateboards and of course the disabled.

Additional improvements throughout the proposed trail include trail signage, benches, interpretive signage, murals, and fencing along the edge of some property lines. Safety improvements and signage would be installed at crossings to conform to applicable local, Caltrans, and California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (California MUTCD) standards.

The entire 3.5-mile trail, including the existing Segment 1 is described below in 6 segments:

Segment 1 – to Freeman Ln and Allison Ranch Rd

The first segment was constructed in 2018-19 and ends at Freeman Lane and Allison Ranch Road. It is the furthest downstream section and runs along the east side of the creek through City easements and City properties. Segment 1 is not a part of this analysis.

Segment 2 – Freeman Ln to south of Neal St Safeway parking lot

This segment extends the trail from the end of Segment 1 at Freeman Ln up to the south of Neal St. Safeway shopping center parking lot. The initial approximately 350-feet of Segment 2 along Mill St. includes installation of a new sidewalk and new curb and gutter, before turning east into a wooded area and toward Wolf Creek. The majority of Segment 2 is proposed along the east banks of Wolf Creek with significant portions within the Caltrans ROW. The proposed path would be 8-feet wide with 1-ft shoulders in most locations, narrowing to a lesser width in constrained locations. The trail would be an asphalt paved trail installed over aggregate base, with paved shoulders. Grading would occur beyond the shoulders to conform the trail to existing grade up to a maximum slope of 2:1 as dictated by geotechnical conditions. In the areas with significant slope, retaining walls will be installed as edge treatments.

Segment 3 – Colfax Ave/Hwy 174 to Bennett St along Hanson Way

At this point a short segment of the eventual completed trail passes through the complex intersection of South Auburn St./Neal St./Hanson Way/Tinloy St. This intersection is being rebuilt by the City under a separate CEQA analysis and therefore is excluded from this analysis. The third segment of the proposed project starts at Colfax Ave/Hwy 174 at Hanson Way and continues adjacent to the east side of Hanson Way and ends at Bennett St. This segment is entirely on City streets. The proposed bike path is an 8-foot wide hot mix asphalt (HMA) Bike path with colored paving separated from parking along Hanson way by an approximately 5-foot wide median with vertical curb planted with trees or river rock. The pedestrian path would be an 8-foot-wide new sidewalk separated from the bike path by a mountable rolled curb and gutter.

Segment 4 – Bennett St to Railroad Ave and Idaho Maryland Rd

This segment begins at Bennett Street and runs adjacent to the onramp to Highway 49 within Caltrans ROW in the hillside above the freeway before leaving the Caltrans ROW for Railroad Avenue where it remains a Class 1 bikeway within the City street ROW. Segment 4 ends at Idaho Maryland Rd. and Railroad Ave. The proposed trail between Bennett St. and Railroad Ave. would be 8 feet wide with 1-foot shoulders for a total width of 10 feet in most locations. The trail would be an asphalt paved trail installed over aggregate base, with paved shoulders. Grading would occur beyond the shoulders to conform the trail to existing grade up to a maximum slope of 2:1 as dictated by geotechnical conditions. In the areas with significant slope, a cut retaining wall will be installed on the east side (upslope side) of the trail as edge treatments. A small retaining

wall will also be installed along portions of the west side of the trail primarily near the Bennett St. side of Segment 4. The proposed trail adjacent to the north side of Railroad Ave. extending to Idaho Maryland Rd. would be a 10-foot wide concrete shared bicycle and pedestrian path separated from Railroad Ave. by curb and gutter.

Segment 5 – Railroad Ave to Centennial Dr along Idaho Maryland Rd

This segment runs adjacent to the south side of Idaho Maryland Rd. from Railroad Ave. to Centennial Ave. with the long-term goal of moving the trail to the south side of Wolf Creek and off Idaho Maryland Rd. as a Class 1 facility. The proposed trail would be a 10-foot wide concrete shared bicycle and pedestrian path separated from Idaho Maryland Rd. by curb and gutter. Minimal grading is needed beyond the back of path to conform to existing grades. This segment also requires removing and replacing traffic striping along Idaho Maryland Rd. that includes a 5-foot wide westbound bike lane along the north side of the roadway.

Segment 6 – Centennial Dr to Sutton Way along Idaho Maryland Rd

This segment continues adjacent to Idaho Maryland Rd, from Centennial Ave. up to the terminus of the Wolf Creek Trail at the northeast corner of the Sutton Way and Idaho Maryland Rd. A trailhead is proposed as part of the Loma Rica development at Sutton Way and Idaho Maryland Rd. and will connect to a planned trail system throughout the development. The pedestrian and eastbound bicycle portion of the proposed trail from Segment 5 adjacent to the south side of Idaho Maryland Rd. will continue with the 10-foot wide concrete shared bicycle and pedestrian path separated from Idaho Maryland Rd, by curb and gutter. The proposed trail in Segment 6 would also include removing and replacing the traffic striping to include a 5-foot-wide westbound bike lane adjacent to the north side of Idaho Maryland Rd.

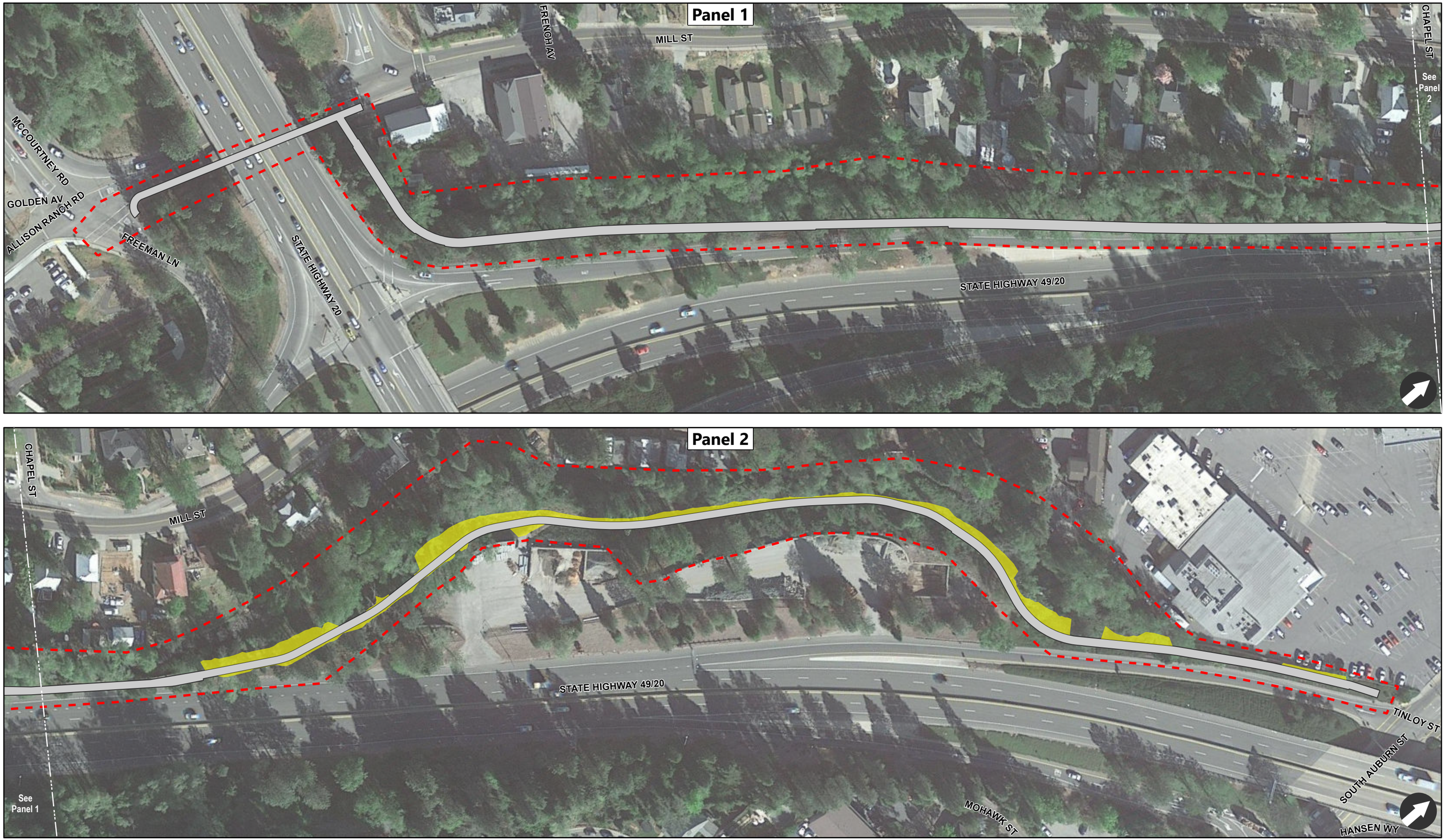

Figure 3A: Proposed Project
Wolf Creek Trail
Segment 2 - Freeman Ln to south of Neal St Safeway parking lot

LEGEND

- Proposed Project
- Temporary Impacts
- Biological Study Area

0 75 150 Feet

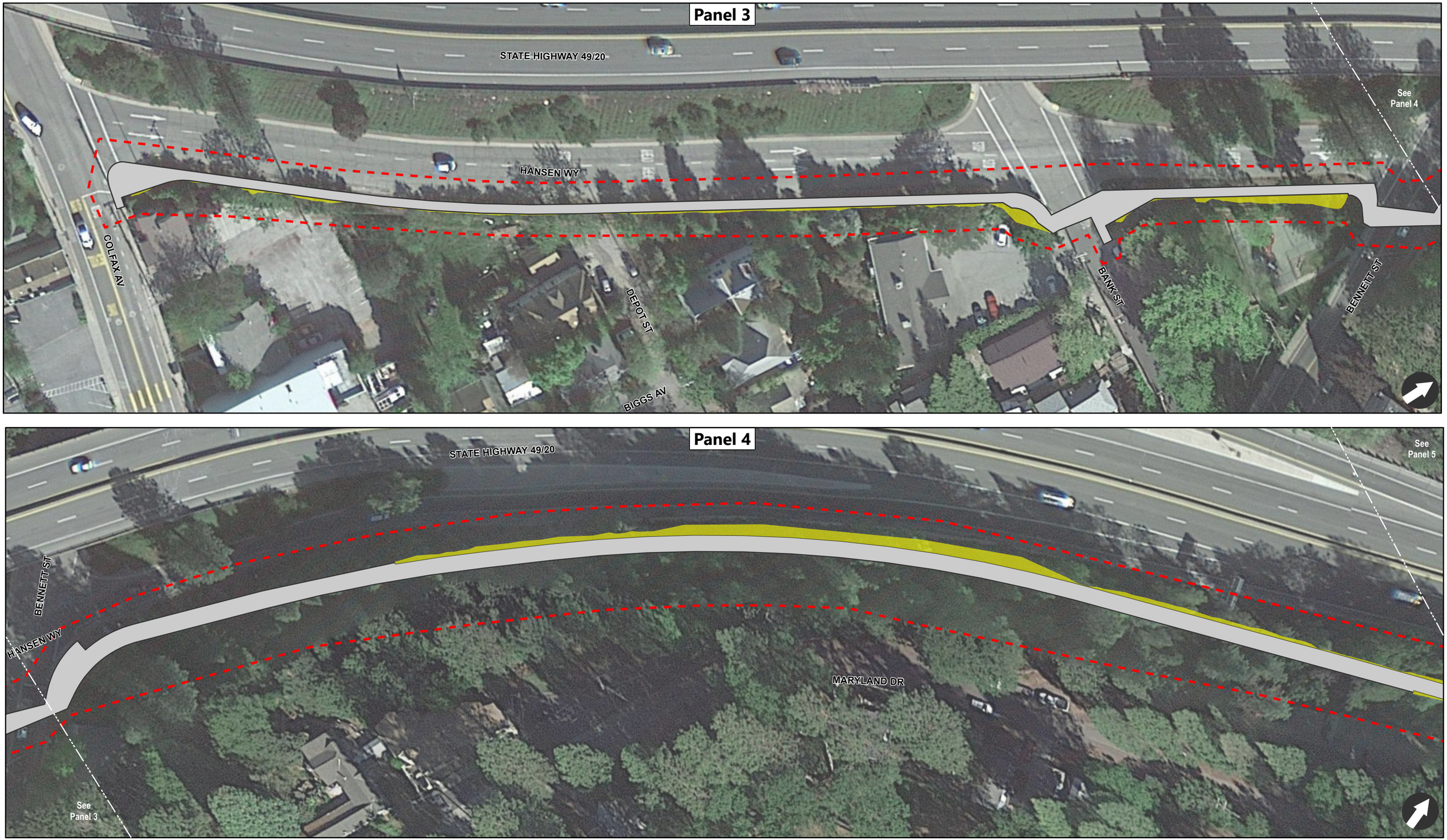

Figure 3B: Proposed Project
Wolf Creek Trail
Panel 3: Segment 3 - Colfax Ave/Hwy 174 to Bennett St along Hanson Way
Panel 4: Segment 4 - Bennett St to Railroad Ave and Idaho Maryland Rd

LEGEND

- Proposed Project
- Temporary Impacts
- Biological Study Area

0 37.5 75 150 Feet

Figure 3C: Proposed Project
Wolf Creek Trail
Segment 4 - Bennett St to Railroad Ave and Idaho Maryland Rd

LEGEND

- Proposed Project
- Temporary Impacts
- Biological Study Area

0 37.5 75 150 Feet

Figure 3D: Proposed Project
Wolf Creek Trail
Segment 5 - Railroad Ave to Centennial Dr along Idaho Maryland Rd

LEGEND

- Proposed Project
- Temporary Impacts
- Biological Study Area

0 25 50 100 Feet

Figure 3E: Proposed Project
Wolf Creek Trail
Segment 6 - Centennial Dr to Sutton Way along Idaho Maryland Rd

LEGEND

- Proposed Project
- Temporary Impacts
- Biological Study Area

0 12.5 25 50 Feet

Construction of the proposed project would include approximately 7,060 cubic yards of excavation. Total fill would be approximately 3,050 cubic yards. Material brought on to the site would be tested in accordance with local and state requirements to ensure contaminated material is not brought on site. Material that is not removed immediately from the project area once excavated would be stockpiled and stabilized as outlined in MM-BIO-15 until it could be off-hauled (approximately 5,370 cubic yards).

Vegetation and tree removal would be required to construct the trail and would include the removal of native trees, landscape trees, and non-native trees. It is estimated that approximately 176 trees would be removed in the project area. The trail has been sited to minimize tree removal to the extent possible, in particular riparian species, while also preserving large and healthy trees that will enhance the trail experience. Considering the Project Area or Biological Study Area (BSA) includes 764 trees, it would allow 588 trees to be preserved. Of the 176 trees proposed for removal, only 16 trees are "significant trees" as defined by Chapter 12.36 of the City Municipal Code Tree Preservation Ordinance as a tree having "*a trunk of twenty-four caliper inches in diameter or larger diameter at breast height (DBH*)" and 157 are native trees. Of the 157 native trees:

- 97 are incense cedar ranging in size from 6.5 to 27.8 diameter at breast height (DBH).
- 49 are ponderosa pine ranging in size from 6.2 to 34.1 DBH.
- 5 are native California black oak ranging in size from 7.7 to 12.8 DBH.
- 3 are Fremont Cottonwood ranging in size from 21.0 to 31.3 DBH.
- 1 Box Elder at 11.3 DBH, 1 Big-leaf Maple at 6.3 DBH, and 1 white alder at 6.0 DBH are also proposed for removal.
- Only 2 of the trees proposed for removal were in excellent condition, both ponderosa pines.
- 78 trees proposed for removal occur within Segment 2 of the trail, 2 within Segment 3, and 96 within the forested section of Segment 4 of the trail between Bennett and Railroad Ave.

Mitigation for native trees to be removed would be accomplished in accordance with the City's Tree Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 12.36) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) requirements. Mitigation measures for tree removal will include replanting trees on or off site at a ration consistent with the City Municipal Code. Additional details on tree species and removals are provided in **Appendix A**, Tree Survey Report.

Underground utilities would remain in place. The small number of distribution utility poles potentially in conflict with the trail would be relocated in coordination with utilities companies (namely PG&E) prior to construction as necessary. Utility relocation would be completed prior to project construction. Other utility adjustments would include relocating fire hydrant in a few locations.

Access to the construction site would occur from SR-20/49 and adjacent roads. While final staging areas would be decided by the contractor, staging would primarily occur near the trail alignment on City or Caltrans owned property, or within City or Caltrans ROW. These areas would be used to store and stage materials and equipment at different times throughout project construction. Staging areas would typically consist of previously disturbed areas with bare, gravel, or paved surfaces.

Following completion of the trail construction, the City of Grass Valley would maintain all portions of the

trail. A Maintenance Agreement, or other suitable means, would be established between the City of Grass Valley and Caltrans to ensure the maintenance of the portions of the trail within Caltrans' ROW by the City. Trail operation and maintenance would require occasional sweeping, litter pick-up, and vegetation and tree trimming to maintain adequate vertical clearance for trail users.

General Plan Land Use and Zoning Designation

The Project Area is entirely within public ROW (City and Caltrans) and the purpose of the project is exclusive to public infrastructure. Public ROW is excluded from General Plan and Zoning designations when the purpose of the project is exclusive to public infrastructure.

The public right of way is typically a strip of land 50 to 60 feet wide that contains the public street, sidewalks, and utilities. The edge of the right of way is also the property line for the abutting property. As per Municipal Code 12.48.0202 public “Right of Way” means land which by deed, conveyance, agreement, easement, dedication, usage or process of law is reserved for and dedicated to the general public for street, highway, alley, public utility, storm drainage, water, sanitary sewer, sidewalk, bikeway or pedestrian walkway purposes. "Encroachments" to the public ROW means going over, upon or under, or using a right-of-way or watercourse in such a manner as to prevent, obstruct, or interfere with its normal use.

Construction of the Wolf Creek Trail will require an encroachment permit from Caltrans.

I.3 Regulatory Setting and Required Agency Approvals

The following City of Grass Valley, Responsible and/or Trustee Agency permits are required prior to construction of the Wolf Creek Trail project:

- City of Grass Valley Department of Public Works - Improvement Plan, Grading Plan, Flood Development Permit, Encroachment Permit and Tree Permit approvals.
- City of Grass Valley Community Development Department - Site Plan and Building Plan Approvals and Conditions of Approval/Mitigation Measure compliance verification.
- A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) shall be approved by the Regional Water Quality Control Board in accordance with the Clean Water Act.
- A Dust Mitigation Plan shall be approved by the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District.
- Timber Harvest Permit Exemption (for less than 3-acre conversion) from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.
- State Department of Fish and Wildlife - A Stream Alternation Agreement may be required for encroachment into the riparian corridor (as defined by vegetation type) of Wolf Creek.
- State Department of Transportation (Caltrans) – Encroachment Permits and Maintenance Agreement for trail maintenance.
- City of Grass Valley Building Department - Building, Plumbing, Mechanical, and Electrical Permits in accordance with the California Codes.
- City of Grass Valley Fire Department - Site Plan, Improvement Plan and Building Plan Approvals.

I.4 Representative Photos

Photo 1: S2S biologist performing an ordinary high water mark (OHWM) survey of Segment 2 facing northeast and upstream on Wolf Creek. The proposed trail location is beyond the right edge of the image frame.

Photo 2: Representative photo of Segment 2 facing northeast and upstream on Wolf Creek. The proposed trail location is to the right side of frame mid-way uphill in image.

Photo 3: Representative Photo of Segment 2 facing north and upstream on Wolf Creek. The proposed trail location runs along the center of the image.

Photo 4: Representative Photo of Segment 3 facing northeast. The proposed trail location is down the center of the image including portion of the right side of the existing road, right shoulder, and some of landscaped area.

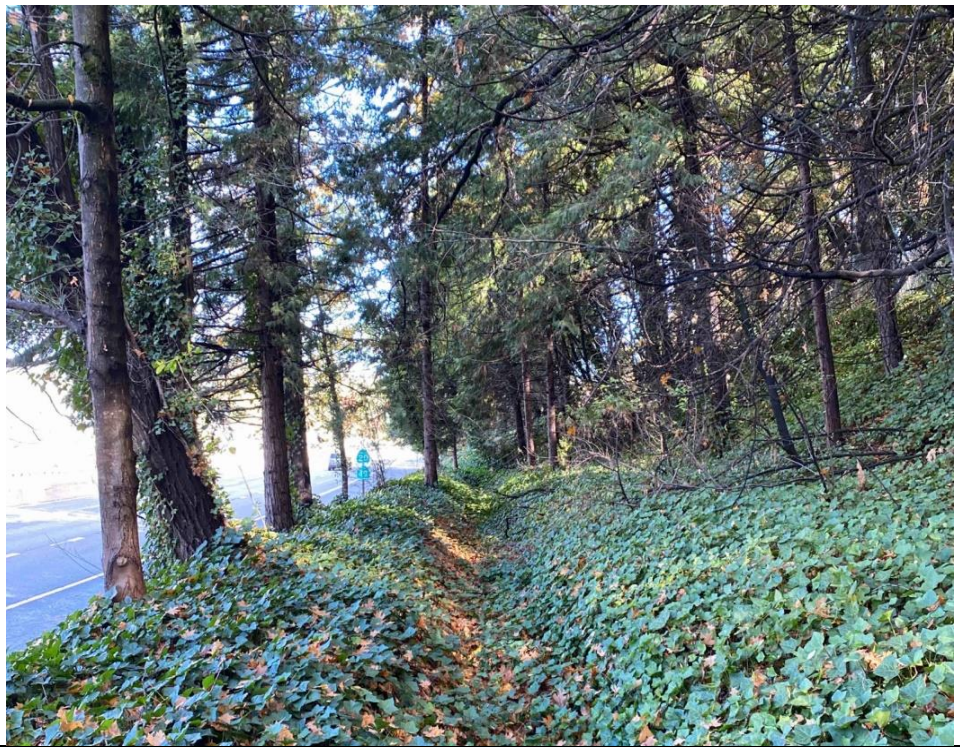

Photo 5: Representative Photo of Segment 4 facing east. The proposed trail location is down the center of image.

Photo 6: Representative Photo of Segment 4 along Railroad Ave. facing northeast. The proposed trail runs down the center of the image along left side of the road, including road shoulder and graveled area. Wolf Creek in left of image.

Photo 7: Representative Photo of Segment 5 facing northeast along Idaho Maryland Rd. The proposed trail runs down the center of image along right side of road, including road shoulder. Wolf Creek on left of image.

Photo 8: Representative Photo of Segment 6 facing east along Idaho Maryland Rd. The proposed trail runs down the center of image along left side of road, including road shoulder and grassed area. Wolf Creek on left of image.

I.5 Evaluation of Environmental Impacts:

1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to a project like the one involved (e.g. the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g. the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).

2) All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.

3) **"Potentially Significant Impact"** is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect is significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required.

4) **"Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated"** applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level.

5) **"Less-Than-significant Impact:"** Any impact that is expected to occur with implementation of the project, but to a less than significant level because it would not violate existing standards.

6) **"No Impact:"** The project would not have an impact to the environment.

7) Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to Tiering, Program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or Negative Declaration.

8) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist reference to information sources for potential impacts (e.g. general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.

II. 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" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- ☒ Aesthetics
- ☐ Agricultural and Forestry Resources
- ☐ Air Quality
- ☒ Biological Resources
- ☒ Cultural Resources
- ☐ Energy
- ☒ Geology/Soils
- ☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- ☐ Hazards & Hazardous Materials
- ☒ Hydrology/Water Quality
- ☐ Land Use/Planning
- ☐ Mineral Resources
- ☒ Noise
- ☐ Population/Housing
- ☐ Public Services
- ☐ Recreation
- ☐ Transportation
- ☒ Tribal Cultural Resources
- ☐ Utilities/Service Systems
- ☐ Wildfire
- ☐ Mandatory Findings of Significance

DETERMINATION:

On the basis of this initial evaluation (check one):

☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☒ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures.

CERTIFICATION:

Lance E. Lowe, AICP, Principal Planner
City of Grass Valley

April 20, 2023
4/18/2023

III. EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Section 3.0, Evaluation of Environmental Impacts, discusses the project's potential for impacts to various resources. The discussion follows the format of Appendix G of the currently adopted CEQA Guidelines (The Office of Planning and Research (OPR) publishes the latest guidelines online: http://opr.ca.gov/ceqa/updates/guidelines/), and identifies any potentially significant impacts that could result from project implementation. Mitigation measures are identified, where necessary, to reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant levels. No significant and unavoidable impacts were identified.

III.1 Aesthetics

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?			X	
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?				X
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?		X		

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?		X		

SETTING

The aesthetic value of an area is a measure of its visual character and quality, combined with the viewer response to the area (Federal Highway Administration, 1983). The visual quality component can best be described as the overall impression that an individual viewer retains from residing in, driving through, walking through, or flying over an area. Viewer response is a combination of viewer exposure and viewer sensitivity. Viewer exposure is a function of the number of viewers, the number of views seen, the distance of the viewers, and the viewing duration. Viewer sensitivity relates to the extent of the public's concern for a particular view shed (U.S. Bureau of Land Management, 1980).

The City of Grass Valley 2020 General Plan notes that the City does not contain any designed scenic highways or vistas, but generally acknowledges the City and its surroundings as having a wide range of landscapes, scenic vistas and visual resources.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. Under CEQA, a scenic vista is defined as a viewpoint that provides expansive views of a highly valued landscape for the public's benefit.

Wolf Creek Trail construction would not substantially or permanently obstruct views of scenic vistas. Construction activities that would have the potential to temporarily alter views would consist of operation of construction equipment that could temporarily interrupt views of surrounding scenic vistas. Any obstruction to views of scenic vistas are expected to occur during construction and shall cease upon completion of the proposed project.

The majority of the Wolf Creek Trail would be a flat and flush with the ground surface. Vertical features associated with the project would be limited to signage and retaining walls. Retaining walls would be designed to have a consistent visual appearance with other retaining walls throughout the corridor. A majority of the retaining walls would not exceed a height of 4-feet, with a few locations requiring an up to 9-foot retaining wall. Where retaining walls are proposed, they would be used to conform the trail to existing grade and are not anticipated to obstruct views from sensitive viewpoints. Therefore, due to the limited vertical development and the harmonious design of the vertical features associated with the project, a less than significant impact would occur, and no mitigation is required.

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

No Impact. There are no officially designated scenic highways within or near the project site (CA Dept Transportation, 2023). Considering scenic vistas or scenic highways are not within the project vicinity, the project will not substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway. No impact will occur.

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?*

Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. The proposed project contains non- urbanized areas. During the construction period, construction equipment storage, and earth- moving would temporarily alter the existing visual quality of the affected area for adjacent sensitive viewers (recreational users and residential neighbors). Temporary construction activities along the Wolf Creek Trail alignment could cause dust and material stockpiles that could create an untidy appearance, collectively degrading the visual quality of the site and surroundings.

Where temporary construction activities occur in residential and/or recreational areas, the activities could potentially temporarily degrade the existing visual quality**.** However, these potential temporary construction impacts would be reduced by storing construction material, stockpiled soil, and equipment in staging areas beyond direct view of residents and recreationists and in already disturbed shoulder areas, to the greatest extent practicable. Staging areas would be in areas where the removal of trees, native vegetation, or large non-native trees would not be required and in areas where the ability to impact trees and/or shrubs would not be present (e.g., within the dripline of trees or shrubs, especially native species). Areas of temporary disturbance for the trail would be re-vegetated or stabilized with erosion control measures implemented in accordance with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and environmental permit requirements. Following these requirements would reduce temporary visual impacts.

The proposed project could adversely affect the visual character at some non-urbanized locations by vegetation removal along the SR-20/49 corridor. Vegetation clearing would occur at a limited number of locations to construct the trail and proposed improvements. This would primarily consist of tree removal and tree trimming. Areas of temporary disturbance would be revegetated in accordance with environmental permit conditions and Caltrans requirements. Where applicable, a seed mix appropriate for the climate and location would be used to revegetate disturbed areas.

Currently, it is estimated that 176 trees would be removed to build the trail. Considering the BSA includes 764 trees, this means it would allow 588 trees or 77% of the trees to be preserved. However, only 16 of the 176 trees proposed for removal are "significant trees" as defined by Chapter 12.36 of the City Municipal Code as a tree having "*a trunk of twenty-four caliper inches in diameter or larger diameter at breast height (DBH).*" These 16 "significant trees" would have the most impact on the visual character or quality of public views of the site and its

surroundings.

Of the 176 trees proposed for removal, 157 are native, including all 16 "significant trees." Native trees would be replanted within the project area at a ratio consistent with local tree protection ordinances and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) replanting requirements. Additional details on tree species and removals are provided in **Appendix A**, Tree Survey Report.

Implementation of mitigation measure Mitigation Measure (MM)-BIO-21 would require the replacement of protected trees consistent with local tree protection requirements for trees removed within local agency jurisdiction, applicable Caltrans requirements for trees removed within Caltrans ROW, and CDFW replanting requirements if any trees were to be removed within riparian areas under CDFW jurisdiction. With the maturation of replacement trees, impacts to the visual character from the loss of trees would be reduced to a less than significant level as mitigated.

Vertical features associated with the project would be limited to signage and retaining walls. Retaining walls would be designed to have a consistent visual appearance with other retaining walls throughout the corridor. A majority of the retaining walls would not exceed a height of 4-feet, with a few locations requiring an up to 9-foot retaining wall. Where retaining walls are proposed, they would be used to conform the trail to existing grade and are not anticipated to obstruct views from sensitive viewpoints. When considering if an impact is significant in a rural environment, the visibility of the Wolf Creek Trail alignment depends on the visibility of the project components considering the area's landform (topography), land cover (vegetation and structures), and atmospheric conditions (dust, fog, precipitation). Most of the Wolf Creek Trail alignment would be at grade with few components extending above grade (retaining walls and signage). The Wolf Creek Trail alignment would not significantly contrast with the existing environmental setting because most of the alignment would be constructed directly adjacent to and parallel to the SR-20/49 corridor or constructed over existing gravel and paved roads. The trail has been sited to minimize tree removal. Vegetation and tree removals would be subject to replanting requirements, as previously discussed.

Through carefully selected staging areas and trail alignment location and minimal vertical features, and implementation of MM-BIO-21 the proposed project would not significantly impact visual quality to sensitive viewer groups along the trail alignment and impacts would be less than significant as mitigated.

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

Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. Existing sources of day and nighttime light within and around Grass Valley include those common to developed areas. Existing sources include motor vehicle lights along SR-20/49, streetlights, parking lot lighting, building lighting and commercial signage in the project vicinity.

Project construction would occur during daylight hours only and no impacts from nighttime construction lighting would occur. The installation of lights along the proposed trail alignment would only occur, if at all, along the forested portions of Segment 2 and Segment 4. The remainder and majority of the trail

is on existing roads and would be lit with existing or modified street lighting. Any lighting added to the forested portions of Segment 2 and 4 would be Dark Sky compliant and would be strictly focused on the trail. In addition to nuisance lighting for neighbors, lighting along a riparian corridor can impact wildlife if not thoughtfully designed. If lighting is to be included on these segments, the project will consider all of these factors.

Through implementation of the City's Development Standards and Community Design Guidelines for lighting, including: 1) Lighting levels shall be limited to the minimum levels necessary to provide public safety. Lighting fixtures should be thoughtfully placed to avoid light spillage and glare on adjacent properties. "Down shine" luminaire shall be utilized; 2) Lighting "spill over" shall not exceed 0.5 foot candles at any point adjacent to residential premises, churches and other sensitive uses; and, 3) All outdoor light fixtures shall be Dark Sky compliance, strategically located, and shall be deflected downward to focus illumination only on the trail, and not adjacent properties, the proposed project would not create a new source of substantial light or glare which would significantly adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area alignment and impacts would be less than significant.

III.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. 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?				X
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?				X
c) 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))?				X
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?			X	
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?				X

SETTING

The Project Area is entirely within public ROW (City and Caltrans) and the purpose of the project is exclusive to public infrastructure. Public ROW is excluded from General Plan and Zoning designations when the purpose of the project is exclusive to public infrastructure.

"Agricultural Land" is defined as prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, or unique farmland, as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture land inventory and monitoring criteria, as modified for California.

No current agricultural operations or forestry lands exist within the BSA as defined according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Although the BSA contains trees, the area does not fall under the definition of forest lands as defined by Public Resources Code Section 12220(g).

a) Would the project 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?

No Impact. The California Resources Agency farmland mapping program does not identify the project site or vicinity as having Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Considering no farmland as defined by CEQA exists within the project area, the proposed project will not involve conversion of farmland or zoning for agricultural use. No impact will occur.

b) Would the project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

No Impact. The California Resources Agency farmland mapping program does not identify the project site or vicinity as having Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Considering no farmland, as defined, exists within the project area, the proposed project will not involve conversion of farmland or zoning for agricultural use, including any farmlands under Williamson Act Contract. Therefore, no impact will occur.

c) Would the project 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) or 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)?

No impact. The project area is not zoned for forest land or timberland. The proposed project would not conflict with, or cause rezoning of, forest land zoning. The proposed project would extend an existing trail system that would open the site to a variety of users that may not otherwise be able to access the existing trails (e.g. physically disabled people). As noted in the project setting above, the project will not conflict with existing zoning or cause the 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)). There would be no conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land, timberland, or timberland zones. No impact will occur.

d) *Would the project involve or result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?*

Less than Significant. As noted above, the project area is not zoned for forest land or timberland, nor would the proposed project conflict with, or cause rezoning of, forest land zoning. The proposed project requires the removal of trees, and other types of vegetation within forest habitat, but these areas are not Forest Lands as defined as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g). In addition, the project is entirely within public ROW (City and Caltrans), the purpose of public ROW designation is to build roads.

The entire region within, and surrounding the City of Grass Valley, can be characterized as forest land. However, the forest land is further defined by its mosaic of vegetative communities that make up the forested region. The majority of the project area is located within an urban area of the City where forest land no longer naturally occurs. However, within the BSA, there are portions that include the forest land habitat types of riparian, ponderosa pine, and Sierra mixed conifer habitat.

As summarized in **Table 1** and displayed in **Figure 4A-4E: Habitats within the Biological Study Area**, construction of the proposed project would impact approximately 0.78 acres of riparian habitat, 0.78 acres of ponderosa pine habitat, and 0.54 acres of Sierra mixed conifer habitat, for a total of approximately 2.10 acres of disturbance to forested lands. Of this 2.10 acres, 1.55 acres are permanent impacts (the trail footprint itself) and 0.55 acres are temporary impacts. New trees would be planted in the temporary impact areas, and these areas would be revegetated and over time and become unnoticeable to offsite viewers, which would reduce the impact to the extent feasible. As further detailed in the Biological Resources section of this Initial Study, the implementation of MM BIO-1 through MM-BIO-3, and MM-BIO-16 and MM-BIO-21 will mitigate impacts to these habitats.

III.2.1 Table 1: Estimated Amount of Project effects to Forest Habitat Communities

Vegetation Habitat Community	Biological Study Area Overlap (acres)	Project Impact Area Overlap (acres)	Permanent Impacts (acres)	Temporary Impacts (acres)
Riparian	5.26	0.78	0.52	0.26
Ponderosa Pine	2.30	0.78	0.63	0.15
Sierra Mixed Conifer	1.82	0.54	0.40	0.14
Total	**9.38**	**2.10**	**1.55**	**0.55**

The design of the trail is specifically tailored to minimize vegetation and tree removal to the extent possible. Numerous alternatives were evaluated to find the path that balanced the objective of building the trail system, with the overarching goal of minimizing the impacts to the natural open space. The

amount of forested land that would be impacted by the proposed project is minimized by design, in particular to riparian habitat. The project would include the removal of 176 trees, but only 4 trees within riparian habitat.

Although the project is slated to remove 176 trees from the site, the project will not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest uses as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g). 53 of the 176 trees are less than 10-inch DBH and their removal can be classified as improving forest health and reduce fuel loads that increase the risk of wildfire. Only 16 of the 176 trees proposed for removal are "significant trees" as defined by Chapter 12.36 of the City of Grass Valley Municipal Code as a tree having "a trunk of twenty-four caliper inches in diameter or larger diameter at breast height (DBH)." Finally, mitigation re-planting will occur as per MM-BIO-22.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) must approve timber harvest plans and logging permits if any trees to be cut down are commercial timber harvest species (i.e. a Timber Harvest Permit would need to be obtained from CAL FIRE). However, standard conditions of approval require the applicant to obtain an exemption (for less than 3-acre conversion) of a Timber Harvest Permit from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Due to the fact that the project area is not in designated forest lands, is entirely within public ROW, and will be implemented in compliance with the City's Tree Protection Ordinance as defined in Chapter 12.36 of the City of Grass Valley Municipal Code, the potential for the project to involve or result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use is less than significant.

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

No Impact. The proposed project will have no potential for impacting any agricultural properties or uses that exist within the City. Therefore, there is no potential for the proposed project resulting in the conversion of existing farmland to a non-agricultural use. No impact will occur.

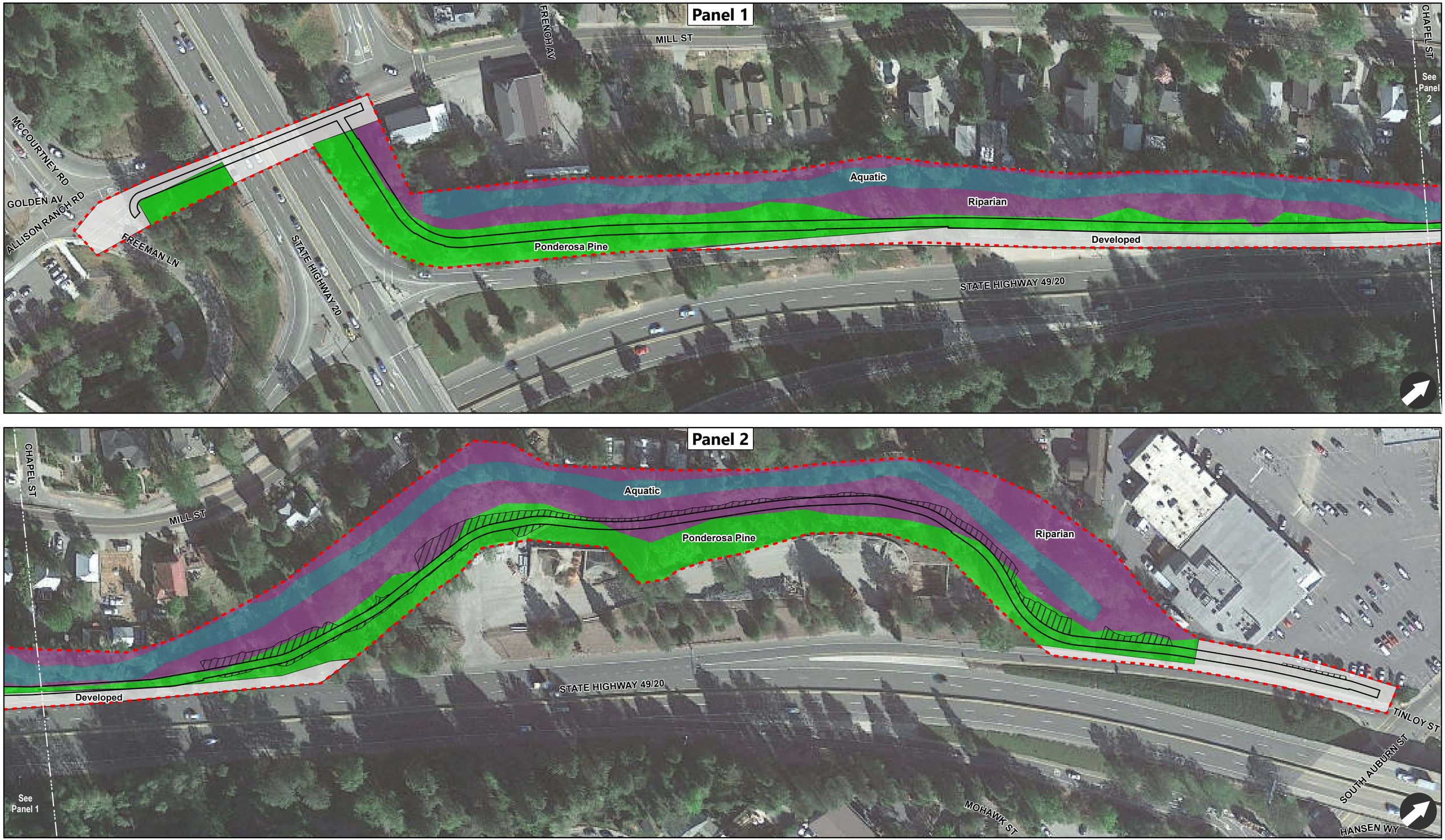

Figure 4A: Habitats within the Biological Study Area
Wolf Creek Trail
Segment 2 - Freeman Ln to south of Neal St Safeway parking lot

LEGEND

- Proposed Project
- Biological Study Area
- Temporary Impacts
- Aquatic
- Developed
- Landscaping
- Ponderosa Pine
- Riparian
- Sierra Mixed Conifer

0 75 150 Feet

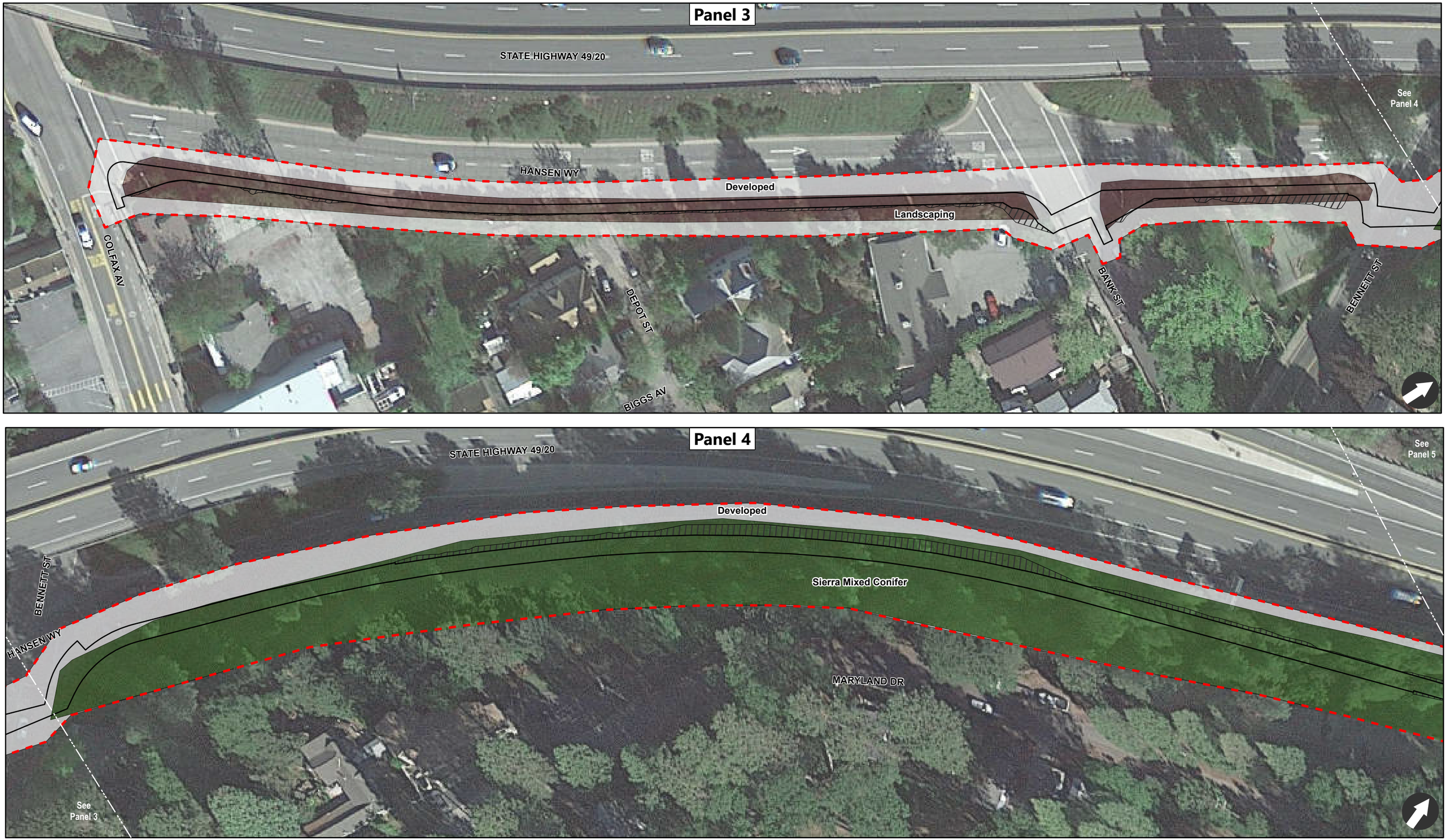

Figure 4B: Habitats within the Biological Study Area
Wolf Creek Trail
Panel 3: Segment 3 - Colfax Ave/Hwy 174 to Bennett St along Hanson Way
Panel 4: Segment 4 - Bennett St to Railroad Ave and Idaho Maryland Rd

LEGEND

- Proposed Project
- Biological Study Area
- Temporary Impacts
- Aquatic
- Developed
- Landscaping
- Ponderosa Pine
- Riparian
- Sierra Mixed Conifer

0 37.5 75 150 Feet

Figure 4C: Habitats within the Biological Study Area
Wolf Creek Trail
Segment 4 - Bennett St to Railroad Ave and Idaho Maryland Rd

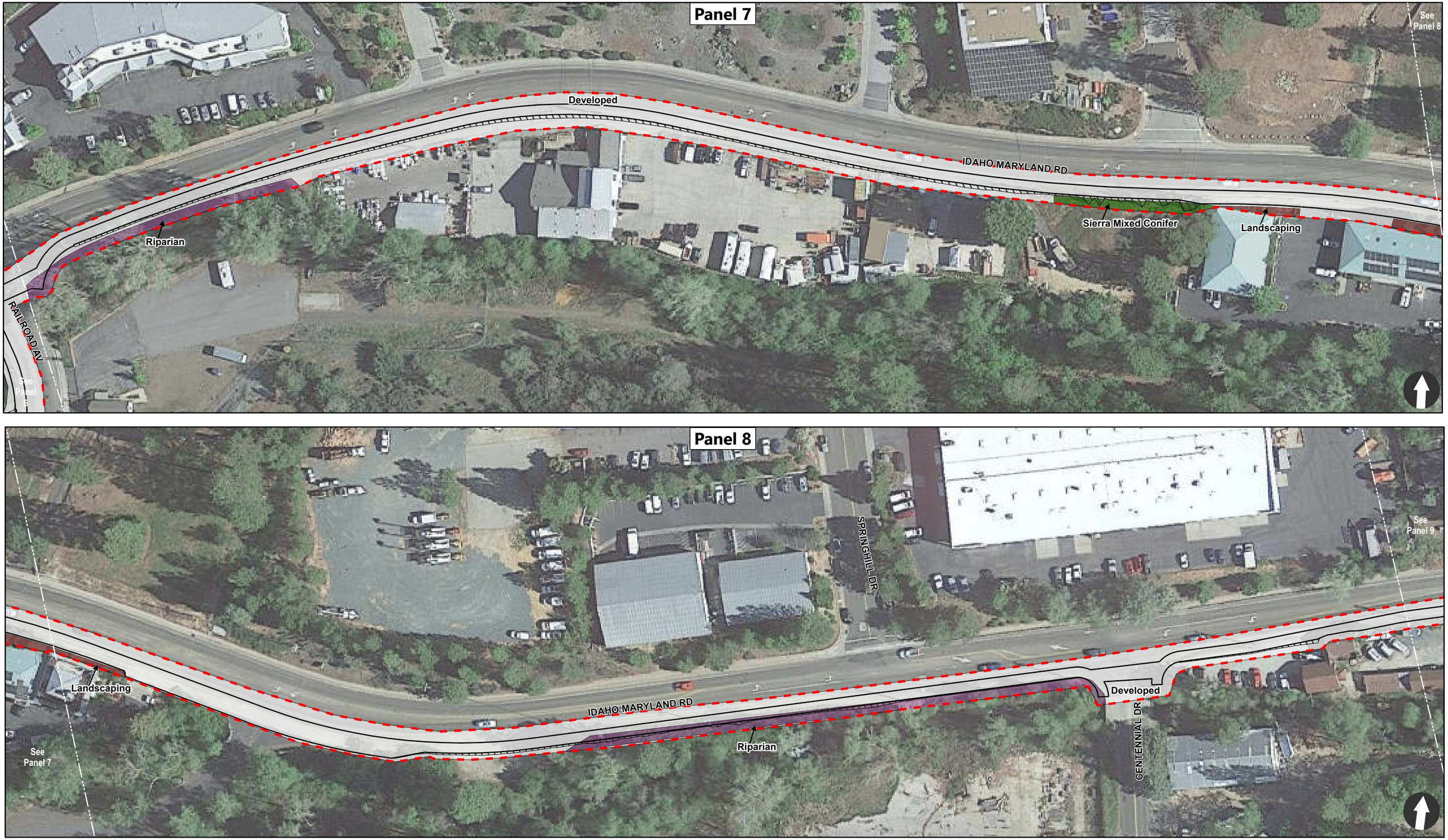

Figure 4D: Habitats within the Biological Study Area
Wolf Creek Trail
Segment 5 - Railroad Ave to Centennial Dr along Idaho Maryland Rd

LEGEND

- Proposed Project
- Biological Study Area
- Temporary Impacts
- Aquatic
- Developed
- Landscaping
- Ponderosa Pine
- Riparian
- Sierra Mixed Conifer

0 25 50 100 Feet

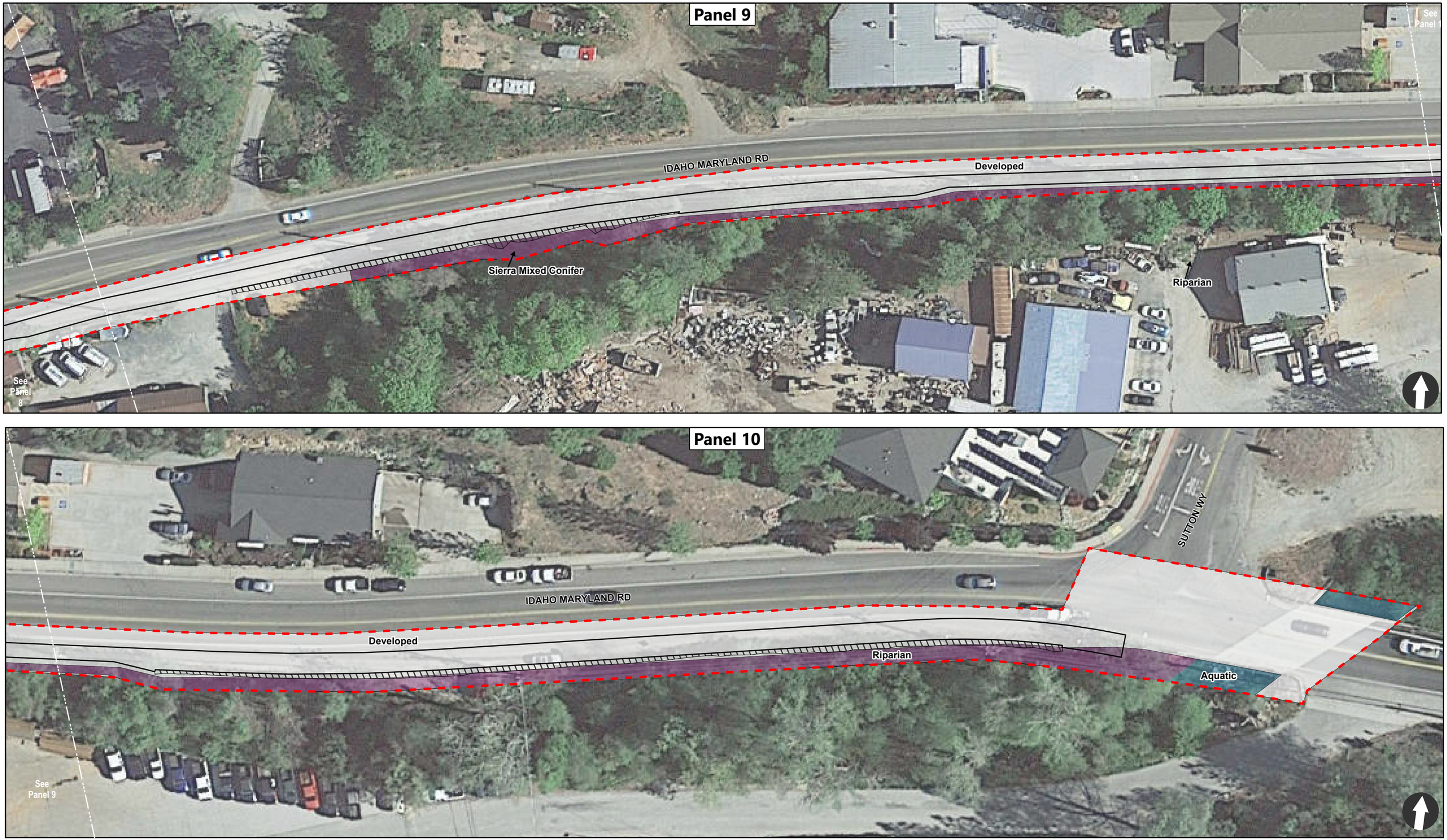

Figure 4E: Habitats within the Biological Study Area
Wolf Creek Trail
Segment 6 - Centennial Dr to Sutton Way along Idaho Maryland Rd

LEGEND

- Proposed Project
- Biological Study Area
- Temporary Impacts
- Aquatic
- Developed
- Landscaping
- Ponderosa Pine
- Riparian
- Sierra Mixed Conifer

0 12.5 25 50 Feet

III.3 Air Quality

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?			X	
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?			X	
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?			X	
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors adversely affecting a substantial number of people?			X	

SETTING

The project is located within the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District's (NSAQMD) jurisdiction. The overall air quality in Nevada County is good but two known air quality problems exist, Ozone and Suspended Particulate Matter (PM-10). Nevada County is a "non-attainment" for both pollutants. PM-10 in Grass Valley meets federal ambient ozone standards but exceeds the more stringent State standards in the winter, primarily due to smoke created from wood stoves and fireplaces. Violations in the summer months have been noted during forest fires or periods of open burning. PM-10 is usually associated with dust generated during construction. Western Nevada County is a non-attainment area for the federal 8-hour ozone standard and the entire county is non-attainment for the state one-hour ozone standard.

The NSAQMD has adopted standard regulations and conditions of approval for projects that exceed certain air quality threshold levels to address and mitigate both short-and long-term emissions. The Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD) has established the below thresholds of significance for PM-10

and the precursors to ozone, which are reactive organic gases (ROG) and nitrogen oxides (NOx). The NSAQMD has developed a tiered approach to significance levels as noted in Table 2 below: A project with emissions meeting Level A thresholds will require the most basic mitigations; projects with projected emissions in the level B range will require more extensive mitigations; and those projects which exceed Level C thresholds, will require an Environmental Impact Report to be prepared, which may result in even more extensive mitigations.

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

b) Would the project 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. In consultation with NSAQMD, the project is required to comply with standard air quality measures for construction as noted below. These measures are consistent with the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management's Air Quality Plan for the district. From an operational perspective, the residential project is anticipated to generate negligible impacts as outlined in **Table 2** - *Project Construction and Operational Emissions Estimates.* The project does not conflict with or obstruct implementation of an air quality plan prepared by NSAQMD. These potential impacts are less than significant.

Adherence with standard Northern Sierra Air Quality Management (NSAQMD) standards will ensure that construction impacts will remain less than significant. Therefore, the project will not violate an air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation. These potential impacts are less than significant.

III.3.1 Table 2: Project Construction and Operational Emissions Estimates

	ROG (lbs/day)	NOx (lbs/ day)	PM10 (lbs/ day)	CO (lbs/day
Project Construction Impacts	0.15	1.46	0.61	1.18
Level A Thresholds				
NSAQMD- Significance Thresholds	ROG (lbs/day)	NOx (lbs/day)	PM10 (lbs/ day)	N/A
	<24lbs/day	<24lbs/day	<79lbs/day	
Level B Thresholds				
Maximum Project Emissions	ROG (lbs/day)	NOx (lbs/day)	PM10 (lbs/ day)	N/A
	24-136 lbs/day	24/136 lbs/day	79-136 lbs/day	
Level C Thresholds				
Maximum Project Emissions	ROG (lbs/day)	NOx (lbs/day)	PM10 (lbs/ day)	N/A
	>136 lbs/day	>136 lbs/day	>136 lbs/day	

c) Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Less Than Significant Impact. Construction-related air pollutant emissions would originate from mobile and stationary sources including but not limited to: construction equipment exhaust, dust resulting from earth-disturbance, painting, and asphalt and/or concrete paving and striping. Construction related emissions vary substantially depending on the level of construction activity, length of the construction period, specific construction operations, types of equipment, number of personnel, wind, precipitation conditions, and soil moisture content.

According to the City's 2020 General Plan EIR, the site is not in an area of naturally occurring asbestos (NOA) as substantiated by Figure 3.1-1 of the General Plan EIR.

In review of the project, the California Emission Estimator Model (CalEEMod) Version 2020.4.0, emissions modeling program was used to estimate air pollutant emissions associated with the project. According to CalEEMod modeling results, air quality impacts for construction would be less than significant for all regulated air pollutants. There are no air quality impacts from project usage. In contrast, increased use of bicycle and pedestrian transport resulting from the trail will serve to reduce vehicular traffic, Vehicle Miles Traveled and improve air quality. These potential impacts are less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. Construction activities at the project site will require diesel-powered vehicles and equipment, which may result in localized odors. However, these odors would be temporary and would dissipate in the outdoor construction environment. Although in close proximity to sensitive receptors at a few specific locations (i.e. residential) the emissions associated with the project would be short-term and are not anticipated to result in a substantial elevation of pollutant concentrations in the area. The potential for the proposed project resulting in odor emissions adversely affecting a substantial number of people is less than significant.

III.4 Biological Resources

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?		X		
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 Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?		X		
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?			X	
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?		X		
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?		X		

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				X

SETTING

The project area is located within the 78 square mile Wolf Creek watershed, which drains to the Bear River Watershed, the second largest tributary to the Feather River. The Feather River flows to the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta before entering the Pacific Ocean through the San Francisco Bay. The Wolf Creek watershed is almost exclusively in the lower montane zone, with altitudes along the creek's 25-mile length ranging from over 3,000 feet at the headwaters to approximately 1,200 feet at the confluence with the Bear River. Unlike most other west-slope Sierran streams and rivers (which flow east to west), Wolf Creek flows primarily along a north–south axis. In comparison to east–west streams, this geographic positioning gives much more of the land a southern or partially southern exposure and thus the ability to support the most productive and diverse ecosystems. The general environmental setting of the site is indicative of the Sierra Nevada foothill habitat, and includes ponderosa pine, Sierra mixed conifer, and riparian habitat. The site slopes are generally minor, being less than 10% with some steeper slopes primarily where grading has occurred.

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

The following section is a summary of the preliminary special-status species analysis in the Biological Constraints Report prepared for the proposed project (**Appendix B**).

Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. A biological resources inventory of plant and wildlife species was conducted to identify the location and extent of candidate, sensitive, or special status species within and around the project area, known as the Biological Study Area (BSA). To complete an analysis of the potential impacts to environmental habitats and resources from the Project, the work area and surrounding habitat was evaluated (Biological Study Area). The BSA was determined based on the characteristics of the project site and its surrounding environment, such as the presence of sensitive habitats, special-status species, and other ecological features of interest. It was also determined early in the project development process, and in

collaboration with stakeholders to include all areas where the trail alignment could potentially pass through.

Biological resources near the project area were generated using a combination of databases including the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Critical Habitats, USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (iPAC), California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB), CDFW Spotted Owl Data Viewer, and the USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (NWI). A search query with a 2-mile radius around the project area created a list of seven plant species, seven wildlife species, and several aquatic features. There was no USFWS designated critical habitat anywhere within the BSA nor 2 miles outside of the BSA.

Habitats within the BSA. Segments 2-6, the five segments that comprise the project area, are composed of the following natural and unnatural habitat types: aquatic (Wolf Creek), riparian, ponderosa pine, Sierra mixed conifer, developed (paved roads), and landscaped. Segments 3-6 are mostly made up of paved areas or adjacent landscaped areas. The proposed trail alignment in Segment 2 is adjacent to Wolf Creek and passes through riparian habitat and ponderosa pine habitat. The forested section of Segments 4 passes through Sierra mixed conifer habitat.

Dominant species in the riparian habitat are Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*), cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), white alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*), and black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*). The ponderosa pine habitat is dominated by ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) with a smaller representation of incense cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*). The Sierra mixed conifer habitat is dominated by incense cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*), ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), and California black oak (*Quercus kelloggii*).

Although multiple wetland features came up on the 2-mile query, the only aquatic feature within the BSA was Wolf Creek. The proposed project will not have any direct impacts on Wolf Creek.

Special-Status Plants. Special-status plant species are those species that are legally protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) and/or California Endangered Species Act (CESA) as listed or proposed for listing as threatened or endangered, as well as California Native Plant Society Rank 1, 2, or 3 California Rare Plant Ranks (CRPR) plants. The special-status species table within the Biological Constraints Report (BCR) (**Appendix B**) summarizes special-status plants and their potential to occur in the BSA. Of the seven plant species listed in the table, two species were discussed in more detail to fully evaluate whether there could be impacts from project activities: Scadden flat checkerbloom (*Sidalcea stipularis*) (SE, CRPR 1B.1) and Dubious pea (Lathyrus sulphureus var. argillaceus) (CRPR 3). The other five species [pine hill flannelbush (*Fremontodendron decumbens*), Stebbins' morning-glory (*Calystegia stebbinsii*), brownish beaked-rush (*Rhynchospora capitellata*), chapparal sedge (*Carex xerophila*, and finger rush (*Juncus digitatus*)] that came up on the query had no potential to be affected by the project due to a lack of suitable habitat in or near the proposed work areas. The other two species are discussed below:

Scadden flat checkerbloom (*Sidalcea stipularis*). This plant is endemic to Nevada County in eastern California. It is known from only two occurrences on Scadden Flat in the Sierra Nevada foothills, near Grass Valley. The plant grows in wet montane marshes[1] that are fed by local springs[2]. The only aquatic habitat within the BSA is Wolf Creek and the work areas within the BSA don't have any montane marsh habitat. As such, no impacts are anticipated to occur to this plant species from project activities.

Dubious pea (*Lathyrus sulphureus* var. *argillaceus*). This plant is a perennial herb found within cismontane woodland, and upper and lower montane coniferous forests from 150 to 930 meters in elevation[3]. The proposed work area does not contain quality suitable habitat for this species. Although there is a recorded observance of this species that overlaps the work area, the record encompasses a large area (much larger than the work area) with low accuracy of the exact location of where the plant was actually seen. The project areas may provide marginal, low quality habitat for this species, but there have been no recorded occurrences within the work areas. This species has a very low likelihood of being impacted by the work activities.

Impacts to special status plants from the proposed project are less than significant.

Special Status Animals. Special status animal species include those listed as threatened or endangered or candidates for listing under the FESA or CESA, California Species of Special Concern (as designated by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife); and other rare species, including those on the "Special Animals List" as maintained by CDFW. Plant and animal species were evaluated for their potential to occur within and near the project area and within a 2-mile radius for species observations from CNDDB. Seven wildlife species were identified as having the potential to occur in the project area. The special status species table within the BCR (**Appendix B**) summarizes the results and discusses species with potential habitat present within the vicinity of the project. Of the seven wildlife species evaluated, a total of four species has a low likelihood of occurring. The other three species (California red-legged frog, Townsend's big-eared bat, and coast horned lizard) have no potential to be affected by the project activities as there is no suitable habitat, or there is a lack of recent records for that species within 2 miles of the project work areas. The four with low potential to occur are listed and discussed below:

- California black rail
- California spotted owl
- Yellow breasted chat
- Foothill yellow-legged frog

California black rail. This species nests in marshes and wet meadows including riparian marshes,

[1] Calflora: Information on California plants for education, research and conservation, with data contributed by public and private institutions and individuals, including the Consortium of California Herbaria. [web application]. 2023. Berkeley, California: The Calflora Database [a non-profit organization

[2] Kelly Steele & Duane Isely 2012, Lathyrus sulphureus, in Jepson Flora Project (eds.) Jepson eFlora, https://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/eflora/eflora_display.php?tid=30340, accessed on January 31, 2023.

[3] Calflora: Information on California plants for education, research and conservation, with data contributed by public and private institutions and individuals, including the Consortium of California Herbaria. [web application]. 2023. Berkeley, California: The Calflora Database [a non-profit organization

coastal prairies, saltmarshes, and impounded wetlands. All habitats have stable shallow water, usually just 1-2 inches deep. Marsh nests are set on or close to the ground, at the base of taller vegetation. Specific plants correlated with black rail presence include Bolboschoenus acutus, B. californicus, B. acutus, Typha angustifolia, T. latifolia, and Phragmites australis.

The proposed work areas do not contain suitable nesting habitat for this species. There are recorded observances of this species in areas adjacent to the proposed work area. However, the records indicate the observations are only visual with no evidence of nests or nesting behavior. **This species has a low likelihood of being impacted by work activities.**

California spotted owl. The California subspecies of spotted owl lives in mature and old-growth forests in the Sierra Nevada and in the mountains of coastal and Southern California. The California spotted owl prefers forests with large-diameter trees and varied levels of vegetation. The closest record for spotted owl is 1.3 miles southeast of the work area in Empire Mine State Historic Park, which is heavily forested[4]. Portions of Segments 2 and 4 have forested riparian, ponderosa pine, or Sierra mixed conifer forest, however none of this habitat provides suitable old growth forest nesting trees for the spotted owl. In addition, the forested habitat is interspersed within developed and landscaped areas. It is possible that this species could potentially forage within the forested areas of the project site. The majority of the project is adjacent to main roads, thus the noise level from construction should not be much higher than the ambient noise levels from traffic. **This species has a low likelihood of being impacted by work activities.**

Yellow-breasted chat. Nesting yellow-breasted chats occupy early successional riparian habitats with a well-developed shrub layer and an open canopy. This species primarily nests in the narrow border of streams, creeks, sloughs, and rivers and seldom forms extensive tracts. Blackberry (*Rubus spp.*), wild grape (*Vitis spp*.), willow, and other plants that form dense thickets and tangles are frequently selected as nesting strata. The nest is typically placed within 1 meter of the ground but may range up to 2.4 meters[5].

Segment 2 and small portions of Segments 4 and 5 may contain suitable nesting habitat for this species, however, no recorded occurrences have been observed within or directly adjacent to work areas. **This species has a low likelihood of being impacted by work activities.**

Foothill yellow-legged frog. The foothill yellow-legged frog lives in foothill and mountain streams from the Pacific coast to the slopes of the Sierra Nevada and Cascade mountains, up to approximately 5,000 feet in elevation. Habitats for this species ranges from valley-foothill hardwood, mixed conifer, to valley-foothill riparian, ponderosa pine, mixed chapparal and wet meadows[6.] Unlike other ranid frogs in California, this species stays close to permanent water sources and does not venture far away. Breeding stream habitat is generally shallow and rocky

[4] https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDB/Spotted-Owl-Info
[5] Shuford, W. D., and Gardali, T., editors. 2008. California Bird Species of Special Concern: A ranked assessment of species, subspecies, and distinct populations of birds of immediate conservation concern in California. Studies of Western Birds 1. Western Field Ornithologists, Camarillo, California, and California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento.
[6]USFWS https://www.fws.gov/species/foothill-yellow-legged-frog-rana-boylii

with some exposed sunlight. Tadpoles require water for a minimum of three to four months. There is suitable habitat within the some of the work areas where Wolf Creek occurs in the BSA. The closest record of this species is recorded 1.85 miles northeast of the eastern portion of the project site. There are no records within Wolf Creek. Since this species does not migrate very far from their permanent water sources and there are no documentations in Wolf Creek and there will be no direct impacts to Wolf Creek, **this species has a low likelihood of being impacted by work activities**.

The proposed project anticipates needing to remove 176 trees within the work areas. Trees slated for removal include incense cedar, ponderosa pine, California black oak, Fremont cottonwood, and 1 box elder, 1 big-leaf maple, and 1 white alder. This habitat modification could result in impacts to nesting bird species.

There is a low likelihood of potential impacts from the proposed work activities to the four special status species, however, mitigation measures (MM) will be implemented to protect these species and nesting birds to ensure impacts are avoided or minimized to the greatest extent possible. MM-BIO- 01 requires a worker environmental training to make sure all construction crews are aware of special status plants and wildlife in the area, the permits on the project, and the avoidance and mitigation measures that must be followed for the duration of the project. General measures MM-BIO-02 through MM-BIO-06 will be implemented to help avoid attracting wildlife, entrapment, or inadvertent impacts to special status species. MM-BIO-07 and MM-BIO-08 requires a nesting bird survey and wildlife survey prior to the commencement of work. MM-BIO-9 thru MM-BIO-16 include measures to protect Wolf Creek and help avoid impacts to aquatic species. MM-BIO-17 thru MM-BIO-21 help minimize impacts from vegetation removal and requires restoration and replanting to restore impacted habitats.

With the implementation of these mitigation measures, the impacts to special status plant and wildlife species will be reduced to less than significant impact.

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

Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. The subject property is not located in or adjacent to an identified refuge, wildlife area, or ecological reserve area of either the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service or the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Of the four vegetation habitat communities within the BSA, the proposed project would have potential direct effects on riparian, ponderosa pine, Sierra mixed-confer, and landscaping. These permanent impacts would result from construction of the project components. A total of 0.58 acres of habitat and would be temporarily impacted within the project site. These temporary impacts would occur in discrete areas and would occur for only one season. Temporary impacts include areas required to construct the trail. **Table 3** provides the estimated amount of project effect to

vegetation habitat communities, and **Figure 4A-4E** provides a map of these habitats with the permanent and temporary impacts overlayed.

III.4.1 Table 3: Estimated Amount of Project effects to Vegetation Habitat Communities

Vegetation Habitat Community	Biological Study Area Overlap (acres)	Project Impact Area Overlap (acres)	Permanent Impacts (acres)	Temporary Impacts (acres)
Aquatic (wetlands/waters)	2.58	0.00	0.00	0.00
Riparian	5.26	0.78	0.52	0.26
Ponderosa Pine	2.30	0.78	0.63	0.15
Sierra Mixed Conifer	1.82	0.54	0.40	0.14
Landscaping	0.36	0.16	0.14	0.03
Developed	6.26	2.07	1.85	0.22
Total (excludes developed)	**12.32**	**2.26**	**1.69**	**0.58**

The proposed project could also result in indirect impacts to sensitive natural communities, including disturbances from a change in bike and pedestrian volume, dust, and degradation of water quality from additional roadway surface. Impacts to riparian, ponderosa pine, Sierra mixed-confer, and landscaping habitats are primarily due to individual tree removals which would be replanted within the project vicinity in accordance with replanting ratios required by local tree protection ordinances and MM-BIO-21. No degradation to water quality will occur from the proposed project due to implementation of a SWPPP for the project (MM-BIO-16). Sediment and erosion control BMPs detailed in the SWPPP will minimize potential indirect effects to downstream resources from sedimentation that could result from construction activities in the project site. Implementation of MM-BIO-1 through MM-BIO-3 would reduce impacts to these vegetation communities to a less than significant level.

Riparian vegetation habitat. CDFW has jurisdiction authority over wetland resources associated with rivers, streams, and lakes under Fish and Game Code Section 1600-1616. CDFW has the authority to regulate all work under the jurisdiction of the State of California that would substantially divert, obstruct, or change the natural flow of a river, stream, or lake; substantially change the bed, channel, or bank of a river, stream, or lake; or use material from a stream bed. In practice, CDFW not only marks its jurisdictional limit at the top of the steam or lake bank, but at times includes within its jurisdictional limit the outer edge of the riparian vegetation (where present) and/or extends its jurisdiction to the edge of the 100-year floodplain. No element of the proposed project encroaches within the bed and bank of Wolf Creek. However, due to impacts to vegetation within the riparian corridor of Wolf Creek, a streambed alteration agreement from CDFW may be required at the discretion of CDFW. If required, the CDFW permitting requirements would serve as addition mitigation to reduce any impacts associated with Wolf Creek steam to a less than significant impact.

The riparian habitat as mapped in **Figure 4A-4E** was generated from a detailed tree survey of 764 trees within the BSA. Riparian habitat was determined by the presence of strongly riparian associated tree species such as white alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*), Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), willow (*Salix spp.)* and Oregon ash (*Fraxinus latifolia*), characteristic physical features of an outer floodplain, and the FEMA mapped 100-year floodplain for Wolf Creek.

The City of Grass Valley Development Code requires a Resource Management Plan to be prepared for encroachment in the 30-foot stream setback and shall include measures which will minimize impacts to the watercourse and enhance runoff filtration. The majority of the proposed project will be located more than 30 feet from Wolf Creek; however, portions of Segments 2, 5 and 6 approach to within 10-15 feet of the edge of a drainage area. However, as defined in Chapter 17.50.040 of the City of Grass Valley Development Code a path or trail may be within a watercourse setback.

In addition to the SWPPP for the project required as a mitigation measure (MM-BIO-16), the following performance standards associated with a Resource Management Plan will also be implemented to augment the measures within the SWPPP:

- Water quality impacts would be minimized through a combination of BMPs for construction within the 30-foot stream setbacks, which would include erosion control devices such as coir or other fiber roles or logs, straw, straw bales, etc. to minimize any sediment runoff that could cause erosion into the steam.
- Long term minimization of sedimentation and run off would occur through the construction of vegetated swales in areas subject to storm runoff to pre-treat runoff before it enters the stream.
- Develop and implement site specific enhancement and/or restoration of the riparian vegetation area.
- Removal of non-native vegetation.

Through project design measures, compliance with applicable permits and City of Grass Valley Development Code, and implementation of MM-BIO-1 through MM-BIO-3, and MM-BIO-16 and MM-BIO-21, the potential for the project having a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community is less than significant.

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

The following section is a summary of the aquatic resources analysis in the Biological Constraints Report prepared for the proposed project (**Appendix B**).

Less Than Significant Impact. Aquatic resources within and around the project area were identified using the USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) and were confirmed with an aquatic resources survey conducted by a Surf to Snow, Environmental Resource Management, Inc. biologist on April 4, 2022. The aquatic resources survey was conducted to determine if any

aquatic features that are subject to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404, State Water Resource Control Board (SWRCB) Section 401, or CDFW Code 1600 jurisdiction might be impacted by project activities.

There were multiple wetlands identified within 2 miles of the project, but the only aquatic resource within the BSA is Wolf Creek. Wolf Creek is a 25-mile-long creek that occurs in a mostly lower montane zone between the elevations of 3,000 feet at the headwaters up to 1,200 feet at the confluence of Bear River[7]. Wolf Creek possesses a clearly defined bed, bank, and channel and Ordinary High-Water Mark (OHWM). However, the proposed project will not have any direct impacts (including fill, dewatering, direct removal, hydrological interruption or any other means) on Wolf Creek.

The creek only overlaps with Segment 2 of the of the five segments that comprise the BSA. Very small sections of Wolf Creek appear in Segment 4 and Segment 6 where the creek runs underneath a paved bridge. In total, approximately 2.58 acres of aquatic habitat was mapped within the BSA. However, the project impact area does not overlap with the aquatic habitat at all.

Although there will be no direct impacts to Wolf Creek from the proposed project activities, Mitigation Measures (MM) have been developed to protect the creek from indirect impacts such as construction site runoff or erosion. Mitigation measures MM-BIO-9 thru MM-BIO-16 will be implemented. These measures include installing BMPs to protect the creek and following the guidelines of the SWPPP. These measures are intended for inclusion into the project during and after construction to minimize direct and indirect impacts to water quality during and following construction.

Since there are no direct impacts (including fill, dewatering, direct removal, hydrological interruption or any other means) to wetlands from the proposed project, the impact is considered less than significant.

d) Would the project 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 wildlife nursery sites?

Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. Camp Far West Reservoir serves as an upstream migration barrier for anadromous species to enter Wolf Creek, eliminating their access to the Project Area. Wolf Creek is adjacent to the project footprint in Segment 2, a small section of Segment 4, and Segment's 5 and 6. However, there is no element of the proposed project that impacts the bed and bank of Wolf Creek or requires the direct removal, fill, or relocation of any portion of this watercourse.

[7] https://www.wolfcreekalliance.org/aboutcreek.html

The forest and riparian habitats in the project area provide potential nesting and foraging habitats for many species such as passerines, and roosting habitat for bats. Wolf Creek may provide movement corridors for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife. However, no work will occur within the creek to construct the project; therefore, no aquatic wildlife movement will be impacted. The proposed project alignment would be located at grade level, and therefore, would not substantially obstruct terrestrial wildlife movement within the riparian corridor.

The nests of all the native bird species are protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and California Fish and Game Code. Impacts to nesting birds would be mitigated through implementation of MM-BIO-1 and MM-BIO-11. Lastly, No wildlife nursery sites were located anywhere in the project area during the biological survey or extensive tree survey.

Therefore, impacts as a result of the proposed project would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

e) Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.
Tree removal. Currently, it is estimated that 176 trees would be removed to build the trail (see Tree Survey Report, **Appendix A**). However, only 16 of the 176 trees proposed for removal are "significant trees" as defined by Chapter 12.36 of the City of Grass Valley Municipal Code as a tree having "a trunk of twenty-four caliper inches in diameter or larger diameter at breast height (DBH)." There are no trees within the BSA that are listed on the City of Grass Valley heritage tree list.

Implementation of mitigation measure (MM)-BIO-20 would require the replacement of protected trees consistent with local tree protection requirements for trees removed within local agency jurisdiction, applicable Caltrans requirements for trees removed within Caltrans ROW, and CDFW replanting requirements if any trees were to be removed within riparian areas under CDFW' jurisdiction.

The City of Grass Valley Development Code requires a Resource Management Plan to be prepared for encroachment in the 30-foot stream setback and shall include measures which will minimize impacts to the watercourse and enhance runoff filtration. The majority of the proposed project will be located more than 30 feet from Wolf Creek, but portions of Segments 2, 5 and 6 approach to within 10-15 feet of the edge of a drainage area. However, as defined in Chapter 17.50.040 of the City of Grass Valley Development Code a path or trail may be within a watercourse setback.

In addition to the SWPPP for the project required as a mitigation measure (MM-BIO-16), the following performance standards associated with a Resource Management Plan will also be implemented to augment the measures within the SWPPP:

- Water quality impacts would be minimized through a combination of BMPs for construction within the 30-foot stream setbacks, which would include erosion control devices such as

coir or other fiber roles or logs, straw, straw bales, etc. to minimize any sediment runoff that could cause erosion into the steam.

- Long term minimization of sedimentation and run off would occur through the construction of vegetated swales in areas subject to storm runoff to pre-treat runoff before it enters the stream.
- Develop and implement site specific enhancement and/or restoration of the riparian vegetation area.
- Removal of non-native vegetation.

Due to the encroachment within the 30-foot setback of Wolf Creek, the implementation of MM-BIO-9 through MM-BIO-22 will be implemented to reduce potential impacts. These measures are intended for inclusion into the project within the 30-foot drainage setback during and after construction to minimize direct and indirect impacts to water quality during and following construction. Therefore, impacts as a result of the proposed project would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

f) Would the project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

No Impact. The proposed project is not located within any Natural Community Conservation Plan or Habitat Conservation Plan. Thus, the proposed project would not conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Plan, or other approved local, regional, or State habitat conservation. No impact will occur.

Mitigation Measures

MM-BIO-1: Worker Training: Prior to the start of work, a qualified biologist will provide a worker environmental awareness training to the construction crew. The biologist will train all project staff regarding habitat sensitivity, identification of special status species with potential to occur, and minimization and avoidance measures that are being implemented for the project. All contractors must complete the training prior to beginning any project-related work.

MM-BIO-02: Parking: Park vehicles and equipment on pavement, existing roads, or other disturbed or designated areas (barren, gravel, compacted dirt).

MM-BIO-03: Access: Use existing access and ROW roads. Minimize the development of new access and ROW roads, including clearing and blading for temporary vehicle access in areas of natural vegetation.

MM-BIO-04: Equipment Inspection: Minimize potential for wildlife to seek refuge or shelter in pipes, culverts, hollow poles, or similar construction equipment by capping, covering, or elevating said structures when not in use.

MM-BIO-05: Trash: Prohibit trash dumping, , open fires (such as barbecues), and pets (except for safety in remote locations) at work sites.

MM-BIO-06: Escape Ramps: Fit open trenches or steep-walled holes with escape ramps of plywood boards or sloped earthen ramps at each end if left open overnight. Field crew will search open trenches or steep-walled holes every morning prior to initiating daily activities to ensure wildlife is not trapped.

MM-BIO-07: Nesting Birds: Pre-construction Survey: If feasible, work should be scheduled outside of the nesting bird season in the fall and winter. If not possible and work is scheduled during nesting bird season (March 1st through August 31st), a pre-construction nesting bird survey will be conducted by a qualified biologist within 10 days of construction commencement. The survey area should cover a radius of 250 feet for raptors and 50 feet for other non-raptor birds around all work areas.

If an active nest is observed within the survey area, the biologist will determine an appropriate exclusion buffer zone based on the type of species nesting, the distance from the work area, and the level of disturbance/noise levels in that area. The perimeter of the nest setback zone shall be fenced or adequately demarcated with stakes and flagging to ensure construction personnel and activities are restricted from the area. If needed, a qualified biologist will monitor construction activities occurring near the active nest site to ensure no inadvertent impacts on the nests occur.

MM-BIO-08: Special Status Wildlife: Prior to the start of work, a qualified biologist will perform a special status species survey of work areas that could provide suitable habitat for species with potential to occur in or near the project areas. The survey will focus on Segments 2 and 4, and the portion of suitable habitats in the other segments. Special attention will be made to look for foothill yellow-legged frog in areas where the train alignment is adjacent to Wolf Creek. Based on survey results, the qualified biologist will determine what other measures may need to be implemented to protect resources. This may include limiting work areas to walking access only, setting up protection buffers, or having a biological monitor onsite. If special status species are observed, then the agencies will be notified and provided a survey report of the findings.

MM-BIO-09: No Fill: No impacts (including fill, discharge or ground disturbance) to Wolf Creek are permitted.

MM-BIO-10: No Dewatering: No dewatering of Wolf Creek is permitted.

MM-BIO-11: Dry Season Work: If feasible, conduct work activities near Wolf Creek during the dry season (April 15 - October 15).

MM-BIO-12: Minimize Impacts: Minimize the number and size of work areas for equipment and spoil storage sites in the vicinity of Wolf Creek. Place staging areas and other work areas as far back from the creek as possible.

MM-BIO-13: Erosion Control: Utilize standard erosion and sediment control BMPs to prevent construction site runoff into Wolf Creek. All exposed/disturbed areas within the proposed project site

will be stabilized to the greatest extent possible. Erosion control measures such as straw wattles, straw mulch or silt fencing will be used to prevent runoff from entering the creek.

MM-BIO-14: Plates or Mats: If temporary plates or matting are needed to facilitate access, contact the Project Biologist or Environmental Lead prior to use.

MM-BIO-15: Stockpile: Stockpile soil within established work site boundaries and locate stockpiles so as not to enter Wolf Creek, stormwater inlets, or other standing bodies of water. Cover stockpiled soil prior to precipitation events.

MM-BIO-16: Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan: A SWPPP will be prepared for the Project in accordance with Section 402 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and Caltrans' Construction General Permit (Order 2009-009-DWQ). The SWPPP shall incorporate best management practices (BMPs) to control sedimentation and runoff and address water quality on site. Protective measures would include the following:

- No discharge of pollutants from vehicle and equipment cleaning into any storm drains or watercourses.
- Vehicle and equipment fueling and maintenance operations must be located away from watercourses, except at established commercial gas stations or established vehicle maintenance facility or staging areas with BMPs or secondary containment installed and maintained.
- Spill containment kits will always be maintained onsite during construction operations. Vehicles operating adjacent to wetlands and waterways must be inspected and maintained daily to prevent leaks.
- All food and food-related trash items will be enclosed in sealed trash containers and removed completely from the site at the end of each day.

MM-BIO-17: Timing of Veg Work: If feasible, vegetation work should be scheduled between September 1st and March 1st to avoid the nesting bird season.

MM-BIO-18: Tree Protection: Removal and trimming of vegetation should be the minimum amount necessary to support the work. All cut vegetation must be removed from the riparian area.

MM-BIO-19: Felling Trees: Directionally fall trees away from an exclusion zone, if an exclusion zone has been defined. If this is not practicable, remove the tree in sections. Avoid damage to adjacent trees to the extent practicable.

MM-BIO-20: Replanting: Vegetation and tree removal would be required to construct the trail. Trees shall be replanted within the project area at a ratio consistent with local tree protection requirements for trees removed within local agency jurisdiction, Caltrans requirements for trees removed within Caltrans ROW, and CDFW replanting requirements for trees removed within the riparian zone in CDFW's jurisdiction.

MM-BIO-21: Restoration: All slopes or unpaved areas temporarily disturbed by the construction activities will be reseeded with native grasses and shrubs to stabilize and prevent erosion. The temporarily disturbed areas will be restored to pre-construction conditions to the maximum extent practicable. Where disturbance includes tree removal, native species will be replanted at ratios as described above.

MM-BIO-22:

- Establishing the area around the active drainage channel as Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) where those areas will not be impacted by construction or thereafter;
- Minimize the number and size of work areas for equipment and spoil storage sites in the vicinity of the stream. Place staging areas and other work areas outside of the 30-foot drainage setback.
- The contractor shall exercise reasonable precaution to protect this drainage and adjacent 30-foot drainage setback, including potential wetlands, from pollution with fuels, oils, and other harmful materials. Construction by products and pollutants such as oil, cement, and wash water shall be prevented from discharging into or near these resources and shall be collected for removal from the site. All construction debris and associated materials and litter shall be removed from the work site immediately upon completion.
- No equipment for vehicle maintenance or refueling shall occur within the 30-foot drainage setback. The contractor shall immediately contain and clean up any petroleum or other chemical spills with absorbent materials such as sawdust or kitty litter. For other hazardous materials, follow the cleanup instruction on the label.

III.5 Cultural Resources

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to in § 15064.5?			X	
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?		X		
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?		X		

The following section is summarized from the Phase 1 Archaeological Survey Report prepared for the proposed project (**Appendix C**).

a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15064.5?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Area of Potential Effect (APE) records search revealed that there are five previously recorded resources that overlap the APE. The pre-field research and Phase I intensive pedestrian survey identified 6 potential historic properties within the APE.

P-29-000839 – Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad: Though the historic alignment of this railroad crosses the APE, there are no visible features or other historic attributes visible within the APE.

P-29-001463 – Mine Shaft: This historic-era site was not relocated, and appears to have been altered, covered, and or destroyed during construction of buildings and parking lots in the mapped location of the mine.

P-29-001514 – Idaho-Maryland Road: The historic Idaho-Maryland Road is no longer observable within the APE. Significant development of the road, including widening, repaving, and sidewalk construction have altered the character-defining features of this resource to the extent that appears to retain no integrity within the APE.

P-29-001515 – South Auburn Street: The short section of South Auburn Street that crosses the APE (approximately 300 feet) retains none of the historic character of the resource as originally recorded. It currently displays as a modern road beneath the elevated Hwy 20, and surrounded by relatively modern commercial development.

P-29-003568 – Grass Valley Yard – Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad**:** Though a very small section of this large historic site overlaps the APE, there are no visible and associated historic features, artifacts, or other elements of this resource within the APE.

P-29-004634 – East Bennett Road: The road was first recorded in 2016 as a modern paved road displaying four historic features, including three culverts and one retaining wall feature thought to date from the 1935 to 1943 Works Project Administration (WPA) period. None of these four features are located within the APE.

Temp 001 – Historic Rock Walls**:** The current survey identified a series of historic rock walls constructed to channelize Wolf Creek near Segment 2 of the proposed trail as it passes through Grass Valley. The walls are constructed of stacked and dry-laid rock of 3 to 10 courses and were observed on both, but primarily southeast side of Wolf Creek, along a 0.5-mile stretch of the creek between Hwy 20 in the southwest to the Safeway shopping center in the northeast. Full delineation and description of this resource was not possible during this survey due to lack of private property access and significant blackberry overgrowth, obscuring visibility of the resource.

Though this resource has not yet been fully delineated or described, it appears unlikely to be impacted by the Project, as currently defined. The observed rock walls establish the margin of Wolf Creek; when developed, the Wolf Creek trail is designed to be set back from the creek and therefore not be in conflict with the rock walls. Should these plans change, resulting in potential impact to the resource, the rock walls would need to be fully recorded to address any impacts during planning, construction, or use of the trail.

Therefore, the potential for the project causing a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource is less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

b) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15064.5?

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. On February 22, 2022, Surf to Snow archaeologist James Mangold completed an intensive pedestrian Phase I archaeological inventory survey of the Project Area within Sections 25, 26, 27, 34 of the Grass Valley 7.5-minute United State geological survey (USGS) topographic map in Nevada County. The purpose of the archaeological survey was to identify any previously unrecorded cultural resources within the Project Area that may be affected by the proposed project. The survey yielded negative results for the presence of cultural resources.

The survey was completed by walking meandering transects along the proposed trail alignment, which travels through the City of Grass valley along Wolf Creek. The Project traverses terrain that varied from heavily vegetated to fully paved. The Project Area generally occupies creek-side terraces landform was generally flat and at the time of survey was predominantly covered by thick blackberry brambles. Ground visibility was accordingly poor for most of the survey, only varying from 0-10% throughout. Where possible, boot scrapes were employed at regular intervals to expose soils and ascertain if cultural constituents were present.

Construction activities for the project would include excavation and grading. Therefore, there is the potential for the project to affect previously unidentified archaeological resources during ground disturbing activities. MM-CUL-1 through MM-CUL-3 would ensure archaeological resources that may be found on the site are properly identified and protected. With inclusion of these mitigation measures, potential project impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level.

c) *Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?*

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. No known human remains occur on site. In the event that previously unknown human remains are encountered during earth removal or disturbance activities, the project would be required to comply with California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and public resource code (PRC) as set forth in MM-CUL-3. Potential impacts concerning human remains would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

MM-CUL-1: Prior to initiating ground disturbing activities within the project area, construction personnel should be alerted to the possibility of encountering buried prehistoric or historic period cultural remains. Personnel should be advised that upon discovery of buried archaeological deposits, work in the immediate vicinity of the find should cease and a qualified archaeologist should be contacted immediately. Once the find has been identified, plans for the treatment, evaluation, and mitigation of impacts to the find shall be developed if it is found to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources.

MM-CUL-2: Archaeological resources unearthed by project construction activities shall be evaluated by a qualified archaeologist and Native American monitor. If the resources are Native American in origin, the tribe shall coordinate with the jurisdiction regarding treatment of these resources. The treatment plan established for the resources shall be in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(f) for historical resources and PRC Section 21083.2(b) for unique archaeological resources. Preservation in place (i.e., avoidance) shall be the preferred manner of treatment. If preservation in place is not feasible, treatment may include implementation of archaeological data recovery excavations to remove the resource along with subsequent laboratory processing and analysis; provided no data recovery will be permitted to tribal cultural resources without prior consultation and consent of relevant Tribes.

MM-CUL-3: California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5, and PRC Section 5097.98 mandate the process to be followed in the event of an accidental discovery of any human remains in a location other than a dedicated cemetery. California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 requires that in the event that human remains are discovered, disturbance of the site shall be halted until the coroner has investigated the circumstances, manner and cause of death, and the recommendations concerning the treatment and disposition of the human remains have been made to the person responsible for the excavation, or to his or her authorized representative, in the manner provided in PRC Section 5097.98. If the coroner determines that the remains are not subject to his or her authority and if the coroner recognizes or has reason to believe the human remains to be those of a Native American, he or she shall contact, by telephone within 24 hours, the Native American Heritage Commission.

III.6 Energy

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				X
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?				X

SETTING

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) is the energy utility provider in Nevada County, furnishing both natural gas and electricity for residential, commercial, industrial, and municipal uses. PG&E generates or buys electricity from hydroelectric, nuclear, renewable, natural gas, and coal facilities.

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

No Impact. The Pacific Gas & Electric Company provides electricity and natural gas service to the project area and surrounding areas. The proposed project would enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety and increase connectivity and mobility. During construction, the project would result in a nominal increase in electricity and natural gas demand. This nominal increase represents an insignificant percent increase compared to overall demand in PG&E's service area. Therefore, projected electrical and natural gas demand would not significantly impact PG&E's level of service.

During construction, transportation energy use depends on the type and number of trips, vehicle miles traveled, fuel efficiency of vehicles, and travel mode. Transportation energy use during construction would come from the transport and use of construction equipment, delivery vehicles and haul trucks, and construction employee vehicles that would use diesel fuel and/or gasoline. The use of energy resources by these vehicles would fluctuate according to the phase of

construction and would be temporary. Most construction equipment during demolition and grading would be gas-powered or diesel-powered, and the later construction phases would require electrically powered equipment. Impacts related to transportation energy use during construction would be temporary and would not require expanded energy supplies or the construction of new infrastructure.

During operations, energy consumption associated with the trail would be nominal. Furthermore, gasoline fuel facilities and infrastructure already exist in the surrounding area. Consequently, the proposed project would not result in a substantial demand for energy that would require expanded supplies or the construction of other infrastructure or expansion of existing facilities. The proposed project would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. Therefore, there would be no impact.

b) Would the project conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

No Impact. The Grass Valley Energy Action Plan set goals to improve energy efficiency in buildings, facilities, and City operations, and to expand the utilization of renewable energy and resilience measures. It projected a decrease of annual grid supplied electricity use in 2035 by 36% and annual natural gas use by 29%. The Nevada County Energy Action Plan provides an analysis of the energy use within the unincorporated county limits by the community and County operated facilities as well as a roadmap for accelerating energy efficiency, water efficiency, and renewable energy efforts already underway in Nevada County. The goal of the plan is to reduce the projected annual grid supplied electricity use in 2035 by 51% and annual natural gas use by 30%.

The proposed project would enhance pedestrian and bicyclist safety and increase connectivity and mobility. The project would further promote alternative modes of transportation and reduce vehicle trips. The project is a trail extension and therefore would not generate any new automobile traffic or require energy use. Additionally, the proposed project would be consistent with the California Air Resources Board Scoping Plan measures, the Grass Valley Energy Action Plan, and the Nevada County Energy Action Plan. A reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions would occur by providing alternative transportation options, which reduces vehicle fuel consumption. The proposed project does not conflict with or obstruct either of these local plans, or a state plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact.

III.7 Geology and Soils

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:			X	
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.			X	
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?			X	
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?			X	
iv) Landslides?			X	
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?			X	
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?			X	
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?			X	

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?				X
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?		X		

SETTING

The proposed project is located on the northern half of the Sierra Nevada Geomorphic Providence of California. The Sierra Nevada Geomorphic Province is bordered to the north by the Cascade and Basin and Ranges, to the west by the Great Valley, to the east by the Basin and Range, and to the south by the Transverse Ranges and the Mojave Desert. The Sierra Nevada is nearly 400 miles in length and averages about 50 miles wide. Formation of the Sierra Nevada occurred by tectonic shifting of the Sierran Block; the western side dropping to form the Great Valley and the eastern side being uplifted to form the Sierra Nevada.

The following sections are summarized from the Phase I/II Environmental Site Assessment Report prepared for the proposed project (**Appendix D**).

Geology. The trail is located within a region underlain by a complex assemblage of igneous and metamorphic rocks in the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada. The regional structure of the foothills is characterized by the north-northwest trending Foothills Fault System, a feature formed during the Mesozoic era (between approximately 65 million and 248 million years ago) in a compressional tectonic environment. A change to an extensional tectonic environment during the late Cenozoic (approximately within the last 30 million years), resulted in normal faulting which has occurred coincident with some segments of the older faults near the site. According to the Tuminas (1983), the southern segment of the trail segment crosses an area mapped as La Barr Meadows quartz diorite, and the northern segment crosses an area mapped as Lake Combie diabase, serpentine and gabbro.

Soils. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey, the trail crosses land that is mapped as Alluvial land clayey (Ao), Placer diggings (Pr), Sites silt loam (SID), Sites very stony loam (SmC), and Rock outcrop-Dubakella (RrE).

a) Would the project 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?

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

iv) Landslides?

Less Than Significant Impact. Based on the *2010 Fault Activity Map of California prepared by the California Geological Survey,* the nearest faults are the Grass Valley Fault, Wolf Creek Fault Zone, Spenceville Deadman Fault, and Swan Ravine Fault located 2 miles east, 6 miles south, 12 miles west, and 14 miles northwest, respectively. The Grass Valley Fault is a Pre-Quaternary fault (i.e. no visible signs of movement within 1.6 million years). This fault is not necessarily inactive. The Wolf Creek and Spenceville Deadman Faults show geomorphic evidence of movement during the late Pleistocene epoch (700,000 to 11,000 years ago), and the Swan Ravine Fault shows geomorphic evidence of movement undifferentiated during the Quaternary period.

According to the 2008 Seismic Motion Interpolator prepared by the California Division of Mines and Geology, there is a 10 percent probability that the site will experience a horizontal ground acceleration of 0.16g in the next 50 years. This is a relatively low level of ground shaking for California. Earthquake faults, strong seismic ground shaking, seismic related ground failure and landslide impacts are considered less than significant.

Because the site is relatively flat, the potential for landslides and seismically inducted slope failures at or near the project site is low. Therefore, project implementation would result in less than significant impacts associated with the exposure of people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects involving strong seismic ground shaking, seismic-related ground failure including liquefaction, and landslides, and no mitigation is required.

b) Would the project result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Less Than Significant Impact. Grading would be required to construct segments of the trail. Grading and earthwork activities during construction would expose soils to potential short-term erosion by wind and water. Because the project would disturb more than one acre, a SWPPP would be developed in accordance with the NPDES General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (NPDES General Construction Permit) (Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000002) (California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) 2009). The SWPPP would identify BMPs that would be implemented to prevent soil erosion during construction and to stabilize the site at the end of

construction. These requirements would ensure that potential project impacts are less than significant.

c) Would the project 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project would be required to be in conformance with the latest version of the California Building Code and other applicable standards. Conformance with standard engineering practices and design criteria would reduce the effects of ground failure to a less than significant level.

As per the Phase I/II Environmental Site Assessment Report prepared for the proposed project (**Appendix D**), with the geology and soils summarized in this section above, the risk of lateral spreading from landslides and liquefaction is low. The site resides in a low seismic zone, and site geology consists of stiff/ dense native soils and decomposing rocks. These impacts are considered less than significant.

d) Would the project be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (2021), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?

Less Than Significant Impact. Expansive soils can change in volume depending on moisture content. When wet, these soils can expand; conversely, when dry, they can contract or shrink. Sources of moisture that can trigger this shrink-swell phenomenon can include seasonal rainfall, landscape irrigation, utility leakage, and/or perched groundwater. Expansive soil can exhibit wide cracks in the dry season, and changes in soil volume have the potential to damage concrete slabs, foundations, and pavement. Adherence to all construction and project design features would ensure impacts are less than significant.

e) Would the project 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?

No Impact. The project does not propose the use of septic tanks. Therefore, no impact would occur and no mitigation is required.

f) Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. Paleontological resources are the fossilized remains of organisms from prehistoric environments found in geologic strata. These resources are valued for the information they yield about the history of the earth and its past ecological settings. The potential for fossil occurrence depends on the rock type exposed at the surface in a given area. Typically, paleontological resources are found within alluvium deposits.

Although not anticipated, the potential to encounter paleontological resources during subsurface construction activities associated with the project, such as grading and trenching, still exists. If the project were to encounter paleontological resources, the project could potentially result in a significant impact to paleontological resources. Accordingly, implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1 is recommended to reduce potential impacts to paleontological resources that may be discovered during project construction. With the incorporation of mitigation, impacts associated with paleontological resources would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

MM-GEO-1: In the event that paleontological resources are encountered during grading or other construction activities at the site, all construction, excavation, or grading activities within 100-feet of the find shall be temporarily halted until the City has been notified and a qualified paleontologist has had the opportunity to assess the significance of the find and provide proper management recommendations.

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III.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?			X	
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?			X	

SETTING

Unlike emissions of criteria and toxic air pollutants, which have local or regional impacts, emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) that contribute to global climate change have a broader global impact. Global climate change is a process whereby GHGs accumulating in the atmosphere contribute to an increase in the temperature of the earth's atmosphere. The principal GHGs contributing to global climate change are carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), and fluorinated compounds. These gases allow visible and ultraviolet light from the sun to pass through the atmosphere, but they prevent heat from escaping back into space.

Among the potential implications of global climate change are rising sea levels, and adverse impacts to water supply, water quality, agriculture, forestry, and habitats. In addition, global climate change may increase electricity demand for cooling, decrease the availability of hydroelectric power, and affect regional air quality and public health. Like most criteria and toxic area pollutants, much of the GHG production comes from motor vehicles. GHG emissions can be reduced to some degree by improved coordination of land use and transportation planning on the city, county and sub regional level, and other measures to reduce automobile use. Energy conservation measures can also contribute to reductions in GHG emissions.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.4 provides direction to lead agencies in determining the significance of impacts from GHG emissions. Section 15064.4(a) calls on lead agencies to make a good faith effort, based upon available information, to describe, calculate or estimate the amount of GHG emissions resulting from a project. The lead agency has the discretion to determine, in the context of a particular project, how to quantify GHG emissions.

Senate Bill 97 requires an assessment of projects GHG emissions as part of the CEQA process. SB 97 also required the Office of Planning and Research to develop guidelines to analyze GHG emissions.

The NSAQMD has not adopted thresholds of significance for GHG emissions. Due to the nature of global climate change, it is not anticipated that a single project would have a substantial impact on global climate change. Although it is possible to estimate a project's CO2 emission, it is not possible to determine whether or how an individual project's relatively small incremental contribution might translate into physical effects on the environment.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. GHG emissions associated with implementation of the proposed project would occur over the short-term from construction activities, consisting primarily of emissions from equivalent exhaust. The proposed project would not result in significant, long-term, GHG emissions, as the proposed project consists of a trail for pedestrians and bicyclists that would not generate vehicle trips and/or source emissions.

The primary existing sources of human-caused GHGs in the project area are vehicle emissions from SR-20/49 and other major roads located adjacent to the proposed project.

Construction GHG emissions were estimated using CalEEMod. For the purpose of this environmental analysis, project construction is expected to occur over an approximately nine-month period. Construction activities would include grading, paving, and coating for striping and signage. Project construction would result in direct emissions of CO2, N2O, and CH4 from the operation of construction equipment and the transport of materials and construction workers to and from the project site. Construction of the project would result in a total of 223.89 CO2e.

The proposed project includes an approximately 2.3-mile trail extension which would not include any structures which would provide energy, waste, water, or wastewater emissions. Additionally, no vehicle trips are associated with the project. Therefore, no GHG emissions are expected to be generated from operation of the proposed project and impacts are less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. The City of Grass Valley has not conducted a greenhouse gas emissions inventory or adopted a Climate Action Plan, performance standards, or a GHG efficiency metric. However, the City has adopted an Energy Action Plan and the Grass Valley 2020 General Plan includes numerous goals, policies, and programs which, if implemented, will reduce Grass Valley's impacts on global climate change and reduce the threats associated with global climate change to the City. The

proposed project would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases and therefore the impact is less than significant.

III.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?			X	
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?			X	
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				X
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?				X
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?			X	
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				X

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?			X	

SETTING

A Phase I/II Environmental Site Assessment Report was prepared for the proposed project to identify and evaluate the level of risk to the project associated with hazardous materials, hazardous waste, and/or contamination. The trail alignment was assessed for the potential of encountering hazardous materials during proposed construction activities and/or operations (**Appendix D**). This assessment revealed no evidence of recognized environmental conditions (RECs) in connection with the proposed trail alignment.

In addition, a record search on the State's Geotracker, Envirostor and Department of Conservation websites and found no evidence of abandoned mine or hazardous waste sites within the project area.

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

Less Than Significant. During operations of the proposed project, no routine transport or disposal of hazardous materials would be associated with the proposed project. The hazardous materials most likely to be used during construction include typical construction materials such as gasoline, diesel, motor oil, lubricants, solvents, and adhesives. Drips and small spills would be the most likely potential hazardous materials releases to occur, and any release that occurs in close proximity to a stream or drainage channel could have a significant impact on the environment, if not properly controlled. Given the project would disturb over one acre, a SWPPP would be developed and implemented in accordance with the NPDES General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (NPDES General Construction Permit)(Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000002) (SWRCB 2009). Implementation of the SWPPP would reduce the potential for hazardous materials releases to occur during construction and would reduce the potential for spills to impact sensitive habitat or human health, to less than significant.

The middle segment of the proposed trail is aligned with Hansen Way, a frontage road along SR-49/20. Soil samples WCT-6 through WCT-8 were obtained from near the road shoulder to evaluate the potential for aerially deposited lead (ADL) from historical leaded fuel emissions from highway traffic. The detected soil lead concentrations ranged from 53 to 326 mg/kg, which are

below the DTSC-SL for commercial soil (320 mg/kg) and the TTLC for designating soil as hazardous waste (1,000 mg/kg) (**Appendix D**).

The proposed project does not involve an activity that may create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Therefore, the impact is considered less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed trail crosses through the historical Grass Valley Mining District, where hard rock (lode) gold mining was performed from the early 1850s to the mid 1950s. Mining waste (waste rock, gold-bearing ore and processed tailings) commonly contains elevated concentrations of heavy metals (such as arsenic and lead) from naturally mineralized ore materials, as well as other chemicals (such as mercury) that were used to extract gold from the ore. Heavy metals such as arsenic, gold and mercury have known toxic effects and can present a health risk in the case of routine contact. Based on the findings of the Phase I/II Environmental Site Assessment Report, the RECs encountered on adjacent sites are not considered likely to have a significant impact on the proposed trail alignment. These included an analysis of the five historical mining-era operations in the vicinity of the proposed trail alignment (historical workings of North Star Mine, Golden Center Mine, the historical Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad, historical Crown Point Mine. And the historical Idaho-Maryland Mine). However, the area could contain mine-related features since they are very common, and not an unusual circumstance, in the City.

The properties within the project area are not listed on the City's Hazardous Waste Site or Nevada County's Contaminated Sites lists.

While some localized soil and aerial contamination may be present, construction activities are not anticipated to involve any materials or conditions that would result in risk of upset or accident that would release hazardous materials into the environment. Examples of projects that may involve such risk could include refineries, fuel storage, or tanker transportation, where accidents could result in catastrophic environmental or human consequences. The construction activity for this project would not involve such risk or circumstances, and therefore is considered less than significant.

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

No Impact. The proposed project does not involve an activity that will emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. No impact will occur.

d) Would the project 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?

No Impact. The project is not located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites. No impact will occur.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact. The northeast edge of the project area is located approximately 1.2 miles (as the crow flies) from the Nevada County Airport. As required by the Public Utilities Code, the Airport Land Use Commission adopted the Nevada County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. The compatibility plan's function is to promote compatibility between the airport and surrounding land uses with respect to: height (e.g. height of structures), safety (e.g. number of persons per acre), and noise (e.g. noise sensitive land uses). According to the Nevada County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, the project site is located outside of the area of influence. The project site is not located within an airport land use plan. Therefore, the impact is less than significant.

f) Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

No Impact. The proposed trail is within the City of Grass Valley and Caltrans public ROW. During construction, road access may be disrupted temporarily. Streets and roads affected by trail construction would be appropriately signed with temporary traffic control measures. After completion of the proposed trail and associated intersection improvements, temporary signage and traffic control measures would be removed. Once operational, the Wolf Creek Trail would connect two existing trail segments, providing another route that could be used by bicyclists and pedestrians in an emergency. Therefore, the proposed project would not impair or interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or evacuation plan. No impact will occur.

g) Would the project expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

Less Than Significant Impact. Though the project site, as with most of the City, is designated as within a high fire hazard severity zone, the proposed access and water system will support adequate fire suppression activities. Development of the proposed project does not expose a greater risk from wildfire than in any other area in the City. The proposed project would not expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to significant loss, injury or death involving wildland fires. Thus, impacts would be less than significant.

III.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?		X		
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?		X		
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
i. Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?		X		
ii. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite?		X		
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?			X	
iv. Impede or redirect flood flows?			X	

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?			X	
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?				X

SETTING

The project area is located within the 78 square mile Wolf Creek watershed, which drains to the Bear River Watershed, the second largest tributary to the Feather River. The Feather River flows to the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta before entering the Pacific Ocean through the San Francisco Bay. The Wolf Creek watershed is almost exclusively in the lower montane zone, with altitudes along the creek's 25-mile length ranging from over 3,000 feet at the headwaters to approximately 1,200 feet at the confluence with the Bear River. Because the trail alignment roughly follows Wolf Creek the whole project area drains a generally short distance to Wolf Creek. There are no other aquatic resources within the project area (**Appendix B**). Nevada Irrigation District (NID) uses the section of Wolf Creek that runs through Grass Valley for irrigation water conveyance. As a result, water levels in summer are higher than the natural hydrograph and temperatures are cooler.

The Wolf Creek Community Alliance (WCCA), a volunteer-run 501(c)(3) non-profit organization focused primarily on cleaning up and restoring Wolf Creek, operates a program launched in 2005 for regularly monitoring of the physical and chemical conditions of Wolf Creek at selected sites in order to help identify areas of concern for various pollutants. Representatives of the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) oversee all WCCA monitoring quality assurance plans. Indicators of water quality measured include temperature, dissolved oxygen, nitrates, total dissolved solids, and pH. About 30 volunteer monitors take and test water samples at 20 different sites along Wolf Creek on a monthly basis.

According to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps, most of the proposed project is not within a mapped flood plain. However, there is a portion of Segment 2 of the trail that crosses into Zone AE and Zone X. Zone AE is the area of inundation due to the 100-year storm event (base flood), which has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year. Zone X is defined as an area with 0.2% annual chance flood, areas or 1% annual chance flood with average depths of less than 1-foot or with drainage areas less than 1-square mile, and areas protected by levees from 1% annual chance flood. Evaluation of flood zone areas requires a Flood Zone

Development permit in accordance with Chapter 15.52.050 et. Seq. of the City's Development Code.

The general NPDES stormwater permits for general construction activities require an applicant to file a notice of intent (NOI) with the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) to discharge stormwater and prepare and implement a SWPPP. The SWPPP would include a site map, description of stormwater discharge activities, and BMPs that would be employed to prevent water pollution. The SWPPP for general construction activity permits must describe Best Management Practices (BMPs) that would be used to control soil erosion and discharges of other construction-related pollutants that could contaminate nearby water resources.

a) Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. While much of the proposed trail would occur on existing roadway and disturbed shoulder areas, the proposed project would result in an increase in the amount of impervious area as a result of new trail. This could result in a slight increase in flowrates and volumes of stormwater runoff, as compared to existing conditions. The path will generally drain its runoff to adjacent pervious, non-erodible surfaces.

Based upon the cut and fill quantities proposed, the proposed project will require a grading permit to be issued by the City of Grass Valley, Public Works Division pursuant to the City's Grading Ordinance. The City's Grading Ordinance requires specific measures to address erosion and the introduction of construction materials into surface waters. In addition, Section 402(p) of the Clean Water Act requires National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) storm water permitting to be approved by the Regional Water Quality Control Board for projects disturbing over 1 acre. Compliance with these regulations and the implementation of Mitigation Measures MM-HY/WQ 1 and MM-HY/WQ 2 requiring a NPDES permit from the RWQCB will reduce potential impacts to a less than significant impact.

If dewatering is necessary in areas where groundwater is encountered within the planned depth of excavation, depending on surface and groundwater levels at the time of construction, the dewatering shall be consistent with RWQCB requirements and as such would not result in a violation of water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. Therefore, impacts as a result of the proposed project would be less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. Groundwater depths were not determined. Wolf Creek flows adjacent to segments of the trail and influences local groundwater elevations. Shallow groundwater may be perched over relatively impermeable soil/rock layers, while deeper groundwater is typically encountered in bedrock fractures.

The proposed project would not result in the construction of large impervious surface areas that would prevent water from infiltrating into the groundwater nor would it result in direct additions or withdrawals to existing groundwater. A majority of the project will require excavation at depths of 1.5 to 3 feet. The maximum excavation depth of 15-feet occurs in Segment 4 for the construction of a retaining wall, and this section of the proposed trail is up a steep slope over 250-feet from Wolf Creek. The maximum excavation depth near a daylighted reach of Wolf Creek is 5-feet and occurs in Segment 2, but at a location where the trail is situated over 20-feet in elevation above the top of bank of Wolf Creek, reducing the likelihood of encountering groundwater during excavation.

The implementation of MM-HY/WQ 1 will require a drainage plan prepared for the project that shall consider the potential for near-surface groundwater in Segment 2 of the proposed trail. Low Impact Development (LID) and infiltration features shall be designed in consideration of groundwater levels that may rise to within 3-feet of the ground surface.

With the implementation of mitigation measure MM-HY/WQ 1, the proposed project is not anticipated to deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge. This impact is less than significant.

c) Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:

i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. There is no element of the proposed project that will alter the course of Wolf Creek.

The project consists of constructing 1.68 acres of new impervious surface for the proposed trail, and thus triggers the requirement for completion and submittal of a SWPPP (MM-HY/WQ 2). The plan will identify self-treating areas, proposed retaining detention basins, and underground drainage infrastructure that will assist in the collection and treatment of stormwater generated at the site. Where needed, drainage improvements would be installed to capture stormwater and convey it into the existing storm drain systems and channels. These drainage improvements would remain after construction. Minimal alterations to the existing drainage system would result from the proposed project.

Implementation of the SWPPP (MM-HY/WQ 2) and compliance with the County's applicable drainage standards (MM-HY/WQ 3) will ensure that the potential for the project resulting in substantial erosion or siltation, flooding, exceeding the capacity of existing drainage systems, or impeding/redirecting flood flows is less than significant.

ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. No substantial change in either drainage patterns or flooding on-or off-site would occur as a result of the proposed project. Much of the proposed trail would occur on existing roadway rights of way; however, approximately half of the proposed trail would require new impervious surfaces to be constructed. The new impervious surface areas would increase surface runoff, but it would not be substantial enough to result in flooding as a majority of the trail runoff would be discharged to adjacent permeable areas with minimal potential for erosion.

During construction, BMPs identified in the SWPPP (MM-HY/WQ 2) would be implemented so that on-site and off-site erosion and sedimentation would be controlled to the extent practicable. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

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?

Less Than Significant. Please refer to the analysis and discussion in Subsection-i and ii above.

iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?

Less Than Significant. According to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps, most of the proposed project is not within a mapped flood plain. However, there is a portion of Segment 2 of the trail that crosses into Zone AE and Zone X. Zone AE is defined as having a 1% chance of floods occurring in any given year. Zone X is defined as an area with minimal flood hazard. Neither Zone AE nor Zone X are considered to be high flood hazard areas. Since the proposed trail in Segment 2 is only 8-feet wide, and overall exiting grade would not substantially change along the proposed trail alignment in this section, flood waters would not be redirected as a result of the proposed project.

Retaining walls would not be installed in a location or manner that would impede or redirect flood flows. In a few locations where retaining walls are proposed, stormwater runoff would be collected at the base of a retaining wall and conveyed to a suitable discharge location. Evaluation of flood zone areas requires a Flood Zone Development permit in accordance with Chapter 15.52.050 et. Seq. of the City's Development Code.

Therefore, impacts as a result of the proposed project would be less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant. Seiches are caused when earthquake ground motions cause water to oscillate from one side to the other of a closed or partially closed body of water such as a lake, bay or channel. Since no such bodies of water are located in the vicinity of the project site, there is no risk of release of pollutants due to project inundation.

Tsunamis, or seismic tidal waves, are caused by off-shore earthquakes that can trigger large, destructive sea waves. The project site is located approximately 125 miles northeast of the Pacific Ocean. Therefore, no impact would occur as a result of tsunamis or seismic tidal waves.

Hazardous materials, solid waste, or other byproducts will not be stored in the project area and therefore there will be no risk for significant pollutant release as a result of inundation. Therefore, the potential for the proposed project resulting in significant pollution as a result of inundation is less than significant.

e) Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

No Impact. Water quality impacts other than those described in response (a) above are not anticipated with implementation of the proposed project. The proposed project would be required to comply with Nevada County and City of Grass Valley regulations related to stormwater runoff, including implementation of post-construction BMPs as requirements of the SWPPP and therefore there would be no impact.

Mitigation Measures

MM-HY/WQ 1 - The drainage plan prepared for the project shall consider the potential for near-surface groundwater in Segment 2 of the proposed trail. Low Impact Development (LID) and infiltration features shall be designed in consideration of groundwater levels that may rise to within 3 feet of the ground surface.

MM-HY/WQ 2 - Prior to the issuance of a grading permit, the applicant shall submit a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to the City for acceptance, file a Notice of Intent with the California Water Quality Control Board and comply with all provisions of the Clean Water Act. The applicant shall submit the Waste Discharge Identification (WDID) number, issued by the state, to the City of Grass Valley Engineering Division.

MM-HY/WQ 3 - Prior to the issuance of a grading permit, a detailed grading, permanent erosion control and landscaping plan shall be submitted for review and approval by the Engineering Division prior to commencing grading. Erosion control measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plans. Any expenses made by the City to enforce the required erosion control measures will be paid by deposit.

III.11 Land Use Planning

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?				X
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?			X	

SETTING

The proposed Wolf Creek Trail roughly follows the alignment of Wolf Creek through the City of Grass Valley from its southern limits to the northeast corner of town. The proposed project is entirely within public two jurisdictions: City of Grass Valley ROW and Caltrans ROW. The purpose of the project is exclusive to public infrastructure and public ROW is excluded from General Plan and Zoning designations when the purpose of the project is exclusive to public infrastructure.

a) Would the project physically divide an established community?

No Impact. The physical division of an established community typically refers to the construction of a physical feature (such as an interstate highway or railroad tracks) or removal of a mean of access (such as local road or bridge) that would impair the mobility within an existing community, or between a community and outlying areas. The proposed project would provide a new bicycle and pedestrian trail within Caltrans and public ROW. The proposed project would not physically divide an established community, and in fact would provide for better connectivity. No impact will occur.

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

Less Than Significant. The plans, policies, and regulations applicable to the proposed project include the City of Grass Valley General Plan and Municipal Code, and the Nevada County General Plan. The proposed project would be consistent with County of Nevada and City of Grass Valley General Plan land use designation and zoning which allows for recreational and public uses that are compatible with surrounding land uses.

Generally, the proposed project is in direct support of many relevant plans and policies, which contain goals and policies in support of bicycle and pedestrian trails, and specific goals and policies in support of completion of the Wolf Creek Trail. Additional relevant policies relate to the protection of natural resources, water quality, cultural resources, visual resources, air quality, and public safety from natural and human-caused hazards, provision of public services, noise and traffic. Many of the project impacts related to these topics are less than significant or are limited to the short-term construction phase of the project as described in the relevant sections of this document. With implementation of the mitigation measures contained in this document, the proposed project is consistent with all of these policies with all the relevant regulations and policies contained in these documents. This impact would be less than significant.

III.12 Mineral Resources

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				X
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?				X

SETTING

The City of Grass Valley adopted a General Plan Mineral Management Element (MME) on August 24, 1993. The MME contains four resource areas defined as: Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ) - 1 though MRZ - 4. The designations are described as follows:

- MRZ - 1: Areas where adequate information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present.
- MRZ - 2: Areas where adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present or where it is judged that there is a high likelihood for their presence.
- MRZ - 3: Areas containing mineral deposits the significance if which cannot be evaluated from available data.
- MRZ - 4: Areas where available information is inadequate for assignment to any other MRZ zone.

a) *Would the project 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?*

No Impact. The General Plan Mineral Management Element does not show the site as being near an area classified as having significant mineral deposits. The proposed project is not located near one of the two areas identified in the MME as being targeted for mining conservation. Should mining activities be proposed in the area, the MME includes a policy statement that requires a proposed mine project to address potential impacts on the urban uses based upon the nature of the mining activities. According to the MME, the proposed project is not anticipated to result in the

loss of availability of a known mineral resource or locally known minimal resource. No impact will occur.

b) Would the project 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?

No Impact. The proposed project is not located in an area that has been identified by the City of Grass Valley or the County of Nevada as a locally important mineral resource recovery site. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the loss of the availability if any locally important mineral recovery site. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact.

III.13 Noise

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?		X		
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?			X	
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?			X	

SETTING

Noise is generally defined as loud, unpleasant, unexpected, or undesired sound that disrupts or interferes with normal human activities. Although exposure to high noise levels over an extended period has been demonstrated to cause hearing loss, the principal response to noise is annoyance.

Sound intensity is measured in decibels (dB) using a logarithmic scale. For example, a sound level of 0 dB is approximately the threshold of human hearing, while normal speech has a sound level of approximately 60 dB. Sound levels of approximately 120 dB become uncomfortable sounds.

Two composite noise descriptors are in common use today: Ldn and CNEL. The Ldn (Day-Night Average Level) is based upon the average hourly noise level over a 24-hour day, with a +10-decibel weighting applied to nighttime (10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.) noise values. The nighttime penalty is based upon the assumption that people react to nighttime noise exposures as though they were subjectively twice as loud as daytime exposures. The CNEL (Community Noise Equivalent Level), like Ldn, is based upon the weighted average hourly noise over a 24-hour day, except that an additional +4.77 decibel penalty is applied to evening (7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.) hours. The CNEL was developed for the

California Airport Noise Regulations and is normally applied to airport/aircraft noise assessment. The Ldn descriptor is a simplification of the CNEL concept, but the two will usually agree, for a given situation, within Ldn. Like the noise levels, these descriptors are also averaged and tend to disguise short-term variations in the noise environment. Because they presume increased evening or nighttime sensitivity, these descriptors are best applied as criteria for land uses where nighttime noise exposures are critical to the acceptability of the noise environment, such as residential developments.

The primary existing noise source in the project area is vehicular traffic, including cars, trucks, buses, and motorcycles on roadways near or in the project vicinity, especially along SR-20/49. The level of vehicular noise generally varies with traffic volume, the number of trucks or buses, the speed of traffic, and the distance from the roadway. Additional sources of potential noise in and around the project area include the Caltrans yard adjacent to Segment 2, concrete supply business adjacent to Segment 4 along Railroad Ave, other light industrial uses adjacent to Segment 4, 5 and 6, and commercial and residential uses in the vicinity.

a) Would the project result in 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?

Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.

Construction Noise. Construction noise represents a short-term impact on ambient noise levels. The project would involve minimal construction activities which would be temporary and be short duration resulting in periodic increases in the ambient noise environment. Construction activities would primarily require the use of excavators, backhoes, pavers, and paving equipment.

Groundborne noise and other types of construction-related noise impacts typically occur during the initial earthwork phases. Operating cycles for these types of construction equipment may involve one or two minutes of full power operation followed by three to four minutes at lower power settings. Other primary sources of acoustical disturbance would be due to random incidents, which would last less than one minute (such as dropping large pieces of equipment or the hydraulic movement of machinery lifts). It should be noted that as project construction would not use large heavy-duty pieces of construction equipment such as a pile driving, graders, or scrapers, noise levels would be less intense than typical construction projects. Additionally, due to the width of the trail, only one or two small pieces of equipment would be used simultaneously.

Since it is a trail project, equipment would move in a linear fashion as opposed to operating adjacent to any one sensitive receptor for an extended period of time. Segments of the trail are bordered by residential uses; with the nearest approximately 15 feet from of the project site adjacent to Segment 3 along Hansen Way. The majority of residences are 100 feet or more from the project site. In addition, construction activities would occur throughout the project site and would not be concentrated at a single point near sensitive receptors.

Noise levels typically attenuate (or drop off) at a rate of 6 dB per doubling of distance from point sources, such as industrial machinery. During construction, exterior noise levels could affect the

residential neighborhoods near the construction site. Construction activities would be relatively minor and would not produce excessive levels of noise (e.g., replacing construction machinery to be equipped with properly operating noise attenuation devices, designating haul routes away from sensitive receptors, locating staging areas away from receptors) would be required. Construction activities would be limited to daylight hours and equipment would be properly muffled.

III.13.1 Table 4: Equipment used for the project and the dBA for each type of equipment.

Equipment Type	dBA at 50 feet
Backhoe	84dBA
Excavator	81dBA
Generator	81dBA
Jackhammer	89dBA
Paver	77dBA
Pickup Truck	75dBA
Pneumatic Tools	85dBA

In accordance with the City's Municipal Code, construction activities will be temporary in nature and will occur between normal working hours of 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and not at all on Sunday and legal holidays.

Compliance with the applicable Nevada County and City of Grass Valley noise ordinances would ensure that construction noise does not disturb residents during the times they are most likely to be home or during hours when ambient noise levels are likely to be lower (e.g., at night). According to the State's General Plan Guidelines and City General Plan Noise Element, noises which are generally less than ±60 dB CNEL are normally acceptable for outdoor low- density residential uses taking into account that any building impacted would be of normal conventional construction without any special noise insulation requirements. The type of equipment used may intermittently exceed ±60 dB, during the working hours from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. However, based upon the temporary and fluctuating nature of construction noise and the implementation of MM-NOI-1, construction noise impacts would be reduced on adjacent noise-sensitive land uses to a less than significant level.

Operational Noise. The proposed project would not introduce any new uses that would result in an increase of noise levels. The project would enhance pedestrian and bicyclist connectivity and safety. The project would serve existing pedestrians and bicyclists and no uses are proposed that would directly increase vehicular trips in the study area. Additionally, the project has been designed to be a pedestrian-oriented area and does not include any stationary noise sources. The project would include occasional path sweeping and landscape equipment for trail maintenance, however, this would be infrequent and temporary. The path sweeping and landscape equipment would not substantially alter the existing ambient noise levels. Therefore, no long-term noise impacts would result from implementation of the proposed project. Operational noise impacts would be less than significant.

b) Would the project result in generation of excessive ground borne vibration or ground borne noise levels?

Less Than Significant Impact. Project construction can generate varying degrees of groundborne vibrations, depending on the construction procedure and the construction equipment used. Operation of construction equipment generates vibrations that spread through the ground and diminish in amplitude with distance from the source. The effect on buildings located near a construction site often varies depending on soil type, ground strata, and construction characteristics of the receiver buildings. The results from vibration can range from no perceptible effects at the lowest vibration levels, to low rumbling sounds and perceptible vibration at moderate levels, to slight damage at the highest levels. Groundborne vibrations from construction activities rarely reach levels that damage structures.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has published standard vibration velocities for construction equipment operations. In general, the FTA architectural damage criterion for continuous vibrations (i.e., 0.20 inch/second) appears to be conservative. The types of construction vibration impact include human annoyance and building damage. Human annoyance occurs when construction vibration rises significantly above the threshold of human perception for extended periods of time. Building damage can be cosmetic or structural. Typical vibration levels produced by construction equipment is identified in **Table 5.**

III.13.2 Table 5: Typical Vibration Levels for Construction Equipment

Equipment	Approximate peak particle velocity at 25 feet (inches/second)[1]	Approximate peak particle velocity at 100 feet (inches/second)[1]
Loaded trucks	0.076	0.01
Small bulldozer	0.003	0.00
Large bulldozer	0.089	0.01
Jackhammer	0.035	0.00
Vibratory compactor/roller	0.210	0.03

Notes:

1. Peak particle ground velocity measured at 25 feet per Federal Transit Administration, *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual*, September 2018. Table 7-4.
2. Calculated using the following formula:

$PPV_{equip} = PPV_{ref} \times (25/D)^{1.5}$

where:

PPV (equip) = the peak particle velocity in in/sec of the equipment adjusted for the distance
PPV (ref) = the reference vibration level in in/sec from Table 7-4 of the FTA *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual* (2018).
D = the distance from the equipment to the receiver.

Source: Federal Transit Administration, *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual,* September 2018.

Groundborne vibration decreases rapidly with distance. As indicated in Table 3.13.2, based on the FTA data, vibrational velocities from typical heavy construction equipment operations that would be used during project construction range from 0.003 to 0.21 inches per second peak particle velocity (PPV) at approximately 25 feet from the source of activity. The closest sensitive receptors

would be approximately 25 feet away from active construction zones. However, the nearest sensitive receptor structures are approximately 100 feet or more from the project site. Vibration from construction activities experienced at the nearest sensitive residential structures would range between 0.01 and 0.35 inch per second PPV, which is below the 0.20 inch-per- second PPV significance threshold. Therefore, a less than significant impact would occur.

Operational use of the project would not generate vibrational impacts. Use of the sidewalks and trails would not generate groundborne vibration that could be felt at surrounding uses. The proposed project would not involve railroads or substantial heavy truck operations, and therefore would not result in vibration impacts at surrounding uses. Impacts would be less than significant.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact. As the crow files, the northeast extent of the project is located approximately 1.25 miles from the Nevada County Airport. Due to the distance from the Nevada County Airport and smaller nature of the aircraft associated with this airport, the impact of the project to expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels is considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

MM NOI-1: The following multipart measure shall be implemented to reduce construction noise impacts to a less-than-significant level:

- All equipment shall have sound-control devices that are no less effective than those provided on the original equipment. No equipment shall have unmuffled exhaust.
- All equipment shall be properly maintained and operated.
- The contractor shall implement appropriate additional measures to reduce noise when adjacent to receptor locations including but not limited to, changing the location of stationary construction equipment and using temporary noise barriers.
- Within 14 days of starting construction, the contractor shall notify adjacent residents in advance of construction of the work hours and scheduled work.
- The construction contractor's specifications shall stipulate that noise- generating construction activities not be allowed between the hours of 6:00p.m. and 7:00 a.m. daily for City of Grass Valley or at any time on Sunday or a legal holiday except when permitted by the governing Planning Director for an extreme situation.

III.14 Population and Housing

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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)?				X
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X

a) *Would the project induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (e.g., by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (e.g., through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?*

No Impact. The proposed project would not involve the construction of new housing or new businesses. The project consists of the extension of a trail and would not induce substantial unplanned population growth in the area. Therefore, no impact would occur and no mitigation is required.

b) *Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?*

No Impact. The project site does not include any existing housing and no housing would be removed to accommodate the proposed project. Therefore, no impacts would occur and no mitigation is required.

III.15 Public Services

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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:				
i) Fire protection?				X
ii) Police protection?				X
iii) Schools?				X
iv) Parks?				X
v) Other public facilities?				X

SETTING

The proposed project area is within the City of Grass Valley and is served by the following public services:

- *Fire Protection:* The City of Grass Valley Fire Department provides fire protection and emergency medical services within the City. The Ophir Hill Fire Protection District serves lands east of the City limits, and the Nevada County Consolidated Fire District (NCCFD) serves the area generally north, west, and south of the City limits. The Fire Department is part of the tri-agency Joint Operating Agreement that includes the Nevada City Fire Department and NCCFD. The Fire Department has three locations: Fire Station #1 (474 Brighton Street), Fire Station #2 (213 Sierra College Drive), and administrative offices at City Hall (125 East Main Street). Equipment includes three front line engines, one reserve engine, one Office of Emergency Services (OES) engine, a ladder truck, one air support unit, and five staff vehicles.

- *Police Protection:* The City of Grass Valley Police Department currently employs 27 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) sworn members and 3 FTE civilian staff. Based upon Grass Valley's population of 13,041 the department's ratio of police officers per 1,000 residents is 2.1.

- *Schools:* Throughout Grass Valley, the Grass Valley School District serves K-8 students and the Nevada Joint Union School District serves students in grades 9 - 12. In addition, through inter-district contracts (which can be retracted), 467 students from Grass Valley currently attend schools in other school districts.

- *Parks:* The Grass Valley public parks and recreation system is comprised of approximately 108 acres of City park lands, including seven developed parks (Dow Alexander, Elizabeth Daniels, Glenn Jones, Minnie, Memorial, DeVere Mautino, and Condon and one underdeveloped park Morgan Ranch) within the City limits.

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 in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:*

i) Fire Protection?
ii) Police Protection?

No Impact. The project would not hinder the fire departments of the City of Grass Valley, the Ophir Hill Fire Protection District, or the Nevada County Consolidated Fire District (NCCFD) or the police departments of the City of Grass Valley from maintaining acceptable service ratios, levels of effort, response times or other performance objectives given the nature of the project. As identified in the project description, the project would be constructed adjacent to SR-20/49, Hansen Way, Railroad Ave., and Idaho Maryland Rd. However, no roadways would be completely closed during construction. Therefore, no significant impacts would occur during construction or operation of the project. Implementation of the proposed project would not cause an increase in population, and therefore, service ratios for fire and police services would not be affected. Therefore, there would be no impact to fire and police protection services.

i) Schools?
ii) Parks?
iii) Other public facilities?

No Impact. The project does not involve residential development or new employment- generating land uses and would therefore not generate an increase in the City's population. No major additional public services would be required to serve the proposed project. Therefore, no impacts to schools, parks, and other public facilities would occur.

III.16 Recreation

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				X
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?				X

SETTING

The City owns and maintains eight park/-recreation facilities. These include three parks currently classified as "community parks": Condon Park, Mautino Park, and Memorial Park. One of the eight parks, Morgan Ranch, is still undeveloped. In addition, the City contracts with Nevada County Historical Society to operate the North Star Mining Museum. An inventory of City owned/ operated parks and recreation facilities include: Memorial Park, 8.4 acres; Condon Park, 80 acres; North Star Mining Museum, 1.7 acres; Minnie Park, 1.6 acres; Elizabeth Daniels Park, 0.3 acres; Dow Alexander Park, 0.5 acres; Morgan Ranch Park, 4.08 acres; and Mautino Park, 12.5 acres.

Additional park/ recreational facilities within the City of Grass Valley that are owned and maintained by entities other than the City are: Nevada County Country Club, 58 acres; Sierra College Rotary fields, 7.95 acres; Grass Valley Charter School, 3 acres.

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?

No Impact. The project's primary purpose is to help close a gap in the regional bicycle and pedestrian transportation network. The proposed project does not include a residential element that would directly induce a population increase within the County. In addition, the proposed land uses will not be of a type or scale that would create new employment opportunities within the County. Therefore, the project would not increase the use of existing neighborhoods or regional

parks or create a demand for construction of new or expansion of existing recreational facilities. No impacts would occur.

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?

No Impact. The project would not result in the need for construction or expansion of recreational facilities. The proposed project would not materially increase the use of existing neighborhood or regional parks or require the expansion of recreational facilities which may have an adverse effect on the environment. The added recreational opportunities and connectivity to existing recreational uses as a result of the project would be beneficial. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

III.17 Transportation

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?			X	
b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?			X	
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?				X
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?			X	

SETTING

The responses to a) to d) below are informed by a Transportation Analysis and associated Technical Memorandum completed by LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc. (see **Appendix E** for more details).

a) Would the project conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?

Less Than Significant Impact. Implementation of the proposed project would result in the construction of a trail. Short-term construction trips would include the transfer of construction equipment, construction worker trips, and hauling trips for construction materials; however, impacts in this regard would be temporary in nature and would cease upon project completion. Long-term operation of the project would not generate vehicle trips that would adversely affect the circulation system; no impacts would occur. Project components that require reduction in vehicular lanes do not result in reduced capacity or affect transit service. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b)?

Less Than Significant Impact. Implementation of the proposed project would enhance pedestrian and bicyclist safety and increase connectivity and mobility. The project would further promote alternative modes of transportation and reduce vehicle trips. The project is not a land use associated with the generation of traffic and no project components would require reduction of vehicle lanes such that capacity would be affected. Therefore, impacts are less than significant.

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

No Impact. The proposed improvements consist of bicycle and pedestrian facility improvements, retaining walls, and signage. These improvements would provide bicyclists and pedestrians with a safe alternative to using City streets in their current condition.

Portions of the trail would be co-located on the existing roadway, which is utilized by vehicular traffic. Parts of the trail would be shared use with pedestrian and bicycle users and vehicles. However, pedestrians and bicyclists already utilize the roadways, and the project would not introduce a new use or geometry that would substantially increase a hazard.

Overall, the project would introduce safer routes of travel and reduce several roadway hazards and not include any incompatible uses. Therefore, no impact would occur.

d) Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project includes pedestrian and bicyclist improvements and would not impact evacuation routes. No roadways would be completely closed during construction. Therefore, impacts to an emergency response plan would be less than significant.

III.18 Tribal and Cultural Resources

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) 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:		X		
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 5020.1(k)?		X		
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 Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe?		X		

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 5020.1(k)?

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 Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe?

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. Chapter 532 Statutes of 2014 (i.e., Assembly Bill [AB] 52) requires that lead agencies evaluate a project's potential impact on "tribal cultural resources." Such resources include "sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources or included in a local register of historical resources." AB 52 also gives lead agencies the discretion to determine, based on substantial evidence, whether a resource qualifies as a "tribal cultural resource."

In compliance with PRC Section 21080.3.1(b), S2S provided formal notification to California Native American tribal representatives identified by the California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). Native American groups may have knowledge about cultural resources in the area and may have concerns about adverse effects from development on tribal cultural resources as defined in PRC Section 21074. S2S sent letters to tribal representatives on the NAHC contact list on February 10, 2023. The letters informed them about the project and provided them with location maps as well as a description of proposed construction activities. The individuals contacted were as follows:

- Grayson Coney, Cultural Director, Tsi Akim Maidu
- Clyde Prout, Chairperson, Colfax-Todds Valley Consolidated Tribe (Maidu/Miwok)
- Pamela Cubbler, Treasurer, Colfax-Todds Valley Consolidated Tribe (Maidu/Miwok)
- Gene Whitehouse, Chairperson, United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria (Maidu/Miwok)
- Darrel Cruz, Cultural Resources, Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California
- Shelly Covert, Tribal Secretary Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe
- Saxon Thomas, Tribal Council, Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe
- Richard Johnson, Chairman, Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe
- Jesus Tarango, Chairperson, Wilton Rancheria (Miwok)
- Dahlton Brown, Director of Administration, Wilton Rancheria (Miwok)
- Steve Hutchason,, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), Wilton Rancheria (Miwok)

A response was received from the United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria (UAIC). In an email dated March 7, 2023, the UAIC Tribal Historic Preservation Department requested direct contact with the Lead Agency and more specific information on the potential project impact on cultural resources with significance to the tribe. They requested documentation regarding archaeological studies and other associated information for review. S2S shared the Phase I Archaeological Survey Report (**Appendix C**) with the UAIC on March 9, 2023. S2S answered specific questions the UAIC posed about the report and sent additional project maps on March 13, 2023. There was no further communication between the UAIC and S2S or the City at

the time of writing this report, and the 30-day period for responses to the February 10, 2023 NAHC contact list letters had elapsed at the time of writing.

There is the potential for ground disturbing activities associated with the project to inadvertently affect previously unidentified Native American tribal cultural resources. Due to the possibility of unearthing tribal cultural resources which include, but is not limited to, Native American human remains, funerary objects, items or artifacts, sites, features, places, landscapes or objects with cultural values during ground disturbance activities MM TCR-1 through MM TCR-3 have been identified to mitigate this potential impact to archaeological resources. Compliance with the mitigation measures would mitigate potential impacts to tribal cultural resources to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measures

MM-TRC-1: Prior to initiating ground disturbing activities within the project area, construction personnel should be alerted to the possibility of encountering buried prehistoric or historic period cultural remains. Personnel should be advised that upon discovery of buried archaeological deposits, work in the immediate vicinity of the find should cease and a qualified archaeologist should be contacted immediately. Once the find has been identified, plans for the treatment, evaluation, and mitigation of impacts to the find shall be developed if it is found to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources.

MM-TRC-2: Archaeological resources unearthed by project construction activities shall be evaluated by a qualified archaeologist and Native American monitor. If the resources are Native American in origin, the tribe shall coordinate with the jurisdiction regarding treatment of these resources. The treatment plan established for the resources shall be in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(f) for historical resources and PRC Section 21083.2(b) for unique archaeological resources. Preservation in place (i.e., avoidance) shall be the preferred manner of treatment. If preservation in place is not feasible, treatment may include implementation of archaeological data recovery excavations to remove the resource along with subsequent laboratory processing and analysis; provided no data recovery will be permitted to tribal cultural resources without prior consultation and consent of relevant Tribes.

MM-TRC-3: California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5, and PRC Section 5097.98 mandate the process to be followed in the event of an accidental discovery of any human remains in a location other than a dedicated cemetery. California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 requires that in the event that human remains are discovered, disturbance of the site shall be halted until the coroner has investigated the circumstances, manner and cause of death, and the recommendations concerning the treatment and disposition of the human remains have been made to the person responsible for the excavation, or to his or her authorized representative, in the manner provided in PRC Section 5097.98. If the coroner determines that the remains are not subject to his or her authority and if the coroner recognizes or has reason to believe the human remains to be those of a Native American, he or she shall contact, by telephone within 24 hours, the Native American Heritage Commission.

III.19 Utilities and Service Systems

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?			X	
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?				X
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?				X
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?			X	
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?				X

SETTING

The project footprint area, including permanent and temporary impacts, includes 2.07 acres of already developed streets and sidewalks and 2.26 acres forest habitat and landscaped areas (**Figure 3A-3E and Figure 4A-4E**). The developed areas have slopes of no more than 5%. The forested areas have slopes of varying gradients ranging between 5% and 20%. The elevation of the project footprint ranges from approximately 2,366 to 2,533- or 167-feet grade change.

A variety of local and regional purveyors in this area provide and maintain utility and service system facilities associated with electricity, water, stormwater, wastewater, solid water, communications and natural gas. Existing routes of underground gas and water pipelines and underground fiber-optic cables would remain. Utility poles and overhead utility lines that are in conflict with the proposed trail alignment would be relocated in coordination with the affected utility provider prior to construction of the proposed project.

Drainage from and around the project site includes natural swales, ditches, and storm water infrastructure. Historical drainage from the project site likely followed natural topography and flowed toward Wolf Creek where it is daylighted, and towards stormwater infrastructure where Wolf Creek is within an underground culvert. The proposed trail alignment has been designed to conform to existing grade and provide minimal alteration to existing drainage conditions. Where constrained by property lines, easement or change in grade such that a built-up slope would not be feasible, short retaining structures would be built.

Solid waste within the project area is collected by Waste Management, a licensed private disposal company. Solid waste is transported to the company's transfer station located on McCourtney Road.

The City's water system serves approximately, sixty (60%) of the incorporated City of Grass Valley and is located at 808 Alta Vista Avenue. The City's service area is 1,357 acres, approximately 2.1 square miles, with a service area population of 5,855.

a) Would the project require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunication facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?

Less Than Significant Impact. Existing storm drain facilities would be maintained as part of the proposed project. As described above, inlets or other means would be provided, where needed, to convey stormwater into existing storm drainage system and channels with minimal alteration to existing drainage patterns. These drainage improvements would remain after completion of the proposed project. The proposed project would not require or result in the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities that could result in significant environmental effects. This impact would be less than significant.

The implementation of MM-HY/WQ 1 will require a drainage plan prepared for the project that shall consider the potential for near-surface groundwater in Segment 2 of the proposed trail. Low Impact Development (LID) and infiltration features shall be designed in consideration of groundwater levels that may rise to within 3-feet of the ground surface.

The proposed project would not require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities as no potable water and/or toilets would be provided as part of the proposed trail alignment. Therefore, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact.

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

No Impact. See Section 19(a) above.

c) Would the project 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?

No Impact. See Section 19(a) above.

d) Would the project 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. Project construction would generate waste including construction materials, trench spoils, and general refuse, and these wastes would need to be disposed of in local or regional facilities. Waste generated from construction would include: non-hazardous metal waste, non-hazardous non-metal waste (concrete rubble, organic waste [vegetation], boxes and crates, refuse from construction workers), and trenching spoils (rubble, soil, broken asphalt). Non-hazardous metal and non-metal waste would be hauled to local disposal centers for recycling or taken to landfills. Trenching and excavation spoils would be reused to the maximum extent possible. The disposal demand would be reasonable relative to the solid waste disposal capacities of area landfills. The project would not generate additional waste once completed. Impacts related to solid waste disposal would be considered less than significant.

e) Would the project comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

No Impact. The proposed project would comply with all federal, State, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact.

III.20 Wildfire

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				X
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?			X	
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?			X	
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?			X	

SETTING

The Grass Valley region has a generally high potential for wildland fires of devasting intensity. This is due to the presence, particularly in less urban settings, of heavier timber, woodland and brush, the occurrence of steep slopes, dry weather conditions, and human activity. Generally, vegetative areas of over 20% slope are considered as fire hazardous areas. The City limits have a distinct urban/wildland interface area. The greatest threat for wildfire hazards is from those that may originate outside the City in unincorporated Nevada County. Historical data on wildfires in or near Grass Valley is kept on the Firehouse Reporting Data System. Because of the extended urban/wildland interface area, the City has participated in regional efforts to reduce wildfire risks to the City. These efforts include participation in Nevada County's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Fire Safe Council of Nevada County Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Nevada County OES and the Fire Safe Council also maintain historical fire records.

According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps, the project area falls entirely within a Local Responsibility Area. A State responsible "Very High Fire Hazard Safety Zone" is adjacent to the project area to the south of Idaho Maryland Rd. in the 0.25 miles west of Centennial Dr. (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. Very High Severity Fire Hazard Zone (VHFHSZ) in LRA. Available at: https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/divisions/community-wildfire-preparedness-and-mitigation/wildfire-preparedness/fire-hazard-severity-zones. Accessed on March 19, 2023).

The City of Grass Valley prepared an Emergency Preparedness Guide in 2019 aimed at individual citizen preparedness in the event of an emergency, with primary focus on wildland fire. The County of Nevada Office of Emergency Services released a Wildfire Preparedness Plan in 2019 to provide a focal point for both strategic and tactical planning to address local wildfire hazard reduction and preparedness goals.

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

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

No Impact. No element of the proposed project will adversely impact any regional-scale communication systems within the City or County that may be used as part of an emergency response or evacuation plan. The proposed project would not impair emergency response or evacuation plans identified in the City of Grass Valley Emergency Preparedness Guide because it would not affect any service ratios or evacuation routes. Rather, the project would increase multi-modal connectivity, thereby adding a potential benefit for emergency evacuations. Thus, no impact would occur.

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?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project would result in the construction of a trail within the developed public ROW along local streets and roads and would result in similar uses to the existing conditions, as a transportation corridor. The County of Nevada Wildfire Preparedness Plan has several mitigation measures in place to help reduce and address wildland fire risks. In addition, the City of Grass Valley and Nevada County General Plan have incorporated many policies that protect homes and business from fire and wildfire and minimize potential losses of life and property. Through consistency with the goals and policies of these Plans, the proposed project would not exacerbate wildfire risk. Thus, impacts would be less than significant.

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?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project would result in the construction of an additional transportation corridor and would have similar uses to the existing conditions. Underground utilities would remain in place. The small number of distribution utility poles potentially in conflict with the trail would be relocated in coordination with utilities companies (namely PG&E) prior to construction of the project and would be separate from this proposed project. No additional or expanded use of water or wastewater facilities are proposed as part of the proposed project.

The project will not 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 on-going impacts to the environment. All utilities serving the site shall be installed underground in accordance with City of Grass Valley Development Standards. These impacts are considered less than significant.

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?

Less than Significant Impact. As discussed above, there is no evidence in the record to suggest that the proposed project will increase wildfire risks or hazards within the County. In a few locations of the proposed project, new storm drain infrastructure may be installed to convey road and trail runoff to existing or extended culverts. With exception of the storm drain infrastructure mentioned above, stormwater runoff from the proposed project would be conveyed to adjacent permeable non- erodible areas. Therefore, the potential for the project increasing risks to people or structures as a result of increased post-fire runoff, slope instability, or drainage changes is less than significant.

III.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?			X	
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)?			X	
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?			X	

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

Less than Significant Impact. As discussed in Section IV, Biological Resources, of this IS/ Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), implementation of the proposed project is not expected to have the potential to result in adverse effects to special- status plant and wildlife species.

Additionally, while unlikely, the project could result in impacts related to eliminating important examples of California History or Pre-history associated with undiscovered archeological and/ or paleontological resources during project construction. However, this IS/MND includes mitigation measures that would reduce any potential impacts to less than significant levels. With implementation of the mitigation measures outlined in this IS/MND, as well as compliance with General Plan policies these potential impacts are less than significant.

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.)

Less than Significant Impact. The impacts of the proposed project would be individually limited and not cumulatively considerable. The proposed project would be a multi-use trail and associated intersection improvements. All environmental impacts that could occur as a result of the proposed project would be reduced to a less-than-significant level through implementation of the mitigation measures recommended in this IS/MND.

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

Less than Significant Impact. As identified throughout this IS/MND, the project would not have significant air quality, noise, traffic, or hazardous materials impacts that might directly or indirectly harm human beings. Therefore, the proposed project would not cause adverse effects on human beings.

REFERENCES

The following references used in preparing this report have not been attached to this report. The reference material listed below is available for review upon request of the Grass Valley Community Development Department, 125 East Main Street, Grass Valley, CA 95945.

- California Emission Estimator Model (CalEEMod) Version 2020.4.0
- California Department of Transportation. (2023). List of Eligible and Officially Designated State Scenic Highways. Available at https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic- highways. Accessed March 10, 2023.
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife. (2022). California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB).
- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. VHFHSZ in LRA. Available at: https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/media/6730/fhszs_map28.pdf. Accessed on February 13, 2023.
- California Geological Survey - 2010 Fault Activity Map of California
- City of Grass Valley 2020 General Plan
- City of Grass Valley 2020 General Plan Certified Environmental Impact Report (SCH#98082023)
- City of Grass Valley Energy Action Plan
- City of Grass Valley Grading Ordinance
- City of Grass Valley Municipal Code - Chapter 12.36
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), FEMA Flood Map Service Center: Search by Address, 2019
- Federal Highway Administration, 1983
- Fire Safe Council of Nevada County
- Flood Insurance Rate Map for the County of Nevada, Map No. 06057C0633E dated February 3, 2013.
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA)
- Mineral Management Element of the City's General Plan, dated August 24, 1993
- NPDES General Construction Permit) (Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000002) (California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) 2009
- Native American Heritage Commission
- Natural Wetlands Inventory (NWI) and HDD datasets
- Nevada County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan
- Nevada County Energy Action Plan
- Nevada County General Plan
- Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL)
- Nevada County's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Nevada County Office of Emergency Services (OES)
- Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD)
- Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)
- Tuminas, A., 1983. Geologic Map of the Grass Valley - Colfax Area, Nevada and Placer Counties, California
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management, 1980
- USDA on line soil survey maps and data from - http:/ /websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov
- USGS Topographic Quadrangle for Grass Valley