

Sacramento Municipal Utility District Folsom Administrative Operations Building Project

Final Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration •

State Clearinghouse Number 2024070894 •

February 2025

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APPENDICES

- A Folsom Administrative Operations Building Project Draft Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration
- B Supplemental Conceptual Renderings and Tower Design Alternatives
- C Representative Views of the Project Site.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BMP	Best Management Practice
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CVRWQCB	Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
IS/MND	Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
Mph	Miles Per Hour
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NO _x	Nitrogen Oxides
NPDES	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
PM	Particulate Matter
ROG	Reactive Organic Gases
SMAQMD	Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District
SMUD	Sacramento Municipal Utility District
SQIP	Stormwater Quality Improvement Plan
SSBMI	Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians
SSQP	Sacramento Stormwater Quality Plan
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
TAC	Toxic Air Contaminant
UAIC	United Auburn Indian Community
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
VELB	Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle
WEAP	Worker Environmental Awareness Program

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) has been prepared to evaluate the potential physical environmental impacts associated with Sacramento Municipal Utility District's (SMUD) Folsom Administrative Operations Building Project (Project) in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). SMUD is the lead agency responsible for complying with the provisions of CEQA.

Project Description

SMUD is proposing to construct and operate the Folsom Administrative Operations Building Project in the City of Folsom on an approximately 6-acre Project site within the Lake Forest Technical Center. The Project involves the construction of up to an approximately 100,000-square-foot administrative operations building and a 100-foot-tall communications tower. The Project would be constructed in phases: Phase 1 would include a 50,000-square-foot, one-story structure and communications tower; and Phase 2 would include a 50,000-square-foot, two-story connecting structure.

Findings

As lead agency for compliance with CEQA requirements, SMUD finds that the Project would be implemented without causing a significant adverse impact on the environment. Mitigation measures for potential impacts associated with Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Tribal Cultural Resources, and Utilities and Service Systems would be implemented as part of SMUD's Project through adoption of a mitigation monitoring and reporting program.

Cumulative Impacts

CEQA requires lead agencies to assess whether a project's incremental effects are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of other past, present, and foreseeable future projects. Based on the analysis presented in the Draft IS/MND, the Project would not contribute incrementally to considerable environmental changes when considered in combination with other projects in the area. Therefore, the potential cumulative environmental effects of the Project were determined to be less than cumulatively considerable. All identified potentially significant impacts would be mitigated to less than significant.

Growth-Inducing Impacts

SMUD exists as a public agency to supply electrical energy to customers in the Sacramento area. It has an obligation to serve all new development approved by the local agencies and Sacramento County. SMUD does not designate where and what new development may occur.

Determination

On the basis of this evaluation, SMUD concludes:

- The Project does not have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered species, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory.
- The Project would not achieve short-term environmental goals to the disadvantage of long-term environmental goals.
- The Project would not have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable.
- The Project would not have environmental effects that would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly.
- No substantial evidence exists to demonstrate that the Project would have a substantive negative effect on the environment.



Jerry Park
Environmental Management Specialist

February 5, 2025

Date

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Overview

The Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) is proposing the Folsom Administrative Operations Building Project (“Project”) to construct and operate an up to an approximately 100,000-square-foot administrative operations building and a 100-foot-high communications tower on a six-acre parcel in southwest Folsom. The Project would be located in an area surrounded by the existing industrial and business park uses to the north of State Route 50, west of Folsom Boulevard, and to the east of Lake Natoma. The Project would be developed in two phases: Phase 1 would include a 50,000-square-foot, one-story structure and communications tower; and Phase 2 would include a 50,000-square-foot, two-story connecting structure.

1.2 Environmental Process Summary

1.2.1 Review of the Draft IS/MND

Copies of the Draft IS/MND were made available in hard copy form for public review at SMUD offices (Customer Service Center and East Campus Operations Center), posted on SMUD’s public website, and distributed to the State Clearinghouse via the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research. A notice of intent was distributed to property owners and occupants of record within 1,000 feet of the Project alignment. The 30-day public review period began on July 23, 2024, and ended on August 22, 2024. SMUD held a public meeting on August 8, 2024. Two comment letters were received during the comment period. The comment letters and SMUD’s written responses are presented in Section 2.0 of this document. After the close of the public comment period, SMUD received additional comment letters, including one submitted the day of SMUD’s Energy Resources and Customer Services Committee and Special Board meeting on the IS/MND on October 15, 2024, and the day before SMUD’s scheduled Board of Directors public hearing on the IS/MND on October 17, 2024. Both of these comment letters were submitted to SMUD as comments to an agendized item via PublicComment@smud.org. Those comment letters are also included in Section 2.0 along with SMUD’s written responses to those comments. As noted in Section 2.0, the conclusions presented in the Draft IS/MND were not altered in response to comments received.

1.2.2 Preparation of the Final IS/MND

The comment letters were reviewed, and responses were prepared (see Section 2.0). Based on the comments received, no new environmental effects were identified. The Final IS/MND incorporates minor changes to the Project description, including clarification that the Project will not result in the creation of access from the Project site to the American River bike trail and the use of a monopole design, with artificial pine tree branches for the communications tower. These changes do not affect the conclusions

of the Initial Study checklist responses in the Draft IS/MND (provided as Appendix A of this Final IS/MND).

CEQA Guidelines

CEQA Guidelines Section 15073.5 provides the conditions for determining if recirculation of a negative declaration is required before adoption. Section 15073.5(a) states:

A lead agency is required to recirculate a negative declaration when the document must be substantially revised after public notice of its availability has previously been given pursuant to Section 15072, but prior to adoption.

According to Section 15073.5(b), a substantial revision is defined as:

- (1.) A new, avoidable significant effect is identified, and mitigation measures or project revisions must be added in order to reduce the effect to insignificance, or
- (2.) The lead agency determines that the proposed mitigation measures or project revisions will not reduce potential effects to less than significance and new measures or revisions must be required.

SMUD has determined that none of the aforementioned conditions were satisfied following public notice; therefore, recirculation of the Draft IS/MND is not required. SMUD, as the lead agency, may proceed to present the Final IS/MND to the SMUD Board for action.

Circumstances under which recirculation is not required include:

- (1.) Mitigation measures are replaced with equal or more effective measures pursuant to Section 15074.1.
- (2.) New project revisions are added in response to written or verbal comments on the project's effects identified in the proposed negative declaration which are not new avoidable significant effects.
- (3.) Measures or conditions of project approval are added after circulation of the negative declaration which are not required by CEQA, which do not create new significant environmental effects and are not necessary to mitigate an avoidable significant effect.
- (4.) New information is added to the negative declaration which merely clarifies, amplifies, or makes insignificant modifications to the negative declaration. (Section 15073.5[c])

No changes to the checklist in the Draft IS/MND is required; therefore, recirculation of the Draft IS/MND is not required.

1.3 Mitigation Measures

This section presents the mitigation measures SMUD would implement to address potential impacts on Air Quality (as addressed in 3.2 of the Draft IS/MND), Biological Resources (as addressed in 3.4 of the Draft IS/MND), Cultural Resources (as addressed in 3.5 of the Draft IS/MND), Tribal Cultural Resources (as addressed in 3.18 of the Draft IS/MND), and Utilities and Service Systems (as addressed in 3.19 of the Draft IS/MND). These measures reflect text revisions as documented in the Final IS/MND.

1.3.1 Air Quality

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

As discussed in Section 3.3, “Air Quality” of the Draft IS/MND, the Project’s projected maximum construction and operational emissions do not exceed SMAQMD’s daily or annual construction emission standards. However, SMAQMD predicates the particulate matter standard on adherence to their *Basic Construction Emission Control Practices and Best Management Practices*. Without the application of the SMAQMD’s BMPs, this impact would be potentially significant.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.3-1 would reduce Project construction emissions and ensure that Project related emissions of NO_x, ROG, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5} would not exceed SMAQMD thresholds during construction activities. The Project would implement SMAQMD BMPs to reduce fugitive dust emissions to the extent feasible. With implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.3-1, this impact would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measure 3.3-1. Implement SMAQMD Emissions Controls and BMPs.

SMUD or the authorized contractor will adhere to the SMAQMD basic construction emissions control practices, including, but not limited to the measures listed below, and additional measures designed to limit diesel particulate matter:

- *Water all exposed surfaces two times daily. Exposed surfaces include, but are not limited to soil piles, graded areas, unpaved parking areas, staging areas, and access roads;*
- *Cover or maintain at least two feet of free board space on haul trucks transporting soil, sand, or other loose material on the site. Any haul trucks that would be traveling along freeways or major roadways should be covered;*
- *Use wet power vacuum street sweepers to remove any visible track-out mud or dirt onto adjacent public roads at least once a day. Use of dry power sweeping is prohibited;*
- *Limit vehicle speeds on unpaved roads to 15 miles per hour (mph);*

- *All roadways, driveways, sidewalks, parking lots to be paved should be completed as soon as possible. In addition, building pads should be laid as soon as possible after grading unless seeding or soil binders are used;*
- *Minimize idling time either by shutting equipment off when not in use or reducing the time of idling to 5 minutes [California Code of Regulations, Title 13, sections 2449(d)(3) and 2485]. Provide clear signage that posts this requirement for workers at the entrances to the site;¹*
- *Provide current certificate(s) of compliance for CARB's In-Use Off-Road Diesel-Fueled Fleets Regulation [California Code of Regulations, Title 13, sections 2449 and 2449.1];² and*
- *Maintain all construction equipment in proper working condition according to manufacturer's specifications. The equipment must be checked by a certified mechanic and determined to be running in proper condition before it is operated.*

Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations

As discussed in Section 3.3, "Air Quality" of the Draft IS/MND, uncontrolled emissions of fugitive dust may also contribute to potential increases in nuisance impacts to nearby receptors. Construction generated fugitive dust, generally associated with PM₁₀, would be limited by implementation of SMAQMD construction BMPs.

In regard to toxic air contaminant (TAC) emissions, total PM₁₀ emissions from both construction and operation would be well below the SMAQMD significance thresholds for criteria pollutant assessment. The Project would not involve emissions at levels consistent with intensive or long-lasting construction activities nor expose threshold amounts during operation of the facility.

These localized, short-term emissions would be reduced with the implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.3-1, which requires adherence to all applicable SMAQMD construction emissions control practices. With implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.3-1, this impact would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measure 3.3-1. Implement SMAQMD Emissions Controls and BMPs.

1.3.2 Biological Resources

Have a substantial Adverse effect on special-status species

¹ This BMP for idling specifically applies to diesel-powered equipment. Non-diesel vehicles are not required to limit idling time.

² This BMP specifically applies to diesel-powered equipment.

As described in Section 3.4, “Biological Resources” of the Draft IS/MND, three special-status species have low potential to occur in the Project site, including monarch butterfly, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, and Swainson’s hawk and one species, northwestern pond turtle has a moderate potential to occur. The Project could have a potentially significant impact to these species.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.4-1 would reduce impacts to special-status species and sensitive habitats through avoidance and compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Statewide construction general permit for stormwater runoff which would subject the Project to comply with state and federal water quality regulations and require development of a stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP). In addition, Mitigation Measure 3.4-1 provides for preconstruction surveys and avoidance actions, the implementation of which would avoid adverse impacts to special-status species that could be affected by Project construction. With implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.4-1, the potential impacts to special-status plant species would be reduced to a **less-than-significant** level.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-1: Impacts to Special-Status Species, Sensitive Habitats, and Aquatic Resources:

The following actions shall be undertaken to reduce impacts to special-status species:

- 1. A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) shall be developed prior to the ground disturbing activities. The SWPPP shall identify specific best management practices (BMPs) which shall be implemented during construction to prevent discharges of sediment, oil, turbid water, and/or other potential toxic or hazardous substances to surface waters. The BMPs shall be installed and maintained so that they demonstrate effectiveness.*
- 2. All areas of earth disturbance remaining after project implementation shall be stabilized and revegetated with a native seed mix.*
- 3. Avoided trees shall be protected during construction activities. Specifically, work shall not be conducted within dripline of native oak trees to prevent vehicles from damaging the roots.*
- 4. Removal of any native oak trees shall adhere to the replacement ratios required by the Sacramento County Tree Ordinance.*
- 5. All work equipment shall be washed at an offsite location.*
- 6. All fueling and maintenance of vehicles and equipment shall occur a minimum of 100 feet from aquatic resources and away from the dripline of native oak trees.*
- 7. All vehicles and equipment shall be inspected for leaks prior to use.*
- 8. Prior to construction, but not more than 14 days before grading, demolition or site preparation activities, a qualified biologist shall conduct a pre-construction survey to determine the presence of western pond turtles on or adjacent to the Project site. A temporary non-climbable fencing (or other solid fencing/barrier) shall be installed along*

the Project boundary adjacent to Lake Natoma as to exclude turtles from the active construction zone. If turtles are found within the construction zone, they shall be moved out of harm's way to appropriate areas by a qualified biologist as approved by CDFW and/or USFWS.

- 9. No elderberry shrubs (potential habitat for VELB) were observed within the Biological Study Area during the survey conducted on February 15, 2024. If more than two years have passed since the site visit, additional surveys for the elderberry shrubs shall be conducted by a qualified biologist prior to the start of work. If present, the USFWS shall be consulted to determine appropriate avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures.*
- 10. Pre-construction surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist during the appropriate bloom time to determine if milkweed (host plant for the monarch butterfly) is present. If present, CDFW shall be consulted to determine appropriate avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures.*
- 11. To avoid impacts to common and special-status migratory birds pursuant to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and CDFW Codes, a nesting survey shall be conducted prior to construction activities if the work is scheduled between February 1 and August 31. The pre-construction nesting bird surveys will identify on-site bird species. If no nesting birds are found in or within 660 feet of the Project alignment during the pre-construction clearance surveys, construction activities may proceed as scheduled.*

If pre-nesting behavior is observed, but an active nest has not yet been established (e.g., courtship displays, but no eggs in a constructed nest), a nesting bird deterrence and removal program will be implemented. Such deterrence methods include removal of previous year's nesting materials and removal of partially completed nests in progress. Once a nest is situated and identified with eggs or young, it is considered to be "active" and the nest cannot be removed until the young have fledged.

If an active nest is found in or within 500 feet of the Project alignment during construction, a "No Construction" buffer zone will be established around the active nest (usually a minimum radius of 50 feet for passerine birds and 500 feet for raptors) to minimize the potential for disturbance of the nesting activity. The Project biologist/biological monitor will determine and flag the appropriate buffer size required, based on the species, specific situation, tolerances of the species, and the nest location. Project activities will resume in the buffer area when the Project biologist/biological monitor has determined that the nest(s) is (are) no longer active or the biologist has determined that with implementation of an appropriate buffer, work activities would not disturb the birds nesting behavior.

If special-status bird species are found nesting in or within 500 feet of the Project site, SMUD's Environmental Services shall notify CDFW or USFWS, as appropriate, within 24

hours of first nesting observation shall be consulted to determine appropriate avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures.

1.3.3 Cultural Resources

Adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource

As described in Section 3.5, “Cultural Resources” of the Draft IS/MND, no pre-contact archaeological resources were identified within the Project site and the archaeological sensitivity assessment determined a relatively low potential to uncover buried archaeological resources in the Project site. While unlikely, there remains the possibility that archaeological resources could be found during ground disturbing activities associated with construction of the Project.

Potential significant impacts to previously undiscovered archaeological resources would be avoided through implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.5-1, which would implement worker training as well as procedures to be implemented in the event of inadvertent discovery of Cultural Resources. With implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.5-1, this impact would be reduced to **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measure 3.5-1: Worker Environmental Awareness and Cultural Respect Training and Procedures for Inadvertent Discovery of Cultural Resources

Prior to excavation or other subsurface disturbance activities, individuals conducting the work will be required to participate in Worker Environmental Awareness and Cultural Respect Training. Workers will be advised to watch for cultural resource materials. If workers observe any evidence of pre-contact cultural resources (freshwater shells, beads, bone tool remnants or an assortment of bones, soil changes including subsurface ash lens or soil darker “midden” in color than surrounding soil, lithic materials such as flakes, tools or grinding rocks, etc.), or historic cultural resources (adobe foundations or walls, structures and remains with square nails, refuse deposits or bottle dumps, often associated with wells or old privies), all ground-disturbing activity within 100 feet of the discovery must immediately cease and a qualified archaeologist must be consulted to assess the significance of the cultural materials. SMUD will be notified of the potential find and a qualified archeologist shall be retained to investigate its significance. If the qualified archaeologist determines the archaeological material to be Native American in nature, Mitigation Measure 3.18-1 shall be implemented. If the find is determined to be significant by the archaeologist (i.e., because it is determined to constitute a unique archaeological resource), the archaeologist shall work with SMUD to develop and implement appropriate procedures to protect the integrity of the resource and ensure that no additional resources are affected. Procedures could include but would not necessarily be limited to preservation in place, archival research, subsurface testing, or contiguous block unit excavation and data recovery.

Disturbance of any human remains

As described in Section 3.5, “Cultural Resources” of the Draft IS/MND, there are no known past cemeteries or burials on the Project site or immediate area. While unlikely, because earthmoving activities associated with Project construction would occur, there is potential to encounter buried human remains or unknown cemeteries in areas with little or no previous disturbance.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.5-2 would reduce potential impacts related to human remains to a **less-than-significant** level through the implementation of procedures to be implemented if human remains are discovered during construction.

Mitigation Measure 3.5-2: Procedures for Discovery of Human Remains

If human remains are discovered, all work within a 100 feet of the find must immediately cease, and the local coroner must be contacted. Procedures for the discovery of human remains will be followed in accordance with provisions of the State Health and Safety Code, Sections 7052 and 7050.5 and the State Public Resources Code Sections 5097.9 to 5097.99. If the Coroner determines that the remains are those of Native American origin, the Coroner shall contact the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) and subsequent procedures shall be followed, according to State Public Resources Code Sections 5097.9 to 5097.99, regarding notification of the Native American Most Likely Descendant. Following the coroner’s and NAHC’s findings, SMUD and the NAHC-designated Most Likely Descendant shall determine the ultimate treatment and disposition of the remains and take appropriate steps to ensure that additional human interments are not disturbed.

1.3.4 Tribal Cultural Resources

Substantial adverse change in the significance of a Tribal cultural resource

As described in Section 3.18, “Tribal Cultural Resources,” the identification of Tribal cultural resources for this Project by United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC) and the Lone Band of Miwok Indians included a review of pertinent literature and historic maps, and a records search using Tribal historic records and information databases. The UAIC reviewed the proposed Project site within their database – UAIC requested the standard mitigation measure for inadvertent discoveries to be included for this Project.

Consultation with UAIC, Wilton Rancheria and Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians (SSBMI) revealed no known Tribal cultural resources on the Project site as defined in PRC Section 21074; however, the area is potentially sensitive for unknown Tribal cultural resources. Therefore, it is possible that yet-undiscovered Tribal cultural resources could be encountered or damaged during ground-disturbing construction activities.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.18-1, 3.18-2, 3.18-3, and 3.5-2 would reduce impacts to Tribal cultural resources to a **less than significant** level.

Mitigation Measure 3.18-1: Worker Environmental Awareness and Cultural Respect Training and Procedures for Discovery of Potential Tribal Cultural Resources

All construction personnel must receive Tribal Cultural Resources Sensitivity and Awareness Training (Worker Environmental Awareness Program [WEAP]), including field consultants and construction workers. The WEAP shall be developed in coordination with interested Native American Tribes.

The WEAP shall be conducted before any project-related construction activities begin at the Project site. The WEAP will include relevant information regarding sensitive cultural resources and Tribal cultural resources, including applicable regulations, protocols for avoidance, and consequences of violating State laws and regulations. The WEAP will also describe appropriate avoidance and impact minimization measures for cultural resources and Tribal cultural resources that could be located at the Project site and will outline what to do and who to contact if any potential cultural resources or Tribal cultural resources are encountered. The WEAP will emphasize the requirement for confidentiality and culturally appropriate treatment of any discovery of significance to Native Americans and will discuss appropriate behaviors and responsive actions, consistent with Native American Tribal values. The training may be done in coordination with the Project archaeologist.

All ground-disturbing equipment operators shall be required to receive the training and sign a form that acknowledges receipt of the training.

During excavation or other substantial subsurface disturbance activities, all construction personnel must follow procedures and the direction of archeologists and Tribal monitors if any cultural resource materials are observed.

Mitigation Measure 3.18-2: Spot Check Monitoring for Tribal Cultural Resources

SMUD shall invite representatives of UAIC to periodically inspect the active areas of the Project, including any soil piles, trenches, or other disturbed areas. UAIC shall be notified at least 48 hours prior to start of construction.

Mitigation Measure 3.18-3: Unanticipated Discovery of Tribal Cultural Resources

If any suspected TCRs are discovered by any person on site during ground disturbing construction activities all work shall cease within 100 feet of the find, or an agreed upon distance based on the project area and nature of the find. A Tribal Representative from the consulting Tribe or a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with a geographic area shall be immediately notified and shall determine if the find is a TCR (PRC §21074). The Tribal Representative will make recommendations for further evaluation and treatment as necessary.

Preservation in place is the preferred option for mitigation of TCRs under CEQA and Tribal protocols, and every effort shall be made to preserve the resources in place, including through

project redesign. If adverse impacts to TCRs, unique archeology, or other cultural resources occurs, then consultation with Tribes regarding mitigation contained in the Public Resources Code §21084.3(a) and (b) and CEQA Guidelines §15370 should occur, in order to coordinate for compensation for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

Culturally appropriate treatment may be, but is not limited to, processing materials for reburial, minimizing handling of cultural objects, leaving objects in place within the landscape, or returning objects to a location within the project area where they will not be subject to future impacts. Permanent curation of TCRs and cultural belongings will not take place unless approved in writing by the consulting Tribe.

Treatment that preserves or restores the cultural character and integrity of a TCR may include paid Tribal Monitoring, culturally appropriate recovery of cultural objects, and reburial of cultural objects or cultural soil. These recommendations will be documented in the project record. For any recommendations made by traditionally and culturally affiliated Native American Tribes that are not implemented, a justification for why the recommendation was not followed will be provided in the project record.

SMUD shall preserve TCR's in place, avoid, or minimize impacts to the resource, including, but not limited to, facilitating the appropriate Tribal treatment of the find, as necessary. Treatment that preserves or restores the cultural character and integrity of a TCR may include Tribal Monitoring, culturally appropriate recovery of cultural objects, and reburial of cultural objects and belongings or cultural soil.

Work at the discovery location cannot resume until all necessary investigation and evaluation of the discovery under the requirements of CEQA, including AB52, have been satisfied.

Mitigation Measure 3.5-2: Procedures for Discovery of Human Remains (Described in Section 3.5, Cultural Resources)

1.3.5 Utilities and Service Systems

Result in significant environmental effects from the relocation or construction of new or expanded utility infrastructure

As described in Section 3.19, "Utilities and Service Systems" the Project would require relocation of the existing drainage infrastructure within the Project site. The relocation of drainage facilities would be required to place all accesses within existing public right of way, as required by the City of Folsom's Environmental & Water Resources Department. The potential environmental effects of onsite construction, including the installation of water and sewer lines and construction of the proposed drainage easement and associated facilities are identified throughout this document and, where necessary, mitigation measures are provided to reduce them to less than significant levels. These include Mitigation Measure 3.3-1, which requires adherence to all applicable SMAQMD construction emissions control practices; Mitigation Measure 3.4-1, which requires various measures to avoid impacts to

special-status species and habitats; Mitigation Measures 3.5-1 and 3.5-2, which provide procedures to avoid impacts to cultural resources and human remains; and, Mitigation Measures 3.18-1 through 3.18-3, which provide procedures to avoid impacts to tribal cultural resources. The mitigation measures listed above would reduce this impact to a **less than significant** level by requiring implementation of various measures during construction activities to avoid or minimize adverse effects to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, and tribal cultural resources. With implementation of these measures, this impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure 3.3-1. Implement SMAQMD Emissions Controls and BMPs.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-1. Impacts to Special-Status Species, Sensitive Habitats, and Aquatic Resources.

Mitigation Measure 3.5-1. Worker Environmental Awareness and Cultural Respect Training and Procedures for Inadvertent Discovery of Cultural Resources.

Mitigation Measure 3.5-2. Procedures for Discovery of Human Remains.

Mitigation Measure 3.18-1. Worker Environmental Awareness and Cultural Respect Training and Procedures for Discovery of Potential Tribal Cultural Resources.

Mitigation Measure 3.18-2. Spot Check Monitoring for Tribal Cultural Resources.

Mitigation Measure 3.18-3. Unanticipated Discovery of Tribal Cultural Resources.

1.4 CEQA Determination

SMUD has determined that although the Project could have a significant effect on the environment, a significant effect would not occur with implementation of the aforementioned mitigation measures because the proposed mitigation measures would reduce the effects of any impacts to below the established thresholds of significance. Therefore, SMUD published the proposed MND and supporting IS on July 23, 2024, and SMUD's Board of Directors will consider adoption of the MND at a Board meeting on February 20, 2025.

2.0 COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

2.1 Introduction

The Draft IS/MND for the Project was circulated for a 30-day public review period (July 23, 2024 to August 22, 2024). During the public comment period, SMUD received two agency comment letters, one from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB) and one from the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD).

After the close of the public comment period, SMUD received a comment email from Laurette Laurant, as well as additional “form” comment letters, including one submitted the day of SMUD’s Energy Resources and Customer Services Committee and Special Board meeting on the IS/MND on October 15, 2024, and the day before SMUD’s scheduled Board of Directors public hearing on the IS/MND on October 17, 2024. The form comment letters are included in Table 2-1 as Letter Numbers 3 through 15.

TABLE 2-1 LIST OF COMMENTERS

Letter Number	Name
1	Peter G. Minkel, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board August 22, 2024
2	Roberto Ramirez, Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District August 21, 2024
3	Laurette Laurent August 31, 2024
4	Mark Falzone, Scenic America October 15, 2024
5	Jim Michaels, California State Parks, Gold Fields District October 16, 2024
6	Beth Kelly October 10, 2024
7	Debbie Cederdahl October 9, 2024
8	Fred Kindel October 11, 2024
9	JoAnne Obata October 10, 2024
10	Joelle Fondale October 10, 2024
11	Keith McRonald

	October 10, 2024
12	LeAnn Nienow, October 9, 2024
13	Warren Truitt, Save the American River Association (SARA) October 14, 2024
14	William Dunn October 9, 2024
15	Tammie Lopez October 11, 2024

2.2 Responses to Comments

The comment letters identified in Table 2-1 and SMUD's responses to comments are provided on the following pages.

**Letter 1**

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

22 August 2024

Jerry Park
Sacramento Municipal Utility District
6201 S Street
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jerry.park@smud.org

COMMENTS TO REQUEST FOR REVIEW FOR THE MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION, FOLSOM ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS BUILDING PROJECT, SCH#2024070894, SACRAMENTO COUNTY

Pursuant to the State Clearinghouse's 24 July 2024 request, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) has reviewed the *Request for Review for the Mitigated Negative Declaration* for the Folsom Administrative Operations Building Project, located in Sacramento County.

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Our agency is delegated with the responsibility of protecting the quality of surface and groundwaters of the state; therefore our comments will address concerns surrounding those issues.

I. Regulatory Setting

Basin Plan

The Central Valley Water Board is required to formulate and adopt Basin Plans for all areas within the Central Valley region under Section 13240 of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. Each Basin Plan must contain water quality objectives to ensure the reasonable protection of beneficial uses, as well as a program of implementation for achieving water quality objectives with the Basin Plans. Federal regulations require each state to adopt water quality standards to protect the public health or welfare, enhance the quality of water and serve the purposes of the Clean Water Act. In California, the beneficial uses, water quality objectives, and the Antidegradation Policy are the State's water quality standards. Water quality standards are also contained in the National Toxics Rule, 40 CFR Section 131.36, and the California Toxics Rule, 40 CFR Section 131.38.

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The Basin Plan is subject to modification as necessary, considering applicable laws, policies, technologies, water quality conditions and priorities. The original Basin Plans were adopted in 1975, and have been updated and revised periodically as required, using Basin Plan amendments. Once the Central Valley Water Board has adopted a Basin Plan amendment in noticed public hearings, it must be approved by

MARK BRADFORD, CHAIR | PATRICK PULUPA, ESQ., EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), Office of Administrative Law (OAL) and in some cases, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Basin Plan amendments only become effective after they have been approved by the OAL and in some cases, the USEPA. Every three (3) years, a review of the Basin Plan is completed that assesses the appropriateness of existing standards and evaluates and prioritizes Basin Planning issues. For more information on the *Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins*, please visit our website:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/basin_plans/

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Antidegradation Considerations

All wastewater discharges must comply with the Antidegradation Policy (State Water Board Resolution 68-16) and the Antidegradation Implementation Policy contained in the Basin Plan. The Antidegradation Implementation Policy is available on page 74 at:
https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/basin_plans/sacsjr_2018_05.pdf

In part it states:

Any discharge of waste to high quality waters must apply best practicable treatment or control not only to prevent a condition of pollution or nuisance from occurring, but also to maintain the highest water quality possible consistent with the maximum benefit to the people of the State.

This information must be presented as an analysis of the impacts and potential impacts of the discharge on water quality, as measured by background concentrations and applicable water quality objectives.

The antidegradation analysis is a mandatory element in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System and land discharge Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) permitting processes. The environmental review document should evaluate potential impacts to both surface and groundwater quality.

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II. Permitting Requirements

Construction Storm Water General Permit

Dischargers whose project disturb one or more acres of soil or where projects disturb less than one acre but are part of a larger common plan of development that in total disturbs one or more acres, are required to obtain coverage under the General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (Construction General Permit), Construction General Permit Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ. Construction activity subject to this permit includes clearing, grading, grubbing, disturbances to the ground, such as stockpiling, or excavation, but does not include regular maintenance activities performed to restore the original line, grade, or capacity of the facility. The Construction General Permit requires the development and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). For more information on the Construction General Permit, visit the State Water Resources Control Board website at:

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http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/constpermits.shtml

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Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit

If the project will involve the discharge of dredged or fill material in navigable waters or wetlands, a permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act may be needed from the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). If a Section 404 permit is required by the USACE, the Central Valley Water Board will review the permit application to ensure that discharge will not violate water quality standards. If the project requires surface water drainage realignment, the applicant is advised to contact the Department of Fish and Game for information on Streambed Alteration Permit requirements. If you have any questions regarding the Clean Water Act Section 404 permits, please contact the Regulatory Division of the Sacramento District of USACE at (916) 557-5250.

Clean Water Act Section 401 Permit – Water Quality Certification

If an USACE permit (e.g., Non-Reporting Nationwide Permit, Nationwide Permit, Letter of Permission, Individual Permit, Regional General Permit, Programmatic General Permit), or any other federal permit (e.g., Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act or Section 9 from the United States Coast Guard), is required for this project due to the disturbance of waters of the United States (such as streams and wetlands), then a Water Quality Certification must be obtained from the Central Valley Water Board prior to initiation of project activities. There are no waivers for 401 Water Quality Certifications. For more information on the Water Quality Certification, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/water_quality/certification/

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Waste Discharge Requirements – Discharges to Waters of the State

If USACE determines that only non-jurisdictional waters of the State (i.e., “non-federal” waters of the State) are present in the proposed project area, the proposed project may require a Waste Discharge Requirement (WDR) permit to be issued by Central Valley Water Board. Under the California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, discharges to all waters of the State, including all wetlands and other waters of the State including, but not limited to, isolated wetlands, are subject to State regulation. For more information on the Waste Discharges to Surface Water NPDES Program and WDR processes, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/waste_to_surface_water/

Projects involving excavation or fill activities impacting less than 0.2 acre or 400 linear feet of non-jurisdictional waters of the state and projects involving dredging activities impacting less than 50 cubic yards of non-jurisdictional waters of the state may be eligible for coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board Water Quality Order No. 2004-0004-DWQ (General Order 2004-0004). For more information on the General Order 2004-0004, visit the State Water Resources Control Board website at:

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https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/water_quality/2004/wqo/wqo2004-0004.pdf

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Dewatering Permit

If the proposed project includes construction or groundwater dewatering to be discharged to land, the proponent may apply for coverage under State Water Board General Water Quality Order (Low Threat General Order) 2003-0003 or the Central Valley Water Board's Waiver of Report of Waste Discharge and Waste Discharge Requirements (Low Threat Waiver) R5-2018-0085. Small temporary construction dewatering projects are projects that discharge groundwater to land from excavation activities or dewatering of underground utility vaults. Dischargers seeking coverage under the General Order or Waiver must file a Notice of Intent with the Central Valley Water Board prior to beginning discharge.

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For more information regarding the Low Threat General Order and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/water_quality/2003/wqo/wqo2003-0003.pdf

For more information regarding the Low Threat Waiver and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/adopted_orders/waivers/r5-2018-0085.pdf

Limited Threat General NPDES Permit

If the proposed project includes construction dewatering and it is necessary to discharge the groundwater to waters of the United States, the proposed project will require coverage under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Dewatering discharges are typically considered a low or limited threat to water quality and may be covered under the General Order for *Limited Threat Discharges to Surface Water* (Limited Threat General Order). A complete Notice of Intent must be submitted to the Central Valley Water Board to obtain coverage under the Limited Threat General Order. For more information regarding the Limited Threat General Order and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:

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https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/adopted_orders/general_orders/r5-2016-0076-01.pdf

NPDES Permit

If the proposed project discharges waste that could affect the quality of surface waters of the State, other than into a community sewer system, the proposed project will require coverage under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. A complete Report of Waste Discharge must be submitted with the Central Valley Water Board to obtain a NPDES Permit. For more information regarding the NPDES Permit and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at: <https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/help/permit/>

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If you have questions regarding these comments, please contact me at (916) 464-4684
or Peter.Minkel2@waterboards.ca.gov.



Peter G. Minkel
Engineering Geologist

cc: State Clearinghouse unit, Governor's Office of Planning and Research,
Sacramento

Letter 1**Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board**

Peter G. Minkel

August 22, 2024

- 1-1 The comment provides introductory remarks to the comment letter. This comment does not raise environmental issues or concerns regarding the adequacy, accuracy, or completeness of the environmental document. The comment is noted and will be provided to the SMUD Board for review during Project consideration of the Project for approval. No further response is necessary.
- 1-2 The comment provides information related to the Basin Plan. This comment does not raise environmental issues or concerns. No further response can be provided.
- 1-3 The comment provides an overview of the Antidegradation Policy (State Water Board Resolution 68-16). Impacts on surface and groundwater quality are addressed in Section 3.10, "Hydrology and Water Quality," in the Draft IS/MND. No changes to the document are necessary.
- 1-4 The comment identifies general permitting requirements, related to the State Water Resources Control Board's Construction General Plan Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ. As discussed in Section 3.10, "Hydrology and Water Quality," the City of Folsom has a Phase I National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit and is part of the Sacramento Stormwater Quality Partnership (SSQP). The City of Folsom is regulated by Order No. R5-2002-0206 NPDES No. CAS082597, "Waste Discharge Requirements for County of Sacramento and the Cities Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, Folsom, Galt and Sacramento Storm Water Discharges From Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems Sacramento County" issued by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB). The discharge of sediment and pollutants into stormwater runoff could adversely affect the water quality in the Project area. However, the SWRCB adopted statewide general NPDES permits for stormwater discharge associated with construction and operation that requires implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to protect water quality.

The Project would be required to implement all applicable goals, policies, and BMPs set forth by the above programs. BMPs to be implemented during Project construction would likely include, but are not limited to, installation of storm drain inlet protection, stabilization of construction exits, and proper maintenance of material stockpiles. BMPs to be implemented during Project operation would include the diversion of stormwater through water quality swales and routine inspection and maintenance of onsite BMPs.

The Project's compliance with the requirements of the CVRWQCB, the SQIP, and the City of Folsom's Stormwater Quality Program would ensure that neither construction nor operation of the Project results in degradation of downstream water quality or an increase in erosion. The

Project would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality. No changes to the document are required in response to this comment.

- 1-5 The comment provides an overview of permit requirements associated with Clean Water Act Section 404, Clean Water Action Section 401, and waste discharge requirements under the California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. As currently designed, there would be no proposed project components or any other associated ground disturbance within state or federally protected aquatic resources. For these reasons, there would be no direct effects to state or federally protected aquatic resources. No changes to the document are necessary.
- 1-6 The comment provides an overview of dewatering permit requirements under the Central Valley Flood Protection Board. Potential impacts related to dewatering are on page 74, in Section 3.10, “Hydrology and Water Quality” of the Draft IS/MND. As discussed there, the Project would adhere to the City’s water quality and watershed protection measures mandated by the Phase I NPDES Permit and implemented through the Sacramento County Stormwater Quality Improvement Plan (SQIP). Dewatering plans would be subject to approval from Sacramento County’s Department of Environmental Management and/or SWRCB. Additionally, as discussed on page 76 in the Draft IS/MND, SMUD would comply with existing stormwater regulations, including the County’s Stormwater Ordinance (Sacramento County Code Chapter 15.12), the City’s Stormwater Management and Control Code, and the NPDES Regional MS4 Permit, which would necessitate the implementation and maintenance of on-site BMPs to control potential erosion and siltation and prevent discharges off-site. As the Project would involve the disturbance of more than one acre (in total), SMUD is subject to and will comply with NPDES Statewide construction general permit for stormwater runoff (Order WQ-2022-0057-DWQ and NPDES No. CAS000002 [Construction General Permit]), which would require preparation and implementation of a formal SWPPP. Additionally, SMUD will comply with the County of Sacramento Improvement Standards and Floodplain Management Ordinance, which ensures that the Project would not substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that causes flooding or that exceeds stormwater system capacity. Compliance with these requirements and regulations would reduce potential adverse impacts to water quality, including those associated with dewatering, to a less-than-significant level. No changes to the document are required.
- 1-7 The comment provides a summary of the requirements under the Limited Threat General Order, which is applicable to projects that include construction dewatering and discharge to waters of the United States. As discussed above, under response to comment 1-6, the Project would be implemented consistent with regulations that reduce potential impacts from construction dewatering. No changes to the document are required.
- 1-8 The comment identifies general permitting requirements related to NPDES permit requirements. As discussed above, under response to comment 1-6, the Project would be implemented

consistent with regulations that reduce potential impacts to groundwater from construction dewatering. No changes to the document are required.

February 2025

From: [Roberto Ramirez](#)
To: [Jerry Park](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] No Comment - Draft ISMND for the Folsom Administrative Operations Building Project
Date: Wednesday, August 21, 2024 1:06:55 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

Letter 2

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of SMUD. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello Jerry,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to review the Draft ISMND for the Folsom Administrative Operations Building Project. We have no comments at this time.

2-1

Thank you,

Roberto Ramirez

Air Quality Planner/Analyst

ISA Certified Arborist #WE-14276A

Transportation & Climate Change

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X [@AQMD](#)

SACRAMENTO METROPOLITAN


AIR QUALITY
MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Letter 2**Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board**

Peter G. Minkel

August 22, 2024

2-1 The comment acknowledges that SMUD has provided the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) with the opportunity to review the Draft IS/MND, for which SMAQMD has no comment at this time. No further response is necessary.

February 2025

From: [Li Laurent](#)
To: [Ramesh Iyengar](#)
Cc: [Jerry Park](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Cortesi list site Folsom apn (APN) 069-0240-031-0000
Date: Saturday, August 31, 2024 12:09:42 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)

Letter 3

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of SMUD. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To: Ramesh Iyengar, Jerry Park
From: Laurette Laurent
August 31, 2024

Re: SMUD ISMND

Thank you for the link. I have done a preliminary Draft Research Report, reviewing every page of Document. Note it is not yet filed with CEQA SCH #.

As thorough and readable as this document is, for me, it is NOT complete. When NO Licensed CA Civil Engineer Seals/Signs a formal Submission, there are bound to be issues. This is due to this being basically a "one party" state which has shown less and less Concern for Civil Engineers as Law Enforcement officials.

When Folsom dumped all the 3 prisons and all existing Raw Sewage into the American River, and the "leader" ordered all Sewer Division workers sent home, raw sewage flowed into the river near the SMUD site, for about four entire days/nights. Folsom never filed with OES. Subsequent to this early 2000s major SSO event, and all the other SSO events and irregularities perpetrated by city "leadership", Sacramento Bee covered the city like raw sewage on land and federal waters did. It was my Private Enforcement Lawsuit and all my own research, Plus the Testimony of the deposed [but still under long-term Contract] Folsom City Engineer Bob Blaser. Direct retaliation meant I also did Video tapes of both top experts [City Engineer and Sewer Manager] during their depositions. Being of a scientific background, as well as judicial position, I have kept all records and track every move Folsom has made. It is a yeoman's job. Since we moved to Folsom, 61 innocent humans have died on Folsom city property -- mostly its totally Substandard "city streets."

There are a few Introductory observations for your consideration, but this is just a superficial/brief contextual introduction for you. FYI, City Engineer Bob Blaser was "set aside" about mid-Contract, and city leader proceeded to use his elected position to "help out" his friend and client AKT, the major vacant land owner in Sac Valley.

I have five past "Folsom Sanitary Sewer System Hydraulic Capacity Reports" as evidence. 2017/2018 Waterworks Engineering Report is the most devastating and convincing hard Certified Evidence this city is a "known" and "direct threat" to federal American River waters and watershed forests. I have worked with Sacramento Sewer Design Engineer Steve Norris, who gave me the full set of Blueprints for Sac Sewers "FE3 Connector" pipe which is Sac Sewer's [Folsom East 3 collection pipe.] I have full blueprints for "Lake Natoma Shores Subdivision" which about the American River assets. Bob Blaser mentored me and expanded my engineering knowledge to sanitary sewer systems hydraulic capacity, NPDES Permits/enforcement, and delegation by NEPA to State of California to do proper

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enforcement. RWQCB Regional Water Quality Control Board Area 5, staff, are still very familiar with my full responsibility for winning NPDES Permit Folsom SSS Conveyance Pipes, imposition of the minimum fine of about \$1 Million on Folsom, and Oversight & control by RWQCB Enforcing Engineers, of NPDES Permit inspections and enforcement actions. Folsom was in total violation at the time a top state official ordered Waterboards to "transfer" Folsom to the "self-enforcing" "general permit." Hence the missing sections of Folsom Blvd. 27" "main or largest collector system" is still INCOMPLETE. It is incomplete and totally missing at the most critical point: the LOWEST POINT in city: the American River itself. This is perfectly illustrated by Waterworks Report in clear RED LINE SSS Pipes MAPS beginning Page 125 et seq. Like all four preceding SSS Hydraulic Reports, this one formally documents Folsom's lack of an Independent City Engineer. They do not document that a leader/lawyer had that Title/Duties/long term Contract -- secretly erased from city's "online-only" City Charter and Municipal Code. Folsom Blvd. Bridge was not built where it was planned for decades; Lake Natoma Shores was built upon the old dredge rock piles which were leveled, and were previously "unbuildable" in Sacramento County.

This is the condensed version of Context, but all the evidence exists and continues to mount. Folsom is a city in deep, deep financial woes, mainly because the Not-built and Not expanded Infrastructure needs are huge and pressing. For me, the worst part of all this "scoff law" behavior by Folsom "leaders" is that 61 innocent people have died on city property. The latest was a suicide by a woman who left her car right on pavement of "Folsom Lake Crossing", and jumped off the high point. If she thought she'd land in American River, she landed 50 to 60' below on the rocks. This was told me by USBR person who responded.

My motivation is increasing Respect for Laws and Enforcement, especially by Licensed and Independent Civil Engineers. Currently there are other battles where city made jammed up messes of substandard 19th century city lanes -- and called them streets --- "arterial" streets of only 9 foot wide lanes in heavily trafficked places such as ancient Sutter St. More than once have I been involved with stopping wrong-doing, by mostly working with Federal agencies and their staff. My 2nd career, after land use & environmental expertise, was degree in Electronics and position in 4 states as Outside Sales Engineer for high-tech, high reliability precious metal components and miniature plastic injection molding capabilities. Sometimes it seems I speak Engineering better than English. That is my background in a nutshell.

At this point in time, it is important you know INCORRECT information was supplied and included in the ISMND CEQA -intended filing. When Folsom removed Waterworks SSS Hydraulic Capacity Report from Online Access, it was downloaded and circulated widely to downstream/impacted beneficial users of American River Water Supplies and Watershed recreators exposed to e-coli. But it was USBR staff who supported me at Hearings, because they worked in American River "Lake Natoma" at same time Folsom and 3 prisons raw sewage was being used as a Folsom Raw Sewage Conveyance substitute for adequate SSS Pipes --- for almost a week.

How would you like to proceed? I have read the entire Draft ISMND report you supplied. There is Direct Refutation of statements about Folsom's Infrastructure being "adequate." There is another state-level agency which is being concurrently informed their Compliance with FRA Fed Railroad Administration laws/rules is totally lacking. They filed 3 CEQA Filings which have a hugely deleterious impact on everyone using, living near Folsom Blvd. RED LINE SSS conveyance pipes, and the Direct Threats to American River assets at a lower

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elevation than Parkshore and Folsom Blvd. area. Folsom choosing the "highest point" of the local Folsom Blvd. sewage shed, to install a mere 18" diameter pipeline, was a ruse to avoid addressing the more expensive LOWEST section, which is American River itself. As for the massive removal of JPA Heritage Protected Historic Oak Grove along Folsom Blvd., it is a clear deception that city council could "delist" unilaterally the entire grove to "double track" at the R.G.Holderness/Glenn Sac RT Station.

For your information, the place where RT operates is the ONLY place along the Folsom Blvd. low sections, and at the station, where the MISSING/OMITTED-willfully but Essential elements of the SSS can be installed. Said Elements are a 2nd Pump Station at American River north bank, and Larger than 5", 6", and small section of 15" pipe exist. There is absolutely NO 27" pipeline from the Pump Station at the American River south bank --- all the way down to South of Intersection of Bidwell St. with Folsom Blvd. Where the city used Sac RT Federal Rail Grant monies, to purchase land where the SSS 27" pipe & pump station have NO OTHER possible location, it is a simple finding.

Folsom Blvd. SSS conveyance pipes have been backed up since at least year 2000, from the Bidwell inverted manhole issue, all the way along Folsom Blvd., OVER the American River bridge with a mere 18" diameter pipe attached to bridge, and northward all the way to old Oak Avenue/Lew Howard Park.

Proof of this is Folsom has not had ability to produce "Flow Monitoring Data" for this entire RED LINE section, for decades. Failure is accurately predicted by 5 Licensed Engineering studies. Waterworks is the finest, in that it considers the known consequences for 3 County Arterial traffic when Folsom Blvd. must be shut down to install "balloons" in the pipes. After that last-ditch effort, the entirety of Folsom will become a construction zone for the pipe and Pump Station which were deliberately not built. Removing a law-enforcing Independent City Engineer was directly responsible for omission of critical infrastructure.

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FYI, Folsom is not in compliance with state law mandating Housing equality. A CEQA filed document for city plan contains a Response from a Sacramento Sewer Civil Engineer. He notes the problems NOT ONLY with city-admitted Folsom Blvd. sewage issues, but also the city's refusal to note the SSS pipes at East Folsom are "at capacity." There is only South of Hwy 50 left with land for inclusionary housing, but few people are aware ALL the S50 raw sewage is PUMPED up into the North of Hwy 50 piping. All of this raw sewage and prisons raw sewage, and planned hospitals raw sewage, is going to be concentrated along side American River.

Back in the days of SSS Report 3, I gave "Folsom Mystery Sewage Tours" to State civil engineers, and separately, to USBR federal civil engineers and Folsom Dam Operating staff. I also kept 11 years of videos on "Folsom Way" at <https://www.youtube.com/@4sewerdogs/videos>

I recall clearly the days of S. David Freeman as General Manager. Times have changed. Unfortunately city of Folsom infrastructure is still identical in most places, to the 1954 infrastructure.

My Research reports have gone to State agencies, to Sac RT Board of Directors, Waterboards [RWQCB and SWRCB], and most importantly in my view, to Federal authorities who have the ultimate opinion, and a Duty to protect American River assets as they opt to enforce laws. Reports are out there, even last week to Governor's OPR Staff. They responded to me "CEQA is self-enforcing." I replied with hard evidence OPR and CEQA

staff DO HAVE options and rights to address something as serious as all Downstream users being fed, yet again, Folsom city and 3 state prisons, RAW SEWAGE.

Coming from a law enforcement family, and being very distressed by each of the 61 deaths on Folsom property since living here, I am committed to stopping the Death Count.

As for this issue, it would appear SMUD, as a State Agency, has NO Alternatives but to Launch SMUD Investigations which are based upon the certified, Signed/Sealed Civil Engineer Reports in my possession.

Certainly the obvious statements by SMUD's consultant about dismissing all concerns about SMUD having any issue or any impact on Folsom SSS Hydraulic Capacity, need Further investigation.

<https://www.folsom.ca.us/home/showpublisheddocument/786/637467522258230000>

Waterworks not only did a spectacular 5th Hydraulic Capacity report, but there is another MANDATORY report due from city now.

FYI, Waterworks produced a BID SET for the Folsom Blvd. small pipe project near this exact area where SMUD owns land. Folsom was asked formally via PRA for the Parkshore area SSS pipe "enhancement project." Folsom civil engineers did NOT produce a City Engineer or any engineer approval. PRA Response from Marcus Yasutake referred me to the BID SET done by Waterworks. Folsom Blvd. has been two lanes only for well over a year.

Intersection of Folsom Blvd. and Blue Ravine was actually shut down due to some "underground utility problem." This happens when a city grows like a mushroom with NO civil engineer in charge since 1990s. For further information, Sac RT is occupying NOT only the only place for the required SSS Pump Station and large 2nd conveyance pipe, but Sac RT has made a mockery of Folsom's EOP Emergency Operations Plan. Sac RT has been advised their operations violate FRA rules, and if they do not RESOLVE the Seven Way Intersection, complaints will ensue to protect human lives at RR Crossings.

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Seven way intersection consists of

Oakdale St. North only of Natoma St.

Oakdale St [private & substandard] South only of Natoma St.

Mormon St. East Only of Folsom Blvd FB,

Mormon St. West only of Folsom Blvd.

Forrest St. SE only of FB

Forrest St. West only of FB

Natoma St. [only route EW to Folsom 3 prisons, but only 2 lane not-arterial size street]

and

7, Sac RT non-compliant RR Crossing

which totally obstructs EOP Access to "Folsom Village" a mobile home residence community with houses a mere <30 feet from Sac RT RR commuter train cars. EOP acknowledges Village being nearly adjacent to FB, but NOT having emergency or First Responder Access which is EQUAL to what law demands.

Welcome to the Folsom Way, as it is called by Journalists.

Since Jerry Parks referred this to a CA Licensed Engineer, it is hoped SMUD will consider that ANY raw sewage you add, will encounter a RED LINE Folsom SSS conveyance pipe. Please remember, even when Waterworks did this ONLY North of Hwy Folsom existing city, this is the nexus, at the American River, of a stinking dereliction practice of long standing. It did make a mayor's buddy and land operations lawyer, more able to sell vacant land within city limits, and later annexed S50 vacant land. Now the S50 sewage is pumped up into this

same FB sewage shed. It is not a "sewer shed" because Folsom has and is probably right now using American River as part of its SS System. We have reported spills of Folsom Corporation Yard diesel &/or gasoline fuels into river, and Waterboards did nothing. Hopefully SMUD will realize most of city residents are NOT EQUALLY SERVED; and NOT Equally Protected. But then, one thing, Folsom gets ALL its drinking water Above stream of RED LINE sewer conveyances.

Please let me know if you wish any of the Communications sent to Public Agencies -- which makes them Public Records. This includes Cong. Kiley, Sac RT Board members, CA Natural Resources, USBR- CA State Parks as the US Managing Partner of Folsom area federal assets, CPUC when I was referred by a not-helpful Sac RT Counsel Sanchez Ochoa [in re her claim RT was not responsible for RR Crossings within Folsom city. She claimed RT was only "regulated by CPUC" which is NOT CORRECT.]

Also convinced Univ. of CA Regents that their large parcel in Folsom S50 could not support the UCDMC huge commercial and medical, hotel, offices, they announced would start construction 2023.

Outreach has included Advocacy groups, Save the American River Assn., for example.

I attempted to reach JPA authorities about Destruction of FB History Grove Protections, and also Bird/wildlife advocates. Folsom city council vice mayor claimed the city had a legal right to "Declassify" each protected JPA Tree, so I contacted CA Nat Resources and CA State Parks who just did a full inventory of the entire area. SP is Managing Partner and CA State Parks is registered Owner of land parcel near this area, further north on west side of Folsom Blvd.

Other Research into Sacramento County Property Records has indicated a Pattern of Folsom False Filings, so this was referred for criminal investigations. Why were so many FB area parcels declared by Folsom, to have their Entire Tax obligation "EXEMPT" from County taxes?

It's the "Folsom Way."

Clearly SMUD will not File any CEQA Document which is contradicted in Public Records by many CA Lic. Civil Engineers, including a Sac Sewer Engineer, and the North of 50 only Waterworks Engineering Roseville, three Lic. Engineers.

As Bob Blaser, last City Engineer always closed, "questions are always welcome."

Plus, I have access to copies of all the evidence cited/used and mentioned herein to SMUD. Laurette Laurent, dubbed by many front page stories of Sacramento Bee as the Folsom Sewage Watchdog.

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cont.

Submitted with hope SMUD will care about those of us treated unequally, having lives put at high risk, loving the American River without all that raw sewage, and most of all, stopping Folsom city property Death Count at 61.

Willing to utilize ten years/degree in land use, and even electronics degree/2nd career, and experience working with Engineers doing Federal Govt parts, projects, etc.

Laurette Laurent

Letter 3**Laurette Laurent**August 31, 2024

3-1 Page 112 of the IS/MND describes the City's wastewater system. The City of Folsom operates its sewer system pursuant to SWRCB General Order 2006-0003-EXEC (Statewide General Waste Discharge Requirements (GWDR) for Sanitary Sewer Systems) as modified by 2008-0002-EXEC. The City's 2019 Sewer System Management Plan sets forth its plan to operate its sewer system in conformity with the General Order. Supporting documents are available here: <https://www.folsom.ca.us/government/environmental-water-resources/wastewater-sewer/sewer-system-management-plan-ssmp>. The Sewer Plan addresses, among other things, the required elements under the General Order, including design, operation and maintenance, controls, overflow response, capacity assurance, audits, and inspections for the City's sewer system. The City's plan, in short, provides a comprehensive plan for managing wastewater within the City's boundaries in conformity with the GWDR.

The comment letter provides no tangible evidence to demonstrate that the City's Sewer Plan, as implemented, would fail to properly manage the wastewater from the Project. In the absence of contrary evidence, it is presumed that a City will effectuate the regular performance of its official duty. *City of Sacramento v. State Water Resources Control Bd.* (1992) 2 Cal. App. 4th 960, 975. The same presumption applies to the SWRCB in its management and oversight of municipal plans, such as the City's, operating under the GWDR for Sanitary Sewer Systems.



October 15, 2024

Sacramento Municipal Utility District
Board of Directors and Energy Resources and Customer Services Committee
6301 S Street
Sacramento, CA 95817

To the SMUD Board of Directors and ERCS Committee Members:

I am writing to you as the president of Scenic America, the nation's only 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated solely to the promotion, preservation, and protection of America's scenic beauty. In our over forty years of operation, we have been on the forefront of advocacy and education for many issues that directly affect the beauty and character of our communities. We have built a reputation as an organization that can quickly and effectively organize and activate a motivated group of supporters for or against issues of importance.

Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) staff are recommending that on October 15th the SMUD Energy Resources and Customer Services (ERCS) Committee consider, and that on October 17th the SMUD Board of Directors adopt, the September 2024 Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the Sacramento Municipal Utility District Folsom Administrative Operations Building Project (Project). For reasons outlined in this letter, Scenic America respectfully requests that the SMUD Board of Directors decline to adopt the IS/MND and direct staff to provide further study of the Project's aesthetic/visual impacts prior to SMUD's reconsideration of adoption or certification of an environmental document for the Project for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Of primary concern to Scenic America is the aesthetic/visual impact of the proposed 100-foot-tall tower within the immediate view of the public using lands surrounding Lake Natoma and much of the water surface of Lake Natoma. Lake Natoma provides a unique and important regional resource with important and well-documented biological, cultural, recreational, and scenic resources. Scenic America recognizes SMUD's vital role as an electric utility service provider in the Sacramento region and encourages SMUD to receive and consider these comments in the interest of ensuring that SMUD continues its exemplary service while expanding its offices and equipment in a manner that minimizes environmental impacts within one of the region's most environmentally important and visually sensitive areas.

4-1

SMUD proposes to construct and operate an approximately 100,000-square-foot administrative office building and a 100-foot-tall communications tower on a vacant six-acre parcel located at 102 Woodmere Road in the City of Folsom. Site improvements would include parking, lighting, landscaping, security features, driveway access, utilities, and street frontage improvements. The Project site is on a parcel within the Lake Forest Technical Center and located immediately adjacent to open space lands and Lake Natoma within the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area (FLSRA) managed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks).

As discussed herein, SMUD's IS/MND provides an insufficient description of the Project, presents visual simulations that fail to meaningfully demonstrate the visibility of the tower from sensitive viewpoints, and fails to consider and disclose the full range of sensitive view locations and viewers within the Lake Natoma area. Notably, SMUD's proposed tower would be visible from up to approximately 160 acres of the Lake Natoma surface which is a primary feature of the Lake Natoma-unit of the Folsom Lake SRA and is used by thousands of people each year who enjoy the unique and peaceful setting of Lake Natoma and its surrounding landscape; yet SMUD's IS/MND provides no analysis of the impact of the tower to views from the surface of Lake Natoma.

Attachment A to this letter provides a selection of exhibits prepared to support and demonstrate our argument. Figure A-1 illustrates the approximately 160-acre surface area portion of Lake Natoma from which we estimate there would be a direct view of the upper portion of the proposed tower. Figure A-2 provides a location index and explanation of sightline profile cross-sections prepared to demonstrate the portion of the tower anticipated to be visible within the line of sight from various view locations around and on Lake Natoma.

Please consider the concerns discussed below and ensure a more comprehensive and complete assessment of the Project's visual impacts is performed prior to adoption of an environmental document for the Project.

1. SMUD's Project Description Lacks Information Sufficient to Support Impact Analysis and Conclusions in the IS/MND

CEQA Courts have held that, "[a]n accurate and complete project description is necessary for an intelligent evaluation of the potential environmental impacts of the agency's action. Only through an accurate view of the project may affected outsiders and public decision-makers balance the proposal's benefit against its environmental cost, consider mitigation measures, assess the advantage of terminating the proposal...and weigh other alternatives in the balance." (*Save Our Capitol! v. Department of General Services* (2023), Cal.App.5th, citing others).

The Project description of SMUD's IS/MND provides the following in describing SMUD's proposed communications tower, "[t]he Project would include a communications tower approximately 100 feet in height, located at the northeast corner of the Project site" (Draft IS/MND, pg. 10) and the

4-2

4-3

IS/MND includes a Figure 4, "Conceptual Site Design," that shows the proposed (or at least conceptual) location of the tower.

The IS/MND Project description does not describe the design of the tower (e.g., mono-pole, free-standing lattice, guyed lattice), does not describe or present the proposed tower color, does not describe or present the proposed types of communication equipment that would be placed on the tower (e.g., dishes, antennae, conduit), and does not discuss whether the tower would include or require lighting. Without an understanding of these basic design components, it is not possible for the public and decision-makers to fully understand and assess the visibility and degree of visual impact that the tower would have from offsite view locations.

4-3 cont.

Although one of SMUD's three photo simulations in the IS/MND (Figure 3.1-2, Key Observation Point 1 [KOP 1]) represent what appears to be a free-standing, steel lattice tower, the IS/MND does not describe that this is the actual tower design that is proposed and does not provide other detail about the design. Additionally, the KOP 1 simulation includes an antenna that appears to extend approximately 10 feet above the top of the steel lattice tower. However, the IS/MND provides no discussion of whether SMUD proposes that the top of such antenna would be limited to a maximum height of 100 feet or if SMUD intends that antennae would be allowed to extend even farther above the height of the 100-foot tower. Without a sufficient description of the proposed tower, it is impossible to fully understand and evaluate the visual impacts of the tower. SMUD's IS/MND must be revised to provide sufficient detail for a meaningful evaluation of the proposed tower.

4-4

The Project description of SMUD's IS/MND provides the following in describing SMUD's proposed landscaping, "[l]andscape strips with perimeter trees would be located in the landscaped areas along the northwest and east sides of the project site, within the perimeter fence" (Draft IS/MND pg. 10) and the IS/MND identifies interior and exterior landscape strips on Figure 4, "Conceptual Site Design." However, the IS/MND does not include a landscaping plan and does not identify the types of plants/trees that would be used for landscaping. Yet, the visual simulations and impact analysis presented in the IS/MND rely on the presence of trees along the Project site perimeter to conclude that landscaping would mitigate the visual impact of SMUD's proposed building and tower, stating, "views of the buildings and communications tower from the west of the Project site would be mostly obscured by screening trees."

4-5

Further, IS/MND Figure 3.1-3 presents a simulated view toward the Project site which includes simulated trees, one of which appears to be gratuitously positioned to block what would otherwise be a view of SMUD's proposed tower. Yet, neither the IS/MND Project description nor the visual impact analysis provide any discussion of the types of trees, their height, their degree of maturity in the simulation, or even if such a tree species exists that could be used for perimeter landscaping and achieve the screening necessary to mitigate the visual impact.

4-6

The absence of even a conceptual landscaping plan that identifies plant and tree types that would achieve the optimistic screening presented in the analysis renders SMUD's Project description incomplete and insufficient for presenting a meaningful understanding of the Project and its visual impacts. Furthermore, the reliance on landscaping to avoid significant visual impacts (from one particular view location) without a sufficient landscaping plan and landscaping performance standards is deferred mitigation and impermissible under CEQA.

4-6 cont.

For an adequate CEQA document, SMUD must revise and expand the level of Project design detail and performance standards/commitments in the IS/MND Project description.

2. The IS/MND Analysis of Effects on Scenic Vistas is Insufficient

Section 3.1, "Aesthetics," of the IS/MNM (Draft IS/MND pp. 21-29) discusses that, [e]levated views of Lake Natoma and the American River Parkway from surrounding bluffs provide remarkable scenery and are considered a scenic vista." To assess the magnitude of the Project impact on views from scenic vistas, the analysis appears to rely solely on a single "key observation point" (KOP 3) and a photographic simulation toward the Project site from KOP 3. The analysis concludes that "due to distance and intervening vegetation, the proposed development would be nearly indistinguishable from surrounding development when viewed from the western shore of Lake Natoma. The Project would blend with the surrounding existing business development and would not have a substantial adverse effect on this scenic vista." (Draft IS/MND pp. 21-22)

4-7

As shown on IS/MND Figure 3.1-1, KOP 3 is located adjacent to a residential development to the northwest of the Project site. Though not identified in the IS/MND, KOP 3 is approximately 2,400 feet from the Project site. The IS/MND conclusion that the Project would blend with the surrounding development is flawed. Although the visual simulation downplays the visibility of the tower (a zoom into the simulated view shows the tower merely as a few grey pixels), at a distance of 2,400 feet, the Project's tower would be readily apparent in the view and would present a new, unnatural/cultural component to the viewshed. The human eye can easily and clearly see a 100-foot tower from a distance of 2,400 feet, regardless of whether that same clarity is presented in a photographic simulation.

Additionally, by selecting a view location at an elevation above much of the lands surrounding Lake Natoma and all of the water surface of Lake Natoma, this viewpoint is not representative of the many scenic vistas and other areas surrounding Lake Natoma. Looking down toward the Project site and technology center as from KOP 3, development in the technology center is visible. However, from the multitude of other locations and areas from which the tower would be visible, the more natural setting of Lake Natoma is dominant and the proposed tower would represent a conflicting element and significant adverse visual effect. To demonstrate, Figure A-4 in Attachment A of this letter is a GoogleEarth streetview image from a viewpoint along the bike trail in line with the KOP 3 sightline toward the Project (see Figure A-3 for sightline cross-section profile). The

4-8

Figure A-4 viewpoint is a lower elevation than KOP 3 and along a bike trail that has much higher use than the KOP 3 viewpoint. Figure A-4 includes a 100-foot-tall three-dimensional block illustration situation at the proposed tower location. The 3D block is "clamped to the ground" to accurately demonstrate the height of the tower as seen from the Figure A-4 viewpoint along the bike trail. As shown, in Figures A-3 and A-4, the tower would extend above the view horizon, as opposed to blending with adjacent development in the technology center as represented in the KOP 3 simulation of the IS/MND.

To sufficiently evaluate the Project impact to views from scenic vistas, SMUD must first inventory and identify scenic vistas from which the Project would be visible. Lands within the Folsom Lake SRA to the west of Lake Natoma contain a multitude of view locations that have panoramic views of Lake Natoma and its surrounding undeveloped lands and which the tower would be visible. The IS/MND's focus on just one location without establishing a methodology or rationale for how that location was selected and how it might be considered representative of the multitude of other scenic vistas around the lake render the impact analysis cursory and insufficient as substantial evidence to conclude that the Project would not have a significant effect on scenic vistas.

3. The IS/MND Analysis of the Project Impacts to the Quality of Public Views of the Site and Surrounding Areas is Insufficient

CEQA requires that the analysis of a project's impacts include enough detail to enable those who did not participate in the preparation of the environmental document to understand and to consider meaningfully the impacts of the Project. Under the CEQA Guidelines, an environmental document "should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decisionmakers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences." (CEQA Guidelines, section 15151.) The IS/MND assessment of whether the Project would substantially degrade the existing visual character of public views of the site and its surroundings fails to meet this standard.

First, the analysis identifies three "key observation points (KOPs)" that "were selected for focused evaluation of the Project's potential effects on public views." The IS/MND provides no discussion of how the KOPs were selected and the IS/MND provides no discussion for why the three KOPs are sufficient for an adequate analysis. The IS/MND discusses that the KOPs "provide a range of public viewpoints located within the visually sensitive American River Parkway," yet, only two (KOP 2 and KOP 3) of the three KOPs are within the American River Parkway and the two KOPs are insufficient to adequately present and assess visual impacts from the multitude of locations and viewers within the lands surrounding Lake Natoma and the surface waters of Lake Natoma.

The IS/MND discusses that, "KOP 2 represents short-range views of cyclists and other recreationists using the Jedediah Smith Memorial Trail/American River Bike Trail immediately west of the Project site." While KOP 2 is a viewpoint "immediately west of the Project site" that is the

4-8 cont.

4-9

only viewpoint for which KOP 2 is representative and renders the evaluation and conclusion regarding impacts to views from KOP 2 similarly limited to that specific point. The viewpoint and simulation is not representative of many other bike trail, dirt trail, and shoreline areas within the lands surrounding Lake Natoma. Furthermore, the KOP 2 impact analysis in the IS/MND is premised on a gratuitously placed landscape tree, the presence of which is not ensured through any mechanism presented in the IS/MND Project description or any mitigation measure identified in the IS/MND. At best, the visual impact to the view from KOP 2 might be mitigated were SMUD to identify and commit to planting a tree of sufficient height and opacity to actually screen views of the tower; but no such mitigation is provided. Worse, one need only step a few feet to the left from the KOP 2 viewpoint, and the Project tower would be predominantly visible to the left of the simulated tree. At a minimum, to make KOP 2 useful in disclosing the Project's impacts, SMUD's analysis needs to present a visual simulation from KOP 2 that provides the actual appearance of the proposed tower without obscuring it with a speculative landscape tree.

4-9 cont.

Furthermore, the IS/MND analysis of KOP 2 attempts to downplay the visual impact by suggesting that other buildings, fencing, and utilities are present along this segment of bike trail and are "relatively consistent with the presence of a communications tower." Scenic America disputes this notion. While such features are present, they are not characteristically similar to a massive 100-foot-tall communication tower. Additionally, although acknowledging these existing features, nowhere in the IS/MND is there analysis or discussion of the cumulative visual impact associated with the Project tower in consideration of these existing buildings, fences, and utilities.

The IS/MND discusses that "KOP 3 represents mid-range views of the eastern shore of Lake Natoma from Arden Bluff which sits at a higher elevation than the Project site on the west side of Lake Natoma... at a trailhead that connects the Arden Bluff neighborhood...with the...American River Bike Trail." While KOP 3 is representative of that particular view, it is not representative of views from the many other bike trail, dirt trail, and shoreline areas within the lands surrounding Lake Natoma.

To provide adequate disclosure at evaluation of the Project's visual impact, SMUD must more fully assess viewpoints from areas surrounding and on the surface of Lake Natoma.

4-10

Attachment A of this letter provides representative locations and cross-section illustrations to demonstrate the anticipated visibility of SMUD's proposed tower. While the locations and cross-sections are just a small sampling of the views that should be considered, they provide substantial evidence that the Project tower would be a dominant visual feature that would degrade the natural and scenic qualities of the Lake Natoma viewshed.

Furthermore, SMUD must disclose and assess the Project's visual impact to views from the Lake Natoma surface as would be visible to perhaps the most visual sensitive viewers – kayakers, paddleboarders, sailors, and rowers – that come to Lake Natoma for recreation and to enjoy its

unique visual character and outstanding visual quality. Figure A-1 in Attachment A of this letter illustrates the estimated approximately 160 acres of Lake Natoma surface from which the tower would be partially visible. Figure A-6 illustrates a sightline cross-section profile from a representative location on the lake surface west of the Project site. SMUD's IS/MND must recognize the viewer sensitive and Project impacts from the vast and important viewing area that the Lake Natoma water surface provides.

4-10 cont.

4. The Project would Conflict with Regulations Governing Scenic Quality

Section 3.1, "Aesthetics," of the IS/MND (Draft IS/MND pp. 21-29) discusses that, "the Project would be required to obtain a Planned Development Permit from the City of Folsom for the proposed communications tower to exceed the maximum height standard established for the Project site. The Project is designed to be consistent with the applicable zoning and development standards related to design and aesthetics including requirements for neutral colored building exteriors, shielded lighting, and landscape screening, and would be subject to review by the City of Folsom Planning Commission to achieve desired city standards."

4-11

First, as discussed above, the IS/MND Project description provides very little information about the specific Project design and does not support the visual analysis statement that, "the Project is designed to be consistent with applicable development standards." Instead, SMUD's approach defers Project design detail until some future time after SMUD's intended adoption of the IS/MND. However, for SMUD's analysis to conclude the Project would not conflict with applicable zoning and regulations, SMUD must sufficiently identify Project design that complies with applicable zoning and regulations. SMUD's failure to do so in the IS/MND at best constitutes deferred mitigation and is impermissible under CEQA.

More pointedly, the Project's proposed 100-foot-tall tower would be in direct conflict with applicable regulations governing scenic quality.

The "Development Standards for Lake Forest Technical Center" (Development Standards) were adopted by the City of Folsom through Ordinance No. 425 in 1981 and are applicable to the Project site. The Development Standards expressly state their purpose and intent to, "mitigate and/or avoid potential impacts of industrial development adjacent to the unique and sensitive open space lands along Lake Natoma and Willow Creek." With regard to building height, the Development Standards expressly state, "[n]o building, antenna, nor structure of any kind shall exceed the height of forty (40) feet above the established building grade for the site."

4-12

The Project's proposed 100-foot-tall tower would be 2.5 times taller than the maximum height allowed by the Development Standards. SMUD's analysis and conclusions in the IS/MND are premised on the assumption that the City of Folsom will make a special exception for the Project

allowing for the tower. But such a conclusion is flawed or would require a disingenuous review and waiver from the City.

First, the Development Standards allow for special exceptions only when, "there exist circumstances in the nature of the use(s) or its special design needs that make strict enforcement impractical or out of character with the intent of the standards and that the design of the project is consistent with the intent of these standards." A waiver of the Development Standards' 40-foot height limit to allow for a 100-foot tower simply cannot reasonably meet the exception criteria requiring a showing that the tower is "consistent with the intent of these standards." Moreover, even if the City were to somehow determine that the Project's tower qualified for the exception, the tower would still conflict with the Development Standard height limit. In such an instance, SMUD's Project and tower might be found to comply with City regulations by obtaining a waiver, but would nevertheless still conflict with the applicable height regulation and represent a significant impact under CEQA.

4-12 cont.

5. The IS/MND Fails to Fully Assess the Project's Potential to Conflict with American River Parkway Plan and Folsom Lake SRA General Plan and Resource Management Plan Policies

Section 3.11, "Land Use and Planning," of the IS/MND discusses the Project's potential to cause a significant impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

Section 3.11 identifies two land use plans for assessment of potentially applicable policies – the City of Folsom General Plan and the American River Parkway Plan (ARPP). Scenic America does not address the Folsom General Plan in this letter and focuses our input on the ARPP and as well as the 2010 Folsom Lake State Recreation Area (SRA) General Plan and Resource Management Plan (Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP) discussion of which is absent from SMUD's IS/MND.

SMUD's IS/MND provides a very brief discussion of the ARPP, stating that, "[t]he American River Parkway Plan (Sacramento County 2008) provides guidance for land use decisions affecting the Parkway and specifically addresses the preservation, use, development, and administration of the Parkway," and concluding that, "Project activities would be limited to the Project site and would not encroach on the Parkway during construction or operation. The Project would not conflict with implementation of the American River Parkway Plan." SMUD's analysis of the ARPP fails to acknowledge that the ARPP incorporates the Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP in its entirety by reference. The 2008 ARPP states, "California State Parks and Reclamation are currently developing a new combined General Plan/Resource Management Plan for both the Folsom Powerhouse SHP and Folsom Lake SRA, including the Lake Natoma sub-unit. Upon adoption, this plan is adopted by reference into the American River Parkway Plan." (ARPP, pg. 204)

4-13

It is unclear why SMUD's analysis provided such a cursory review of the ARPP and more thorough consideration of the plan is warranted. The ARPP provides substantial evidence of the importance of important view locations and viewsheds that SMUD entirely omits from its analysis. For example, the ARPP discusses the Lake Overlook as follows (ARPP, pp. 209-210):

Lake Overlook: Located between Nimbus Dam and Mississippi Bar at the southern end of Lake Natoma, this zone is relatively unknown to all but local users—this despite the fact that its steep oak-studded ridges and canyons are such a visually dominant part of landscape here. Lake Overlook offers arguably the park's most dramatic and high quality panorama across Lake Natoma and the Sierra Foothills to the north and the Sacramento Valley and Mt. Diablo to the south. A paved parking area is the only facility currently provided. Comprehensive site planning and design are needed to enhance the recreation and interpretive opportunities of the area and take advantage of the extraordinary visual setting.

SMUD's exclusion of this location from a viewpoint inventory and the IS/MND's omission of this and similar information renders the evaluation of the Project's potential to conflict with the ARPP incomplete and insufficient.

Additionally, the Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP (of which SMUD's IS/MND makes no mention) includes important policies associated with avoiding and minimizing impacts of adjacent development on resources within the Lake Natoma Unit of the Folsom Lake SRA. (The Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP is publicly available at the following webpage: https://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/21299/files/FLSRA_GP_RMP_Vol1_Final_Plan.pdf)

Section III.f, "Visual Resources and Aesthetics," of the Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP discusses that the Folsom Lake SRA "represents a significant visual and scenic resource within the region offering a combination of panoramic views and distinctive landscape features. Situated where the Central Valley meets the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, the SRA includes a variety of landscapes from rugged canyons along the American River forks, to the rolling hills and upland plateaus above Folsom Lake, to the bluffs and broad river plain of Lake Natoma. ... the resulting lakefront setting affords visitors with dramatic panoramas of the lakes, the surrounding natural landscape, and cultural resource features." The plan identifies a visual resources goal of, "[p]rotection and enhancement of views and distinctive landscape features that contribute to the SRA's setting, character, and visitor experience."

Visual Protection guidelines/policies in the Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP include:

Visual-2: Work with local jurisdictions in the land use planning and development process to protect key views in the SRA from continued visual intrusion from surrounding development. This will include appropriate general planned land use designations, zoning to regulate such matters as building height and setbacks, ridgeline protection ordinances

4-13 cont.

4-14

that help protect visual resources of the SRA, and rigorous development review and enforcement.

SMUD's IS/MND makes no mention of the Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP or its visual resources protection goals and guidelines/policies and, therefore, fails to provide any analysis of the Project's potential to conflict with relevant goals and guidelines/policies. With regard to guideline Visual-2 quoted above, the guideline establishes the important role of coordination among local agencies and State Parks for land use planning and development to protect key views in the SRA from visual intrusion from surrounding development. Yet, with SMUD's apparent neglect to consider the Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP and foster the intended coordination specified in Visual-2, it appears that the land use planning coordination envisioned by Visual-2 has not occurred. Visual-2 anticipates "rigorous development review and enforcement," yet SMUD's intent to request variances from the City of Folsom to allow SMUD's proposed tower to exceed applicable Development Standard height regulations is clearly in conflict with rigorous enforcement of established development standards. Thus, in the absence of substantial evidence to the contrary, the IS/MND analysis must conclude that the Project would conflict with Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP policies intended for visual resources protection and consider this a significant visual impact and land use plan conflict.

4-14 cont.

6. The IS/MND Fails to Disclose and Mitigate for Impacts to Trees Protected Under the City of Folsom Tree Preservation Ordinance

The IS/MND Biological Resources section discusses that, "[t]he Project could require the removal of a few interior, live oak trees that are currently within the Project site. However, pursuant to subsection 12.16.050(C)(11) of the Folsom Municipal Code, SMUD is exempt from the requirements of City's Tree Preservation Ordinance, as a public utility performing tree removal activities to maintain a safe operation of SMUD facilities."

First, the Biological Resources Assessment (BRA) (IS/MND Appendix B) and IS/MND evaluation of potential impacts to protect trees is incomplete. The BRA discusses that, "[t]he proposed Project could require the removal of a few interior live oak trees that are currently within the Project site. If these trees are proposed for removal, an arborist survey should be conducted to determine the diameter at breast height (DBH) and assess the proposed Project impacts." This analysis fails to disclose and assess tree removal and the impacts of tree removal. According to the IS/MND conceptual site plan (Figure 4), the entire Project site would be graded/developed for the Project and any existing trees would require removal. Additionally, the grading could affect the root zones of trees adjacent to the site, resulting in damage to or loss of those adjacent trees. While this loss would have biological resource impacts that also need to be assessed and disclosed, Scenic

4-15

America is particularly concerned with the visual impact associated with the loss of native vegetation and oak trees. SMUD's analysis must evaluate and disclose the Project's actual impact on native vegetation, including oak trees and other trees on and near the property.

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4-15 cont.

Additionally, although the IS/MND asserts that the Project is not subject to the City's Tree Preservation Ordinance, the cited exception provision is for "public and private utilities performing tree pruning or removal activities as is necessary to maintain a safe operation of their facilities." While SMUD might want the Project to be exempt from the tree preservation ordinance, the IS/MND does not provide sufficient rationale to support the assertion that the Project qualifies for this exemption. The City's tree preservation ordinance requires that a tree defined as "protected" under the Ordinance cannot be approved for removal unless a finding is made that, "there are no Reasonable Alternative Measures to allow for use of the property consistent with the Zoning Code." Without evidence of a basis for how such a finding could be made, SMUD must seek reasonable alternative measures to preserve any trees on the site that fit the category of "protected" under the City's ordinance.

Folsom Municipal Code section 12.16.010 expresses the purpose and intent of the Tree Preservation Ordinance as follows:

A. Purpose. Trees are both community and environmental assets, unique in their ability to provide a multitude of benefits that appreciate over time. In addition to many others, these benefits include life-giving oxygen, filtration of air pollutants, protection from heat and ultra-violet radiation, energy savings, reduced Heat Island effect, habitat for wildlife, carbon sequestration, and improvement of property values. The purpose of this chapter is to advance these aesthetic, economic, environmental, and social contributions of the City's Urban Forest through the creation and preservation of tree resources. In order to promote the public health, safety and general welfare, enhance the beauty of Folsom and to complement and strengthen zoning, subdivision and land use standards and regulations, while at the same time recognizing individual rights to develop private property, the City Council finds it necessary to establish standards and measures for the preservation of trees.

4-16

The purpose and intent of the City's Tree Preservation Ordinance includes protection of trees for their aesthetic and environmental contribution. If SMUD's Project would result in the removal of protected trees, the visual impact of the removal of those trees must be evaluated and disclosed – regardless of whether SMUD obtains an exemption to the ordinance. Moreover, if SMUD somehow does achieve an exemption from the City's Tree Preservation Ordinance, SMUD's impact associated with removal of any protected trees would not be avoided, and instead the impact would be exacerbated as SMUD would not be required to fulfill the Tree Preservation Ordinance's otherwise applicable mitigation requirements.

↓

The Project's impact to protected trees must be evaluated, disclosed, and mitigated sufficient to avoid significant biological and visual impacts.

↑
4-16 cont.

7. The IS/MND Fails to Acknowledge the Presence of and Potential Impacts to Nesting Bald Eagles

The IS/MND fails to acknowledge the presence of an active bald eagle nest within less than 1 mile and in direct line of sight of SMUD's proposed tower. Effects on foraging habitat, potential eagle interaction/injury associated with the tower, or other impacts to the nesting eagles would not just be a biological resources impact, but would also have a detrimental effect on the aesthetic benefit that the presence of the eagle nest and eagles provide to the Lake Natoma area. (Photographs and information about these eagles, including a spreadsheet with observations of eagle activities this spring and summer is available at the following publicly accessible website: <https://folfaneaglecam.org/>) Without a proposed design of the tower (e.g., guy wires, placement of dishes/antenna, etc.) and without assessing potential effects on bald eagle associated with the presence of the tower and the loss of foraging habitat on the Project site, SMUD cannot definitely determine potential effects on the nesting eagles.

4-17

Conclusion

For the reasons discussed above, Scenic America objects to the Project as currently described and evaluated and urges SMUD to conduct a more thorough assessment of the aesthetic/visual impacts of the Project and to consider alternatives to the proposed 100-foot tower.

Sincerely,



Mark Falzone
President, Scenic America

Attachment A
Images and Illustrations



Lake Natoma at sunset with crew teams.

Figure A-1
160-acre surface area of Lake Natoma within which SMUD's proposed tower is expected to be partial visible.



Basemap Source: GoogleEarth

Figure A-2
Locations of Sightline Cross-Section View Locations

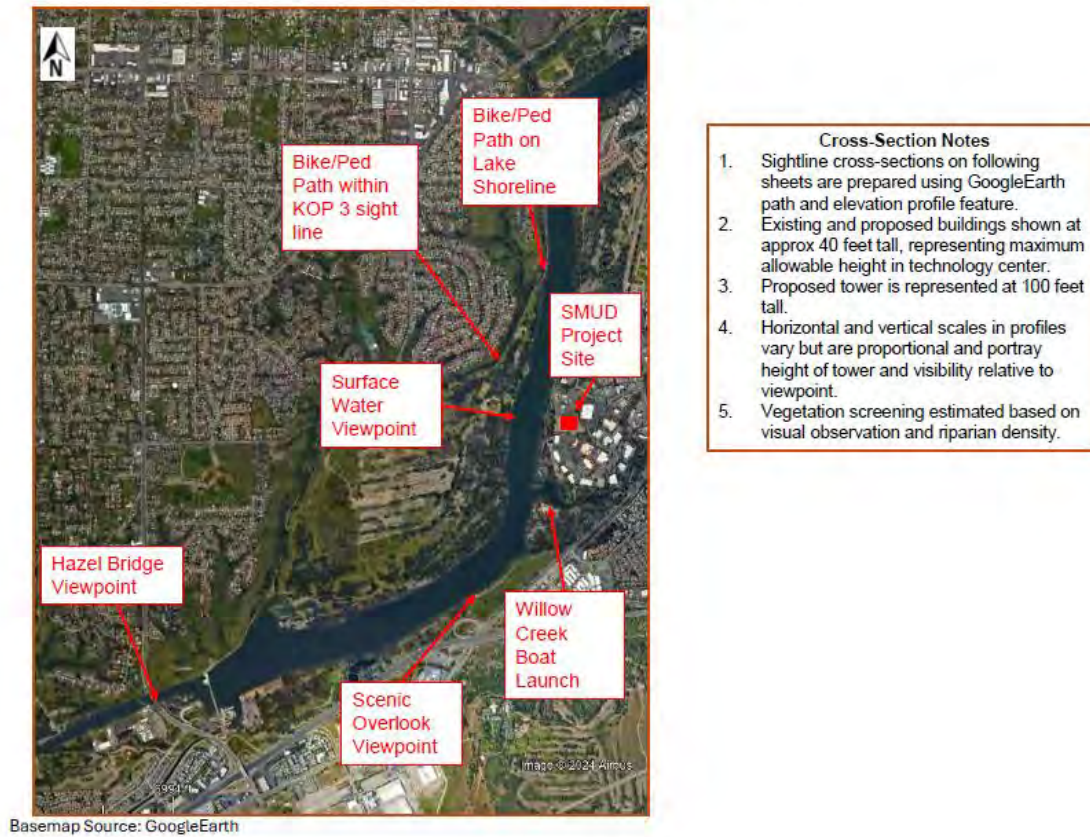


Figure A-3
Sightline cross-section illustration for viewpoint from bike/ped trail inline with KOP 3 sightline.

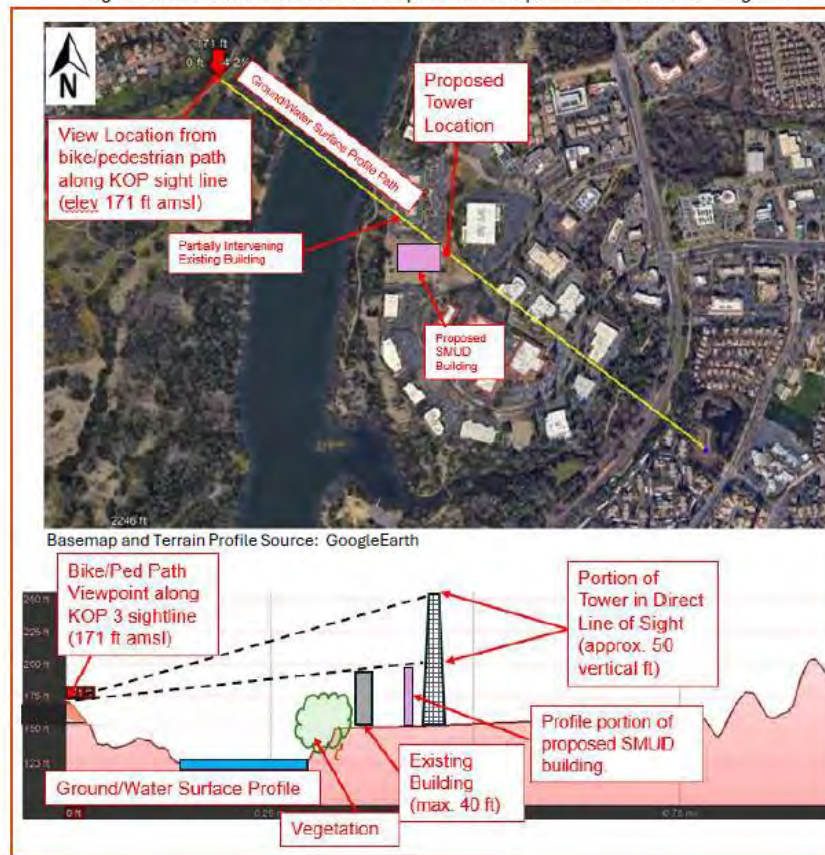


Figure A.4

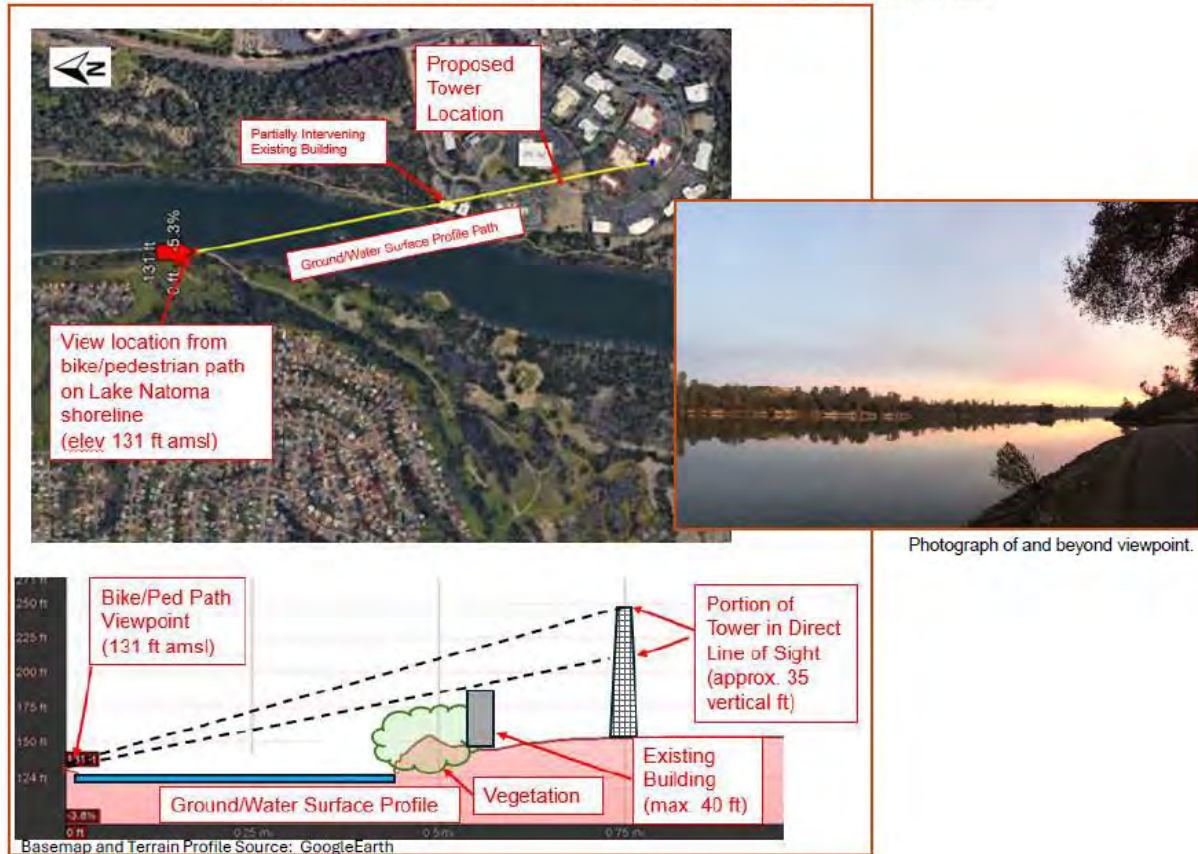
Google Earth 3D Object 100-foot-tall (30-meters) clamped to ground at proposed tower location. View from bike path inline with KOP 3 viewpoint a distance of approximately 2,000 feet from tower.



Photo source: GoogleEarth

Figure A-5

Sightline cross-section illustration for viewpoint from bike/ped trail along Lake Natoma shoreline.



Photograph of and beyond viewpoint.

Figure A-6
Sightline cross-section illustration for viewpoint from Lake Natoma surface west of Project site.

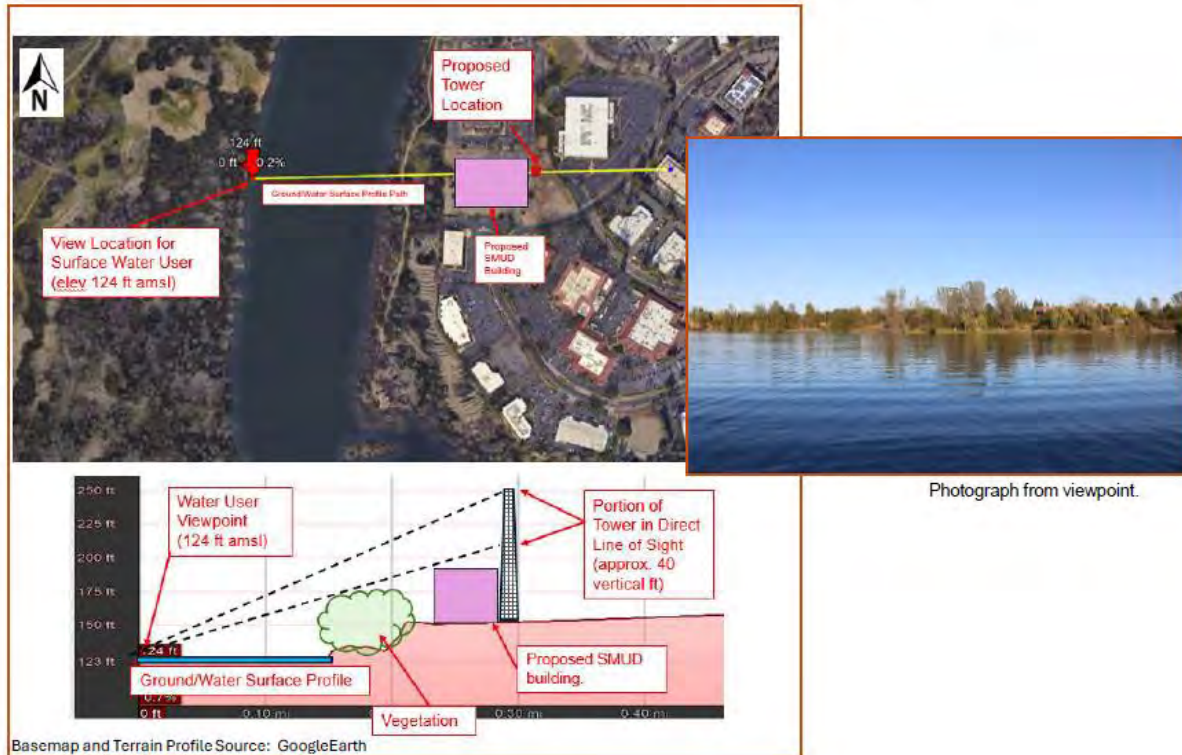


Figure A-7
Sightline cross-section illustration for viewpoint from scenic overlook southwest of Project site.

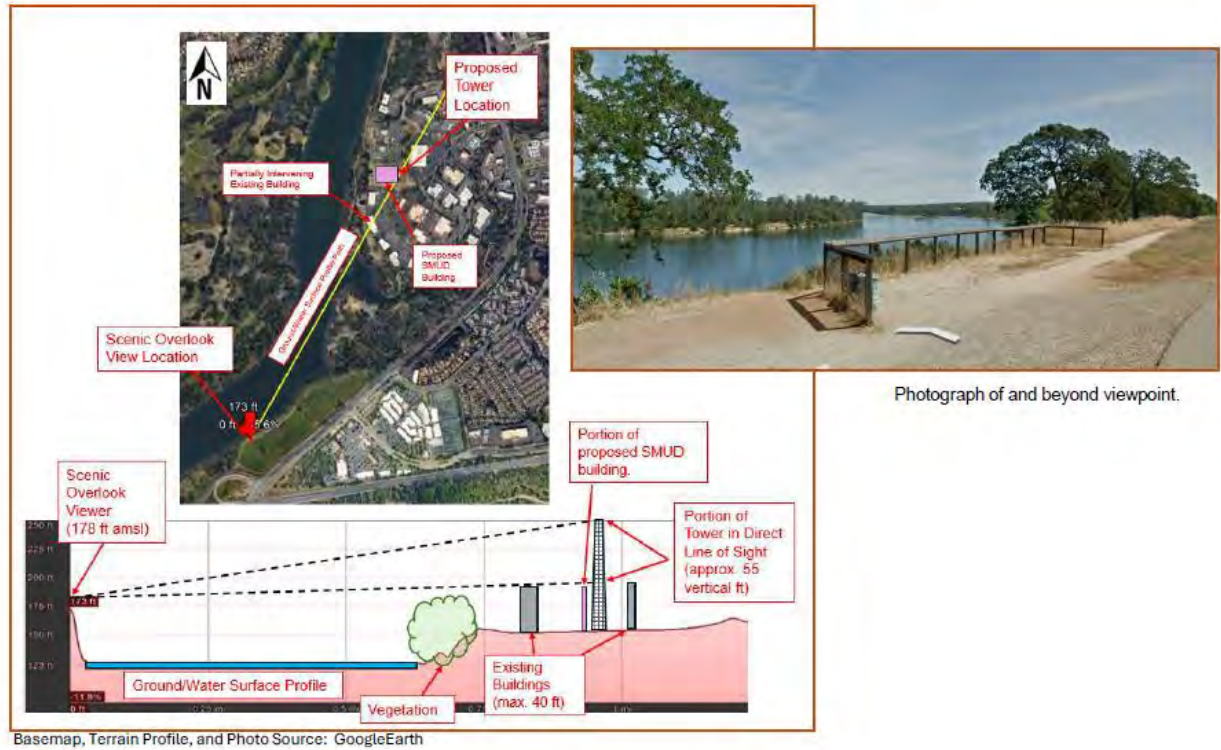
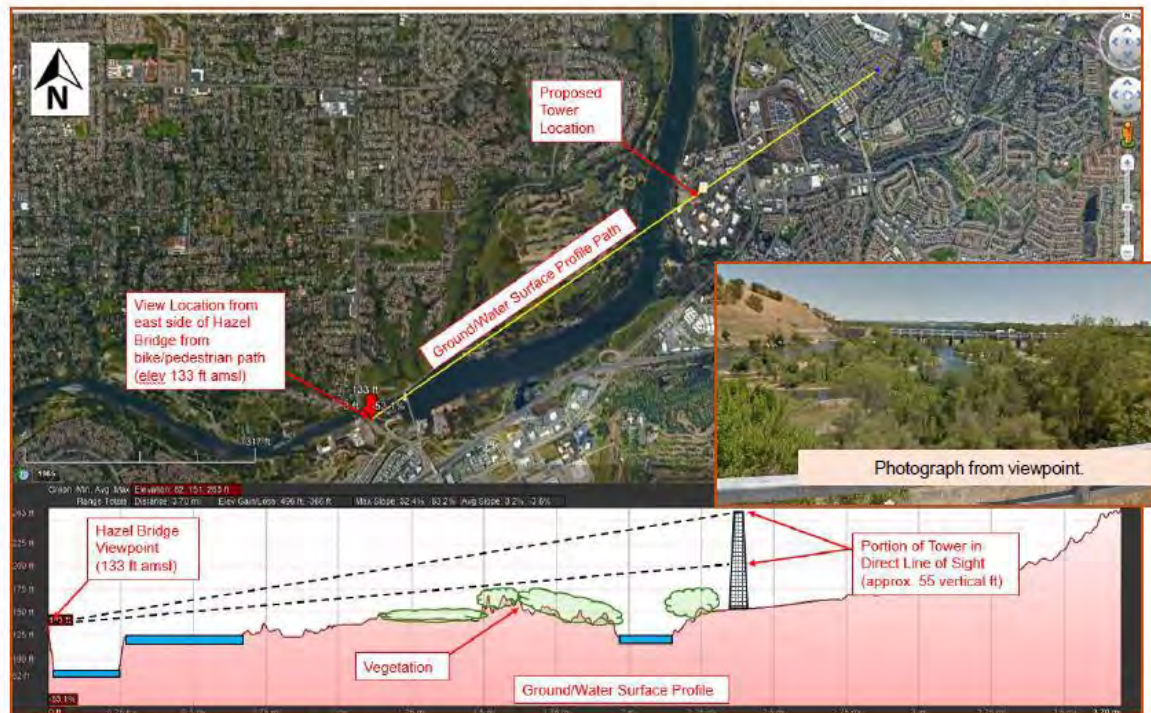
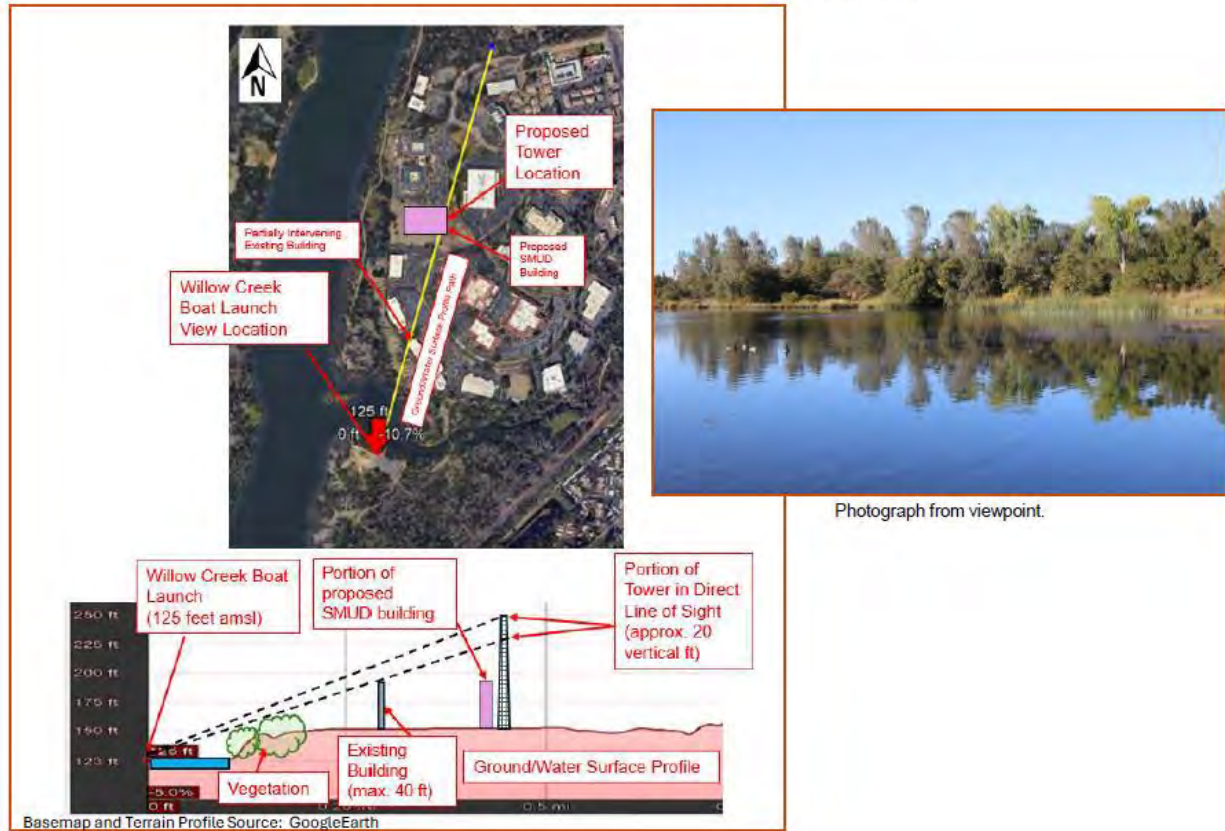


Figure A-8
Sightline cross-section illustration for viewpoint from Hazel Bridge bike/pedestrian path.



Basemap, Terrain Profile, and Photo Source: GoogleEarth

Figure A-9
Sightline cross-section illustration for viewpoint from Willow Creek boat launch.



Letter 4

Scenic America
October 15, 2024

- 4-1 The comment provides observations regarding potential visual impacts of the proposed communications tower as viewed from the Lake Natoma area. Visual impacts of the proposed Project are analyzed on pages 21 through 29 of the IS/MND. The analysis in the IS/MND considered views of the Project from varying perspectives and evaluated the effect of adding the Project to existing views from the Lake Natoma State Recreation Area (SRA) and from other surrounding vantage points and considered whether addition of the Project from various vantage points would have substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista, concluding the Project features would be nearly indistinguishable from the existing background when viewed from the western shore of Lake Natoma. The comment also identified Lake Natoma as an important regional resource with important and well-documented biological, cultural, recreational, and scenic resources. The IS/MND also includes analysis of impacts to biological resources on pages 42 through 50, cultural resources on pages 51 through 54, Tribal cultural resources on pages 106 to 110, for which Tribes were invited to consult pursuant to and in compliance with Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52); and recreation on pages 102 to 103. The analysis of each resource area determined that impacts from the Project would be less than significant or could be reduced to less than significant with the implementation of feasible mitigation. The comment further requests that SMUD consider comments from Scenic America but does not raise a fair argument backed with substantial evidence that the Project may have a potential significant effect on the environment. No substantial changes to the IS/MND are required, such that the IS/MND is required to be recirculated pursuant to Section 15073.5 of the CEQA Guidelines, as the analysis already considered views from key vantage points and aligns with applicable environmental standards.
- 4-2 The comment makes three assertions regarding the IS/MND: (1) the project description provided in the IS/MND is not sufficient; (2) the IS/MND fails to meaningfully demonstrate the visibility of the tower; and (3) the IS/MND fails to consider and disclose the full range of sensitive view locations and viewers within the Lake Natoma area.

The IS/MND provides a project description that is comprehensive, accurate, and adequate for the purposes of CEQA analysis. CEQA Guidelines Sections 15063(a) and 15071 outline the required contents of a negative declaration, calling for a brief description of the Project. As described below under Response to Comment 4-5, SMUD intends to execute the Project using a Progressive Design-Build process. The Project description in the IS/MND (pages 6 to 18) provides a level of detail adequate to allow for a conservative analysis of potential Project impacts, by identifying the maximum potential measurements of the proposed Project elements, where the Project to be developed is likely to have lesser impacts. As an example, the project description in the IS/MND provides the proposed maximum height of proposed structures, including the proposed communications tower. The detailed design of the tower structure was not disclosed

because it was not known at the time of release of the IS/MND what type of tower structure would be adequate to support the intended use. In order to assist the public understanding of how the tower might be designed, and to provide a basis for analysis in the IS/MND, a conceptual rendering of a communications tower with a free-standing lattice structure is provided in the record as visual simulations presented on pages 27 through 29 of the IS/MND, based on a maximum height of one hundred feet. The Project details presented provide sufficient information for the development of visual simulations and the subsequent analysis of visual impacts. Therefore, no additional Project details are necessary for the project description to be sufficient for the purpose of analysis in the IS/MND, as outlined in Section 15071 of the CEQA Guidelines.

The IS/MND analyzes the impacts of the Project on scenic vistas on pages 21 and 22, identifying that scenic vistas are prevalent in the City of Folsom and around Lake Natoma. As stated in the analysis, elevated views of Lake Natoma and the American River Parkway from surrounding bluffs provide remarkable scenery and are considered a scenic vista. The IS/MND provides three key observation points (KOPs) for focused evaluation of the Project's potential effects on public views. As concluded in the IS/MND, the Project would be partially obscured from many vantage points and would also blend with the surrounding existing business development and would not have a substantial adverse effect on the scenic vistas. While the analysis in the IS/MND does not identify each potential scenic vista within and surrounding Lake Natoma that could be affected by the Project, the analysis identifies that the existing visual context of the Project area includes existing development in the Lake Forest Business Park that is visible from many vantage points throughout the area. The assortment of KOPs are representative of some of the vantage points from which the proposed Project and communications tower would be visible, but are not intended to be a comprehensive representation of potential scenic vistas. Section 15063(a)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines describes the required contents of an Initial Study, stating:

An initial study may rely upon expert opinion supported by facts, technical studies or other substantial evidence to document its findings. However, an initial study is neither intended nor required to include the level of detail included in an EIR.

Section 15063(d)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines further describes the required contents of an Initial Study, stating:

An identification of environmental effects by use of a checklist, matrix, or other method, provided that entries on a checklist or other form are briefly explained to indicate that there is some evidence to support the entries. The brief explanation may be either through a narrative or a reference to another information source such as an attached map, photographs, or an earlier EIR or negative declaration. A reference to another document should include, where appropriate, a citation to the page or pages where the information is found.

The selection of KOPs and presentation of conceptual renderings in the IS/MND is sufficient to demonstrate that the proposed Project will be an additionally visible human made feature within a visual context that includes other visible development. This is consistent with the level of analysis required by Section 15063 of the CEQA Guidelines. Therefore, a comprehensive list of affected viewpoints and associated conceptual renderings would not be necessary to inform the analysis in the IS/MND.

Section 15382 of the CEQA Guidelines defines a significant effect on the environment as a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the Project. The IS/MND concluded that, while the Project would be visible from numerous scenic vistas, which could be considered an adverse effect, the visual effect of the Project on scenic vistas would not be substantial amidst the effect of existing visible development on scenic vistas from numerous viewpoints. Therefore, the analysis in the IS/MND is consistent with the requirements of CEQA, and no additional analysis is required.

Nonetheless, subsequent to circulation of the IS/MND for public comment, SMUD predesign work has progressed enough to confirm the proposed communications tower will be monopole, a single tubular shaped pole, rather than a lattice tower. The tower will also be equipped with simulated pine branches to enhance aesthetics on the site and when viewed from surrounding areas. This design helps integrate the structure with the surrounding environment by simulating natural elements to minimize visual disruption. Additionally, the monopole has the potential to be disguised as other faux structures, such as other types of trees or architectural features, subject to the City of Folsom's development review process. This flexibility ensures that the aesthetic treatment aligns with local guidelines and community expectations for the site and surrounding areas. This change in the project description is presented in Chapter 3 of this Final IS/MND, *Changes to Draft IS/MND Text*. Therefore, with this change to the Project, the visual impacts of the proposed communications tower would be reduced relative to the level of impacts analyzed in the IS/MND, and would remain less than significant. Section 15073.5 of the CEQA Guidelines identifies the conditions under which recirculation of a negative declaration prior to adoption is required. Subsection 15073.5(c) clarifies that recirculation is not required if new project revisions are added in response to written or verbal comments on the Project's effects identified in the proposed negative declaration which are not new avoidable significant effects. Additionally, recirculation is not required if new information is added to the negative declaration which merely clarifies, amplifies, or makes insignificant modifications to the negative declaration. As refinement of the communications tower design does not meet the requirements of Section 15073.5, no further action is required.

While no additional analysis is required for the evaluation of Project effects on scenic vistas, Comment Letter 4 identifies additional KOPs that are of particular concern to Scenic America. The letter does not include a photographic representation of the communications tower as it

would appear to someone within the viewshed, though it does include some unaltered photographs of the Project site from KOPs within the viewshed, and includes cross-section views that, in the absence of simulations, could be used support the expressed concern that the tower could potentially be an aesthetic concern.

In response to these concerns and in the interests of fostering greater public transparency and information, SMUD has prepared conceptual renderings of the proposed Project as viewed from each of the KOPs presented in the Comment Letter 4, to demonstrate the visual effect of the Project within those viewsheds. The simulations were prepared using photographic and other data gathered from floating a balloon 100' high at the actual proposed tower location to ensure the simulations would accurately depict the proposed tower's effect on the viewshed from each KOP.

Those and other conceptual renderings are provided in Appendix B, and amply demonstrate that the proposed communications tower and building would not be a substantial element within existing viewsheds from scenic vistas in the Project area and fully address any purported concern implied by the cross-section views and unaltered photographs in the comment letter. These simulations show that from viewpoints across the Lake Natoma area, the Project, including the communications tower, will be largely indistinguishable from the existing environmental features. Therefore, the determination of a less-than-significant impact related to a substantial adverse effect to scenic vistas in the IS/MND is amply supported by the record.

- 4-3 The comment discusses project description requirements under CEQA. Response to Comment 4-2, discusses the sufficiency of the project description provided in the IS/MND. As described in that response, the IS/MND's project description meets the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15071(a), which calls for a "brief description of the project." The project description provides the location and height of the proposed communications tower with no details as to its design or type, but as part of the aesthetics assessment does include conceptual renderings of the tower as a free-standing lattice. Those details were sufficient for the development of conceptual renderings of the Project as viewed from key observation points. These informed analysis in the IS/MND consistent with the requirements of Section 15063 of the CEQA Guidelines.

The comment also presents the CEQA Court ruling in *Save Our Capitol! v. Department of General Services* as relevant direction regarding the requirements of project descriptions in an IS/MND. However, the cited case is an EIR case and is addressing the more comprehensive requirements for an EIR, included in Section 15124 of the CEQA Guidelines. Therefore, the cited case is not relevant to the IS/MND and does not substantiate the assertion that the project description is insufficient for the purpose of CEQA analysis. The comment's suggestion that the IS/MND has to include all manner of details about the tower design to pass muster (including "paint color,"

“actual tower design”) under CEQA is misguided. Even in an EIR, the project description “should not supply extensive detail beyond that needed for review of the environmental impact.” CEQA Guidelines 15124; *Save Round Valley Alliance, v County of Inyo* (2007) 157 Cal.App.4th 1437, 1448.

Finally, the comment does not identify any specific impacts that have not been disclosed as result of the level of detail included in the project description.

- 4-4 The comment questions the maximum height of the tower. The IS/MND specifies that the tower’s approximate height will be 100 feet. The description did not specifically note that the tower’s component parts would not be higher than the tower they comprise. But since the commenter found that confusing, the project description, described in Chapter 3 of this Final IS/MND, was updated to state that the tower will be approximately 100 feet including antennae. The analysis in the IS/MND of aesthetic impacts from the proposed Project assumes that the tower would have a height of 100 feet. Therefore, the analysis in the IS/MND remains valid with respect to the revised project description and the IS/MND would not be required to be recirculated prior to adoption, consistent with Section 15073.5 of the CEQA Guidelines.
- 4-5 CEQA is a legal prerequisite to the development and approval of the Project, so the final design and construction plans could not be developed prior to doing CEQA. The Project will be designed consistent with the Project Description and all mitigation measures. To account for project details, SMUD made conservative assumptions in the description of the proposed Project that allow for practical flexibility in the development of project design and a conservative assumption of environmental effects. The description of the Project in the IS/MND included all Project details that had been developed at the time of circulation of the IS/MND for public comment. As described in the Responses to comments 4-2 and 4-3, the project description included in the IS/MND is sufficient for analysis in the IS/MND.

The comment also questions the IS/MND’s reliance on the presence of trees along the site perimeter to conclude that landscaping would mitigate the visual impact of the proposed building and tower even though there is no final landscaping plan. Again, a final design plan is not necessary to assess environmental impacts. The Project Description calls for perimeter trees along all sides except the western one and the Conceptual Site Design depicts areas to be planted with perimeter and interior trees. On page 80, the IS/MND explains that landscaping will be consistent with City of Folsom standards, which are designed to maintain existing aesthetics. It is appropriate to analyze the visual impact of the building including trees since they are being planted as part of the project.

The building design is not and cannot be final prior to executing the foundational contracts for the Project, which are contingent on CEQA, and the final landscaping design plan cannot be complete until the building design is known. It is not “deferring mitigation” to identify project

features (in this case the location of perimeter and interior trees), the City of Folsom standards, and the accompanying mitigation approach to be taken without including every detail of the resulting design in the CEQA document.

As discussed in Response to Comment 4-2, SMUD has refined its project description to identify potential tree species that would be planted along the western perimeter of the Project site to provide site shading and additional screening of the Project to viewers from the west of the Project site. Appendix F includes a list of potential tree species and their size and canopy width at maturity. The evergreen perimeter trees are shown in the conceptual renderings provided on pages 27 and 28 of the Draft IS/MND as well as in the updated renderings included in Appendix B of this Final IS/MND, Figure 8a, 8b, and 8c. The update to the project description provides clarifying detail regarding the potential tree species to be planted in response to the comment.

The comment does not identify any significant impacts or critical errors for which substantial revisions must be implemented. Therefore, no further action is required.

- 4-6 The comment asserts that the project description provides insufficient information for the evaluation of visual impacts related to visual scenic vistas and visual character related to views from the west of the Project site, suggesting that the provision of landscape trees along the west perimeter of the Project site would not be sufficient mitigation, as described in the project description. As described in Response to Comment 4-2, visibility from viewpoints from the Lake Natoma area is not a potentially significant impact. The proposed Project would include trees planted along the northern portion of the western perimeter, as well as in the site's interior along the building, which would reduce the visual impact of the Project on views throughout the Lake Natoma Area. However, the absence of landscape trees along a portion of the western perimeter of the Project site would not result in the Project having a substantial adverse impact to views, as the other adjacent development along the west side of the Lake Forest Technical Center, to the north and south of the Project site, does not include screening landscape features along their western perimeters that substantially obscures visibility of those structures. In fact, along the western perimeter of the Lake Forest Technical Center, the four existing structures to the south of the Project site and two facilities to the north (including an unscreened electrical substation on the property to the immediate north of the Project site) are all substantially visible from numerous viewpoints along the Jedediah Smith Memorial Trail/American River Parkway and throughout the Lake Natoma area. Photographs of existing conditions at these property edges are included in Figures 1, 2, 10, and 11, in Appendix C of this Final IS/MND. Thus, the addition of the proposed Project to those views would not be a substantial change in the visual character of views toward the Lake Forest Technical Center from areas to the west. Further, the Project as proposed would provide more vegetative screening than existing development to the north and south. Views from the lakeside of Lake Natoma toward the Project site are also substantially obscured by a particular dense grouping of trees relative to the density of trees in front of the Western Area Power Association (WAPA) facility, which is adjacent to the Project site

to the north. The WAPA facility is substantially visible from numerous vantage points in the Lake Natoma area. Amidst existing development, the proposed Project would be one of the least visible developed features along the western perimeter of the Lake Forest Technical Center. For this reason, the IS/MND concludes that the proposed Project would have less than significant impacts to scenic vistas and visual character. Mitigation is not required and the landscape trees along the western perimeter of the Project site are not provided as mitigation for a significant impact. Therefore, no further definition of the proposed landscape trees along the western site perimeter is required to establish appropriate mitigation, as is suggested by the comment. No further action is required. However, as described in Response to Comments 4-5 and in Chapter 3 of this Final IS/MND, the project description has been revised to provide additional clarity regarding the proposed landscape trees.

- 4-7 The comment raises concerns about CEQA adequacy. CEQA does not require technical perfection but adequacy, completeness, and good-faith disclosure. As stated in CEQA Guidelines Section 15003, the IS/MND meets this standard. This comment is addressed in Response to Comment 4-2, which identifies the sufficiency of the analysis of aesthetic impacts included in the IS/MND and why an expansive array of key observation points is not necessary to provide substantial evidence that the Project would not have a significant impact to scenic vistas or visual character. The existing analysis of aesthetics impacts is sufficient for the purposes of CEQA analysis and no further analysis is necessary.

While not required as further analysis, additional visual simulations of the Project from the viewpoints identified in Attachment A of the comment letter (Letter 4) are provided in this Final IS/MND (see Appendix B), including simulations of the selected monopole tower with pine tree features, to assist the public in understanding how visible the Project will be from those vantage points. The additional visual simulations are consistent with the determinations made in the Draft IS/MND, and in fact show with great clarity that the tower would not be a prominent visual feature within the existing visual landscape, as it would be designed to visually blend with existing trees along the horizon from most vantage points and would be visually indistinguishable from more distant viewpoints. Other visual simulations show that even without the pine branch features, the communications tower will be largely indistinguishable from the viewshed of Lake Natoma and its vicinity. The analysis and determinations made in the IS/MND regarding aesthetic resources remains valid. Therefore, no further actions are necessary.

- 4-8 The comment discusses viewpoint selection for visual impact analysis. This comment is addressed in Response to Comments 4-2, which identifies the sufficiency of the analysis of aesthetic impacts included in the IS/MND and why an expansive array of key observation points is not necessary to provide substantial evidence that the Project would not have a significant impact to scenic vistas or visual character. The IS/MND selected representative viewpoints to analyze visual impacts, focusing on locations of maximum exposure. While the Project will be visible from various points around Lake Natoma, it is situated within an environment that

includes urban features, as illustrated in Response to Comment 4-6. The comment is additionally addressed in Response to Comment 4-7 which described the additional simulations that have been provided to enhance public understanding of the visual impacts. The additional visual simulations do not provide evidence that is inconsistent with the determinations made in the Draft IS/MND. The analysis and determinations made in the IS/MND regarding aesthetic resources remains valid. Therefore, no further actions are necessary.

- 4-9 The comment asserts that the analysis of impacts related to visual quality in the IS/MND is insufficient. The comment provides text from Section 15151 of the CEQA Guidelines to identify the standard for an environmental document. However, Section 15151 defines the standards for adequacy of an Environmental Impact Report, which is not relevant to an IS/MND.

The comment further addresses thresholds of significance for impacts to visual character, suggesting that the analysis in the Draft IS/MND is insufficient to meet the required standard of analysis. The analysis of Project impacts to visual character in the Draft IS/MND is based Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, which considers whether the Project would:

- (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 points.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?*

The threshold of significance cited in the comment pertains to non-urbanized areas, which does not apply to the Project area. Section 15387 of the CEQA Guidelines defines “urbanized area” in the following way:

“Urbanized area” means a central city or a group of contiguous cities with a population of 50,000 or more, together with adjacent densely populated areas having a population density of at least 1,000 persons per square mile. A Lead Agency shall determine whether a particular area meets the criteria in this section either by examining the area or by referring to a map prepared by the U.S. Bureau of the Census which designates the area as urbanized.

Under Section 15387 the City of Folsom is considered an “urbanized” area, along with Orangevale and Fair Oaks, all of which surround Lake Natoma. For this reason, the analysis of impacts to visual quality in the Draft IS/MND appropriately focuses on whether the Project would conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality, for which the Project would acquire a Planned Development Permit from the City of Folsom, allowing for allowing SMUD to apply its own development standards for the project. The Project would otherwise comply with applicable zoning and development standards. Thus, the Project would

have a less than significant impact related to visual quality, as was determined in the Draft IS/MND.

Further, Response to Comment 4-7 provides additional simulations showing varying levels of visibility, including from the surface of Lake Natoma as suggested in the comment. The additional visual simulations are consistent with the determinations made in the Draft IS/MND. Thus, the analysis and determinations made in the IS/MND regarding aesthetic resources and land use remains valid. No further actions are necessary.

- 4-10 The comment asserts that the use of Key Observation Point (KOP) 3 is not representative of views from the many other bike trail, dirt trail, and shoreline areas within the lands surrounding Lake Natoma. The comment additionally refers to the attachment to Letter 4, which provides representative locations and cross-section illustrations to demonstrate the anticipated visibility of the proposed tower, asserting that SMUD should include consideration of numerous additional vantage points in its analysis. The comment also asserts that the view point and cross-section illustrations provide substantial evidence that the proposed tower would be a “dominant visual feature” that would degrade the natural and scenic qualities of the Lake Natoma viewshed. The comment is first addressed by Response to Comment 4-2, which explains why an exhaustive inventory of scenic viewpoints is not a required element of analysis to render a determination regarding impacts to scenic vistas, as representative observation points are sufficient for analysis. Further, the analysis of impacts to scenic vistas and visual character in the Draft IS/MND identifies that the Project would be situated amidst existing development that includes industrial buildings, infrastructure, and landscape trees, that are of similar height to the proposed tower, all of which are visible from numerous vantage points throughout the Lake Natoma area. A two transmission poles adjacent to the WAPA site are approximately 35 feet and 40 feet tall. A monopole communication tower approximately 1,700 feet from the site is approximately 74 feet tall. Moreover, as amply demonstrated in the additional visual simulations included in this Final IS/MND, the Project will be indistinguishable from the existing areas in the viewshed of Lake Natoma and environs. Response to Comment 4-6 describes the prominence of neighboring development along the eastern waterfront of Lake Natoma in the Project area. As is concluded in the analysis in the IS/MND and further clarified in the responses to comments cited above, and shown in the visual simulations, the Project’s tower would be largely indistinguishable from the existing background features from numerous vantage points throughout the Lake Natoma area

In addition, as introduced in Chapter 3 and Response to Comment 4-2, SMUD’s predesign work has proceeded and determined the tower will be a monopole, which is identified in the updated project description. This design would have less prominent visual profile relative to a freestanding lattice tower, as included in the visual simulations of the Project in the Draft IS/MND. The thinner profile of the tower, in combination with its position as set back on the eastern side of the Project site, would limit the visual prominence of the tower, allowing it to

further blend with the existing tall utility poles, that are similar in height to the proposed tower and substantially visible within the Lake Natoma viewshed, as can be seen in Figure 3.1-3 of the Draft IS/MND.

To provide further clarification regarding the visual impacts of the Project, SMUD has prepared additional visual simulations, for the representative observation points described in the comment and included in Attachment A of Letter 4. The additional visual simulations are included in Appendix B and provide the approximate scale of the proposed monopole structure. They were developed with the use of a balloon deployed 100 feet above the Project site at the proposed tower location, which was photographed to confirm the expected visibility of the proposed tower and to ensure appropriate scaling from each of the vantage points. As demonstrated in those visual simulations, the proposed tower and structure would not be dominant visible features from the representative viewpoints.

The comment also identifies views from the Lake Natoma surface are the most sensitive in the viewshed. The additional visual simulations provided in Appendix B include a simulation of the Project as viewed from the water surface to the west of the Project site. As demonstrated in the simulation, the proposed tower would have a similar visual prominence to the utility pole located along the western perimeter of the WAPA facility; northwest of the proposed tower, as viewed from the Lake Natoma surface. However, the updated monopine design would further lessen the visual prominence of the proposed tower, relative to existing human made structures visible from the Lake Natoma surface. The monopine design allows for selection of foliage color from an array of colors so that the foliage on the monopine would be similar in color to the surrounding trees in the Project vicinity.

SMUD evaluated the representative viewpoints and cross-sections identified by the comment and finds that they do not identify any new significant impact or present evidence that the analysis in the IS\MND is insufficient for the purposes of CEQA. No changes to the IS/MND are required.

- 4-11 The comment suggests that the project description in the Draft IS/MND is insufficient to support aspects of the visual analysis. The comment is addressed in Response to Comment 4-5.

The comment further asserts that the project description is not sufficient to conclude that the Project would not conflict with applicable zoning and regulations. The project description has provided sufficient details to evaluate whether known Project features would be consistent with existing zoning and regulations. In conjunction with the IS/MND, the Project is subject to the City of Folsom's development application process, which the City will review and evaluate the proposed Project for conformance with applicable zoning and regulations. The standard for sufficiency of a project description for an IS/MND does not require a level of detail sufficient to verify that the Project is in compliance with every zoning ordinance and regulation. Response to Comment 4-2 identifies the appropriate standard for describing the Project in an IS/MND. The

IS/MND identifies that the Project will require the approval of a Planned Development Permit by the City of Folsom for the purpose of allowing greater flexibility in the design of the Project site than otherwise possible through the standard zoning and regulation development standards .

- 4-12 The comment cites the City of Folsom’s Development Standards for the Lake Forest Tech Center, specifically the maximum allowable structural height of 40 feet, and the standard’s purported purpose being to “mitigate and/or avoid potential impacts of industrial development adjacent to the unique and sensitive open space lands along Lake Natoma and Willow Creek.” The comment also notes , that the Development Standards allow for variances under specific circumstances, where the special design needs of a project make strict enforcement impractical or out of character with the intent of the standards and that the design of the project is consistent with the intent of these standards, but contends the standards would not allow for approval of a waiver for the Project’s communications tower.

As a procedural matter, it should be noted that although the Project site is located in the Lake Forest Technical Center, the Planned Development Permit application to be submitted to the City of Folsom for approval would seek to remove the Project site from being subject to the existing Planned Development overlay, and would instead create a SMUD Planned Development overlay for the Project site with its own development standards. Much of the existing overlay standards would be maintained through the SMUD Planned Development overlay, but changes would include allowing for a communications tower with a maximum height of 100 feet and a reduction in minimum parking standards for office. Accordingly, no waiver from the existing Development Standards is being sought as a new Planned Development overlay is proposed that would result in independent development standards that would be applicable only for the Project site.

As for the substance of the Development Standards, the proposed Project would be an administrative operations facility, and would be consistent with the type of uses intended to take place within the Lake Forest Technical Center, as evidenced by the existing adjacent WAPA facility, a similar electrical utility operations facility. The proposed communications tower is a required component of the administrative operations facility and has been determined by SMUD engineering staff to be the minimum height necessary to provide the necessary communication functions that would meet the Project’s stated objectives of contributing to SMUD’s goal for ensuring electrical service reliability (see page 6 of the Draft IS/MND). For these reasons, the Project would meet the criteria for the granting of a height deviation to allow the construction of the proposed tower.

As noted in the comment letter, the Development Standards’ height restriction was adopted for aesthetic purposes as well as to mitigate or avoid potential impacts to views from open space lands along Lake Natoma and Willow Creek. (City of Folsom, 1981). However, as demonstrated in Appendix B, the proposed Project would not have a substantial impact on views from these

areas. Moreover, the City retained the authority to make an exception to the standards based on whether the Project under consideration meets the intent of the standards. (City of Folsom 1981). The installation of the monopole communications tower will not violate the aesthetic intent of the standard with or without the pine tree features that will be installed. The updated visual simulations, included in Appendix B show that the site development will integrate well with the surroundings. The monopine tower will have a similar profile to nearby pine trees on neighboring properties approximately 50 feet to the southeast of the Project site, as well as the existing monopine structure located approximately 1,700 feet to the northeast of the Project site, all of which would be part of views from Lake Natoma open space areas and Willow Creek. The City's development standards themselves do not indicate there was any reason other than aesthetics for the imposition of the standard.

- 4-13 The comment asserts that the Draft IS/MND does not fully assess the Project's potential conflict with the American River Parkway Plan (ARPP), specifically evaluating consistency with the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area and Folsom Powerhouse State Historic Park General Plan/Resource Management Plan (Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP), which is incorporated into the ARPP by reference.

Folsom Lake State Recreation and Folsom Powerhouse State Historic Park General Plan/Resource Management Plan

The Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP represents a combined State Parks General Plan and Bureau of Reclamation Resource Management Plan for the SRA and SHP. It describes the areas surrounding the SRA in the Project area as having undergone significant urbanization over the past half century. The upland areas of the SRA are described as generally comprising a relatively narrow strip of shoreline above the high-water mark that puts development on private property adjacent to the SRA's boundary in close proximity to various SRA use areas. The Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP describes the SRA's most significant scenic resources as being dramatic and high-quality panoramic views visible from numerous vantage points. The GP/RMP notes that each of these panoramas includes a unique combination of water, sky, and natural and built features (Page II-31).

The Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP provides goals and policies that call for the SRA to interact with neighboring jurisdictions to address development surrounding the SRA. The GP/RMP includes a Goal of Protection and enhancement of views and distinctive landscape features that contribute to the SRA's setting, character, and visitor experience. To pursue this goal, GP Policy VISUAL-2 calls for the SRA to work with local jurisdictions in the land use planning and development process to protect key views in the SRA from continued visual intrusion from surrounding development. This will include appropriate general plan land use designations, zoning to regulate such matter as building height and setbacks, ridgeline protection ordinances that help protect visual resources of the SRA, and rigorous development review and enforcement.

This process is precisely what will happen during the permitting of the Project. The Project landscaping will exceed the amount of existing landscaping at the surrounding buildings and thus would, if anything, facilitate the goals of the RMP. Implementation of SRA GP Policy VISUAL-2 includes coordination of SRA staff with City of Folsom staff and other adjacent jurisdictions. As it relates to the City of Folsom, the Lake Forest Technical Center Development Standards apply building height, setback, building exterior standards that recognize the adjacent open space areas in the SRA. The City provides strict criteria for the granting of special exceptions to the guidelines, which helps to limit the continued visual intrusion from surrounding development. As explained in Response to Comment 4-12, through the granting of a Planned Development Permit by the City of Folsom, the Project would not conflict with the efforts of the SRA to limit continued visual intrusion. Moreover, the photographic simulations of viewpoints from the key resource area of Lake Natoma and environs show that the Project features will not degrade the high quality scenery there and will be consistent with, and likely better than, the properties to the north and south of the Project site along the bike trail.

The Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP does not have goals or policies that are directly applicable to the proposed Project.

American River Parkway Plan

The American River Parkway Plan (ARPP) is the guiding policy document that directs preservation, use, development, and administration within the Parkway. The ARPP also acts as the management plan for the federal and state Wild and Scenic Rivers Acts. The County of Sacramento has the principal responsibility for administration and management of the Parkway as guided by the ARPP. The purpose of the ARPP is to provide direction for land use decisions affecting the Parkway and it specifically addresses the preservation, use, development, and administration of the Parkway. The ARPP contains policies that apply to the entire extent of the Parkway, as well as area-specific policies regarding authorized use of the Parkway and its resources. These include limits on development and protection of natural resources.

While the ARPP acts as a management plan for the federal state Wild and Scenic Rivers Acts, Lake Natoma is not the segment of the American River that falls under the federal or state designations as a Wild and Scenic River. That designation applies to the Lower American River downstream from Lake Natoma, and includes the stretch that flows from the Nimbus Dam (west of the Project site) generally west to the confluence of the American River and Sacramento River; the Project site is upstream from Lake Natoma.

As identified in the comment, the Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP is incorporated in the ARPP by reference. However, as described above, the GP/RMP does not provide goals or policies that are directly applicable to the proposed Project, but instead drive coordination efforts with

neighboring agencies to limit aesthetic impacts, or land use decisions within the SRA for the limitation of visual impacts.

The ARPP contains policies intended to address impacts from uses and facilities adjacent to the Parkway.

- Policy 7.19 calls for jurisdictions to use their authority to reduce, eliminate, and/or mitigate potential adverse impacts upon the Parkway caused by adjacent land uses and activities.
 - Policy 7.19.1 directs structures to be located so that neither they, nor activities associated with them, cause damage to Parkway plants or wildlife.
 - Policy 7.19.2 directs structures to be located so that neither they, nor activities associated with them, impede the recreational use of the Parkway and such structures are consistent with the goals and policies of the plan.
- Policy 7.23 calls for the use of levees, landscaping, or other human-made or natural buffers to be used within the Parkway to buffer or screen the Parkway from adjoining land uses.
- Policy 7.24 calls for local jurisdictions to regulate adjacent development visible from the Parkway, calling for local regulations to take into account the extent to which the development is visible from the Parkway.

SMUD has used its authority to make design considerations to limit the visibility of Project features from the Parkway, including planned planting of landscape trees along the western perimeter of the Project site and within the interior of the site alongside the building (see Chapter 3 of this Final IS/MND), and placement of the proposed communications tower on the eastern side of the Project site, set back from the Lake Natoma shoreline. The proposed Project would also take place within the Project parcel and would locate proposed structures in areas set back from the western perimeter of the Project site, along the Folsom Lake SRA. Thus, the Project would not cause damage to Parkway plants or wildlife (Policy 7.19.1) and would not impede the recreational use of the Parkway (Policy 7.19.2). Similar to the discussion of Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP, Policy VISUAL-2, the City has adopted development standards that address aesthetics, which helps to limit the continued visual intrusion from surrounding development, and will consider those standards in granting permits for the Project. As explained in Response to Comment 4-12, by meeting the requirements for the granting of a height deviation by the City of Folsom, the Project would not conflict with the efforts of Sacramento County to limit continued visual intrusion through implementation of the ARPP. No other ARPP policies are directly relevant to the proposed Project.

The comment also asserts that the analysis is insufficient as it does not discuss the Lake Overlook view. This concern is addressed in Response to Comment 4-2 as well as by the additional renderings provided in Appendix B, Figures 1a, 1b, and 1c, which provides views toward the Project site from the Lake Overlook. As demonstrated in the visual simulations for the Lake Overlook, visibility of the proposed Project would be limited and would be in between existing visible structures to the north and south of the Project site. The proposed monopine tower, as visible from the Lake Overlook vantage point, would be set against a background of more distant trees and would not extend above the background provided by the more distant trees. The monopine design allows for the selection of structural foliage that would have a color similar to surrounding trees. Thus, as viewed from the Lake Overlook, the proposed monopine tower would be difficult to distinguish from other more distant trees and would not have a substantial impact on existing views from that location. The comment does not identify any new significant impacts requiring revisions to the Draft IS/MND. No further action is required.

- 4-14 The comment discusses visual resources guidelines of the Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP. This comment is addressed by Response to Comment 4-13, above, which highlights that the visual goals of the GP/RMP direct the actions of the SRA and do not exert control over adjacent development in the City of Folsom. No changes to the IS/MND are required.
- 4-15 The comment raises concerns about the loss of existing trees on the Project site, as removal of existing live oak trees within the Project site would be required to construct the Project. The comment asserts that the IS/MND fails to disclose and mitigate for impacts to trees protected under the City of Folsom Tree Preservation Ordinance. The Project would remove up to twelve (12) native interior live oak trees (*Quercus wislizeni*) and a pine tree (*Pinus sabiniana*). These trees are grouped in the southern and western areas of the Project site and are poor to fair condition. The diameter (DBH) of onsite trees ranges from 24-inches to 2-inches. The comment incorrectly suggests that the removal of native trees is a significant impact, where impact significance would be achieved through conflict with the policies or ordinances that protect native trees (or other biological resources). As described in the analysis on page 50 of the Draft IS/MND, SMUD is exempt from the requirements of the City's Tree Preservation Ordinance, and the Project would therefore not exceed the threshold, which is to conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as tree preservation policies or ordinances. Thus, as concluded in the Draft IS/MND, no impact would occur under this criteria. No changes to the IS/MND are required. Moreover, the landscaping that will be installed as part of the Project will result in a substantially more dense tree canopy than is at the site already. Figure 5a in Appendix B demonstrates the proposed landscaping at maturity.
- 4-16 The comment discusses tree preservation ordinances. As described in the analysis on page 50 of the Draft IS/MND and further asserted in Response to Comment 4-15, the proposed Project is exempt from the City's Tree Preservation Ordinance. Mitigation measures on pages 47-48 of the

IS/MND address tree avoidance and compensation for native oak loss in the context of potential impacts to special status species habitat. No changes to the IS/MND are required.

- 4-17 The comment raises concerns about potential impacts to bald eagle habitat due to the known presence of a bald eagle nest site to the north of the Project site that is subject to annual use. An ESA biologist reviewed the nest location relative to the Project and determined that the Project would not have a significant impact on bald eagle nesting.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) provides guidance on the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. The Act defines "take" as "pursue, shoot, shoot at, poison, wound, kill, capture, trap, collect, molest or disturb." Regulations further define "disturb" as "to agitate or bother a bald or golden eagle to a degree that causes, or is likely to cause, based on the best scientific information available, 1) injury to an eagle, 2) a decrease in its productivity, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior, or 3) nest abandonment, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior" ([50 CFR 22.6](#)). In addition to immediate impacts, this definition also covers effects that result from human-induced alterations initiated around a previously used nest site during a time when eagles are not present, if, upon the eagle's return, such alterations agitate or bother an eagle to a degree that interferes with or interrupts normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering habits, and causes injury, death or nest abandonment."

An ESA biologist evaluated the potential for the Project to have a significant impact on bald eagle and concluded that the Project is 0.9 miles away from the eagle nest site and is extremely unlikely to cause direct injury to an eagle due to its distance from the eagle nest site.

Under U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) Guidance, Project construction would clearly not be considered to have an adverse effect on bald eagle nesting. USFWS provides the National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines (2007), which are intended to help people minimize such impacts to bald eagles, particularly where they may constitute "disturbance," which is prohibited by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. The National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines recommend a 660-foot-buffer for construction of structures above 3 stories and timber operations (Category B). USFWS recommends a half-mile buffer around blasting and other loud, intermittent noises (Category H).

The Project is not only well beyond a half-mile away, but Project construction would not involve blasting, pile driving, or other highly disruptive activities that would trigger the half-mile buffer. And all construction activities that would take place are approximately 4,800 feet from the nest, more than 7 times beyond the 660-foot buffer.

There is no other evidence suggesting the construction itself will cause the eagles to abandon their nest. To the contrary, during the last four years, three major construction projects (Scott's

Seafood Roundhouse on Sutter Street, Regional Transit work on Folsom Boulevard, Folsom Boulevard sewer replacement) took place closer to the eagle's nest than the Project and the nest has remained active.

The comment also identified that the tower would be visible from the known bald eagle nest along the Lake Natoma shore, suggesting that existence of the tower could have an adverse effect on bald eagle nesting. According to the USFWS Fact Sheet, bald eagles usually choose the tops of large trees to build nests, which they typically use and enlarge each year. However, nests have also been found on cliffs, the ground, and even on humanmade structures like cell phone towers.³ An ESA biologist evaluated whether the proposed tower would interfere with bald eagle breeding, feeding, or sheltering, reaching the same conclusion as is suggested by the USFWS Bald Eagle Management Guidelines. Addition of the proposed tower would not have an adverse effect bald eagle nesting.

For the reasons described above the proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on bald eagles in the Project area, consistent with the determination identified in the Draft IS/MND. No changes to the IS/MND are required.

³ United States Fish and Wildlife Service, 2021. Bald Eagle fact sheet. Page1. Available at <https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/bald-eagle-fact-sheet.pdf>

February 2025

Letter 5

From: Michaels, Jim@Parks
To: Jerry.Parky.Ellias@Parks
Cc: Hilton, Steve@Parks; Howard, Mike@Parks
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Folsom Administrative Operations Building Project IS-MND
Date: Wednesday, October 16, 2024 3:27:58 PM

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Hello –

I am one of the managers on the Gold Fields District of California State Parks. Our District manages Folsom Lake State Recreation Area, which includes the Federal and State lands around Lake Natoma. State Parks manages the federal lands around Lake Natoma and Folsom Lake through a 25-year Managing Partner Agreement with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. State Parks and Reclamation prepared a General Plan/Resource Management Plan in 2010 that provides goals and guidelines for the management of Folsom Lake SRA and Folsom Powerhouse SHP.

I was made aware of SMUD's Folsom Administrative Operations Building Project last winter, as one of the SMUD construction managers contacted me about the project, specifically the location of the drainage/runoff outfall, which drains onto the adjacent FLSRA lands. I forget the gentleman's name, but I met him on site and articulated our preferences on the outfall location. At the time, I don't recall mention of a 100' tall tower as part of the facility development.

We were just made aware that the SMUD Board is scheduled to approve the IS/MND for this project tomorrow evening. I don't know if our office of California State Parks is on the project mailing list and we were sent notices regarding the preparation of the IS/MND and missed it or if we were not on your contact list. I understand property owners within 1,000 ft of the project were notified. Again, I don't recall seeing such notice, but it is possible it went to the Bureau of Reclamation since they are the property owner.

State Parks would appreciate the opportunity to discuss the potential visual impact of the 100' tower on the adjacent FLSRA lands and for recreationists (paddlers, rowers, etc) on Lake Natoma prior to the Board adoption of the IS/MND.

I have done a quick review of the IS/MND, including the Aesthetics section and the KOP analysis. The Gold Fields District remains concerned about the potential visual impact of the project, particularly the proposed 100' tower. We are unsure if the KOP analysis adequately evaluates the visual impacts from all relevant viewpoints of recreational users at Lake Natoma, including the visual impacts on paddlers, rowers and other on water users of Lake Natoma. A park user has contacted us with their concerns about the potential visual impacts of the proposed SMUD project.

The IS/MND mentions the American River Parkway and Lake Natoma but I do not see that it mentions that the lands adjacent to the project are part of Folsom Lake SRA and managed by California State Parks. I don't see in the plan any mention or reference to the Folsom Lake SRA General Plan/Resource Management Plan. Within the GP/RMP there are goals and guidelines with regards to protection of visual resources, including the following:

"f. Visual Resources and Aesthetics

The SRA represents a significant visual and scenic resource within the region offering a combination of panoramic views and distinctive landscape features. Situated where the Central Valley meets the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, the SRA includes a variety of landscapes from rugged canyons along the American River forks, to the rolling hills and upland plateaus above Folsom Lake, to the bluffs and broad river plain of Lake Natoma. Although the manmade reservoirs were created for flood control, water

5-1

5-2

supply, and power generation, the resulting lakefront setting affords visitors with dramatic panoramas of the lakes, the surrounding natural landscape, and cultural resource features. Together, the length and configuration of the SRA's shoreline, coupled with the hilly topography, provide a wealth of viewing conditions and opportunities.

5-2 cont.

Goal

- Protection and enhancement of views and distinctive landscape features that contribute to the SRA's setting, character, and visitor experience.

Guidelines***Viewshed Protection***

VISUAL-2: Work with local jurisdictions in the land use planning and development process to protect key views in the SRA from continued visual intrusion from surrounding development. This will include appropriate general plan land use designations, zoning to regulate such matters as building height and setbacks, ridgeline protection ordinances that help protect visual resources of the SRA, and rigorous development review and enforcement."

Here is a link to the GP/RMP:

https://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/21299/files/FLSRA_GP_RMP_Vol1_Final_Plan.pdf

I don't know what is possible at this late date, but as indicated above, the Gold Fields District is interested in meeting with SMUD and potentially the City of Folsom (who would have to approve a variance for the height of the tower?) regarding the tower, preferably before the SMUD Board adopts the CEQA document and approves the project. Is it possible to postpone this Board action until we have time to discuss with SMUD?

5-3

Apologies for this late email and concern, as I indicate, I am not sure where this project fell through the cracks on our part.

If you are able to contact me at the number below to discuss, that would be great.

Thank you. jm.

Jim Micheaels
Senior Park & Recreation Specialist
Gold Fields District
7806 Folsom-Auburn Rd
Folsom, CA 95630
(916) 439-8504
Jim.micheaels@parks.ca.gov

Letter 5

Gold Fields District of California State Parks
October 16, 2024

- 5-1 The comment provides observations regarding the potential visual impacts of the proposed Project on the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area (Folsom Lake SRA) and its users. This comment is addressed in the Response to Comment 4-2, which provides a detailed discussion regarding the appropriateness of the representative key observation points analyzed in the Draft IS/MND, visual impacts of the 100-foot-tall tower, updates to the project description that are relevant to the visual impacts of the 100-foot-tall tower, and additional conceptual renderings that have been provide to provide clarity regarding the size and scale of the proposed tower from various vantage points. No changes to the IS/MND are necessary as the visual impacts from key observation points have already been analyzed as required under CEQA.

The comment also suggested a meeting between SMUD and a Gold Fields District representative from State Parks. In response SMUD representatives met with the California State Parks Gold Fields District on November 21, 2024 and presented updated visual simulations to which there were no objections. The comment does not raise new significant impacts or the need for revision to the IS/MND. No further action is required.

- 5-2 The comment identifies that the Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP is not discussed in the Draft IS/MND. The comment is addressed by Response to Comment 4-13, which provides a detailed description of the relevance of the Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP to the proposed Project. In addition, as introduced in Chapter 3 and Response to Comment 4-2, SMUD has refined the project description to identify the design of the proposed tower as a monopine. This design would have less prominent visual profile relative to the freestanding lattice tower that was included in the visual simulations of the Project in the Draft IS/MND. The thinner profile of the tower in combination with its position as set back on the eastern side of the Project site would limit the visual prominence of the tower, allowing it to further blend with the existing tall utility poles that are similar in height to the proposed tower and substantially visible within the Lake Natoma viewshed, as can be seen in Figure 3.1-3 of the Draft IS/MND.

To provide further clarification regarding the visual impacts of the Project, SMUD has prepared additional visual simulations. The additional visual simulations are included in Appendix B and provide the approximate scale of the proposed monopine structure. As identified in Response to Comment 4-13, the proposed Project would not conflict with the Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP. No changes to the IS/MND are necessary.

- 5-3 The comment reasserts the District's desire to meet with SMUD prior to SMUD Board adoption of the IS/MND. Following receipt of Letters 4 through 13, in advance of the SMUD Board hearing to adopt the IS/MND, SMUD chose to postpone the approval hearing for the Project until

comments received were considered and addressed. As noted in Response to Comment 5-2, SMUD representatives met with SRA representatives on November 21, 2024 to discuss the proposed tower as was requested by a SRA representative. During the meeting, a SRA representative raised a concern of a potential access trail being created from the Project site to the existing bike trail to the west. The proposed Project site would be fenced in and no new gates or trails would be created connecting the site to the SRA. The comment does not raise new significant impacts or the need for revision to the IS/MND. No further action is required.

February 2025

Letter 6

From: [Beth](#)
To: [Jerry Park](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] proposed administrative office building and telecommunication tower at 102 Woodmere Road in Folsom.
Date: Thursday, October 10, 2024 1:23:48 PM

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Dear Jerry,

I understand that the Initial Study Mitigated Negative Declaration (ISMND) is final; however, since I was not on the mailing list I wanted to express some concerns as a frequent visitor to Lake Natoma and recent resident in Folsom for 15 years.

The Draft ISMND acknowledged that the tower exceeds the 40-foot height restriction by over double (at 100 feet); therefore, I looked at the KOP -2 visual simulation. Figure 3.1-3 shows the tower blocked by 3 large trees. This is not very realistic since it appears the post project simulation is quite a bit in the future. Otherwise - Is SMUD going to plant those very large trees at the time the project is built? If not, the simulation should show the actual post project view after it is built. How visible will it realistically be for visitors of the lake. There was a good reason for the height restriction and yet its importance is downplayed.

6-1

Also, the biology survey buffer was listed at 500 feet. Is this outside the area for the nesting Bald Eagles? They have a very large territory and are quite well documented in Folsom. I think the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act should have been listed in the laws and regulations, followed by a discussion of whether there would be impacts from the presence of the large tower. I noticed it's not shown on the project layout figures and yet it's a big feature of the project.

6-2

I hope that SMUD will address these concerns.

Thank you,

Beth Kelly
Roseville, Ca

Letter 6

Beth Kelly
October 10, 2024

- 6-1 The comment raises concerns regarding the height of the proposed tower, particularly its exceedance of the 40-foot height restriction and the representation of post-Project visual impacts in Figure 3.1-3. This comment is addressed by the detailed discussion provided in Response to Comment 4-2, which provides a detailed discussion regarding the appropriateness of the representative key observation points analyzed in the Draft IS/MND, visual impacts of the 100-foot-tall tower, updates to the project description that are relevant to the visual impacts of the 100-foot-tall tower, and additional conceptual renderings that have been provide to provide clarity regarding the size and scale of the proposed tower from various vantage points. No changes to the IS/MND are necessary as the visual impacts from key observation points have already been analyzed as required under CEQA.
- 6-2 The comment raises concerns about the adequacy of the biology survey buffer and its consideration of the nesting bald eagles, as well as the absence of the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act in the list of applicable laws and regulations. The IS/MND includes a discussion of potential biological impacts and incorporates mitigation measures to protect nesting birds including bald eagles, as well as survey requirements and activity buffers. However, the concerns of the comment are further addressed in detail in Response to Comment 4-17, which identifies that bald eagle are highly unlikely to be adversely impacted by the proposed Project. However, to avoid adverse impacts to nesting eagles, the nesting bird survey distance in Mitigation Measure 3.4-1 was increased to 660 feet. For the reasons described above the proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on bald eagles in the Project area, consistent with the determination identified in the Draft IS/MND.

February 2025

From: [Debbie Cederdahl](#)
To: [Jerry Park](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MY BIG BACKYARD - Lake Natoma Proposed 100-Foot SMUD Tower
Date: Wednesday, October 9, 2024 2:21:33 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Letter 7

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Mr. Park,

I'd like to express my concerns regarding SMUD's proposed administrative office building and telecommunication tower at 102 Woodmere Road in Folsom. I am a daily/weekly user of Lake Natoma and enjoy the unique resources offered by the lake and its surrounding lands. SMUD's proposal to build a 100-foot-tall telecommunication tower on a parcel adjacent to Lake Natoma has the potential to substantially degrade the scenic quality of the Lake Natoma viewshed and to adversely affect resources within the Lake Natoma portion of the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area.

SMUD's September 2024 Initial Study touches on potential visual impacts of the tower, but the Initial Study is insufficient in evaluating and disclosing the visibility and visual impact of the tower from many areas and key viewpoints around Lake Natoma from which the tower would be visible. Additionally, SMUD's assessment fails to acknowledge that the Lake Natoma surface is a key view area for surface water recreationists (e.g., kayakers, paddleboarders, rowers) who visit the lake in a large part due to the scenic quality of the lake and surrounding lands. The visibility of the tower would be inconsistent with the character of the natural areas surrounding the lake and would substantially degrade the viewshed. Without a more thorough assessment of the actual locations on and around Lake Natoma from which the tower would be visible, SMUD's analysis is incomplete by failing to assess and disclose the severity of the tower's visual impact of the tower and by failing to assess mitigation and alternatives to minimize the visual impact.

7-1

SMUD's Initial Study and supporting biological resources study fails to acknowledge the active bald eagle nest that is located less than one mile and in direct line of sight of the proposed tower. (Some photos and information on the eagles, including a spreadsheet with observations of eagle activities this spring and summer is available here: <https://folfaneaglecam.org/>) Without acknowledging the presence of the bald eagle nest, SMUD provides no analysis of the potential effects of tower construction or long-term effects that the tower could have on nesting and foraging eagles. Before pursuing the tower, SMUD needs to assess the potential impacts in terms of whether the project would have the potential to violate the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and SMUD also needs to recognize the aesthetic value that the eagle nest and the presence of the eagles provide to the Lake Natoma environment. Adversely affecting the eagles by causing harm to individual

7-2

and/or causing eagles to abandon the nest would be a significant loss of an important biological and aesthetic resource of Lake Natoma.

7-2 cont.

The business park where SMUD proposes its office building and tower has developed over time with minimal intrusion to the viewshed and resources within and surrounding Lake Natoma. This is largely due to compliance with the development standards for the business park that limit structures to a maximum height of 40 feet. If SMUD wants to develop administrative offices in the business park, SMUD should do so in a manner that complies with the development standards instead of seeking a waiver from those standards. If SMUD cannot develop its administrative offices without an adjacent telecommunications tower, then SMUD should seek an alternative site for its offices that would avoid impacts to the important resources on and around Lake Natoma.

7-3

Thank you for considering my input.



Debbie Cederdahl

Assistant Property Manager

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Letter 7

Debbie Cederdahl
October 9, 2024

- 7-1 The comment expresses concerns about the potential visual impacts of the proposed Project. This comment is addressed by the detailed discussion provided in Response to Comment 4-2, which provides a detailed discussion regarding the appropriateness of the representative key observation points analyzed in the Draft IS/MND, visual impacts of the 100-foot-tall tower, updates to the project description that are relevant to the visual impacts of the 100-foot-tall tower, and additional conceptual renderings that have been provide to provide clarity regarding the size and scale of the proposed tower from various vantage points. No changes to the IS/MND are necessary as the visual impacts from key observation points have already been analyzed as required under CEQA.
- 7-2 The comment raises concerns about the adequacy of the biology survey buffer and its consideration of the nesting bald eagles, as well as the absence of the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act in the list of applicable laws and regulations. The IS/MND includes a discussion of potential biological impacts and incorporates mitigation measures to protect nesting bald eagles, including survey requirements and activity buffers. However, the concerns of the comment are addressed in detail in Response to Comment 4-17, which identifies that bald eagle are highly unlikely to be adversely impacted by the proposed Project. For the reasons described above the proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on bald eagles in the Project area, consistent with the determination identified in the Draft IS/MND. .
- 7-3 The comment notes concerns about compliance with the development standards for the business park and suggests relocating the tower or administrative offices to alternative sites. These concerns, including the rationale for the Project's location and proposed deviation, are addressed in Response to Comment 4-11. The selection of the Project site was based on its ability to meet SMUD's stated objectives for the Project, included on page 6 of the Draft IS/MND, which are to:
- Contribute to SMUD's goals for ensuring electrical service reliability;
 - Provide safe and reliable electrical service to existing and proposed development in the Folsom area and beyond; and
 - Minimize impacts to nearby sensitive receptors and sensitive natural communities.

Further, as described in Response to Comment 4-2, the description of the proposed tower is revised to be a monopine design, which would be a monopole that is designed to resemble a pine tree. No changes to the IS/MND are necessary as the visual impacts from key observation points have already been analyzed as required under CEQA.

February 2025

From: [Fred Kindel](#)
To: [Jerry Park](#)
Cc: [Sharon Kindel](#); [Deborah Grassl](#); [Deb Ozdinski](#); lkatfisher@netscape.net; [Bob Delp](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 100-foot tower
Date: Friday, October 11, 2024 10:54:08 AM

Letter 8

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We object to your proposed 100-foot tower closeby Lake Natoma & American River Parkway. These naural resources are beloved by Sacramento residents. Your tower will degrade the view which is important to maintain. Please locate the tower further away to not intrude on the view. SMUD should be a good neighbor & not bring down our natural resources here we enjoy so much. Thank you.

8-1

Fred & Sharon Kindel, Folsom, CA
Email addresses: f.kindel@att.net & s.kindel@att.net

Letter 8

Fred Kindel
October 11, 2024

- 8-1 The comment objects to the proposed 100-foot tower, expressing concerns about its potential to degrade views near Lake Natoma and the American River Parkway. This comment is addressed by the detailed discussion provided in Responses to Comments 4-2, and 4-13, which provides a detailed discussion regarding the appropriateness of the representative key observation points analyzed in the Draft IS/MND, visual impacts of the 100-foot-tall tower, updates to the project description that are relevant to the visual impacts of the 100-foot-tall tower, and additional conceptual renderings that have been provide to provide clarity regarding the size and scale of the proposed tower from various vantage points. No changes to the IS/MND are necessary as the visual impacts from key observation points have already been analyzed as required under CEQA.

February 2025

From: [JoAnne Obata](#)
To: [Jerry Park](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] SMUD proposal to build a 100-foot-tall telecommunication tower
Date: Thursday, October 10, 2024 5:01:57 PM

Letter 9

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Mr. Park,

This message is to express my concerns regarding SMUD's proposed administrative office building and telecommunication tower at 102 Woodmere Road in Folsom. I am a frequent visitor to Lake Natoma and enjoy the unique resources offered by the lake and its surrounding lands. SMUD's proposal to build a 100-foot-tall telecommunication tower on a parcel adjacent to Lake Natoma has the potential to substantially degrade the scenic quality of the Lake Natoma viewshed and to adversely affect resources within the Lake Natoma portion of the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area.

SMUD's September 2024 Initial Study touches on potential visual impacts of the tower, but the Initial Study is insufficient in evaluating and disclosing the visibility and visual impact of the tower from many areas and key viewpoints around Lake Natoma from which the tower would be visible. Additionally, SMUD's assessment fails to acknowledge that the Lake Natoma surface is a key view area for surface water recreationists (e.g., kayakers, paddleboarders, rowers) who visit the lake in a large part due to the scenic quality of the lake and surrounding lands. The visibility of the tower would be inconsistent with the character of the natural areas surrounding the lake and would substantially degrade the viewshed. Without a more thorough assessment of the actual locations on and around Lake Natoma from which the tower would be visible, SMUD's analysis is incomplete by failing to assess and disclose the severity of the tower's visual impact of the tower and by failing to assess mitigation and alternatives to minimize the visual impact.

9-1

SMUD's Initial Study and supporting biological resources study fails to acknowledge the active bald eagle nest that is located less than one mile and in direct line of sight of the proposed tower. (Some photos and information on the eagles, including a spreadsheet with observations of eagle activities this spring and summer is available here: <https://folfaneaglecam.org/>) Without acknowledging the presence of the bald eagle nest, SMUD provides no analysis of the potential effects of tower construction or long-term effects that the tower could have on nesting and foraging eagles. Before pursuing the tower, SMUD needs to assess the potential impacts in terms of whether the project would have the potential to violate the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and SMUD also needs to recognize the aesthetic value that the eagle nest and the presence of the eagles provide to the Lake Natoma environment. Adversely affecting the eagles by causing harm to individual

9-2

and/or causing eagles to abandon the nest would be a significant loss of an important biological and aesthetic resource of Lake Natoma.

9-2 cont.

The business park where SMUD proposes its office building and tower has developed over time with minimal intrusion to the viewshed and resources within and surrounding Lake Natoma. This is largely due to compliance with the development standards for the business park that limit structures to a maximum height of 40 feet. If SMUD wants to develop administrative offices in the business park, SMUD should do so in a manner that complies with the development standards instead of seeking a waiver from those standards. If SMUD cannot develop its administrative offices without an adjacent telecommunications tower, then SMUD should seek an alternative site for its offices that would avoid impacts to the important resources on and around Lake Natoma.

9-3

Thank you for considering my input.

Sincerely,
JoAnne Obata

Letter 9

JoAnne Obata
October 11, 2024

- 9-1 The comment expresses concerns about the potential visual impacts of the proposed Project. This comment is addressed by the detailed discussion provided in Response to Comment 4-2, which provides a detailed discussion regarding the appropriateness of the representative key observation points analyzed in the Draft IS/MND, visual impacts of the 100-foot-tall tower, updates to the project description that are relevant to the visual impacts of the 100-foot-tall tower, and additional conceptual renderings that have been provide to provide clarity regarding the size and scale of the proposed tower from various vantage points. No changes to the IS/MND are necessary as the visual impacts from key observation points have already been analyzed as required under CEQA.
- 9-2 The comment raises concerns about the adequacy of the biology survey buffer and its consideration of the nesting bald eagles, as well as the absence of the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act in the list of applicable laws and regulations. The IS/MND includes a discussion of potential biological impacts and incorporates mitigation measures to protect nesting bald eagles, including survey requirements and activity buffers. However, the concerns of the comment are addressed in detail in Response to Comment 4-17, which identifies that bald eagle are highly unlikely to be adversely impacted by the proposed Project. For the reasons described above the proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on bald eagles in the Project area, consistent with the determination identified in the Draft IS/MND.
- 9-3 The comment notes concerns about compliance with the development standards for the business park and suggests relocating the tower or administrative offices to alternative sites. These concerns, including the rationale for the Project's location and proposed deviation, are addressed in Response to Comment 4-12. The selection of the Project site was based on its ability to meet SMUD's stated objectives for the Project, included on page 6 of the Draft IS/MND, which are to:
- Contribute to SMUD's goals for ensuring electrical service reliability;
 - Provide safe and reliable electrical service to existing and proposed development in the Folsom area and beyond; and
 - Minimize impacts to nearby sensitive receptors and sensitive natural communities.

Further, as described in Response to Comment 4-2, the description of the proposed tower is revised to be a monopine design, which would be a monopole that is designed to resemble a pine tree. No changes to the IS/MND are necessary as the visual impacts from key observation points have already been analyzed as required under CEQA.

February 2025

From: [Joelle Fondale](#)
To: [Jerry Park](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 100 ft proposed tower in Lake Natoma
Date: Thursday, October 10, 2024 4:28:31 PM

Letter 10

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of SMUD. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mr Park

It has recently come to my attention there is a proposed 100 foot tower at the Smud location in Lake Natoma. While I can understand there is a need to communicate, I am hoping there is a more appropriate place to build this tower. It is my understanding that the maximum building height in this area is 40 feet. I am assuming it was proposed at this height for a reason. I am a consistent user of Lake Natoma and the bike trails. Each time I use these amazing beautiful resources, I count my blessings. I would hate for these highly recreational areas to be changed by the addition of a 100 foot tower. I hope you seriously consider another location for this tower and not place it in the middle of a nearby beautiful resource.

10-1

Sincerely, Joelle Fondale



All the best,

Joelle



<http://Joelle-Fondale.KW.com>

Letter 10

Joelle Fondale
October 10, 2024

- 10-1 The comment expresses concerns about the proposed 100-foot tower at the SMUD location near Lake Natoma, specifically regarding its potential impact on the recreational and scenic value of the area and its inconsistency with the 40-foot height limit. This comment is addressed by the detailed discussion provided in Responses to Comments 4-2, and 4-13, which provides a detailed discussion regarding the appropriateness of the representative key observation points analyzed in the Draft IS/MND, visual impacts of the 100-foot-tall tower, updates to the project description that are relevant to the visual impacts of the 100-foot-tall tower, and additional conceptual renderings that have been provide to provide clarity regarding the size and scale of the proposed tower from various vantage points. No changes to the IS/MND are necessary as the visual impacts from key observation points have already been analyzed as required under CEQA.

February 2025

From: [Keith McDonald](#)
To: [Jerry Park](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Telecommunications Tower
Date: Thursday, October 10, 2024 2:24:25 PM

Letter 11

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of SMUD. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mr. Park,

It has come to my attention that SMUD is planning on building a new administrative building in the Lake Forest business park off of Folsom blvd. Although, I'm not oppose to a new facility for SMUD, I do have concerns about the proposed 100 foot tower adjacent the structure and in the Lake Natoma recreation area.

11-1

I bike, swim and paddle in and around the lake with family and friends on a frequent basis. I'm concerned that a tower of this height would detract from the natural beauty of this area. Lake Natoma is a gem for the Sacramento area and I would hate to see it visual marred by an industrial tower.

I would hope that SMUD has committed to a thorough environmental study before committing to this project. It is my understanding that the City of Folsom has a forty foot limit on new structures. Has a variance been given considering the visual and environmental impact this might have on the avian in that fly away? Have outside communication engineers been consulted for the necessity for a 100 foot tower?

11-2

Mr. Park, I hope the public comment period could be extended so all interested parties could have impute in this matter. Thank you for your time.

Keith McDonald
787 Knight Ln
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762

[Sent from AT&T Yahoo Mail for iPad](#)

Letter 11

Keith McDonald
October 10, 2024

11-1 The comment expresses concerns about the potential visual and environmental impacts of the proposed 100-foot telecommunications tower near Lake Natoma, specifically mentioning its potential to detract from the natural beauty of the area and the recreational experience. This comment is addressed by the detailed discussion provided in Responses to Comments 4-2, and 4-13, which provides a detailed discussion regarding the appropriateness of the representative key observation points analyzed in the Draft IS/MND, visual impacts of the 100-foot-tall tower, updates to the project description that are relevant to the visual impacts of the 100-foot-tall tower, and additional conceptual renderings that have been provide to provide clarity regarding the size and scale of the proposed tower from various vantage points. No changes to the IS/MND are necessary as the visual impacts from key observation points have already been analyzed as required under CEQA.

11-2 The comment raises questions about the City of Folsom's 40-foot height limit, the potential issuance of a variance, the potential impacts to the flyway, and whether external communication engineers have been consulted regarding the tower's height. This comment is addressed in Response to Comment 4-12 which describes the reasoning for height of the proposed tower.

The comment also inquires if a variance has been given considering the visual and environmental impacts of the proposed tower. SMUD will be required to acquire a Planned Development Permit from the City of Folsom through which a SMUD development standards overlay would be applied to the project, as part of approval of the proposed Project. Much of the existing overlay standards would be maintained through the SMUD Planned Development overlay, but changes would include allowing for a communications tower with a maximum height of 100 feet and a reduction in minimum parking standards for office. Response to Comment 4-12 addresses the required approvals and applicability of development standards relevant to the project.

The comment also suggests that the public comment period should be extended. This document provides responses to twelve comment letters received well after the official close of the comment period. No additional changes to the IS/MND are necessary.

February 2025

From: [LeAnn Nienow](#)
To: [Jerry Park](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Proposed 100-foot SMUD Tower near Lake Natoma
Date: Wednesday, October 9, 2024 12:45:28 PM

Letter 12

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of SMUD. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Mr. Park,

This message is to express my concerns regarding SMUD's proposed administrative office building and telecommunication tower at 102 Woodmere Road in Folsom. I am a frequent visitor to Lake Natoma and enjoy the unique resources offered by the lake and its surrounding lands. SMUD's proposal to build a 100-foot-tall telecommunication tower on a parcel adjacent to Lake Natoma has the potential to substantially degrade the scenic quality of the Lake Natoma viewshed and to adversely affect resources within the Lake Natoma portion of the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area.

SMUD's September 2024 Initial Study touches on potential visual impacts of the tower, but the Initial Study is insufficient in evaluating and disclosing the visibility and visual impact of the tower from many areas and key viewpoints around Lake Natoma from which the tower would be visible. Additionally, SMUD's assessment fails to acknowledge that the Lake Natoma surface is a key view area for surface water recreationists (e.g., kayakers, paddleboarders, rowers) who visit the lake in a large part due to the scenic quality of the lake and surrounding lands. The visibility of the tower would be inconsistent with the character of the natural areas surrounding the lake and would substantially degrade the viewshed. Without a more thorough assessment of the actual locations on and around Lake Natoma from which the tower would be visible, SMUD's analysis is incomplete by failing to assess and disclose the severity of the tower's visual impact of the tower and by failing to assess mitigation and alternatives to minimize the visual impact.

12-1

SMUD's Initial Study and supporting biological resources study fails to acknowledge the active bald eagle nest that is located less than one mile and in direct line of sight of the proposed tower. (Some photos and information on the eagles, including a spreadsheet with observations of eagle activities this spring and summer is available here: <https://folfeaglecam.org/>) Without acknowledging the presence of the bald eagle nest, SMUD provides no analysis of the potential effects of tower construction or long-term effects that the tower could have on nesting and foraging eagles. Before pursuing the tower, SMUD needs to assess the potential impacts in terms of whether the project would have the potential to violate the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and SMUD also needs to recognize the aesthetic value that the eagle nest and the presence of the eagles provide to the Lake Natoma environment. Adversely affecting the eagles by causing harm to individual and/or causing eagles to abandon the nest would be a significant loss of an important biological and aesthetic resource of Lake Natoma.

12-2

The business park where SMUD proposes its office building and tower has developed over time with minimal intrusion to the viewshed and resources within and surrounding Lake Natoma. This is largely due to compliance with the development standards for the business park that limit structures to a maximum height of 40 feet. If SMUD wants to develop administrative offices in the business park, SMUD should do so in a manner that complies with the development standards instead of seeking a waiver from those standards. If SMUD cannot develop its administrative offices

12-3

without an adjacent telecommunications tower, then SMUD should seek an alternative site for its offices that would avoid impacts to the important resources on and around Lake Natoma.

12-3 cont.

Thank you for considering my input.

Sincerely,
LeAnn Nienow
916.834.3665

Letter 12

LeAnn Nienow
October 9, 2024

- 12-1 The comment expresses concerns about the potential visual impacts of the proposed Project. This comment is addressed by the detailed discussion provided in Response to Comment 4-2, which provides a detailed discussion regarding the appropriateness of the representative key observation points analyzed in the Draft IS/MND, visual impacts of the 100-foot-tall tower, updates to the project description that are relevant to the visual impacts of the 100-foot-tall tower, and additional conceptual renderings that have been provide to provide clarity regarding the size and scale of the proposed tower from various vantage points. No changes to the IS/MND are necessary as the visual impacts from key observation points have already been analyzed as required under CEQA.
- 12-2 The comment raises concerns about the adequacy of the biology survey buffer and its consideration of the nesting bald eagles, as well as the absence of the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) in the list of applicable laws and regulations. The IS/MND includes a discussion of potential biological impacts and incorporates mitigation measures to protect nesting bald eagles, including survey requirements and activity buffers. However, the concerns of the comment are addressed in detail in Response to Comment 4-17, which identifies that bald eagle are highly unlikely to be adversely impacted by the proposed Project. For the reasons described above the proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on bald eagles in the Project area, consistent with the determination identified in the Draft IS/MND. Moreover, the BGEPA only prohibits “take” of eagles. It does not regulate projects, such as this, that have no meaningful potential to cause take.
- 12-3 The comment notes concerns about compliance with the development standards for the business park and suggests relocating the tower or administrative offices to alternative sites. These concerns, including the rationale for the Project’s location and proposed deviation, are addressed in Response to Comment 4-12. The selection of the Project site was based on its ability to meet SMUD’s stated objectives for the Project, included on page 6 of the Draft IS/MND, which are to:
- Contribute to SMUD’s goals for ensuring electrical service reliability;
 - Provide safe and reliable electrical service to existing and proposed development in the Folsom area and beyond; and
 - Minimize impacts to nearby sensitive receptors and sensitive natural communities.

Further, as described in Response to Comment 4-2, the description of the proposed tower is revised to be a monopine design, which would be a monopole that is designed to resemble a

pine tree. No changes to the IS/MND are necessary as the visual impacts from key observation points have already been analyzed as required under CEQA.

February 2025



Save the American River Association

8836 Greenback Lane, Suite C • Orangevale, CA 95662
916-936-4555 • E-mail: info@SARAriverwatch.org • www.SARAriverwatch.org

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October 14, 2024

Letter 13

Sacramento Municipal Utility District
Board of Directors and Customer Services Committee
Energy Resources Committee

Via email to: PublicComment@smud.org
cc: Jerry.Park@smud.org

**Subject: Letter of Opposition to IS/MND re. Folsom
Administrative Operations Building Project, including 100-foot
Communications Tower**

We (Save the American River Association/SARA) respectfully request that you review and respond to the attached letter with appendices that we have just received from a concerned friend of the river.

The letter has influenced us to request that the SMUD Board of Directors decline to adopt the IS/MND and that you direct staff to engage in further study and analysis of the Project's aesthetic/visual and biological/environmental impacts on one of the region's most sensitive areas.

We emphasize that the proposed construction is situated next to a federally recognized Wild and Scenic River, in an area additionally protected by the American River Parkway Plan (now a California statute) and by the constraints of the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area.

Among many concerns we emphasize the following:

- the continuing presence of nesting bald eagles;
- the fact that the area is protected from visual intrusion from surrounding development; the proposed 100-foot tower is of special concern.

For details underlying our opposition to the project its current form, please see the attachment.

Sincerely,



Warren Truitt
President, SARA

13-1

February 2025

October 15, 2024

Sacramento Municipal Utility District
Board of Directors and Energy Resources and Customer Services Committee
via email to: PublicComment@smud.org
cc: Jerry Park via email to Jerry.Park@smud.org

**Subject: Sacramento Municipal Utility District Folsom Administrative
Operations Building Project**

Dear SMUD Board of Directors and ERCS Committee Members:

Save the American River Association (SARA) is a grass roots non-profit organization founded in 1961 to spearhead the establishment of the American River Parkway — the "crown jewel" of the Sacramento County Park System — and adoption of the American River Parkway Plan 2008. Our mission is to protect and enhance the wildlife habitat, fishery, and recreational resources of the American River Parkway. Our volunteer, non-profit group of members and Board of Directors work to ensure that the American River Parkway will survive and prosper for the benefit of future generations.

13-1
cont.

Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) staff are recommending that on October 15th the SMUD Energy Resources and Customer Services (ERCS) Committee consider, and that on October 17th the SMUD Board of Directors adopt, the September 2024 Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the Sacramento Municipal Utility District Folsom Administrative Operations Building Project (Project). For reasons outlined in this letter, SARA respectfully requests that the SMUD Board of Directors decline to adopt the IS/MND and direct staff to provide further study of the Project's aesthetic/visual impacts prior to SMUD's reconsideration of adoption or certification of an environmental document for the Project for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

A primary concern to SARA is the aesthetic/visual impact of the proposed 100-foot-tall tower within the immediate view of the public using lands surrounding Lake Natoma and much of the water surface of Lake Natoma. Lake Natoma provides a unique and important regional resource with important and well-documented biological, cultural, recreational, and scenic resources. SARA recognizes SMUD's vital role as an electric utility service provider in the Sacramento region, and encourages SMUD to receive and consider these comments in the interest of ensuring that SMUD continues its exemplary service while expanding its offices and equipment in a manner that minimizes environmental impacts within one of the region's most environmentally important and visually sensitive areas.

13-2

SMUD proposes to construct and operate an approximately 100,000-square-foot administrative office building and a 100-foot-tall communications tower on a vacant six-acre parcel located at 102 Woodmere Road in the City of Folsom. Site improvements would include parking, lighting, landscaping, security features, driveway access, utilities, and street frontage improvements. The Project site is on a parcel within the Lake Forest Technical Center, and located immediately adjacent to open space lands and Lake Natoma within the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area (FLSRA) managed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks).

As discussed herein, SMUD's IS/MND provides an insufficient description of the Project, presents visual simulations that fail to meaningfully demonstrate the visibility of the tower from sensitive viewpoints, and fails to consider and disclose the full range of sensitive view locations and viewers within the Lake Natoma area. Notably, SMUD's proposed tower would be visible from up to approximately 160 acres of the Lake Natoma surface which is a primary feature of the Lake Natoma-unit of the Folsom Lake SRA and is used by thousands of people each year who enjoy the unique and peaceful setting of Lake Natoma and its surrounding landscape; yet SMUD's IS/MND provides no analysis of the impact of the tower to views from the surface of Lake Natoma.

13-2
cont.

Attachment A to this letter provides a selection of exhibits prepared to support and demonstrate argument herein. Figure A-1 illustrates the approximately 160-acre surface area portion of Lake Natoma from which we estimate there would be a direct view of the upper portion of the proposed tower. Figure A-2 provides a location index and explanation of sightline profile cross-sections prepared to demonstrate the portion of the tower anticipated to be visible within the line of sight from various view locations around and on Lake Natoma.

Please consider the concerns discussed below, and ensure a more comprehensive and complete assessment of the Project's visual impacts is performed prior to adoption of an environmental document for the Project.

1. SMUD's Project Description Lacks Information Sufficient to Support Impact Analysis and Conclusions in the IS/MND

CEQA Courts have held that, "[a]n accurate and complete project description is necessary for an intelligent evaluation of the potential environmental impacts of the agency's action. Only through an accurate view of the project may affected outsiders and public decision-makers balance the proposal's benefit against its environmental cost, consider mitigation measures, assess the advantage of terminating the proposal...and weigh other alternatives in the balance." (*Save Our Capitol! v. Department of General Services* (2023), Cal.App.5th, citing others).

The Project description of SMUD's IS/MND provides the following in describing SMUD's proposed communications tower, "[t]he Project would include a communications tower approximately 100 feet in height, located at the northeast corner of the Project site" (Draft IS/MND, pg. 10) and the IS/MND includes a Figure 4, "Conceptual Site Design," that shows the proposed (or at least conceptual) location of the tower.

13-3

The IS/MND Project description does not describe the design of the tower (e.g., mono-pole, free-standing lattice, guyed lattice), does not describe or present the proposed tower color, does not describe or present the proposed types of communication equipment that would be placed on the tower (e.g., dishes, antennae, conduit), and does not discuss whether the tower would include or require lighting. Without an understanding of these basic design components, it is not possible for the public and decision-makers to fully understand and assess the visibility and degree of visual impact that the tower would have from offsite view locations.

Although one of SMUD's three photosimulations in the IS/MND (Figure 3.1-2, Key Observation Point 1 [KOP 1]) represent what appears to be a free-standing, steel lattice tower, the IS/MND does not describe that this is the actual tower design that

is proposed and does not provide other detail about the design. Additionally, the KOP 1 simulation includes an antenna that appears to extend approximately 10 feet above the top of the steel lattice tower. However, the IS/MND provides no discussion of whether SMUD proposes that the top of such antenna would be limited to a maximum height of 100 feet or if SMUD intends that antennae would be allowed to extend even farther above the height of the 100-foot tower. Without a sufficient description of the proposed tower, it is impossible to fully understand and evaluate the visual impacts of the tower. SMUD's IS/MND must be revised to provide sufficient detail for a meaningful evaluation of the proposed tower.

13-3
cont.

The Project description of SMUD's IS/MND provides the following in describing SMUD's proposed landscaping, "[l]andscape strips with perimeter trees would be located in the landscaped areas along the northwest and east sides of the project site, within the perimeter fence" (Draft IS/MND pg. 10) and the IS/MND identifies interior and exterior landscape strips on Figure 4, "Conceptual Site Design." However, the IS/MND does not include a landscaping plan and does not identify the types of plants/trees that would be used for landscaping. Yet, the visual simulations and impact analysis presented in the IS/MND rely on the presence of trees along the Project site perimeter to conclude that landscaping would mitigate the visual impact of SMUD's proposed building and tower, stating, "views of the buildings and communications tower from the west of the Project site would be mostly obscured by screening trees."

13-4

Further, IS/MND Figure 3.1-3 presents a simulated view toward the Project site which includes simulated trees, one of which appears to be gratuitously positioned to block what would otherwise be a view of SMUD's proposed tower. Yet, neither the IS/MND Project description nor the visual impact analysis provide any discussion of the types of trees, their height, their degree of maturity in the simulation, or even if such a tree species exists that could be used for perimeter landscaping and achieve the screening necessary to mitigate the visual impact.

13-5

The absence of even a conceptual landscaping plan that identifies plant and tree types that would achieve the optimistic screening presented in the analysis renders SMUD's Project description incomplete and insufficient for presenting a meaningful understanding of the Project and its visual impacts. Furthermore, the reliance on landscaping to avoid significant visual impacts (from one particular view location) without a sufficient landscaping plan and landscaping performance standards is deferred mitigation and impermissible under CEQA.

For an adequate CEQA document, SMUD must revise and expand the level of Project design detail and performance standards/commitments in the IS/MND Project description.

2. The IS/MND Analysis of Effects on Scenic Vistas is Insufficient

Section 3.1, "Aesthetics," of the IS/MNM (Draft IS/MND pp. 21-29) discusses that, "[e]levated views of Lake Natoma and the American River Parkway from surrounding bluffs provide remarkable scenery and are considered a scenic vista." To assess the magnitude of the Project impact on views from scenic vistas, the analysis the appears to rely solely on a single "key observation point" (KOP 3) and a photographic simulation toward the Project site from KOP 3. The analysis concludes that "due to distance and intervening vegetation, the proposed development would be nearly indistinguishable from surrounding development

13-6

when viewed from the western shore of Lake Natoma. The Project would blend with the surrounding existing business development and would not have a substantial adverse effect on this scenic vista." (Draft IS/MND pp. 21-22)

As shown on IS/MND Figure 3.1-1, KOP 3 is located adjacent to a residential development to the northwest of the Project site. Though not identified in the IS/MND, KOP 3 is approximately 2,400 feet from the Project site. The IS/MND conclusion that the Project would blend with the surrounding development is flawed. Although the visual simulation downplays the visibility of the tower (a zoom into the simulated view shows the tower merely as a few grey pixels), at a distance of 2,400 feet, the Project's tower would be readily apparent in the view and would present a new, unnatural/cultural component to the viewshed. The human eye can easily and clearly see a 100-foot tower from a distance of 2,400 feet, regardless of whether that same clarity is presented in a photographic simulation.

13-6
cont.

Additionally, by selecting a view location at an elevation above much of the lands surrounding Lake Natoma and all of the water surface of Lake Natoma, this viewpoint is not representative of the many scenic vistas and other areas surrounding Lake Natoma. Looking down toward the Project site and technology center as from KOP 3, development in the technology center is visible. However, from the multitude of other locations and areas from which the tower would be visible, the more natural setting of Lake Natoma is dominant and the proposed tower would represent a conflicting element and significant adverse visual effect. To demonstrate, Figure A-4 in Attachment A of this letter is a GoogleEarth streetview image from a viewpoint along the bike trail inline with the KOP 3 sightline toward the Project (see Figure A-3 for sightline cross-section profile). The Figure A-4 viewpoint is a lower elevation than KOP 3 and along a bike trail that has much higher use than the KOP 3 viewpoint. Figure A-4 includes a 100-foot-tall three-dimensional block illustration situation at the proposed tower location. The 3D block is "clamped to the ground" to accurately demonstrate the height of the tower as seen from the Figure A-4 viewpoint along the bike trail. As shown, in Figures A-3 and A-4, the tower would extend above the view horizon, as opposed to blending with adjacent development in the technology center as represented in the KOP 3 simulation of the IS/MND.

13-7

To sufficiently evaluate the Project impact to views from scenic vistas, SMUD must first inventory and identify scenic vistas from which the Project would be visible. Lands within the Folsom Lake SRA to the west of Lake Natoma contain a multitude of view locations that have panoramic views of Lake Natoma and its surrounding undeveloped lands and which the tower would be visible. The IS/MND's focus on just one location without establishing a methodology or rationale for how that location was selected and how it might be considered representative of the multitude of other scenic vistas around the lake render the impact analysis cursory and insufficient as substantial evidence to conclude that the Project would not have a significant effect on scenic vistas.

3. The IS/MND Analysis of the Project Impacts to the Quality of Public Views of the Site and Surrounding Areas is Insufficient

CEQA requires that the analysis of a project's impacts include enough detail to enable those who did not participate in the preparation of the environmental document to understand and to consider meaningfully the impacts of the Project. Under the CEQA Guidelines, an environmental document "should be prepared with

13-8

a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decisionmakers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences." (CEQA Guidelines, section 15151.) The IS/MND assessment of whether the Project would substantially degrade the existing visual character of public views of the site and its surroundings fails to meet this standard.

First, the analysis identifies three "key observation points (KOPs)" that "were selected for focused evaluation of the Project's potential effects on public views." The IS/MND provides no discussion of how the KOPs were selected and the IS/MND provides no discussion for why the three KOPs are sufficient for an adequate analysis. The IS/MND discusses that the KOPs "provide a range of public viewpoints located within the visually sensitive American River Parkway," yet, only two (KOP 2 and KOP 3) of the three KOPs are within the American River Parkway and the two KOPs are insufficient to adequately present and assess visual impacts from the multitude of locations and viewers within the lands surrounding Lake Natoma and the surface waters of Lake Natoma.

The IS/MND discusses that, "KOP 2 represents short-range views of cyclists and other recreationists using the Jedediah Smith Memorial Trail/American River Bike Trail immediately west of the Project site." While KOP 2 is a viewpoint "immediately west of the Project site" that is the only viewpoint for which KOP 2 is representative and renders the evaluation and conclusion regarding impacts to views from KOP 2 similarly limited to that specific point. The viewpoint and simulation is not representative of many other bike trail, dirt trail, and shoreline areas within the lands surrounding Lake Natoma. Furthermore, the KOP 2 impact analysis in the IS/MND is premised on a gratuitously placed landscape tree, the presence of which is not ensured through any mechanism presented in the IS/MND Project description or any mitigation measure identified in the IS/MND. At best, the visual impact to the view from KOP 2 might be mitigated were SMUD to identify and commit to planting a tree of sufficient height and opacity to actually screen views of the tower; but no such mitigation is provided. Worse, one need only step a few feet to the left from the KOP 2 viewpoint, and the Project tower would be predominantly visible to the left of the simulated tree. At a minimum, to make KOP 2 useful in disclosing the Project's impacts, SMUD's analysis needs to present a visual simulation from KOP 2 that provides the actual appearance of the proposed tower without obscuring it with a speculative landscape tree.

Furthermore, the IS/MND analysis of KOP 2 attempts to downplay the visual impact by suggesting that other buildings, fencing, and utilities are present along this segment of bike trail and are "relatively consistent with the presence of a communications tower." SARA disputes this notion. While such features are present, they are not characteristically similar to a massive 100-foot-tall communication tower. Additionally, although acknowledging these existing features, nowhere in the IS/MND is there analysis or discussion of the cumulative visual impact associated with the Project tower in consideration of these existing buildings, fences, and utilities.

The IS/MND discusses that "KOP 3 represents mid-range views of the eastern shore of Lake Natoma from Arden Bluff which sits at a higher elevation than the Project site on the west side of Lake Natoma... at a trailhead that connects the Arden Bluff neighborhood...with the...American River Bike Trail." While KOP 3 is representative of that particular view, it is not representative of views from the many

13-8
cont.

13-9

other bike trail, dirt trail, and shoreline areas within the lands surrounding Lake Natoma.

To provide adequate disclosure at evaluation of the Project's visual impact, SMUD must more fully assess viewpoints from areas surrounding and on the surface of Lake Natoma.

Attachment A of this letter provides representative locations and cross-section illustrations to demonstrate the anticipated visibility of SMUD's proposed tower. While the locations and cross-sections are just a small sampling of the views that should be considered, they provide substantial evidence that the Project tower would be a dominant visual feature that would degrade the natural and scenic qualities of the Lake Natoma viewshed.

13-9
cont.

Furthermore, SMUD must disclose and assess the Project's visual impact to views from the Lake Natoma surface as would be visible to perhaps the most visual sensitive viewers – kayakers, paddleboarders, sailors, and rowers – that come to Lake Natoma for recreation and to enjoy its unique visual character and outstanding visual quality. Figure A-1 in Attachment A of this letter illustrates the estimated approximately 160 acres of Lake Natoma surface from which the tower would be partially visible. Figure A-6 illustrates a sightline cross-section profile from a representative location on the lake surface west of the Project site. SMUD's IS/MND must recognize the viewer sensitive and Project impacts from the vast and important viewing area that the Lake Natoma water surface provides.

4. The Project would Conflict with Regulations Governing Scenic Quality

Section 3.1, "Aesthetics," of the IS/MND (Draft IS/MND pp. 21-29) discusses that, "the Project would be required to obtain a Planned Development Permit from the City of Folsom for the proposed communications tower to exceed the maximum height standard established for the Project site. The Project is designed to be consistent with the applicable zoning and development standards related to design and aesthetics including requirements for neutral colored building exteriors, shielded lighting, and landscape screening, and would be subject to review by the City of Folsom Planning Commission to achieve desired city standards."

13-10

First, as discussed above, the IS/MND Project description provides very little information about the specific Project design and does not support the visual analysis statement that, "the Project is designed to be consistent with applicable development standards." Instead, SMUD's approach defers Project design detail until some future time after SMUD's intended adoption of the IS/MND. However, for SMUD's' analysis to conclude the Project would not conflict with applicable zoning and regulations, SMUD must sufficiently identify Project design that complies with applicable zoning and regulations. SMUD's failure to do so in the IS/MND at best constitutes deferred mitigation and is impermissible under CEQA.

More pointedly, the Project's proposed 100-foot-tall tower would be in direct conflict with applicable regulations governing scenic quality.

The "Development Standards for Lake Forest Technical Center" (Development Standards) were adopted by the City of Folsom through Ordinance No. 425 in 1981 and are applicable to the Project site. The Development Standards expressly state their purpose and intent to, "mitigate and/or avoid potential impacts of industrial development adjacent to the unique and sensitive open space lands along Lake

13-11

Natoma and Willow Creek.” With regard to building height, the Development Standards expressly state, “[n]o building, antenna, nor structure of any kind shall exceed the height of forty (40) feet above the established building grade for the site.”

The Project’s proposed 100-foot-tall tower would be 2.5 times taller than the maximum height allowed by the Development Standards. SMUD’s analysis and conclusions in the IS/MND are premised on the assumption that the City of Folsom will make a special exception for the Project allowing for the tower. But such a conclusion is flawed or would require a disingenuous review and waiver from the City.

First, the Development Standards allow for special exceptions only when, “there exist circumstances in the nature of the use(s) or its special design needs that make strict enforcement impractical or out of character with the intent of the standards and that the design of the project is consistent with the intent of these standards.” A waiver of the Development Standards’ 40-foot height limit to allow for a 100-foot tower simply cannot reasonably meet the exception criteria requiring a showing that the tower is “consistent with the intent of these standards.” Moreover, even if the City were to somehow determine that the Project’s tower qualified for the exception, the tower would still conflict with the Development Standard height limit. In such an instance, SMUD’s Project and tower might be found to comply with City regulations by obtaining a waiver, but would nevertheless still conflict with the applicable height regulation and represent a significant impact under CEQA.

5. The IS/MND Fails to Fully Assess the Project’s Potential to Conflict with American River Parkway Plan and Folsom Lake SRA General Plan and Resource Management Plan Policies

Section 3.11, “Land Use and Planning,” of the IS/MND discusses the Project’s potential to cause a significant impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

Section 3.11 identifies two land use plans for assessment of potentially applicable policies – the City of Folsom General Plan and the American River Parkway Plan (ARPP). SARA does not address the Folsom General Plan in this letter, and focuses our input on the ARPP and as well as the 2010 Folsom Lake State Recreation Area (SRA) General Plan and Resource Management Plan (Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP) discussion of which is absent from SMUD’s IS/MND.

SMUD’s IS/MND provides a very brief discussion of the ARPP, stating that, “[t]he American River Parkway Plan (Sacramento County 2008) provides guidance for land use decisions affecting the Parkway and specifically addresses the preservation, use, development, and administration of the Parkway,” and concluding that, “Project activities would be limited to the Project site and would not encroach on the Parkway during construction or operation. The Project would not conflict with implementation of the American River Parkway Plan.” SMUD’s analysis of the ARPP fails to acknowledge that the ARPP incorporates the Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP in its entirety by reference. The 2008 ARPP states, “California State Parks and Reclamation are currently developing a new combined General Plan/Resource Management Plan for both the Folsom Powerhouse SHP and

13-11
cont.

13-12

Folsom Lake SRA, including the Lake Natoma sub-unit. Upon adoption, this plan is adopted by reference into the American River Parkway Plan.” (ARPP, pg. 204)

It is unclear why SMUD’s analysis provided such a cursory review of the ARPP and more thorough consideration of the plan is warranted. The ARPP provides substantial evidence of the importance of important view locations and viewsheds that SMUD entirely omits from its analysis. For example, the ARPP discusses the Lake Overlook as follows (ARPP, pp. 209-210):

Lake Overlook: Located between Nimbus Dam and Mississippi Bar at the southern end of Lake Natoma, this zone is relatively unknown to all but local users—this despite the fact that its steep oak-studded ridges and canyons are such a visually dominant part of landscape here. Lake Overlook offers arguably the park’s most dramatic and high quality panorama across Lake Natoma and the Sierra Foothills to the north and the Sacramento Valley and Mt. Diablo to the south. A paved parking area is the only facility currently provided. Comprehensive site planning and design are needed to enhance the recreation and interpretive opportunities of the area and take advantage of the extraordinary visual setting.

13-12
cont.

SMUD’s exclusion of this location from a viewpoint inventory and the IS/MND’s omission of this and similar information renders the evaluation of the Project’s potential to conflict with the ARPP incomplete and insufficient.

Additionally, the Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP (of which SMUD’s IS/MND makes no mention) includes important policies associated with avoiding and minimizing impacts of adjacent development on resources within the Lake Natoma Unit of the Folsom Lake SRA. (The Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP is publicly available at the following webpage:

https://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/21299/files/FLSRA_GP_RMP_Vol1_Final_Plan.pdf
)

Section III.f, “Visual Resources and Aesthetics,” of the Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP discusses that the Folsom Lake SRA “represents a significant visual and scenic resource within the region offering a combination of panoramic views and distinctive landscape features. Situated where the Central Valley meets the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, the SRA includes a variety of landscapes from rugged canyons along the American River forks, to the rolling hills and upland plateaus above Folsom Lake, to the bluffs and broad river plain of Lake Natoma. ... the resulting lakefront setting affords visitors with dramatic panoramas of the lakes, the surrounding natural landscape, and cultural resource features.” The plan identifies a visual resources goal of, “[p]rotection and enhancement of views and distinctive landscape features that contribute to the SRA’s setting, character, and visitor experience.”

13-13

Visual Protection guidelines/policies in the Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP include:

Visual-2: Work with local jurisdictions in the land use planning and development process to protect key views in the SRA from continued visual intrusion from surrounding development. This will include appropriate general planned land use designations, zoning to regulate such matters as building height and setbacks, ridgeline protection ordinances that help protect visual resources of the SRA, and rigorous development review and enforcement.

SMUD's IS/MND makes no mention of the Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP or its visual resources protection goals and guidelines/policies and, therefore, fails to provide any analysis of the Project's potential to conflict with relevant goals and guidelines/policies. With regard to guideline Visual-2 quoted above, the guideline establishes the important role of coordination among local agencies and State Parks for land use planning and development to protect key views in the SRA from visual intrusion from surrounding development. Yet, with SMUD's apparent neglect to consider the Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP and foster the intended coordination specified in Visual-2, it appears that the land use planning coordination envisioned by Visual-2 has not occurred. Visual-2 anticipates "rigorous development review and enforcement," yet SMUD's intent to request variances from the City of Folsom to allow SMUD's proposed tower to exceed applicable Development Standard height regulations is clearly in conflict with rigorous enforcement of established development standards. Thus, in the absence of substantial evidence to the contrary, the IS/MND analysis must conclude that the Project would conflict with Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP policies intended for visual resources protection and consider this a significant visual impact and land use plan conflict.

13-13
cont.

Without identifying Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP guidelines/policies associated with avoiding/reducing environmental impacts, SMUD has not met its CEQA obligation to assess the Project's potential to conflict with such policies.

6. The IS/MND Fails to Disclose and Mitigate for Impacts to Trees Protected Under the City of Folsom Tree Preservation Ordinance

The IS/MND Biological Resources section discusses that, "[t]he Project could require the removal of a few interior, live oak trees that are currently within the Project site. However, pursuant to subsection 12.16.050(C)(11) of the Folsom Municipal Code, SMUD is exempt from the requirements of City's Tree Preservation Ordinance, as a public utility performing tree removal activities to maintain a safe operation of SMUD facilities."

First, the Biological Resources Assessment (BRA) (IS/MND Appendix B) and IS/MND evaluation of potential impacts to protect trees is incomplete. The BRA discusses that, "[t]he proposed Project could require the removal of a few interior live oak trees that are currently within the Project site. If these trees are proposed for removal, an arborist survey should be conducted to determine the diameter at breast height (DBH) and assess the proposed Project impacts." This analysis fails to disclose and assess tree removal and the impacts of tree removal. According to the IS/MND conceptual site plan (Figure 4), the entire Project site would be graded/developed for the Project and any existing trees would require removal. Additionally, the grading could affect the root zones of trees adjacent to the site, resulting in damage to or loss of those adjacent trees. While this loss would have biological resource impacts that also need to be assessed and disclosed, SARA is particularly concerned with the visual impact associated with the loss of native vegetation and oak trees. SMUD's analysis must evaluate and disclose the Project's actual impact on native vegetation, including oak trees and other trees on and near the property.

13-14

Additionally, although the IS/MND asserts that the Project is not subject to the City's Tree Preservation Ordinance, the cited exception provision is for "public and private utilities performing tree pruning or removal activities as is necessary to maintain a safe operation of their facilities." While SMUD might want the Project to be exempt

13-15

from the tree preservation ordinance, the IS/MND does not provide sufficient rationale to support the assertion that the Project qualifies for this exemption. The City's tree preservation ordinance requires that a tree defined as "protected" under the Ordinance cannot be approved for removal unless a finding is made that, "there are no Reasonable Alternative Measures to allow for use of the property consistent with the Zoning Code." Without evidence of a basis for how such a finding could be made, SMUD must seek reasonable alternative measures to preserve any trees on the site that fit the category of "protected" under the City's ordinance.

Folsom Municipal Code section 12.16.010 expresses the purpose and intent of the Tree Preservation Ordinance as follows:

A. Purpose. Trees are both community and environmental assets, unique in their ability to provide a multitude of benefits that appreciate over time. In addition to many others, these benefits include life-giving oxygen, filtration of air pollutants, protection from heat and ultra-violet radiation, energy savings, reduced Heat Island effect, habitat for wildlife, carbon sequestration, and improvement of property values. The purpose of this chapter is to advance these aesthetic, economic, environmental, and social contributions of the City's Urban Forest through the creation and preservation of tree resources. In order to promote the public health, safety and general welfare, enhance the beauty of Folsom and to complement and strengthen zoning, subdivision and land use standards and regulations, while at the same time recognizing individual rights to develop private property, the City Council finds it necessary to establish standards and measures for the preservation of trees.

The purpose and intent of the City's Tree Preservation Ordinance includes protection of trees for their aesthetic and environmental contribution. If SMUD's Project would result in the removal of protected trees, the visual impact of the removal of those trees must be evaluated and disclosed – regardless of whether SMUD obtains an exemption to the ordinance. Moreover, if SMUD somehow does achieve an exemption from the City's Tree Preservation Ordinance, SMUD's impact associated with removal of any protected trees would not be avoided, and instead the impact would be exacerbated as SMUD would not be required to fulfill the Tree Preservation Ordinance's otherwise applicable mitigation requirements.

The Project's impact to protected trees must be evaluated, disclosed, and mitigated sufficient to avoid significant biological and visual impacts.

7. The IS/MND Fails to Acknowledge the Presence of and Potential Impacts to Nesting Bald Eagles

The IS/MND fails to acknowledge the presence of an active bald eagle nest within less than 1 mile and in direct line of sight of SMUD's proposed tower. Effects on foraging habitat, potential eagle interaction/injury associated with the tower, or other impacts to the nesting eagles would not just be a biological resources impact, but would also have a detrimental effect on the aesthetic benefit that the presence of the eagle nest and eagles provide to the Lake Natoma area. (Photographs and information about these eagles, including a spreadsheet with observations of eagle activities this spring and summer is available at the following publicly accessible website: <https://folfaneaglecam.org/>) Without a proposed design of the tower (e.g., guy wires, placement of dishes/antenna, etc.) and without assessing potential effects on bald eagle associated with the presence of the tower and the loss of

13-15
cont.

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foraging habitat on the Project site, SMUD cannot definitely determine potential effects on the nesting eagles.

13-16
cont.

Conclusion

For the reasons discussed above, SARA objects to the Project as currently described and evaluated, and urges SMUD to conduct a more thorough assessment of the aesthetic/visual impacts of the Project and to consider alternatives to the proposed 100-foot tower.

Attachment A – Images and Illustrations

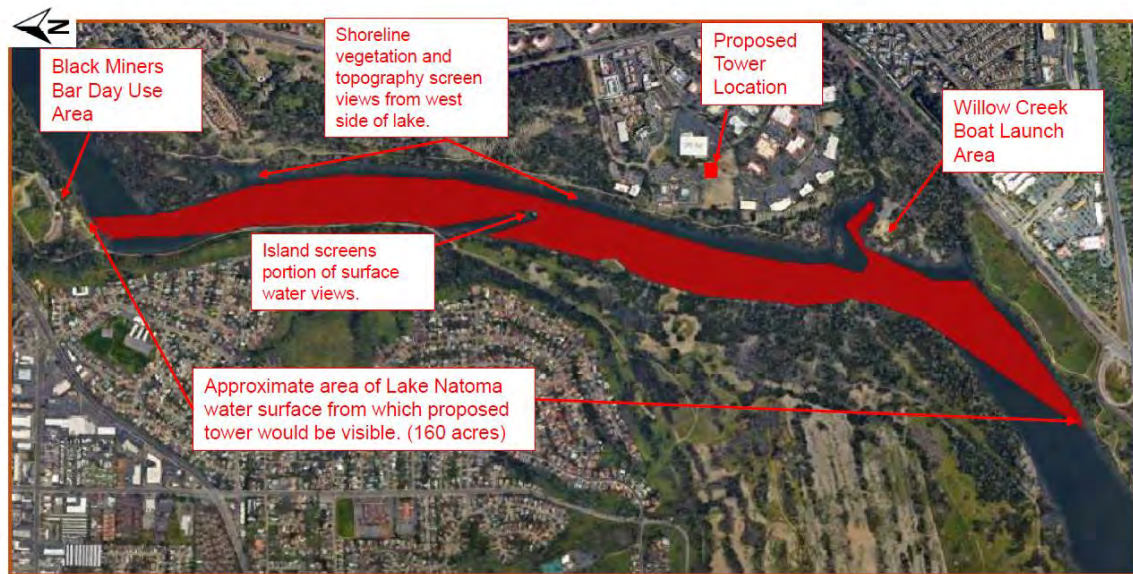
**Attachment A
Images and Illustrations**



Lake Natoma at sunset with crew teams.

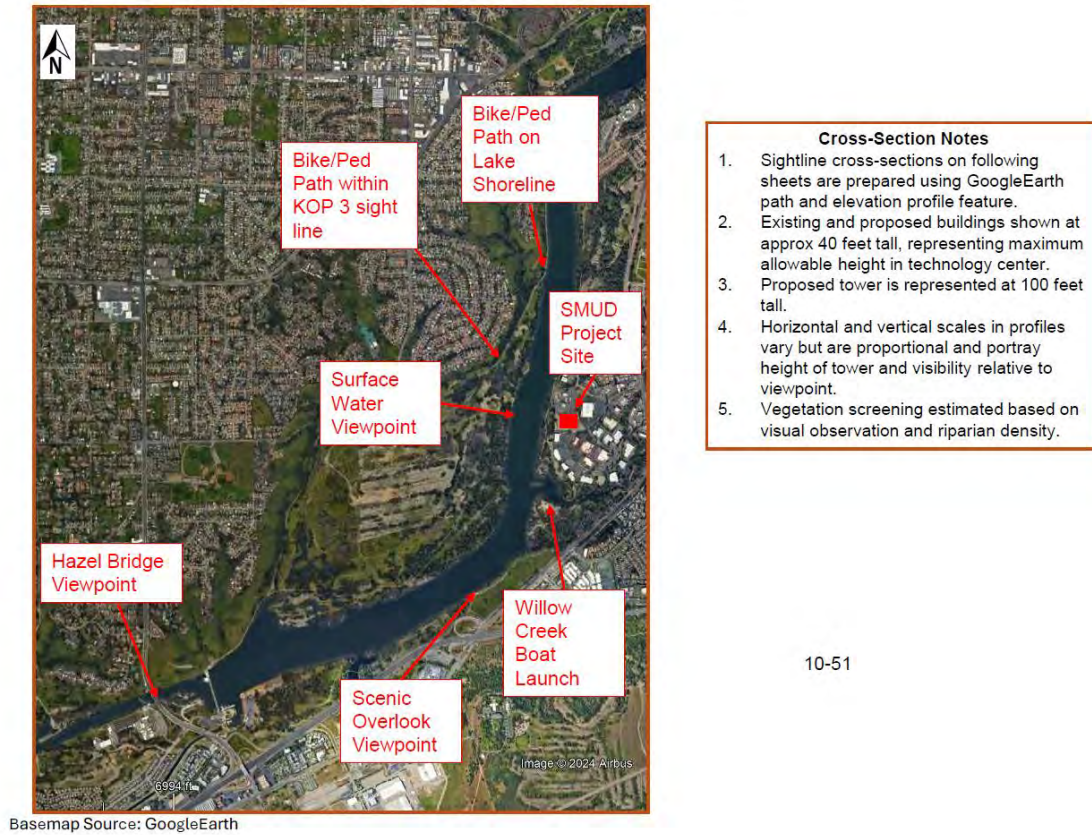
Figure A-1

160-acre surface area of Lake Natoma within which SMUD's proposed tower is expected to be partial visible.



Basemap Source: GoogleEarth

Figure A-2
Locations of Sightline Cross-Section View Locations



10-51

Figure A-3

Sightline cross-section illustration for viewpoint from bike/ped trail inline with KOP 3 sightline.

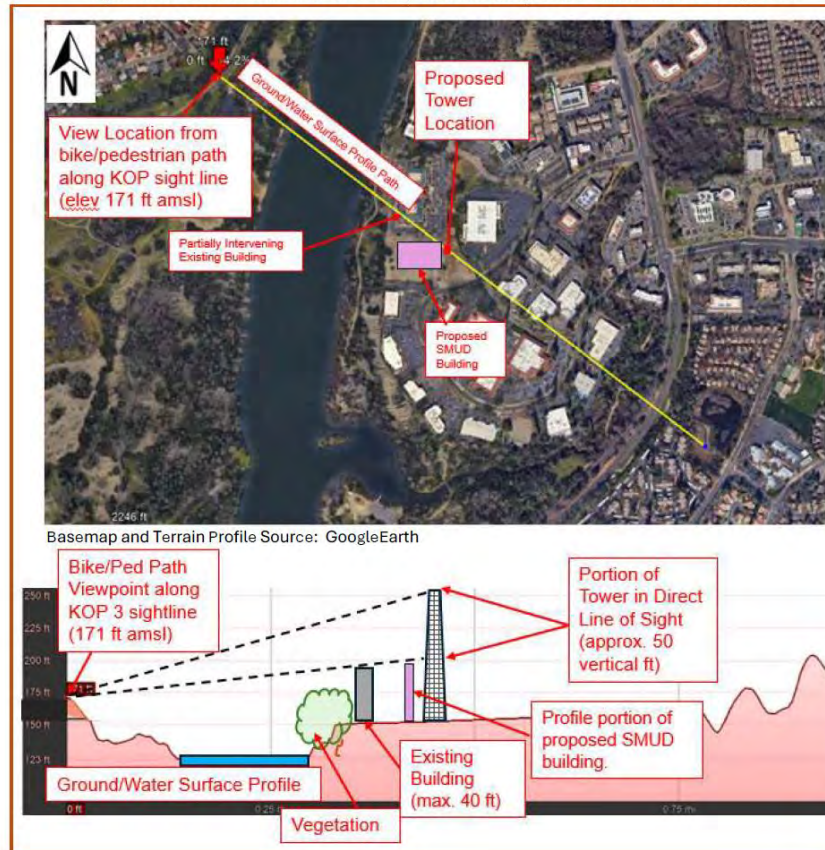


Figure A-4

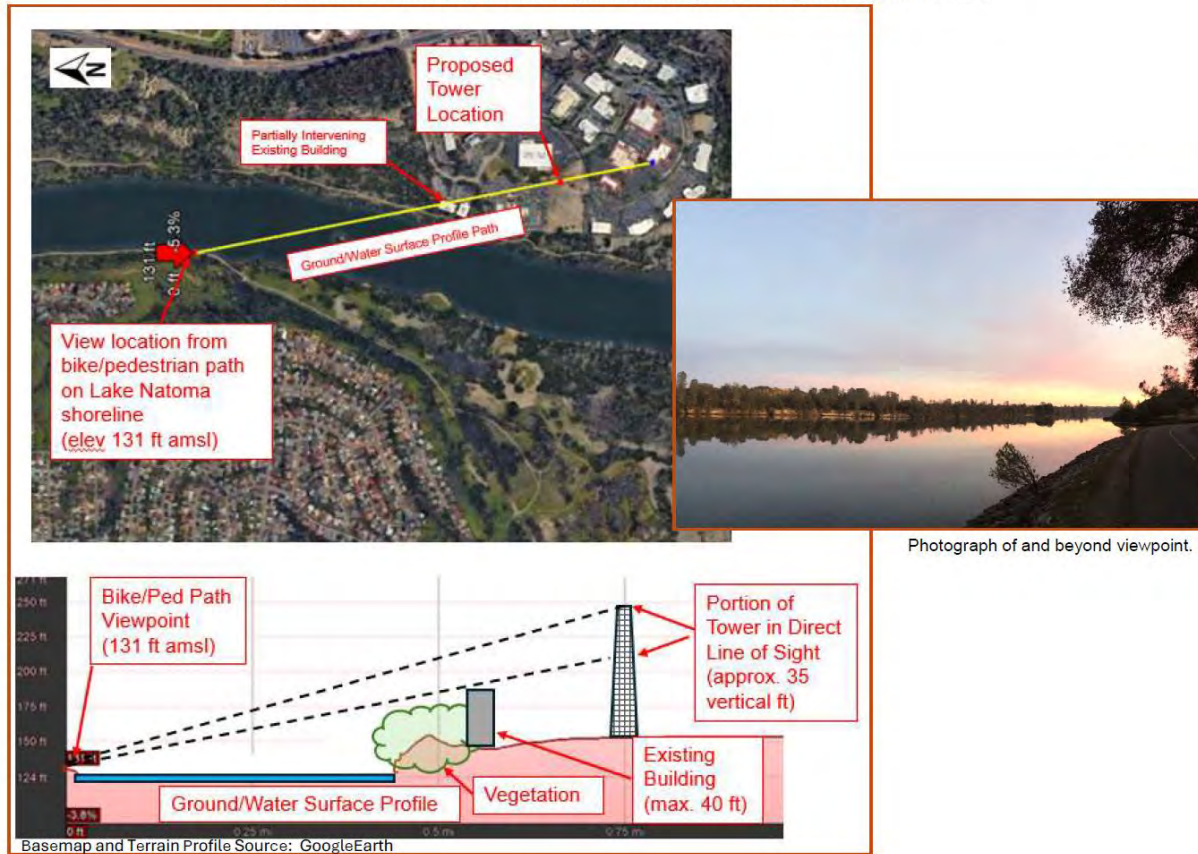
Google Earth 3D Object 100-foot-tall (30-meters) clamped to ground at proposed tower location. View from bike path inline with KOP 3 viewpoint a distance of approximately 2,000 feet from tower.



Photo source: GoogleEarth

Figure A-5

Sightline cross-section illustration for viewpoint from bike/ped trail along Lake Natoma shoreline.



Photograph of and beyond viewpoint.

Figure A-6
Sightline cross-section illustration for viewpoint from Lake Natoma surface west of Project site.

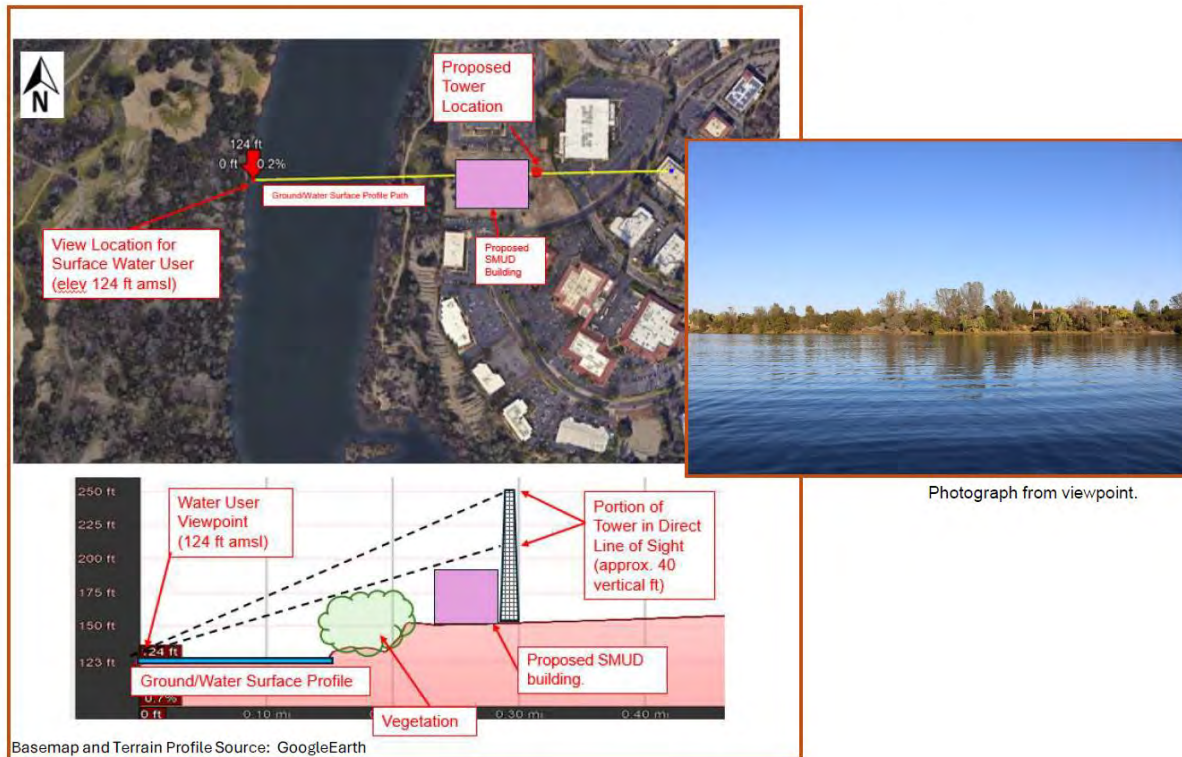
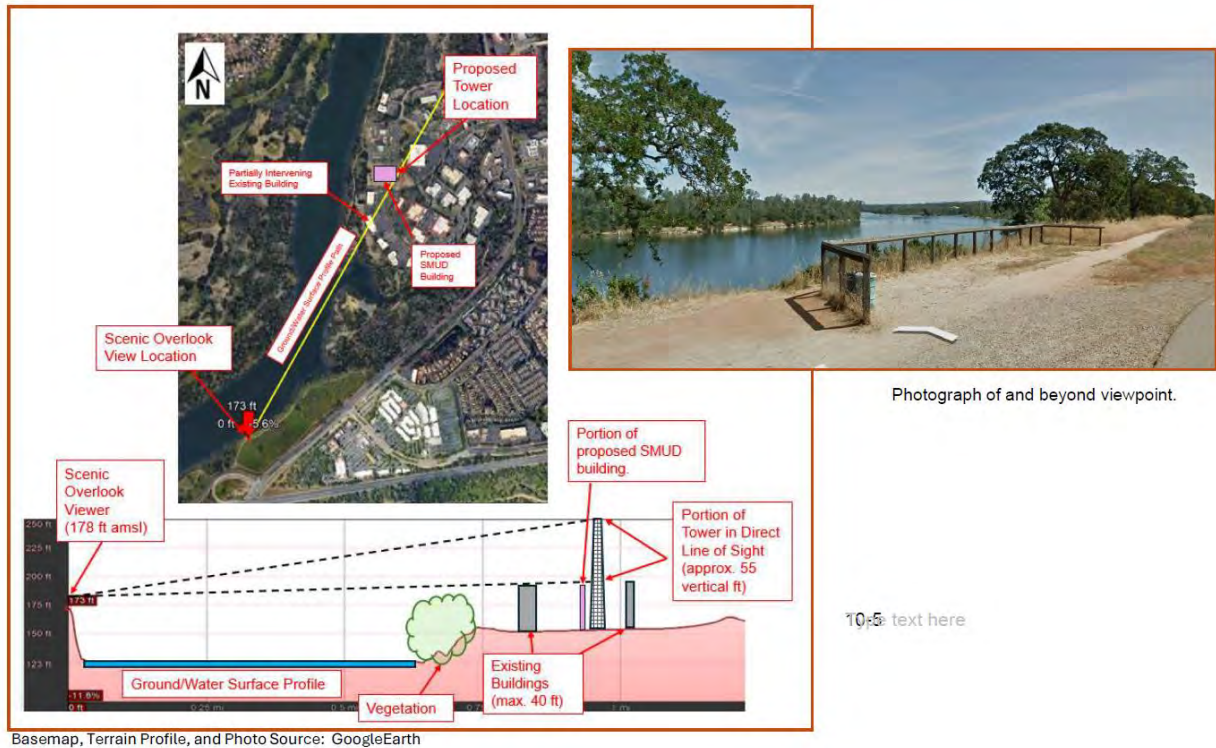


Figure A-7

Sightline cross-section illustration for viewpoint from scenic overlook southwest of Project site.

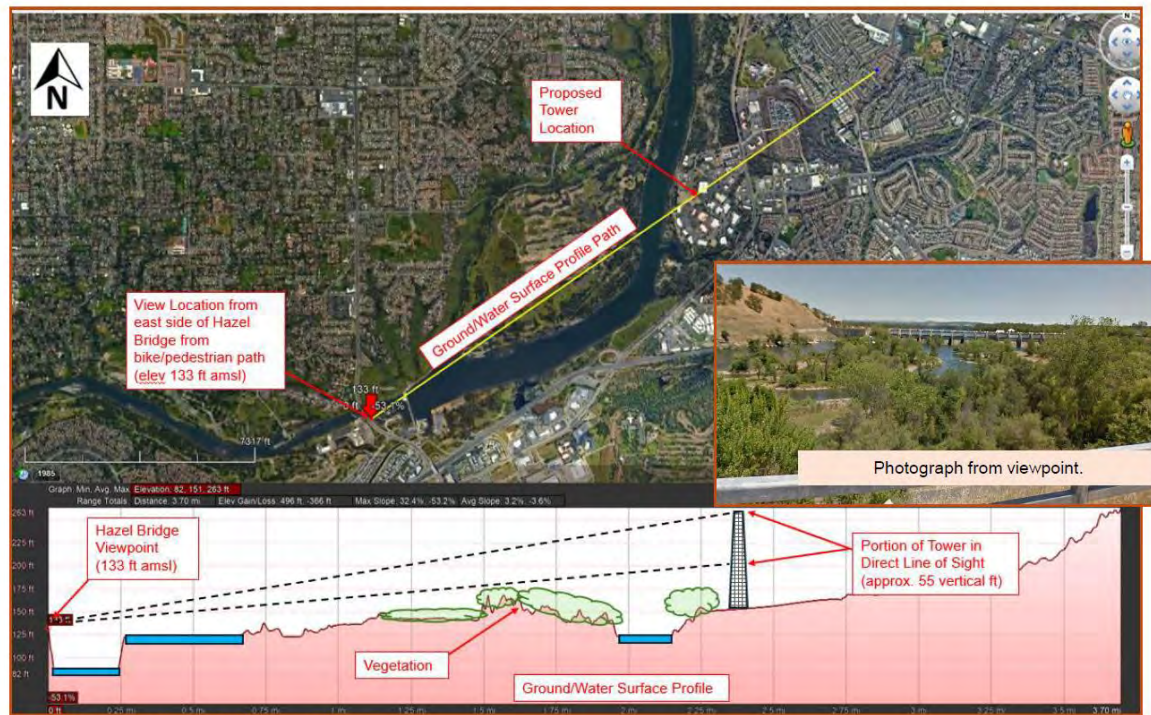


Photograph of and beyond viewpoint.

10:5 text here

Basemap, Terrain Profile, and Photo Source: GoogleEarth

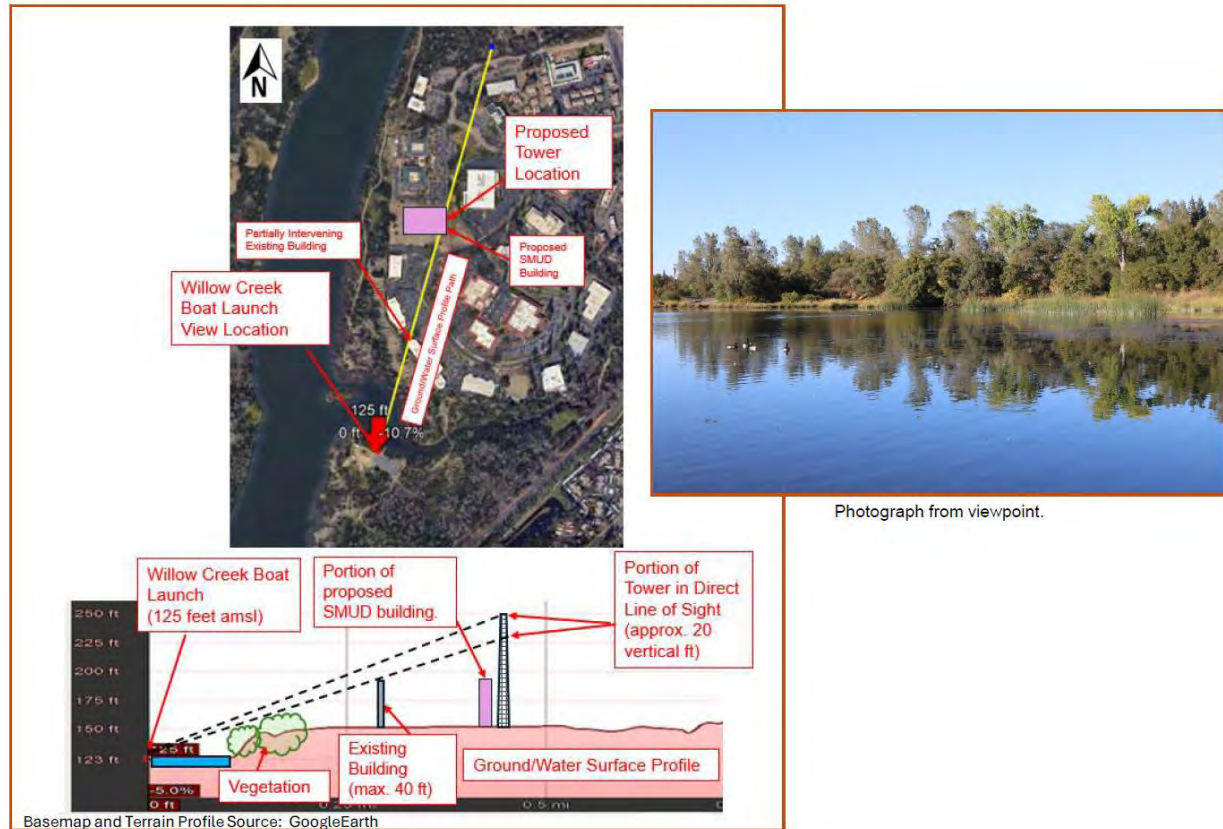
Figure A-8
Sightline cross-section illustration for viewpoint from Hazel Bridge bike/pedestrian path.



Basemap, Terrain Profile, and Photo Source: GoogleEarth

Figure A-9

Sightline cross-section illustration for viewpoint from Willow Creek boat launch.



Letter 13

Save the American River Association
October 14, 2024

- 13-1 The comment requests that SMUD review and respond to Save the American River Association (SARA) comment letter (Comment Letter 13) and requests that SMUD engage in further analysis regarding the Project's aesthetic/visual and biological/environmental impacts. SMUD has reviewed the SARA letter and responses to the letter are provided here. Following receipt of Letters 4 through 13, in advance of the SMUD Board hearing to adopt the IS/MND, SMUD chose to postpone the approval hearing for the Project until comments received were considered and addressed.

The comment also identifies the status of the SRA as a recognized Wild and Scenic River and its coverage under the American River Parkway Plan (ARPP). The comment is addressed by Response to Comment 4-13, which discusses the relevance of the ARPP to the proposed Project and whether the Project would conflict with the goals and policies of the ARPP and the Folsom Lake SRA GP/RMP, which is incorporated into the ARPP by reference. As is demonstrated in Response to Comment 4-13, the proposed Project would not conflict with the ARPP and thus does not require additional analysis or revisions to the IS/MND.

The comment further identifies SARA's emphasis on concerns related to the continuing presence of nesting bald eagles. The IS/MND includes a discussion of potential biological impacts and incorporates mitigation measures to protect nesting bald eagles, including survey requirements and activity buffers. However, the concerns of the comment are addressed in detail in Response to Comment 4-17, which identifies that bald eagle are highly unlikely to be adversely impacted by the proposed Project.

The comment also identifies SARAs concerns regarding the proposed communications tower relative to The Parkway. This comment is addressed by the detailed discussion provided in Response to Comment 4-2, which provides a detailed discussion regarding the appropriateness of the representative key observation points analyzed in the Draft IS/MND, visual impacts of the 100-foot-tall tower, updates to the project description that are relevant to the visual impacts of the 100-foot-tall tower, and additional conceptual renderings that have been provide to provide clarity regarding the size and scale of the proposed tower from various vantage points. No changes to the IS/MND are necessary as the visual impacts from key observation points have already been analyzed as required under CEQA.

- 13-2 The comment is highly similar to Comment 4-1 and 4-2, in Comment Letter 4 provided by Scenic America. Please see Response to Comment 4-1 and 4-2.

- 13-3 The comment includes the same text as was provided in Comment 4-3 and 4-4, in Comment Letter 4 provided by Scenic America. Please see Response to Comments 4-3 and 4-4.
- 13-4 The comment includes the same text as was provided in Comment 4-5, in Comment Letter 4 provided by Scenic America. Please see Response to Comments 4-5.
- 13-5 The comment includes the same text as was provided in Comment 4-6, in Comment Letter 4 provided by Scenic America. Please see Response to Comments 4-6.
- 13-6 The comment includes the same text as was provided in Comment 4-7, in Comment Letter 4 provided by Scenic America. Please see Response to Comments 4-7.
- 13-7 The comment includes the same text as was provided in Comment 4-8, in Comment Letter 4 provided by Scenic America. Please see Response to Comments 4-8.
- 13-8 The comment includes the same text as was provided in Comment 4-9, in Comment Letter 4 provided by Scenic America. Please see Response to Comments 4-9.
- 13-9 The comment includes the same text as was provided in Comment 4-10, in Comment Letter 4 provided by Scenic America. Please see Response to Comments 4-10.
- 13-10 The comment includes the same text as was provided in Comment 4-11, in Comment Letter 4 provided by Scenic America. Please see Response to Comments 4-11.
- 13-11 The comment includes the same text as was provided in Comment 4-12, in Comment Letter 4 provided by Scenic America. Please see Response to Comments 4-12.
- 13-12 The comment includes the same text as was provided in Comment 4-13, in Comment Letter 4 provided by Scenic America. Please see Response to Comments 4-13.
- 13-13 The comment includes the same text as was provided in Comment 4-14, in Comment Letter 4 provided by Scenic America. Please see Response to Comments 4-14.
- 13-14 The comment includes the same text as was provided in Comment 4-15, in Comment Letter 4 provided by Scenic America. Please see Response to Comments 4-15.
- 13-15 The comment includes the same text as was provided in Comment 4-16, in Comment Letter 4 provided by Scenic America. Please see Response to Comments 4-16.
- 13-16 The comment includes the same text as was provided in Comment 4-17, in Comment Letter 4 provided by Scenic America. Please see Response to Comments 4-17.

February 2025

From: [Tammie Lopez](#)
To: [Jerry Park](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Proposed office space at Lake Natoma
Date: Friday, October 11, 2024 8:23:06 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of SMUD. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Mr. Park,

This message is to express my concerns regarding SMUD's proposed administrative office building and telecommunication tower at 102 Woodmere Road in Folsom. I am a frequent visitor to Lake Natoma and enjoy the unique resources offered by the lake and its surrounding lands. SMUD's proposal to build a 100-foot-tall telecommunication tower on a parcel adjacent to Lake Natoma has the potential to substantially degrade the scenic quality of the Lake Natoma viewshed and to adversely affect resources within the Lake Natoma portion of the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area.

SMUD's September 2024 Initial Study touches on potential visual impacts of the tower, but the Initial Study is insufficient in evaluating and disclosing the visibility and visual impact of the tower from many areas and key viewpoints around Lake Natoma from which the tower would be visible. Additionally, SMUD's assessment fails to acknowledge that the Lake Natoma surface is a key view area for surface water recreationists (e.g., kayakers, paddleboarders, rowers) who visit the lake in a large part due to the scenic quality of the lake and surrounding lands. The visibility of the tower would be inconsistent with the character of the natural areas surrounding the lake and would substantially degrade the viewshed. Without a more thorough assessment of the actual locations on and around Lake Natoma from which the tower would be visible, SMUD's analysis is incomplete by failing to assess and disclose the severity of the tower's visual impact of the tower and by failing to assess mitigation and alternatives to minimize the visual impact.

14-1

SMUD's Initial Study and supporting biological resources study fails to acknowledge the active bald eagle nest that is located less than one mile and in direct line of sight of the proposed tower. (Some photos and information on the eagles, including a spreadsheet with observations of eagle activities this spring and summer is available here: <https://folfaneaglecam.org/>) Without acknowledging the presence of the bald eagle nest, SMUD provides no analysis of the potential effects of tower construction or long-term effects that the tower could have on nesting and foraging eagles. Before pursuing the tower, SMUD needs to assess the potential impacts in terms of whether the project would have the potential to violate the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and SMUD also needs to recognize the aesthetic value that the eagle nest and the presence of the eagles provide to the Lake Natoma environment. Adversely affecting the eagles by causing harm to individual and/or causing eagles to abandon the nest would be a significant loss of an important

14-2

biological and aesthetic resource of Lake Natoma.

14-2 cont.

The business park where SMUD proposes its office building and tower has developed over time with minimal intrusion to the viewshed and resources within and surrounding Lake Natoma. This is largely due to compliance with the development standards for the business park that limit structures to a maximum height of 40 feet. If SMUD wants to develop administrative offices in the business park, SMUD should do so in a manner that complies with the development standards instead of seeking a waiver from those standards. If SMUD cannot develop its administrative offices without an adjacent telecommunications tower, then SMUD should seek an alternative site for its offices that would avoid impacts to the important resources on and around Lake Natoma.

14-3

Thank you for considering my input.

A very concerned person who wants to protect our bike trails, rivers, lakes, and animals,

Tammie Lopez
916-662-5911

Letter 14

Tammie Lopez
October 11, 2024

- 14-1 The comment expresses concerns about the potential visual impacts of the proposed Project. This comment is addressed by the detailed discussion provided in Response to Comment 4-2, which provides a detailed discussion regarding the appropriateness of the representative key observation points analyzed in the Draft IS/MND, visual impacts of the 100-foot-tall tower, updates to the project description that are relevant to the visual impacts of the 100-foot-tall tower, and additional conceptual renderings that have been provide to provide clarity regarding the size and scale of the proposed tower from various vantage points. No changes to the IS/MND are necessary as the visual impacts from key observation points have already been analyzed as required under CEQA.
- 14-2 The comment raises concerns about the adequacy of the biology survey buffer and its consideration of the nesting bald eagles, as well as the absence of the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act in the list of applicable laws and regulations. The IS/MND includes a discussion of potential biological impacts and incorporates mitigation measures to protect nesting bald eagles, including survey requirements and activity buffers. However, the concerns of the comment are addressed in detail in Response to Comment 4-17, which identifies that bald eagle are highly unlikely to be adversely impacted by the proposed Project. For the reasons described above the proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on bald eagles in the Project area, consistent with the determination identified in the Draft IS/MND.
- 14-3 The comment notes concerns about compliance with the development standards for the business park and suggests relocating the tower or administrative offices to alternative sites. These concerns, including the rationale for the Project's location and proposed deviation, are addressed in Response to Comment 4-12. The selection of the Project site was based on its ability to meet SMUD's stated objectives for the Project, included on page 6 of the Draft IS/MND, which are to:
- Contribute to SMUD's goals for ensuring electrical service reliability;
 - Provide safe and reliable electrical service to existing and proposed development in the Folsom area and beyond; and
 - Minimize impacts to nearby sensitive receptors and sensitive natural communities.

Further, as described in Response to Comment 4-2, the description of the proposed tower is revised to be a monopine design, which would be a monopole that is designed to resemble a pine tree. No changes to the IS/MND are necessary as the visual impacts from key observation points have already been analyzed as required under CEQA.

February 2025

From: [Bill](#)
To: [Jerry Park](#)
Cc: SARA.president@folfan.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] telecommunications tower concerns
Date: Wednesday, October 9, 2024 2:07:40 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of SMUD. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Mr. Park,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding SMUD's proposed administrative office building and telecommunications tower at 102 Woodmere Road in Folsom. As a frequent visitor to Lake Natoma, I greatly value the unique natural resources and scenic beauty the lake and its surrounding areas offer. SMUD's plan to construct a 100-foot-tall telecommunications tower adjacent to Lake Natoma threatens to significantly degrade the visual quality of the area and negatively impact the resources within the Lake Natoma portion of the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area.

While SMUD's September 2024 Initial Study briefly addresses the potential visual impacts of the tower, I believe it falls short in fully evaluating and disclosing the tower's visibility from many key viewpoints around Lake Natoma. The assessment does not adequately account for the views from the lake's surface, which are crucial to the experience of water recreationists such as kayakers, paddleboarders, and rowers who visit largely for the lake's scenic beauty. The proposed tower would be inconsistent with the natural character of the surrounding area and would substantially degrade the viewshed. Without a comprehensive analysis of the specific locations around Lake Natoma from which the tower would be visible, the study is incomplete in its assessment of the visual impact and fails to properly consider mitigation measures or alternatives.

Moreover, the Initial Study and the accompanying biological resources report neglect to recognize the active bald eagle nest located less than a mile from the proposed tower site, directly within its line of sight. Detailed information about the eagles, including recent observations, can be found here: [https://urldefense.com/v3/https://folfeaglecam.org/_/!!B5ObAA!Em_He2gVKLt7mmk_i0cwed-_iJ0Cdth_NgO4pibOi1CZxiUsSFt0aZvx5sQAQYUueLxllnvrp0stU5\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://folfeaglecam.org/_/!!B5ObAA!Em_He2gVKLt7mmk_i0cwed-_iJ0Cdth_NgO4pibOi1CZxiUsSFt0aZvx5sQAQYUueLxllnvrp0stU5$)]. By not acknowledging the presence of this nest, SMUD has not provided any analysis of the potential impacts the tower's construction and long-term presence may have on nesting and foraging bald eagles. SMUD should thoroughly evaluate whether the project risks violating the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Additionally, the aesthetic and ecological value the eagle nest contributes to the Lake Natoma environment must be considered. Disrupting the eagles' habitat or causing abandonment of the nest would be a significant loss of a critical biological and aesthetic resource.

The business park where SMUD proposes its development has, to date, grown with minimal intrusion on the viewshed and natural resources of Lake Natoma. This is largely due to compliance with development standards that restrict building heights to 40 feet. SMUD should adhere to these standards if it wishes to build administrative offices within the business park, rather than seeking a waiver. If the construction of a telecommunications tower is deemed necessary for SMUD's operations, I encourage SMUD to explore alternative sites for its offices that would avoid impacting the important resources around Lake Natoma.

Thank you for considering my input.

Sincerely,
William Dunn

Sent from my iPad

15-1

15-2

15-3

Letter 15

William Dunn
October 9, 2024

- 15-1 The comment expresses concerns about the potential visual impacts of the proposed Project. This comment is addressed by the detailed discussion provided in Response to Comment 4-2, which provides a detailed discussion regarding the appropriateness of the representative key observation points analyzed in the Draft IS/MND, visual impacts of the 100-foot-tall tower, updates to the project description that are relevant to the visual impacts of the 100-foot-tall tower, and additional conceptual renderings that have been provide to provide clarity regarding the size and scale of the proposed tower from various vantage points. No changes to the IS/MND are necessary as the visual impacts from key observation points have already been analyzed as required under CEQA.
- 15-2 The comment raises concerns about the adequacy of the biology survey buffer and its consideration of the nesting bald eagles, as well as the absence of the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act in the list of applicable laws and regulations. The IS/MND includes a discussion of potential biological impacts and incorporates mitigation measures to protect nesting bald eagles, including survey requirements and activity buffers. However, the concerns of the comment are addressed in detail in Response to Comment 4-17, which identifies that bald eagle are highly unlikely to be adversely impacted by the proposed Project. For the reasons described above the proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on bald eagles in the Project area, consistent with the determination identified in the Draft IS/MND.
- 15-3 The comment notes concerns about compliance with the development standards for the business park and suggests relocating the tower or administrative offices to alternative sites. These concerns, including the rationale for the Project's location and proposed deviation, are addressed in Response to Comment 4-12. The selection of the Project site was based on its ability to meet SMUD's stated objectives for the Project, included on page 6 of the Draft IS/MND, which are to:
- Contribute to SMUD's goals for ensuring electrical service reliability;
 - Provide safe and reliable electrical service to existing and proposed development in the Folsom area and beyond; and
 - Minimize impacts to nearby sensitive receptors and sensitive natural communities.

Further, as described in Response to Comment 4-2, the description of the proposed tower is revised to be a monopine design, which would be a monopole that is designed to resemble a pine tree. No changes to the IS/MND are necessary as the visual impacts from key observation points have already been analyzed as required under CEQA.

3.0 CHANGES TO DRAFT IS/MND TEXT

SMUD has initiated changes to the Draft IS/MND since its publication to provide additional clarity regarding the proposed Project. This chapter describes changes made to the proposed Project since the publication of the Draft IS/MND as well as text changes made to the Draft IS/MND either in response to a comment letter; initiated by SMUD staff; or in response to a modification to the proposed Project.

Under CEQA, a lead agency is required to recirculate a negative declaration when the document must be substantially revised after public notice of its availability has previously been given pursuant to Section 15072, but prior to its adoption. Section 15073.5(b) defines a “substantial revision” of the negative declaration as:

- (1.) A new, avoidable significant effect is identified and mitigation measures or project revisions must be added in order to reduce the effect to insignificance, or
- (2.) The lead agency determines that the proposed mitigation measures or project revisions will not reduce potential effects to less than significance and new measures or revisions must be required.

Section 15073.5(c) clarifies that recirculation is not required if:

- (1.) Mitigation measures are replaced with equal or more effective measures pursuant to Section 15074.1.
- (2.) New project revisions are added in response to written or verbal comments on the project’s effects identified in the proposed negative declaration which are not new avoidable significant effects.
- (3.) Measures or conditions of project approval are added after circulation of the negative declaration which are not required by CEQA, which do not create new significant environmental effects and are not necessary to mitigate an avoidable significant effect.
- (4.) New information is added to the negative declaration which merely clarifies, amplifies, or makes insignificant modifications to the negative declaration.

The changes to the proposed Project and text changes described below update, refine, clarify, and amplify the Project information and analyses presented in the Draft IS/MND. Changes to the proposed Project do not introduce a new, avoidable significant effects requiring the addition of mitigation measures or Project revisions to reduce the effect to insignificant. Further, no new mitigation measures are required because measures proposed in the Draft IS/MND will reduce potential effects to less than significant. Therefore, no substantial revisions to the Draft IS/MND have occurred, and SMUD is not required to revise and recirculate the IS/MND.

This section summarizes text changes made to the Draft IS/MND either in response to a comment letter; initiated by SMUD staff; or in response to a modification to the proposed Project. New text is indicated in double underline and text to be deleted is reflected by a ~~striketrough~~. Text changes are presented in the page order in which they appear in the Draft IS/MND.

The text revisions provide clarification, amplification, and corrections that have been identified since publication of the Draft IS/MND. The text changes do not result in a change in the analysis or conclusions of the Draft IS/MND.

Chapter 2.0 Project Description

The description of the proposed site plan on page 10 is revised to read:

The Project would also include approximately 150 parking spaces located throughout the eastern, western, and southern edges of the Project site. The entirety of the Project site would be surrounded by an eight-foot-high exterior fence with secure vehicle access. Ingress and egress points in the perimeter fencing would only be constructed on the south and east sides of the site. No access to the SRA along the west perimeter would be constructed. Landscape strips with perimeter trees would be located in the landscaped areas along the northwest and east sides of the project site, within the perimeter fence.

The description of the proposed communications tower on page 10 is revised to read:

Communications Tower

The Project would include a communications tower approximately 100 feet in height, inclusive of side-mounted antennae, located at the northeast corner of the Project site. The tower will be a monopole with an approximate diameter of 10 feet at the base, tapering to 5 to 6 feet at the top with artificial branches and foliage to mimic the appearance of a pine tree with careful attention to color, texture, and form, allowing the tower to integrate visually with nearby vegetation and reduce its visual impact on the surrounding environment. The tower will be oriented to face away from the parkway, with the side of the structure facing towards the business park. The structure will be constructed using durable, weather-resistant materials to ensure long-term stability and minimize maintenance. Two communications drums on the tower will face away from the parkway.

To ensure the integrity of the proposed tower over time, SMUD will inspect annually to assess physical status and appearance. Any damage to paint or branches will be repaired, replaced or repainted within ninety days. In addition, SMUD will replace all branches every ten years.

Section 2.4.1, *Project Components*, is revised to add a description of landscaping components to be included in the Project at the end of the section on page 12:

Landscaping

The proposed Project would include landscaped areas along the west site perimeter, the eastern site perimeter, and along the Project frontage to Woodmere Road. Landscaped areas would include the planting of evergreen shade trees, which would provide site shading and also partially obscure the visibility of the proposed building and communications tower from viewpoints to the west of the Project site. The proposed tree plantings would be selected from the tree species included in Appendix F.

Chapter 3 Environmental Impact Evaluation

Section 3.4 Biological Resources, bullet 11 of Mitigation Measure 3.4-1, on page 48, is revised to read:

11. To avoid impacts to common and special-status migratory birds pursuant to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and CDFW Codes, a nesting survey shall be conducted prior to construction activities if the work is scheduled between February 1 and August 31. The pre-construction nesting bird surveys will identify on-site bird species. If no nesting birds are found in or within ~~500~~ 660 feet of the Project alignment during the pre-construction clearance surveys, construction activities may proceed as scheduled.

Appendices

Appendix F is added to the IS/MND, and provides a list of tree species that from which tree plantings would be selected in the landscape plan to be developed as part of Project implementation, included in this Final IS/MND as Appendix D.

4.0 MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM

4.1 Introduction

This mitigation monitoring and reporting program summarizes identified mitigation measures, implementation schedule, and responsible parties for the SMUD Folsom Administrative Operations Building Project (Project). SMUD will use this mitigation monitoring and reporting program to ensure that identified mitigation measures, adopted as conditions of Project approval, are implemented appropriately. This monitoring program meets the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15074(d), which mandates preparation of monitoring provisions for the implementation of mitigation assigned as part of Project approval or adoption.

4.2 Mitigation Implementation and Monitoring

SMUD will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of mitigation measures designed to minimize impacts associated with the Project. While SMUD has ultimate responsibility for ensuring implementation, others may be assigned the responsibility of actually implementing the mitigation. SMUD will retain the primary responsibility for ensuring that the Project meets the requirements of this mitigation plan and other permit conditions imposed by participating regulatory agencies.

SMUD will designate specific personnel who will be responsible for monitoring implementation of the mitigation that will occur during Project construction. The designated personnel will be responsible for submitting documentation and reports to SMUD on a schedule consistent with the mitigation measure and in a manner necessary for demonstrating compliance with mitigation requirements. SMUD will ensure that the designated personnel have authority to require implementation of mitigation requirements and will be capable of terminating Project construction activities found to be inconsistent with mitigation objectives or Project approval conditions.

SMUD and its appointed contractor will also be responsible for ensuring that its construction personnel understand their responsibilities for adhering to the performance requirements of the mitigation plan and other contractual requirements related to the implementation of mitigation as part of Project construction. In addition to the prescribed mitigation measures, Table 4-1 (Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program) lists each identified environmental resource being affected, the corresponding monitoring and reporting requirement, and the party responsible for ensuring implementation of the mitigation measure and monitoring effort.

4.3 Mitigation Enforcement

SMUD will be responsible for enforcing mitigation measures. If alternative measures are identified that would be equally effective in mitigating the identified impacts, implementation of these alternative measures will not occur until agreed upon by SMUD.

In the MMRP below, the following components are identified:

Mitigation Measure	This column provides the text of the mitigation measure
Timing	This column identifies the time frame in which the mitigation will be implemented
Responsible for Implementation	This column identifies the entity or person(s) that will carry out the mitigation.
Responsible for Verification	This column identifies the entity that assumes the overall responsibility for confirming compliance with each specific mitigation.
Form of Verification	This column identifies the method in which compliance with the mitigation will be communicated to the responsible party.
Verification	This column is to be dated and signed by the person/s identified at 'Responsible for Verification' to indicate that the requirements of the mitigation measure have been met.

TABLE 4-1. MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM

Checklist Section	Mitigation Measures	Implementation Duration	Monitoring Duration	Responsibility	
				Implementation	Monitoring
Air Quality	Mitigation Measure 3.3-1. Implement SMAQMD Emissions Controls and BMPs.	Prior to and during construction	During construction	SMUD Environmental Services and Construction Contractor	SMUD Construction Management and Inspection
	<p><i>SMUD or the authorized contractor will adhere to the SMAQMD basic construction emissions control practices, including, but not limited to the measures listed below, and additional measures designed to limit diesel particulate matter:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Water all exposed surfaces two times daily. Exposed surfaces include, but are not limited to soil piles, graded areas, unpaved parking areas, staging areas, and access roads;</i><i>Cover or maintain at least two feet of free board space on haul trucks transporting soil, sand, or other loose material on the site. Any haul trucks that would be traveling along freeways or major roadways should be covered;</i><i>Use wet power vacuum street sweepers to remove any visible track-out mud or dirt onto adjacent public roads at least once a day. Use of dry power sweeping is prohibited;</i><i>Limit vehicle speeds on unpaved roads to 15 miles per hour (mph);</i><i>All roadways, driveways, sidewalks, parking lots to be paved should be completed as soon as possible. In addition, building pads should be laid as soon as possible after grading unless seeding or soil binders are used;</i><i>Minimize idling time either by shutting equipment off when not in use or reducing the time of idling to 5 minutes [California Code of Regulations, Title 13, sections 2449(d)(3) and 2485]. Provide clear signage that posts this requirement for workers at the entrances to the site;⁴</i><i>Provide current certificate(s) of compliance for CARB’s In-Use Off-Road Diesel-Fueled Fleets Regulation [California Code of Regulations, Title 13, sections 2449 and 2449.1];⁵ and</i><i>Maintain all construction equipment in proper working condition according to manufacturer’s specifications. The equipment must be checked by a certified mechanic and determined to be running in proper condition before it is operated.</i>				
Biological Resources	Mitigation Measure 3.4-1: Impacts to Special-Status Species, Sensitive Habitats, and Aquatic Resources:	Prior to and during construction	During construction	SMUD Environmental Services and Construction Contractor	SMUD Construction Management and Inspection
	<p><i>The following actions shall be undertaken to reduce impacts to special-status species:</i></p> <p><i>1. A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) shall be developed prior to the ground disturbing activities. The SWPPP shall identify specific best management practices (BMPs) which shall be implemented during construction to prevent</i></p>				

⁴ This BMP for idling specifically applies to diesel-powered equipment. Non-diesel vehicles are not required to limit idling time.

⁵ This BMP specifically applies to diesel-powered equipment.

Checklist Section	Mitigation Measures	Implementation Duration	Monitoring Duration	Responsibility	
				Implementation	Monitoring
	<p><i>discharges of sediment, oil, turbid water, and/or other potential toxic or hazardous substances to surface waters. The BMPs shall be installed and maintained so that they demonstrate effectiveness.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>All areas of earth disturbance remaining after project implementation shall be stabilized and revegetated with a native seed mix.</i> <i>Avoided trees shall be protected during construction activities. Specifically, work shall not be conducted within dripline of native oak trees to prevent vehicles from damaging the roots.</i> <i>Removal of any native oak trees shall adhere to the replacement ratios required by the Sacramento County Tree Ordinance.</i> <i>All work equipment shall be washed at an offsite location.</i> <i>All fueling and maintenance of vehicles and equipment shall occur a minimum of 100 feet from aquatic resources and away from the dripline of native oak trees.</i> <i>All vehicles and equipment shall be inspected for leaks prior to use.</i> <i>Prior to construction, but not more than 14 days before grading, demolition or site preparation activities, a qualified biologist shall conduct a pre-construction survey to determine the presence of western pond turtles on or adjacent to the Project site. A temporary non-climbable fencing (or other solid fencing/barrier) shall be installed along the Project boundary adjacent to Lake Natoma as to exclude turtles from the active construction zone. If turtles are found within the construction zone, they shall be moved out of harm's way to appropriate areas by a qualified biologist as approved by CDFW and/or USFWS.</i> <i>No elderberry shrubs (potential habitat for VELB) were observed within the Biological Study Area during the survey conducted on February 15, 2024. If more than two years have passed since the site visit, additional surveys for the elderberry shrubs shall be conducted by a qualified biologist prior to the start of work. If present, the USFWS shall be consulted to determine appropriate avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures.</i> <i>Pre-construction surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist during the appropriate bloom time to determine if milkweed (host plant for the monarch butterfly) is present. If present, CDFW shall be consulted to determine appropriate avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures.</i> <i>To avoid impacts to common and special-status migratory birds pursuant to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and CDFW Codes, a nesting survey shall be conducted prior to construction activities if the work is scheduled between February 1 and August 31. The pre-construction nesting bird surveys will identify on-site bird species. If no nesting birds are found in or within 660 feet of the Project alignment during the pre-construction clearance surveys, construction activities may proceed as scheduled.</i> <p><i>If pre-nesting behavior is observed, but an active nest has not yet been established (e.g., courtship displays, but no eggs in a constructed nest), a nesting bird deterrence and removal program will be implemented. Such deterrence methods include removal of previous year's nesting materials and removal of partially completed nests in progress. Once a nest is situated and identified with eggs or young, it is considered to be "active" and the nest cannot be removed until the young have fledged.</i></p>				

Checklist Section	Mitigation Measures	Implementation Duration	Monitoring Duration	Responsibility	
				Implementation	Monitoring
	<p><i>If an active nest is found in or within 500 feet of the Project alignment during construction, a “No Construction” buffer zone will be established around the active nest (usually a minimum radius of 50 feet for passerine birds and 500 feet for raptors) to minimize the potential for disturbance of the nesting activity. The Project biologist/biological monitor will determine and flag the appropriate buffer size required, based on the species, specific situation, tolerances of the species, and the nest location. Project activities will resume in the buffer area when the Project biologist/biological monitor has determined that the nest(s) is (are) no longer active or the biologist has determined that with implementation of an appropriate buffer, work activities would not disturb the birds nesting behavior.</i></p> <p><i>If special-status bird species are found nesting in or within 500 feet of the Project site, SMUD’s Environmental Services shall notify CDFW or USFWS, as appropriate, within 24 hours of first nesting observation shall be consulted to determine appropriate avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures.</i></p>				
Cultural Resources	<p>Mitigation Measure 3.5-1: Worker Environmental Awareness and Cultural Respect Training and Procedures for Inadvertent Discovery of Cultural Resources</p> <p><i>Prior to excavation or other subsurface disturbance activities, individuals conducting the work will be required to participate in Worker Environmental Awareness and Cultural Respect Training. Workers will be advised to watch for cultural resource materials. If workers observe any evidence of pre-contact cultural resources (freshwater shells, beads, bone tool remnants or an assortment of bones, soil changes including subsurface ash lens or soil darker “midden” in color than surrounding soil, lithic materials such as flakes, tools or grinding rocks, etc.), or historic cultural resources (adobe foundations or walls, structures and remains with square nails, refuse deposits or bottle dumps, often associated with wells or old privies), all ground-disturbing activity within 100 feet of the discovery must immediately cease and a qualified archaeologist must be consulted to assess the significance of the cultural materials. SMUD will be notified of the potential find and a qualified archeologist shall be retained to investigate its significance. If the qualified archaeologist determines the archaeological material to be Native American in nature, Mitigation Measure 3.18-1 shall be implemented. If the find is determined to be significant by the archaeologist (i.e., because it is determined to constitute a unique archaeological resource), the archaeologist shall work with SMUD to develop and implement appropriate procedures to protect the integrity of the resource and ensure that no additional resources are affected. Procedures could include but would not necessarily be limited to preservation in place, archival research, subsurface testing, or contiguous block unit excavation and data recovery.</i></p>	Prior to any work and during construction	During construction	Construction Contractor	SMUD Construction Management and Inspection
Cultural Resources	<p>Mitigation Measure 3.5-2: Procedures for Discovery of Human Remains</p> <p><i>If human remains are discovered, all work within a100 feet of the find must immediately cease, and the local coroner must be contacted. Procedures for the discovery of human remains will be followed in accordance with provisions of the State Health and Safety Code, Sections 7052 and 7050.5 and the State Public Resources Code Sections 5097.9 to 5097.99. If the Coroner determines that the remains are those of Native American origin, the Coroner shall contact the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) and subsequent procedures shall be followed, according to State Public Resources Code Sections 5097.9 to 5097.99, regarding notification of the Native American Most Likely Descendant. Following the coroner’s and NAHC’s findings, SMUD and the NAHC-</i></p>	During construction	During construction	Construction Contractor	SMUD Construction Management and Inspection

Checklist Section	Mitigation Measures	Implementation Duration	Monitoring Duration	Responsibility	
				Implementation	Monitoring
	designated Most Likely Descendant shall determine the ultimate treatment and disposition of the remains and take appropriate steps to ensure that additional human interments are not disturbed.				
Tribal Cultural Resources	<p>Mitigation Measure 3.18-1: Worker Environmental Awareness and Cultural Respect Training and Procedures for Discovery of Potential Tribal Cultural Resources</p> <p>All construction personnel must receive Tribal Cultural Resources Sensitivity and Awareness Training (Worker Environmental Awareness Program [WEAP]), including field consultants and construction workers. The WEAP shall be developed in coordination with interested Native American Tribes.</p> <p>The WEAP shall be conducted before any project-related construction activities begin at the Project site. The WEAP will include relevant information regarding sensitive cultural resources and Tribal cultural resources, including applicable regulations, protocols for avoidance, and consequences of violating State laws and regulations. The WEAP will also describe appropriate avoidance and impact minimization measures for cultural resources and Tribal cultural resources that could be located at the Project site and will outline what to do and who to contact if any potential cultural resources or Tribal cultural resources are encountered. The WEAP will emphasize the requirement for confidentiality and culturally appropriate treatment of any discovery of significance to Native Americans and will discuss appropriate behaviors and responsive actions, consistent with Native American Tribal values. The training may be done in coordination with the Project archaeologist.</p> <p>All ground-disturbing equipment operators shall be required to receive the training and sign a form that acknowledges receipt of the training.</p> <p>During excavation or other substantial subsurface disturbance activities, all construction personnel must follow procedures and the direction of archeologists and Tribal monitors if any cultural resource materials are observed.</p>	Prior to and during construction	During construction	Construction Contractor	SMUD Construction Management and Inspection
Tribal Cultural Resources	<p>Mitigation Measure 3.18-2: Spot Check Monitoring for Tribal Cultural Resources</p> <p>SMUD shall invite representatives of UAIC to periodically inspect the active areas of the Project, including any soil piles, trenches, or other disturbed areas. UAIC shall be notified at least 48 hours prior to start of construction.</p>	Prior to and during construction	During construction	Construction Contractor	SMUD Construction Management and Inspection
Tribal Cultural Resources	<p>Mitigation Measure 3.18-3: Unanticipated Discovery of Tribal Cultural Resources</p> <p>If any suspected TCRs are discovered by any person on site during ground disturbing construction activities all work shall cease within 100 feet of the find, or an agreed upon distance based on the project area and nature of the find. A Tribal Representative from the consulting Tribe or a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with a geographic area shall be immediately notified and shall determine if the find is a TCR (PRC §21074). The Tribal Representative will make recommendations for further evaluation and treatment as necessary.</p>	During construction	During construction	Construction Contractor	SMUD Construction Management and Inspection

Checklist Section	Mitigation Measures	Implementation Duration	Monitoring Duration	Responsibility	
				Implementation	Monitoring
	<p><i>Preservation in place is the preferred option for mitigation of TCRs under CEQA and Tribal protocols, and every effort shall be made to preserve the resources in place, including through project redesign. If adverse impacts to TCRs, unique archeology, or other cultural resources occurs, then consultation with Tribes regarding mitigation contained in the Public Resources Code §21084.3(a) and (b) and CEQA Guidelines §15370 should occur, in order to coordinate for compensation for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.</i></p> <p><i>Culturally appropriate treatment may be, but is not limited to, processing materials for reburial, minimizing handling of cultural objects, leaving objects in place within the landscape, or returning objects to a location within the project area where they will not be subject to future impacts. Permanent curation of TCRs and cultural belongings will not take place unless approved in writing by the consulting Tribe.</i></p> <p><i>Treatment that preserves or restores the cultural character and integrity of a TCR may include paid Tribal Monitoring, culturally appropriate recovery of cultural objects, and reburial of cultural objects or cultural soil. These recommendations will be documented in the project record. For any recommendations made by traditionally and culturally affiliated Native American Tribes that are not implemented, a justification for why the recommendation was not followed will be provided in the project record.</i></p> <p><i>SMUD shall preserve TCR's in place, avoid, or minimize impacts to the resource, including, but not limited to, facilitating the appropriate Tribal treatment of the find, as necessary. Treatment that preserves or restores the cultural character and integrity of a TCR may include Tribal Monitoring, culturally appropriate recovery of cultural objects, and reburial of cultural objects and belongings or cultural soil.</i></p> <p><i>Work at the discovery location cannot resume until all necessary investigation and evaluation of the discovery under the requirements of CEQA, including AB52, have been satisfied.</i></p>				

5.0 LIST OF PREPARERS

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6.0 REFERENCES

None.

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Sacramento Municipal Utility District

Folsom Administrative Operations Building Project

Draft Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration • July 2024

Powering forward. Together.



Sacramento Municipal Utility District

Folsom Administrative Operations Building Project

Draft Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration • July 2024

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Assembly Bill
ACM	asbestos-containing material
APN	Assessor's Parcel Number
ARB	California Air Resources Board
ATSDR	Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
BACT	Best Available Control Technology
BMP	best management practice
CAAQS	California ambient air quality standards
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CalEPA	California Environmental Protection Agency
Cal/OSHA	California Division of Occupational Safety and Health
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
CalEnviroScreen	California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CBC	California Building Code
CCVT	capacitor-coupled voltage transformers
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CGP	Construction General Permit
CGS	California Geological Survey
CHRIS	California Historical Resources Information System
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNEL	Community Noise Equivalent Level
CNG	compressed natural gas
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO ₂	carbon dioxide
CRHR	California Register of Historical Resources
CT	current transformer

CUPA	Certified Unified Program Agency
DAC	disadvantaged community
dB	Decibel
dBA	A-Weighted Decibel
DDT	Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane
DOC	California Department of Conservation
DPM	Diesel-exhaust particulate matter
Draft IS/MND	Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
DTSC	California Department of Toxic Substances Control
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
EJ	Environmental Justice
EMD	Environmental Management Department
ESA	federal Endangered Species Act
ESA Phase I	Environmental Site Assessment
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FMMP	Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
FTA	Federal Transit Authority
GGRF	Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund
GHG	Greenhouse gas
HMBP	Hazardous Materials Business Plan
HRSA	Health Resources & Services Administration
I-80	Interstate 80
in/sec	inch per second
kV	Kilovolt
L _{eq}	Energy Equivalent Noise Level
L _{max}	Maximum Noise Level
L _{min}	Minimum Noise Level
L _{dn} or DNL	Day-Night Average Noise Level
LBP	lead-based paint
lbs/day	pounds per day
LED	light emitting diode
LNG	liquefied natural gas

LUSTs	leaking underground storage tanks
MMRP	mitigation monitoring and reporting program
MTCO ₂ e	metric tons per year of CO ₂ equivalent
MVA	megavolt amperes
MVAR	megavolt amperes reactive
NAAQS	national ambient air quality standards
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NASb	North American Subbasin
NCIC	North Central Information Center
NESHAP	National Emission Standard for Hazardous Air Pollutants
NOA	naturally occurring asbestos
NOI	notice of intent
NO _x	nitrogen oxides
NPDES	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
OEHHA	Office of Environmental Health Hazards Assessment
OHWM	ordinary high-water mark
OPR	Governor's Office of Planning and Research
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PCBs	polychlorinated biphenyls
PF	Public Facility
PT	potential transformers
PM	particulate matter
ppm	parts per million
PPV	peak particle velocity
PRC	Public Resources Code
Project	Folsom Administrative Operations Building Project
ROG	reactive organic gases
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality and Control Board
SB	Senate Bill
SF ₆	Sulfur Hexafluoride

SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
SMAQMD	Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District
SMUD	Sacramento Municipal Utility District
SPCC	Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure
SSBMI	Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians
SSC	species of special concern
SVAB	Sacramento Valley Air Basin
SVI	Social Vulnerability Index
SVP	Society of Vertebrate Paleontology
SWPPP	storm water pollution prevention plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TAC	toxic air contaminant
THRIS	Tribal Historic Information System
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
TPH	total petroleum hydrocarbons
UAIC	United Auburn Indian Community
UCMP	University of California Museum of Paleontology
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
UST	underground storage tank
VMT	vehicle miles traveled
WAPA	Western Area Power & Administration
WEAP	Worker Environmental Awareness Program
WEAT	Worker Environmental Awareness Training
WDR	waste discharge requirement

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Overview

The Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) is proposing the Folsom Administrative Operations Building Project (“Project”) to construct and operate up to an approximately 100,000-square-foot administrative operations building and a 100-foot-high communications tower on a six-acre parcel in southwest Folsom. The Project would be located in an area surrounded by the existing industrial and business park uses to the north of State Route 50, west of Folsom Boulevard, and to the east of Lake Natoma. The Project would be developed in two phases: Phase 1 would include a 50,000-square-foot, one-story structure and communications tower; and Phase 2 would include a 50,000-square-foot, two-story connecting structure.

1.2 Purpose of Document

This Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (Draft IS/MND) has been prepared by SMUD to evaluate potential environmental effects resulting from the Project. Chapter 2, “Project Description,” presents detailed project information.

This document has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR] Section 15000 et seq.). Under CEQA, an IS can be prepared by a lead agency to determine if a project may have a significant effect on the environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 15063[a]), and thus to determine the appropriate environmental document. For this project, the lead agency has prepared the following analysis that identifies potential physical environmental impacts and mitigation measures that would reduce impacts to a less- than-significant level. SMUD is the lead agency responsible for complying with CEQA.

In accordance with CEQA, SMUD is distributing a notice of intent (NOI) to adopt a MND to solicit comments on the analysis and mitigation measures presented in this Draft IS/MND. The NOI will be distributed to property owners within a minimum of 1,000 feet of the Project, as well as to the State Clearinghouse/Governor’s Office of Planning and Research and each responsible and trustee agency. This Draft IS/MND will be available for review and comment from July 23, 2024 to August 22, 2024.

Written comments (including those submitted via e-mail) must be received by close of business on August 22, 2024. Letters should be addressed to:

SMUD–Environmental Services
P.O. Box 15830 MS B209
Sacramento, CA 95852-1830
Attn: Jerry Park

E-mail comments should be addressed to **Jerry.Park@smud.org**. Anyone with questions regarding the NOI or Draft IS/MND may call Jerry Park at 916.732.7406.

Digital copies of the NOI and Draft IS/MND are available: <https://www.smud.org/CEQA>. Hard copies of the NOI and Draft IS/MND are available for public review at the following locations:

Sacramento Municipal Utility District
Customer Service Center
6301 S Street
Sacramento, CA 95817

Sacramento Municipal Utility District
East Campus Operations Center
4401 Bradshaw Road
Sacramento, CA 95827

1.3 Public Review Process

This Draft IS/MND is being circulated for a 30-day public comment period and is available at the locations identified above. Following the 30-day public review period, a Final IS/MND will be prepared, presenting written responses to comments received on significant environmental issues. Before SMUD's Board of Directors makes a decision on the Project, the Final IS/MND will be provided to all parties commenting on the Draft IS/MND.

1.4 SMUD Board Approval Process

The SMUD Board of Directors must adopt the IS/MND and approve the mitigation monitoring and reporting program before it can approve the Project. The Project and relevant environmental documentation will be formally presented at a SMUD Environmental Resources and Customer Service Committee meeting for information and discussion. The SMUD Board of Directors will then consider adopting the Final IS/MND and MMRP at its next regular Board meeting. Meetings of the SMUD Board of Directors are generally held on the third Thursday of each month.

1.5 Document Organization

This Draft IS/MND is organized as follows:

Chapter 1, “Introduction”: This chapter provides an introduction to the environmental review process and describes the purpose and organization of this document.

Chapter 2, “Project Description”: This chapter provides a detailed description of the Project.

Chapter 3, “Environmental Checklist”: This chapter presents an analysis of a range of environmental issues identified in the CEQA Environmental Checklist and determines whether the Project would result in no impact, a less-than-significant impact, or a less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated. Where needed to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level, mitigation measures are presented.

Chapter 4, “Environmental Justice Analysis”: Although not required by CEQA, SMUD has elected to prepare an evaluation of potential environmental justice issues related to the Project.

Chapter 5, “List of Preparers”: This chapter lists the organizations and people who prepared the document.

Chapter 6, “References”: This chapter lists the references used in preparation of this Draft IS/MND.

1.6 Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

Impacts on the environmental factors below are evaluated using the checklist included in Chapter 3. SMUD determined that the environmental factors checked below would be less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures. It was determined that the unchecked factors would have a less-than-significant impact or no impact.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and Forestry Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geology / Soils | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology / Water Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use / Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Population / Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation / Traffic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities / Service Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |

1.7 Determination

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- ☐ 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 that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signature



July 23, 2024

Date

Jerry Park

Printed Name

Environmental Management Specialist

Title

Sacramento Municipal Utility District

Agency

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

SMUD is proposing to construct and operate an approximately 100,000-square-foot administrative operations building and a 100-foot-high communications tower in southwest Folsom within Sacramento County. The Folsom Administrative Operations Building Project (hereafter referred to as “Project”) is proposed to be constructed on a six-acre parcel in an area surrounded by the existing industrial and business park uses to the north of State Route 50, west of Folsom Boulevard, and to the east of Lake Natoma.

2.1 Project Location

The Project site is located within the City of Folsom in Sacramento County at 102 Woodmere Road; Assessor Parcel Number (APN) 069-0240-031-0000. The site is just east of Lake Natoma and west of Folsom Boulevard. Land uses surrounding the Project site include the American River Parkway and Lake Natoma to the west, and existing office and industrial uses to the north, south, and east. The site has been previously mass graded and contains a cul-de-sac roadway, Shore Court, which extends north from Woodmere Road. See **Figures 2-1 through 2-3**.

The Project site is approximately 0.9 miles north of Highway 50 and approximately 0.3 miles west of Folsom Boulevard. Current access to the Project site is obtained through Shore Court.

2.2 Project Objectives

The objectives of the Project are to:

- contribute to SMUD’s goals for ensuring electrical service reliability;
- provide safe and reliable electrical service to existing and proposed development in the Folsom area and beyond; and
- minimize impacts to nearby sensitive receptors and sensitive natural communities.

2.3 Background Information

The Project site is currently vacant and has previously been mass graded. It is fenced off and contains a cul-de-sac roadway, Shore Court, which extends north from Woodmere Road into the Project site. The six-acre site, is zoned “M-1 PD – Light Industrial, Planned Development District” and has a City of Folsom General Plan land use designation of “IND – Industrial/Office Park.”



SOURCE: esri, 2023; Sacramento County, 2023; ESA, 2024

SMUD Folsom Office Building Project

Figure 2-1
Regional Location



SOURCE: esri, 2023; Sacramento County, 2023; ESA, 2024

SMUD Folsom Office Building Project

Figure 2-2
Project Vicinity



SOURCE: esri, 2023; Sacramento County, 2023; ESA, 2024

SMUD Folsom Office Building Project

Figure 2-3
Project Site

Surrounding land uses include the American River Parkway and Lake Natoma to the west as well as office and industrial uses to the north, south, and east. This includes the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) facilities directly north, as well as various corporate offices and commercial buildings to the south.

2.4 Proposed Project

The Project consists of constructing and operating an approximately 100,000-square-foot administrative office building and a 100-foot-high communications tower on a six-acre parcel in southwest Folsom. Site improvements would include new electrical equipment, landscaping and security features, driveway access, site fencing, lighting, a drainage easement, and utilities.

2.4.1 Project Components

The Project consists of an administrative office building, communications tower, as well as overall site features. The Project would be constructed in two phases. Phase 1 would include the construction of approximately 50,000 square feet of administrative offices and communications tower; and Phase 2 would construct approximately 50,000 square feet of administrative offices and connect to the Phase 1 building. The building would contain offices for SMUD employees and operational facilities. **Figures 2-4** shows the proposed site plan.

The existing drainage system easement onsite would be relocated, and the new 15-foot-wide easement would occur along the southern edge to the western edge of the Project site.

The Project would also include approximately 150 parking spaces located throughout the eastern, western, and southern edges of the Project site. The entirety of the Project site would be surrounded by an eight-foot-high exterior fence with secure vehicle access. Landscape strips with perimeter trees would be located in the landscaped areas along the northwest and east sides of the project site, within the perimeter fence.

Communications Tower

The Project would include a communications tower approximately 100 feet in height, located at the northeast corner of the Project site.

Driveway Access

The Project would include a single secured primary entrance off Woodmere Road at the southeast edge of the site, and a secured emergency vehicle access located along the eastern side of the site to the adjacent property.



SOURCE: Google, 2023; Sacramento County, 2023; SMUD, 2024; ESA, 2024

Folsom Administrative Operations Building Project

Figure 4
Conceptual Site Design

Lighting

Lighting would be provided for safety, security, and nighttime emergency maintenance. Lighting would fulfill the National Electrical Safety Code requirements. Lights would likely be installed at the entry gates and various locations throughout the site. Most lighting would be off during standard operating conditions, except on occasions when nighttime access is required. All lighting would be oriented downward toward major equipment to minimize glare onto surrounding properties.

Stormwater Drainage

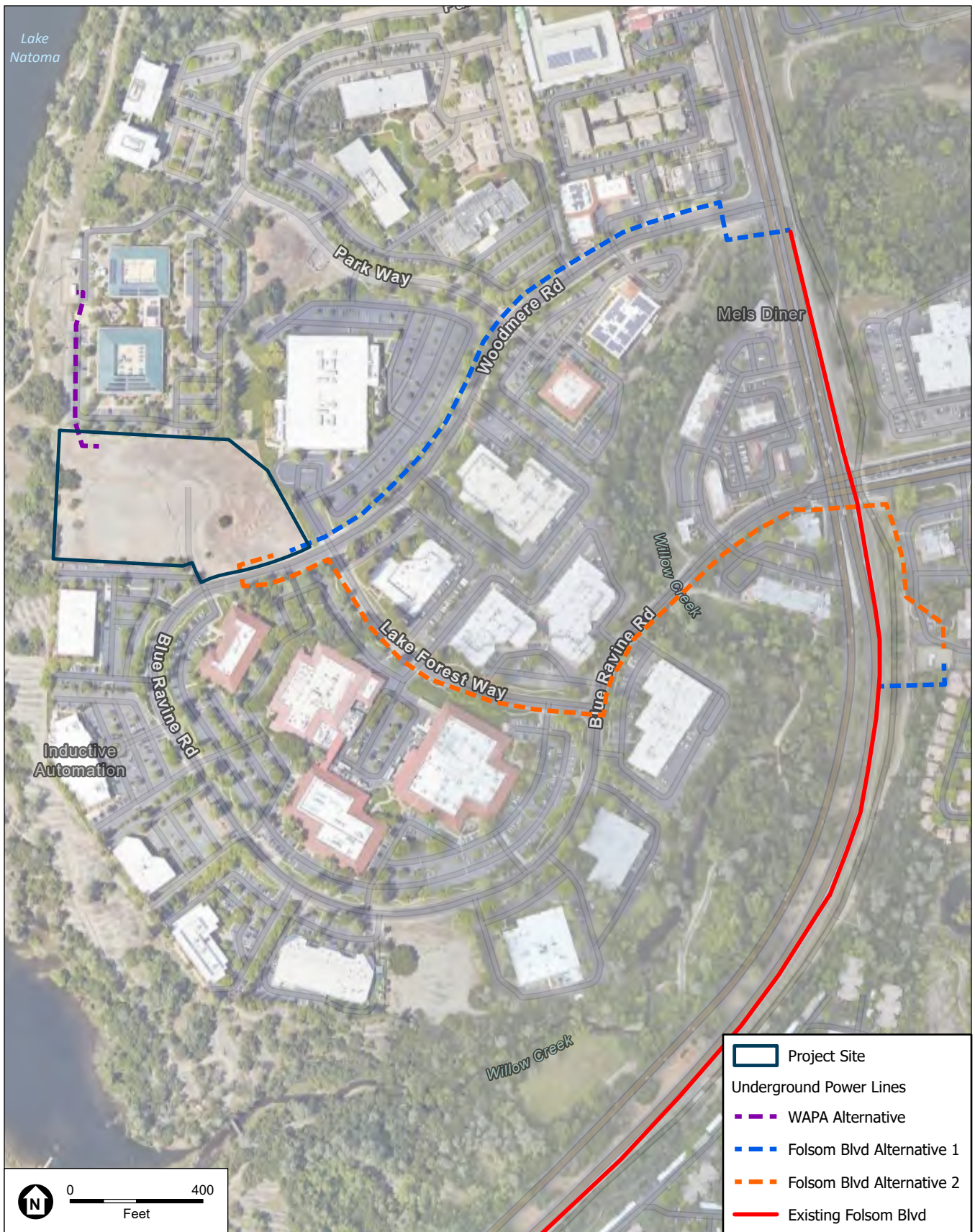
Current site drainage includes an existing storm drain that runs through the Project site to an outfall on the western edge of the site. The development of the Project would include relocation of the existing storm drain along the southern and western sides of the Project site to the existing outfall. To meet City of Folsom Environmental & Water Resources Department requirements, accesses for the relocated sewer system would all be located within public right of way. Site drainage would be designed and constructed to connect to the rerouted storm drainage infrastructure.

Utilities

Utility service would be provided to the site through the existing utility connections accessible from existing public right of way. Some offsite utility improvements would be required to serve the Project. Those connections would be made to existing utility services at Folsom Boulevard and would require trenching within existing roadways and utility easements along one of the utility path alternatives identified in **Figure 2-5**. Utility components of the Project would be completed during the first phase of Project development.

2.4.2 Project Operation and Maintenance

Operation of the proposed administrative operations building would take place during all hours. Operation would occur across two 12-hour shifts, beginning and ending at 6:00 am and 6:00 pm respectively. Workers at the Project site would include 10 workers for Phase 1 and 30 workers for Phase 2, for a total of 40 workers, split across two-shifts.



SOURCE: esri, 2023; Sacramento County, 2023; ESA, 2024

Folsom Administrative Operations Building Project

Figure X
Offsite Improvements

2.4.3 Project Construction

Construction Phasing

Construction of the Project phases (Phase 1 and 2) may occur sequentially, or they may overlap, and not all pieces of construction equipment may be used for the entire duration of a construction phase. The phases of construction would include the following:

- Site preparation
 - clearing and grubbing
 - site grading
 - site drainage
 - fencing installation
 - below-grade civil construction, including water and sewer lines, foundations, electrical grounding, and conduits.
- Structural Components
 - administrative operations building construction
 - electrical equipment installation

Site Preparation

The Project site was previously graded so minimal clearing and grubbing is anticipated to be needed for construction of the Project. Any existing vegetation would be cleared from the site, as needed.

As part of site preparation, the existing storm drain infrastructure within the site would be rerouted along the southern and western perimeter of the property within an approximately 15-foot-wide service easement to be made available for drainage infrastructure maintenance.

The proposed Project site would be further graded for construction of the proposed structures, surface drainage, and driveways and landscaped areas. SMUD anticipates the potential for excavation and removal of existing soil and import of backfill to establish final grade within the site. While volumes are not yet finalized, the Project currently estimates a volume of up to 30,000 cubic yards of exported soils and 10,000 cubic yards of imported fill for the purpose of this analysis.

Below grade water and sewer lines and subsurface drainage components would be installed. Foundations for the Phase 1 administrative operations building and communications tower would also be installed at or below grade. The maximum depth of construction within the Project site would be approximately 15 feet.

A 1,700-linear-foot security fence would be installed around the perimeter of the Project site. The proposed perimeter fence will be similar to the perimeter fence of the adjacent Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) facility, to the north. Landscaping would be installed between the property line and the new perimeter fence.

The new administrative operations building would be constructed utilizing building materials and methods common to the proposed size and type of structures proposed. The Project would not require heavy noise-generating construction methods such as pile construction.

Construction Schedule

Construction of Phase 1 would be anticipated to begin during the 3rd quarter of 2025 and be anticipated to last approximately 18-22 months. Future construction of Phase 2 has not been scheduled and would be anticipated to last approximately 18 months.

Table 2-1 summarizes the timeline for the Project construction phases. The phases may be sequential, or they may overlap.

Table 2-1. Project Phase Timeline

Project Construction Phase	Timeline
Clearing and grubbing	1 weeks
Grading, drainage facilities, and access road improvements	16 weeks
Installation of perimeter fencing	4 weeks
Installation of water and sewer lines, electrical grounding, below-ground conduits, cable troughs, and foundations	16 weeks
Construction of the administrative operations building	80 weeks
Construction of the communications tower	8 weeks
Paving of the Project interior driveways and access roads	2 weeks
Commissioning phase	10 weeks
Total Anticipated Construction Duration	88 weeks

Personnel, Equipment, and Staging

Construction would require an average daily worker population of approximately 50 workers, with up to approximately 70 workers during peak construction activities associated with on-site demolition, re-grading, and heavy equipment deliveries. Crews would normally work Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Table 2-2 provides summary of the typical and anticipated construction equipment that would be used for each Project phase.

Staging for construction equipment and a materials laydown area would be located within the existing site along the east side of the Project site.

Construction materials would be delivered to the site and stored on the Project site or in the designated staging and laydown area. Deliveries would be made by concrete trucks, flatbed trucks, and tractor-trailer rigs. Hazardous materials, including paint, grease, epoxies, and oil would be delivered to the site, and stored in either storage lockers or covered containers with secondary containment, in accordance with local, state, and federal requirements.

Table 2-2. Summary of Anticipated Equipment for Each Project Phase

Equipment	Project Phase
Asphalt paver	Paving
Backhoe	Clearing and grubbing, grading, fencing, below grade civil construction, building construction, paving
Boom truck	Building construction
Compactor	Clearing and grubbing, grading
Concrete truck	Fencing, below grade civil construction, building construction,
Crane	Building construction, erection of structural steel components, tower construction
Crew vehicles	Clearing and grubbing, grading, fencing, below grade civil construction, building construction, paving, erection of structural steel components,
Dozer	Clearing and grubbing, grading
Excavator	Clearing and grubbing, grading, fencing, below grade civil construction, building construction
Forklift	Fencing, below grade civil construction, control building construction, tower construction
Front-end Loader	Clearing and grubbing, grading, below grade civil construction, building construction, paving
Generator	Clearing and grubbing, grading, fencing, below grade civil construction, building

Equipment	Project Phase
	construction, paving
Grader	Clearing and grubbing, grading
Manlift	Building construction, tower construction
Scraper	Clearing and grubbing, grading
Semi-end dump truck	Clearing and grubbing, grading, fencing, below grade civil construction, building construction, paving
Semi-flatbed truck	Fencing, below grade civil construction, building construction
Service truck	Clearing and grubbing, grading, fencing, below grade civil construction, building construction, paving
Skid steer with drills	Fencing, below grade civil construction, building construction
Tandem haul trucks	Clearing and grubbing, grading
Truck-mounted drill rig	Below grade civil construction, control building construction,
Vibratory roller	Clearing and grubbing, grading, fencing, below grade civil construction, building construction, paving
Water truck/sweeper	Clearing and grubbing, grading, fencing, below grade civil construction, building construction, paving
Welder	Below grade civil construction, building construction, Tower construction

2.5 Potential Permits and Approvals Required

Elements of the Project could be subject to the permitting and/or approval authority of other agencies. As the lead agency pursuant to CEQA, SMUD is responsible for considering the adequacy of this IS/MND and determining whether the Project should be approved. The following agencies could require permits or approvals as part of Project implementation:

- **California Department of Transportation (Caltrans):** Caltrans issues permits for movement of oversized or excessive loads on state highways.
- **Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD):** Authority to Construct/Permit to Operate pursuant to SMAQMD Regulation 2 (Rule 201 et seq.).
- **City of Folsom:** The Project would require subsequent entitlements, specifically a Planned Development Permit and Conditional Use Permit, followed by any site improvement and building permits as required by Folsom Municipal Code.
- **State Water Board:** Construction General Stormwater Permit

- **Federal Aviation Administration (FAA):** Negative Declaration for Air Navigation (From 760) for the Proposed Communications Tower
- **Federal Communications Commission (FCC):**
 - Environmental Certification for the Proposed Communications Tower
 - License to Transmit for the Proposed Communications Tower

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT EVALUATION

3.0 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 projects 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 would 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. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. “Potentially Significant Impact” is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more “Potentially Significant Impact” entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
4. “Negative Declaration: 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 (mitigation measures from “Earlier Analyses,” as described in (5) below, may be cross-referenced).
5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063I(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
 - a. Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
 - b. Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.

- c. Mitigation Measures. For effects that are “Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated,” describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the Project.
- 6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references 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.
- 7. Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
- 8. This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project’s environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
- 9. The explanation of each issue should identify:
 - a. the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
 - b. the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

3.1 Aesthetics

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less- Than- Significant Impact	No Impact
I. Aesthetics.				
Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099 (where aesthetic impacts shall not be considered significant for qualifying residential, mixed-use residential, and employment centers), would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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 points.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.1.1 Environmental Setting

The Project site is an undeveloped, relatively flat parcel that has been previously cleared and graded and has become compacted over the last several years resulting in little vegetative cover. Shore Court extends into the center of the site from Woodmere Road.

3.1.2 Discussion

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

Less than Significant. A scenic vista is generally considered a view of an area that has remarkable scenery or of a resource that is endemic to the area. Scenic vistas within the city of Folsom vary from short-range to long-range views, depending upon the topography, intervening buildings, and the presence of mature vegetation (City of Folsom 2018). Elevated views of Lake Natoma and the American River Parkway from surrounding bluffs provide remarkable scenery and are considered a scenic vista. As shown in **Figure 3.1-4** and discussed in greater detail in response (c) below, due to distance and

intervening vegetation, the proposed development would be nearly indistinguishable from surrounding development when viewed from the western shore of Lake Natoma. The Project would blend with the surrounding existing business development and would not have a substantial adverse effect on this scenic vista. This impact would be less than significant.

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

No Impact. According to the California Scenic Highway Mapping System, at approximately 20 miles to the east, U.S. 50 east of Placerville is the closest officially designated scenic highway to the Project site. SR 49, ranging from 15 to 20 miles east of the Project site, is eligible for official designation as a state scenic highway. Given the distances between the Project site and these highways, it can be assumed that the Project would not be visible to travelers along either corridor. There are no federal byways or County designated scenic routes in the Project vicinity. No impact to scenic resources within a state scenic highway would 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 points.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

The Project site is located in an urbanized area but is adjacent to a non-urbanized area that includes open space and recreational uses. As discussed in greater detail in Section 3.11, “Land Use and Planning,” the Project would be required to obtain a Planned Development Permit from the City of Folsom for the proposed communications tower to exceed the maximum height standard established for the Project site. The Project is designed to be consistent with the applicable zoning and development standards related to design and aesthetics including requirements for neutral colored building exteriors, shielded lighting, and landscape screening, and would be subject to review by the City of Folsom Planning Commission to achieve desired city standards.

Three key observation points (KOPs) were selected for focused evaluation of the Project’s potential effects on public views. **Figure 3.1-1** shows the location of each KOP in relation to the Project site. As shown, the KOPs provide a range of public viewpoints located within the visually sensitive American River Parkway. **Figures 3.1-2** through **3.1-4** provide visual simulations of the anticipated views of the Project site from each of the KOPs. **Table 3.1-1** describes each of the selected KOPs and summarizes the anticipated visual effects of the Project on each viewpoint.

Table 3.1-1. Summary of Key Observation Points and Project Visual Effects

Key Observation Point	Description	Evaluation of Visual Effect
KOP 1	KOP 1 represents short range views of vehicle passengers and pedestrians as they approach the Project site from Woodmere Road.	<p>As shown in Figure 3.1-2, with development of the Project, views from KOP 1 would fundamentally change from a vacant site to an office building with prominent communications tower, security fencing, and trees.</p> <p>While this change would be considered substantial, the proposed development would be consistent with surrounding development and would be expected given the site's location within an established business park. Furthermore, consistent with the development standards established for the Lake Forest Technical Center, the proposed building exterior would be finished with neutral colors that would blend with surrounding scenery and would be screened from view by shade trees and other landscaping. Therefore, while the visual change from the current vacant lot at KOP 1 would be substantial, it would not degrade the visual character or quality of the site.</p>
KOP 2	KOP 2 represents short range views of cyclists and other recreationists using the Jedediah Smith Memorial Trail/American River Bike Trail immediately west of the Project site	<p>From KOP 2, existing external vegetation along the Trail as well as proposed perimeter trees would limit views of the proposed development to the northwestern corner of the site. As shown in Figure 3.1-3, the corner of the proposed building and fencing would be partially visible but because of the neutral toned building finishes it would blend with the surrounding scenery and would not become a prominent visual feature. The upper portion of the proposed telecommunications tower would be visible from this location as it projects above the roof line of the proposed building. However, given its distance from KOP 2 and the position of the trail below the grade of the project site, the tower is mostly obscured by the building and existing and proposed vegetation and would not become a prominent visual feature at this location.</p> <p>This segment of the American River Bike Trail is in a non-urbanized setting. However, compared to areas just to the north and south of the business park, views from the segment of the bicycle trail that runs adjacent to the business park includes numerous breaks in vegetation where urbanized development is visible. Cyclists and pedestrians traveling along this segment of the trail are frequently exposed to views of office buildings, fencing, and pole-mounted utilities, which are relatively consistent with the presence of a communications tower.</p>

Key Observation Point	Description	Evaluation of Visual Effect
		In context, introduction of the Project to the existing views at KOP 2 would be consistent with the setting within this segment of the trail and would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality. Therefore, while the visual change from the current vacant lot at KOP 1 would be substantial, it would not degrade the visual character or quality of the site.
KOP 3	KOP 3 represents mid-range views of the eastern shore of Lake Natoma from Arden Bluff which sits at a higher elevation than the Project site on the west side of Lake Natoma. This KOP is located at a public trailhead that connects the Arden Bluff neighborhood in unincorporated Sacramento County with the Jedediah Smith Memorial Trail/American River Bike Trail.	As shown on Figure 3.1-4, given the distance of KOP 3 from the Project site and the intervening thick vegetation, the proposed development would be nearly indistinguishable from surrounding development and pole-mounted utility lines. Implementation of the Project would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of views at this location.

As described in Table 3.1-1, development of the Project site as proposed would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. The Project could not meet the development standards adopted for the Lake Forest Technical Center, thus requiring the approval of a Planned Development Permit from the City of Folsom. Although the proposed communications tower would exceed the maximum height standards established for the site, as shown in Figures 3.1-1 through 3.1-4 and discussed in Table 3.1-1, the tower would be consistent with surrounding development and utilities. Additionally, views of the buildings and communications tower from the west of the Project site would be mostly obscured by screening trees. Compliance with applicable zoning regulations and the development standards established for the Lake Forest Technical Center would ensure that development of the site blends with the surrounding business park and minimizes effects to surrounding views. This impact would be less than significant.

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

Less than Significant. Construction activities would occur during daylight hours and would not require nighttime lighting. Construction equipment is unlikely to have reflective surfaces, other than what is required for safety purposes, and would not be a substantial source of glare in the Project area. During Project operation, exterior lighting would be present throughout the site for security purposes and would include both building and pole-mounted lighting fixtures. In accordance with City standards, all lighting fixtures would be shielded and directed downward to avoid light spillage onto adjacent properties, including the open space area to the west of the Project site, and illumination of the night sky. Compliance with existing local regulations would ensure that visibility of proposed lighting from offsite viewpoints would be minimized to the extent possible. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

Figure 3.1-1. Key Observation Point Locations



Figure 3.1-2. Key Observation Point 1

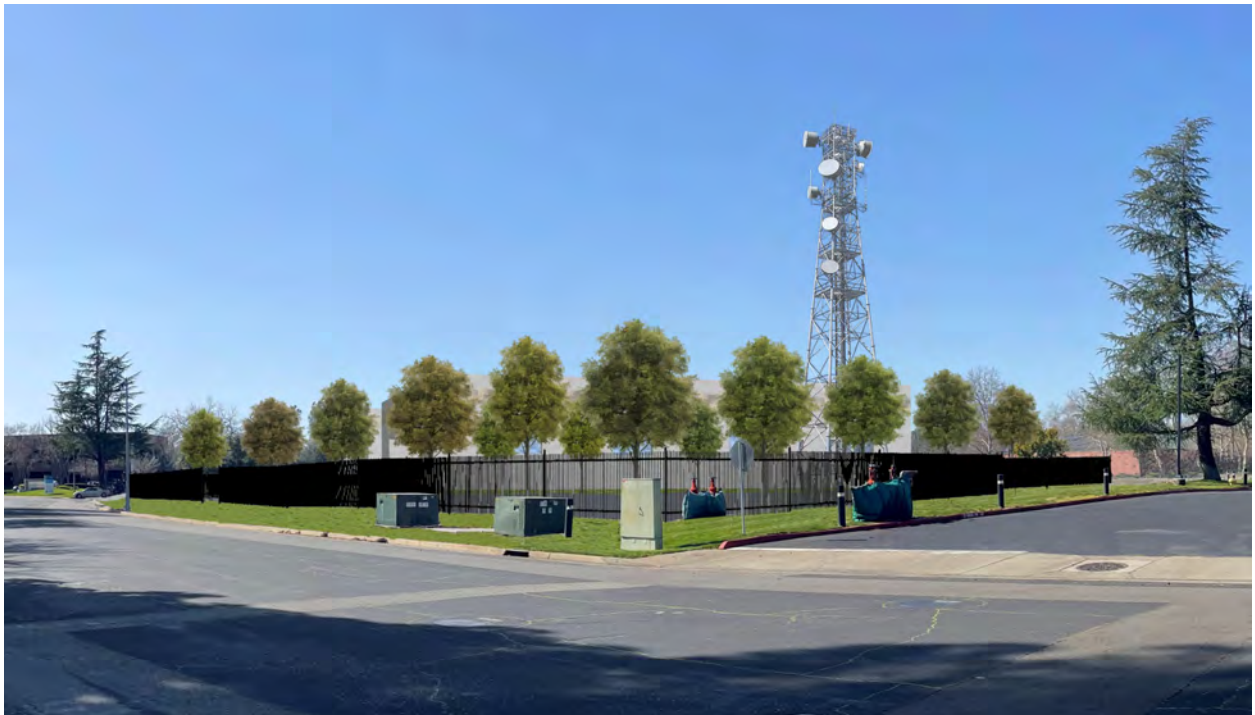


Figure 3.1-3. Key Observation Point 2



Figure 3.1-4. Key Observation Point 3



3.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less- Than- Significant Impact	No Impact
II. Agriculture and Forest Resources.				
<p>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, as updated) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland.</p> <p>In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.</p>				
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3.2.1 Environmental Setting

The Project is located in an urbanized area within an existing business park. There are no agricultural or forestry uses within or near the Project site.

3.2.2 Discussion

- 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?**

No Impact. The Project would have no impact on agricultural use of parcels designated Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. The Project site is not located on land designated either as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Because implementation of the Project would not result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use, there would be **no impact** and no mitigation is required.

- b) **Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?**

No Impact. The proposed administrative operations building Project is located on parcels zoned “M-1 PD – Light Industrial, Planned Development District.” There are no parcels near the Project site zoned for agriculture or under an active Williamson Act contract. Thus, there would be **no impact** and no mitigation is required.

- 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))?**

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

No Impact. The Project site does not include provisions for timberland or forest land. There are no parcels surrounding the Project site with zoning for forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production. Therefore, there would be **no impact** and no mitigation is required.

- 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?**

No Impact. As described above, the Project site is not located within or near agricultural uses or forest resources. The Project would not result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. Therefore, the Project would result in **no impact**, and no mitigation is required.

3.3 Air Quality

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
III. Air Quality.				
Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied on to make the following determinations.				
Are significance criteria established by the applicable air district available to rely on for significance determinations?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes		<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.3.1 Environmental Setting

Air quality in Sacramento County is regulated by several jurisdictions including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), the California Air Resources Board (CARB), and the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD). Each of these jurisdictions develops rules, regulations, and policies to attain the goals or directives imposed upon them through legislation.

The US EPA has established national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for six criteria air pollutants, which are known to be harmful to human health and the environment: carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, particulate matter (which is categorized into particulate matter less than or equal to 10 microns in diameter [PM₁₀] and particulate matter less than or equal to 2.5 microns in diameter [PM_{2.5}]), and sulfur dioxide. The State of California has established the California ambient air quality standards (CAAQS) for these six pollutants, as well as for sulfates, hydrogen sulfide, vinyl chloride, and visibility-

reducing particles. NAAQS and CAAQS were established to protect the public from adverse health impacts caused by exposure to air pollution (USEPA 2023).

The designation of an area as in attainment, nonattainment, or unclassified, with respect to applicable standards is the responsibility of CARB. An “attainment” designation for an area signifies that pollutant concentrations did not violate the applicable standard in that area. A “nonattainment” designation indicates that a pollutant concentration violated the applicable standard at least once. An “unclassified” designation signifies that the data does not support either an attainment or nonattainment designation.

The Project site is located within the Sacramento Valley Air Basin (SVAB). Sacramento County is currently designated as nonattainment for both the federal and state ozone standards, the federal PM_{2.5} standard, and the state PM₁₀ standard. The region is designated as in attainment or as unclassifiable for all other NAAQS and CAAQS (CARB 2024a).

SMAQMD is the local agency responsible for air quality planning and development of air quality plans in the Project area. SMAQMD maintains an attainment plan for achieving the state and federal ozone standards that was updated and approved by the SMAQMD Board and CARB in 2017. The air quality plan establishes strategies to achieve compliance with the NAAQS and CAAQS ozone standards in all areas within SMAQMD’s jurisdiction. There are currently no plans available for achieving the federal PM_{2.5} or state PM₁₀ standards.

SMAQMD has developed the Sacramento Regional 2008 NAAQS 8-Hour Ozone Attainment and Reasonable Further Progress Plan as an air quality plan, which presents comprehensive strategies to reduce reactive organic gases (ROG), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5} emissions from stationary, area, mobile, and indirect sources to achieve attainment status of the NAAQS and CAAQS. The plan relies on projected population, employment, and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) growth from regional and local land use plans such as general plans or community plans to estimate population growth. Projects exceeding growth projections could increase VMT and mobile source emissions, conflicting with plan implementation. Such VMT increases beyond what’s projected in the Sacramento’s regional VMT modeling and SMAQMD’s regional air quality plan would significantly hinder SVAB’s ability to achieve CAAQS and NAAQS for all air pollutants.

Within California, there are additional regulated pollutants that pose a hazard to human health. These are broadly categorized as toxic air contaminants (TACs); these are regulated through the Tanner Air Toxics Act (AB 1807) and the Air Toxics Hot Spots Information and Assessment Act of 1987 (AB 2588). At the local level, the SMAQMD has authority over stationary or industrial sources, and all projects that require air quality permits from the SMAQMD are evaluated for TAC emissions. Among the TACs identified by CARB, diesel-exhaust particulate matter (DPM), recently designated, is one of CARB’s highest priorities, with an aggressive plan to require cleaner diesel fuel and cleaner diesel engines and vehicles (CARB 2024b).

Methods

Emissions associated with the construction and long-term operation of the Project were calculated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod), version 2022.1.1.2. Methods and results of the analysis are presented in **Appendix A**.

Impact Thresholds

SMAQMD-recommended thresholds of significance are used to determine if localized and/or regional air quality emissions would adversely affect human health (*Guide to Air Quality Assessment in Sacramento County, SMAQMD 2020*). Project-generated emissions are considered significant if the Project would:

- Result in short-term (construction) emissions of NOX above 85 maximum pounds per day (ppd);
- Result in short-term (construction) emissions of PM₁₀ above zero ppd without implementation of all best management practices (BMPs) and above 80 maximum ppd or 14.6 tons per year (tpy) after implementation of all BMPs;
- Result in short-term (construction) emissions of PM_{2.5} above zero ppd without implementation of all BMPs and above 82 maximum ppd or 15.0 tpy after implementation of all BMPs;
- Result in long-term (operational) emissions of NOX or ROG above 65 maximum ppd;
- Result in long-term (operational) emissions of PM₁₀ above zero ppd without implementation of all BMPs and above 80 maximum ppd or 14.6 tpy after implementation of all BMPs;
- Result in long-term (operational) emissions of PM_{2.5} above zero ppd without implementation of all BMPs and above 82 ppd or 15.0 tpy after implementation of all BMPs;
- Expose any off-site sensitive receptor to a substantial incremental increase in TAC emissions that exceed 10 in one million for carcinogenic risk (i.e., the risk of contracting cancer) and/or a noncarcinogenic hazard index of 1.0 or greater; or
- Create objectional odors affecting a substantial number of people.

Importantly, both the construction and operational thresholds for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}, as described above, assume the application of SMAQMD-recommended BMPs and the use of Best Available Control Technology (BACT) to minimize emission of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. Without the application of BMPs and BACT, the threshold for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} during construction and operations is zero pounds per day.

3.3.2 Discussion

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

Less than Significant. According to the SMAQMD, construction of land use development projects have the potential to obstruct the success of the regional ozone attainment plans and would therefore be considered significant and require mitigation. The Project would be required to comply with all SMAQMD rules and regulations for construction, including but not limited to,

- Rule 403 related to Fugitive Dust
- Rule 404 related to Particulate Matter

To apply the PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} thresholds presented in *Impact Thresholds*, projects must implement all feasible SMAQMD BACTs and BMPs related to dust control. In the case of construction activities, projects are required to implement the SMAQMD's identified Basic Construction Emissions Control Practices (BCECPs), which are considered by the SMAQMD to be the applicable construction BMPs. The BMPs are listed as Mitigation Measure 3.3-1 under Impact b).

The control of fugitive dust during construction is required by SMAQMD Rule 403 and enforced by SMAQMD staff. Emissions of ROG, NO_x, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5} from construction are discussed below. As discussed in Impact b), criteria air pollutant emissions are expected to be below the construction emissions thresholds.

If the Project's maximum operational daily emissions of ROG, NO_x, PM₁₀ or PM_{2.5} during either the summer or winter season or annual emissions of PM exceeds SMAQMD's thresholds of significance, then the Project will have a significant air quality impact and conflict with or obstruct implementation of the District's air quality planning efforts. It is anticipated that operational activities associated with the Project would include operation of the newly constructed office facility, the use of back-up generators, employee trips, and operation and maintenance of the facility. As discussed in Impact b), criteria air pollutant emissions are expected to be below the operational emissions thresholds.

For these reasons, short-term construction and long-term operation of the Project would not conflict with or obstruct air quality planning efforts. As a result, this impact would be considered less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

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?

Less than significant with mitigation incorporated. The Project would generate criteria air pollutant emissions from both construction and operation, and each are evaluated to determine the extent to which the Project may 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. The project-specific air quality emissions analysis includes an analysis of both construction and operational emissions estimated using the California Emissions Estimator Model and compares the estimated emissions to quantitative thresholds from the *SMAQMD Thresholds of Significance*, to determine the level of significance of this impact. Both phases of construction and operational emissions of the Project are estimated to be below these thresholds.

Construction Emissions

The Project includes construction activities that would require the use of trucks/vehicles and heavy construction equipment (e.g., scrapers, loaders, cranes, etc.). Construction of the Project was modeled over an approximately 27-month period beginning in July 2025 and ending in October 2029.

Construction is assumed to occur five days per week. Phase 1 construction includes the majority of the Project's facilities, including the office building, communications tower, perimeter fencing, ground utilities, and parking lot. Phase 2 construction includes an extension to the office building facility.

A quantitative analysis of the Project's construction criteria air pollutant emissions was conducted using the latest version of CalEEMod to determine whether the Project could result in construction emissions would exceed the SMAQMD criteria air pollutant significance thresholds. CalEEMod incorporates the engine tier status of equipment by default based on the equipment inventory mix for the given construction year. The estimated construction emissions are presented in **Table 3.3-1 and Table 3.3-2** for Phases 1 and 2, respectively, *Construction Emissions Summary*.

As shown in Tables 3.3-1 and 3.3-2, the total construction emission of the Project over the approximately 27-month period would be below the SMAQMD threshold of significance. As a result, Project construction activities would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is in non-attainment status under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard during construction, and this impact would be less than significant.

Operational Emissions

Project operation would begin in 2027 for Phase 1 and 2029 for Phase 2. Once operational, the Project would generate minimal air pollutant emissions. Anticipated operational emissions would primarily be limited to sources such as staff vehicle trips, area sources such as consumer products and landscape maintenance, energy sources such as natural gas usage, and stationary sources such as back-up emergency generators. The expected daily pollutant generation from these sources associated with the Project was estimated using CalEEMod and are presented in **Table 3.3-3 and 3.3-4** for Phases 1 and 2, respectively, *Operational Emission Summary*.

Table 3.3-1. Phase 1 Construction Emissions Summary

Construction Activity	Emissions ¹ ROG (lbs/day)	Emissions ¹ NO _x (lbs/day)	Emissions ¹ PM ₁₀ (lbs/day)	Emissions ¹ PM _{2.5} (lbs/day)	Emissions ¹ PM ₁₀ (tons/year)	Emissions ¹ PM _{2.5} (tons/year)
2025	1.06	9.40	1.28	0.69	0.23	0.13
2026	2.40	17.30	0.83	0.64	0.15	0.12
2027	2.90	12.50	0.58	0.44	0.11	0.08
Maximum Emissions ² :	2.90	17.30	1.28	0.69	0.23	0.13
SMAQMD Thresholds ³ :	None	85	0/80	0/82	0/14.6	0/15
Exceeds Thresholds?	NO	NO	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO
¹ Emissions were quantified using the CalEEMod, v2022.1.1.2, computer program. Includes onsite and offsite sources. Does not include reductions in fugitive dust associated with compliance with SMAQMD's BMP. Totals may not sum due to rounding. ² Maximum daily emissions assumes some activities could potentially occur simultaneously on any given day. ³ SMAQMD has established a zero emissions threshold for PM10 and PM2.5 when projects do not implement SMAQMD-recommended BMPs. Lbs/day = pounds per day; ton/year = tons per year; NO _x = oxides of nitrogen; PM ₁₀ = respirable particulate matter (10 micrometers or less); PM _{2.5} = respirable particulate matter (2.5 micrometers or less) Source: ESA 2024						

Table 3.3-2. Phase 2 Construction Emissions Summary

Construction Activity	Emissions ¹ ROG (lbs/day)	Emissions ¹ NO _x (lbs/day)	Emissions ¹ PM ₁₀ (lbs/day)	Emissions ¹ PM _{2.5} (lbs/day)	Emissions ¹ PM ₁₀ (tons/year)	Emissions ¹ PM _{2.5} (tons/year)
2027	0.37	2.59	0.12	0.09	0.02	0.02
2028	2.39	16.20	0.73	0.56	0.13	0.10
2029	1.41	5.95	0.27	0.20	0.05	0.04
Maximum Emissions ² :	2.39	16.20	0.73	0.56	0.13	0.10
SMAQMD Thresholds ³ :	None	85	0/80	0/82	0/14.6	0/15
Exceeds Thresholds?	NO	NO	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO
¹ Emissions were quantified using the CalEEMod, v2022.1.1.2, computer program. Includes onsite and offsite sources. Does not include reductions in fugitive dust associated with compliance with SMAQMD's BMP. Totals may not sum due to rounding. ² Maximum daily emissions assumes some activities could potentially occur simultaneously on any given day. ³ SMAQMD has established a zero emissions threshold for PM10 and PM2.5 when projects do not implement SMAQMD-recommended BMPs. Lbs/day = pounds per day; ton/year = tons per year; NO _x = oxides of nitrogen; PM ₁₀ = respirable particulate matter (10 micrometers or less); PM _{2.5} = respirable particulate matter (2.5 micrometers or less) Source: ESA 2024						

Table 3.3-3. Phase 1 Operational Emissions Summary

Operational Source Emission	Emissions ¹ ROG (lbs/day)	Emissions ¹ NO _x (lbs/day)	Emissions ¹ PM ₁₀ (lbs/day)	Emissions ¹ PM _{2.5} (lbs/day)
Mobile	1.37	1.38	2.39	0.62
Area	1.48	0.01	< 0.005	< 0.005
Energy	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Stationary	0.45	1.26	0.07	0.07
Average Daily Maximum Emissions ² :	3.30	2.65	2.46	0.69
SMAQMD Thresholds ³ :	65	65	0/80	0/82
Exceeds Thresholds?	NO	NO	YES/NO	YES/NO
¹ Emissions were quantified using the CalEEMod, v2022.1.1.2, computer program. Includes onsite and offsite sources. Does not include reductions in fugitive dust associated with compliance with SMAQMD's BMP. Totals may not sum due to rounding. ² Maximum daily emissions assumes some activities could potentially occur simultaneously on any given day. ³ SMAQMD has established a zero emissions threshold for PM ₁₀ and PM _{2.5} when projects do not implement SMAQMD-recommended BMPs. Lbs/day = pounds per day; ton/year = tons per year; NO _x = oxides of nitrogen; PM ₁₀ = respirable particulate matter (10 micrometers or less); PM _{2.5} = respirable particulate matter (2.5 micrometers or less) Source: ESA 2024				

Table 3.3-4. Phase 2 Operational Emissions Summary

Operational Source Emission	Emissions ¹ ROG (lbs/day)	Emissions ¹ NO _x (lbs/day)	Emissions ¹ PM ₁₀ (lbs/day)	Emissions ¹ PM _{2.5} (lbs/day)
Mobile	0.66	0.63	1.27	0.33
Area	0.75	0.01	< 0.005	< 0.005
Energy	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Average Daily Maximum Emissions ² :	1.42	0.88	1.29	0.35
Full Buildout of Combined Phase 1 and 2 Emissions	4.71	3.29	3.73	1.02
SMAQMD Thresholds ³ :	65	65	0/80	0/82
Exceeds Thresholds?	NO	NO	YES/NO	YES/NO
¹ Emissions were quantified using the CalEEMod, v2022.1.1.2, computer program. Includes onsite and offsite sources. Does not include reductions in fugitive dust associated with compliance with SMAQMD's BMP. Totals may not sum due to rounding. ² Maximum daily emissions assumes some activities could potentially occur simultaneously on any given day. ³ SMAQMD has established a zero emissions threshold for PM ₁₀ and PM _{2.5} when projects do not implement SMAQMD-recommended BMPs. Lbs/day = pounds per day; ton/year = tons per year; NO _x = oxides of nitrogen; PM ₁₀ = respirable particulate matter (10 micrometers or less); PM _{2.5} = respirable particulate matter (2.5 micrometers or less) Source: ESA 2024				

As shown in Table 3.3-3 and 3.3-4, the Project would result in criteria pollutant emissions during Project operation that would be well below the significance thresholds for both phases and combined. Therefore, the Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment status under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard during operation, and this impact would be less than significant.

The Project's projected maximum construction and operational emissions do not exceed SMAQMD's daily or annual construction emission standards. However, SMAQMD predicates the particulate matter standard on adherence to their *Basic Construction Emission Control Practices and Best Management Practices*. Without the application of the SMAQMD's BMPs, this impact would be potentially significant. Mitigation Measure 3.3-1 would require that the Project implement the SMAQMD's BMPs.

Mitigation Measure 3.3-1. Implement SMAQMD Emissions Controls and BMPs.

SMUD or the authorized contractor will adhere to the SMAQMD basic construction emissions control practices, including, but not limited to the measures listed below, and additional measures designed to limit diesel particulate matter:

- *Water all exposed surfaces two times daily. Exposed surfaces include, but are not limited to soil piles, graded areas, unpaved parking areas, staging areas, and access roads;*
- *Cover or maintain at least two feet of free board space on haul trucks transporting soil, sand, or other loose material on the site. Any haul trucks that would be traveling along freeways or major roadways should be covered;*
- *Use wet power vacuum street sweepers to remove any visible track-out mud or dirt onto adjacent public roads at least once a day. Use of dry power sweeping is prohibited;*
- *Limit vehicle speeds on unpaved roads to 15 miles per hour (mph);*
- *All roadways, driveways, sidewalks, parking lots to be paved should be completed as soon as possible. In addition, building pads should be laid as soon as possible after grading unless seeding or soil binders are used;*
- *Minimize idling time either by shutting equipment off when not in use or reducing the time of idling to 5 minutes [California Code of Regulations, Title 13, sections 2449(d)(3) and 2485]. Provide clear signage that posts this requirement for workers at the entrances to the site;**

* This BMP for idling specifically applies to diesel-powered equipment. Non-diesel vehicles are not required to limit idling time.

- *Provide current certificate(s) of compliance for CARB's In-Use Off-Road Diesel-Fueled Fleets Regulation [California Code of Regulations, Title 13, sections 2449 and 2449.1];[†] and*
- *Maintain all construction equipment in proper working condition according to manufacturer's specifications. The equipment must be checked by a certified mechanic and determined to be running in proper condition before it is operated.*

Significance After Mitigation

SMAQMD has established a zero emissions threshold for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} when projects do not implement SMAQMD-recommended BMPs. Maximum emissions without mitigation fall below the threshold applicable to projects that implement SMAQMD-recommended BMPs. Mitigation measure 3.3-1 mandates construction activities adhere to SMAQMD's Basic Construction Emission Control Practices. Therefore, construction-generated and operational-generated emissions would be considered to have a less than significant impact.

c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Less than significant with mitigation incorporated. Localized air quality impacts associated with the Project would be predominantly associated with short-term construction activities. Pollutants associated with earth moving and general constructing activities include fugitive dust and TACs. There are no sensitive receptors located within 1,000 feet of the Project boundary site.

Fugitive Dust

Fugitive dust emissions would be associated with site preparation activities including grading and vehicle travel on unpaved and paved surfaces. Uncontrolled emissions of fugitive dust may also contribute to potential increases in nuisance impacts to nearby receptors. Construction generated fugitive dust, generally associated with PM₁₀, would be limited by implementation of SMAQMD construction BMPs.

TACs

Typically, emissions of PM₁₀ exhaust are used as a surrogate for DPM emissions in health risk calculations. As shown in Tables 3-1, 3-2, 3-3, and 3-4 above, total PM₁₀ emissions from both construction and operation would be well below the SMAQMD significance thresholds for criteria pollutant assessment. The Project would not involve emissions at levels consistent with intensive or long-lasting construction activities nor expose threshold amounts during operation of the facility.

These localized, short-term emissions would be reduced with the implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.3-1, which requires adherence to all applicable SMAQMD construction emissions control practices.

[†] This BMP specifically applies to diesel-powered equipment.

Mitigation Measure 3.3-1. Implement SMAQMD Emissions Controls and BMPs. (described above)**Significance After Mitigation**

Mitigation Measure 3.3-1 would require compliance with SMAQMD's BMP's for the control of construction related emissions, including fugitive dust and DPM. The potential impact on air quality would be reduced to a less than significant level.

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

Less than significant. The Project may create temporary construction odors from combustion of diesel fuel in equipment engines, but the impact would not be considered significant as these temporary odors would disperse rapidly and are rarely observed beyond Project site boundaries. In addition, pavement coatings and architectural coatings used during Project construction would also emit temporary odors. However, construction-generated emissions would occur intermittently throughout the workday and would dissipate rapidly with increasing distance from the source. The Project anticipates the use of two back-up diesel generators for the use of emergency operations. The use of generators are limited to 100 hours per year, which will create temporary operational odors from combustion of diesel fuel in the equipment's engine. Therefore, the Project would result in a less-than-significant impact related to the generation of odors.

3.4 Biological Resources

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less- Than- Significant Impact	No Impact
IV. Biological Resources.				
Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3.4.1 Environmental Setting

This section describes biological resources in the Project site and evaluates potential impacts to such resources that may occur as a result of Project implementation. To determine the biological resources that may be subject to Project impacts, the following data sources were reviewed:

- U.S. Department of Agriculture National Resource Conservation Service Web Soil Survey
- CDFW's California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB)
- California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Online Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants;
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information, Planning, and Consultation System; and
- USFWS National Wetlands Inventory

A field assessment was conducted of the Project site on February 15, 2024. The biological study area for the field assessment includes the Project site as well as a 500-foot buffer. Habitat types were documented, and plant and wildlife species were recorded. Habitats that were determined to be potential habitat for special status species were further assessed for suitability. **Appendix B** provides lists of special status species and an evaluation of their potential to occur within the biological study area that encompasses the Project site.

Vegetation and Habitat Types

Vegetation and habitat types within and surrounding vicinity of the Project site include riverine (4.19 acres), riparian (8.77 acres), disturbed (5.73 acres), and urban developed (30.05), as shown in **Figure 4**.

Riverine

The riverine habitat is comprised of 4.19 acres of Lake Natoma which runs near the Project site. Outside of the developed areas of study area, the largest habitat consists of Riparian Deciduous Woodland habitat comprised of large, interior live oaks and valley oaks (*Quercus lobata*), gray pines, and willows (*Salix* spp.). Many birds were observed or their calls were heard in the riparian habitat in the western portion of the study area including California scrub-jay, American pipit (*Anthus rubescens*), House finch, Nuttall's woodpecker (*Dryobates nuttallii*), Northern flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), song sparrow, oak titmouse (*Baeolophus inornatus*), Bewick's wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*), and ruby-crowned kinglet (*Corthylio calendula*).

Disturbed

The Project site is almost entirely comprised of disturbed habitat areas, as approximately 5.73 acres of exposed rocky soil, within the Project site, has been graded and leveled. Vegetation is sparse and is primarily concentrated in the western portion of the Project site. The only wildlife species found onsite

were killdeer, which tend to use open, flat, and rocky terrain that lacks vegetation to nest. Some rock and dirt piles in the northwest corner of the parcel included some burrows that may be utilized by other wildlife, such as burrowing owls (*Athene cunicularia*). However, these burrows appeared unused, and were filled with leaves and cobwebs.

Urban Developed

A majority of the study area is an urban developed landscape. The City of Folsom is highly developed with residential houses and offices. Most plant species in this area are ornamental and do not provide habitat for wildlife. A maintained trail that transects the riparian habitat is included in the urban developed area.

Aquatic Resources

No aquatic resources were observed within the Project site. A formal U.S. Army Corps of Engineers protocol-level wetland delineation was not conducted within the Project site, but no signatures of wetlands were present. The site is relatively flat with only one distinct depression. No water was ponded or collected in the depression during the survey, which occurred immediately after a rain event. The vegetation associated with the depression consists of upland trees and shrubs and the rocky substrate appears to be well drained. Lake Natoma is the only aquatic resources observed within the BSA. A search of USFWS' National Wetland Inventory did not reveal any other wetlands in the BSA.

Special-Status Species

Special-status species are plants and animals that are legally protected under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), California Endangered Species Act (CESA), California Fish and Game Code, or local plans, policies, and regulations or that are otherwise considered sensitive by federal, state, or local resource conservation agencies. For this IS/MND, special-status species are defined as:

- species listed or proposed for listing as threatened or endangered under the ESA;
- species designated as candidates for listing as threatened or endangered under the ESA;
- species listed, proposed for listing, or candidates for listing as threatened or endangered under CESA;
- species listed as fully protected under the California Fish and Game Code;
- animals identified by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as species of special concern (SSC);
- plants considered by CDFW to be “rare, threatened or endangered in California” and assigned California Rare Plant Ranks of 1A, presumed extinct in California; 1B, considered rare or

endangered in California and elsewhere; 2A, presumed extinct in California but more common elsewhere; and 2B, considered rare or endangered in California but more common elsewhere;

- species considered a locally significant species—that is, species that are not rare from a statewide perspective but are rare or uncommon in a local context, such as in a county or region (CEQA Section 15125[c]), or that are so designated in local or regional plans, policies, or ordinances (State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G); and
- taxa (i.e., taxonomic categories or groups) that meet the criteria for listing even if they are not currently included on any list, as described in CCR Section 15380 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

Based on a review of existing data sources, four special-status plant species and 11 special-status wildlife species have potential to occur in the Project area (Appendix B). Species ranges and habitat requirements were further evaluated to determine potential for occurrence on the Project site.

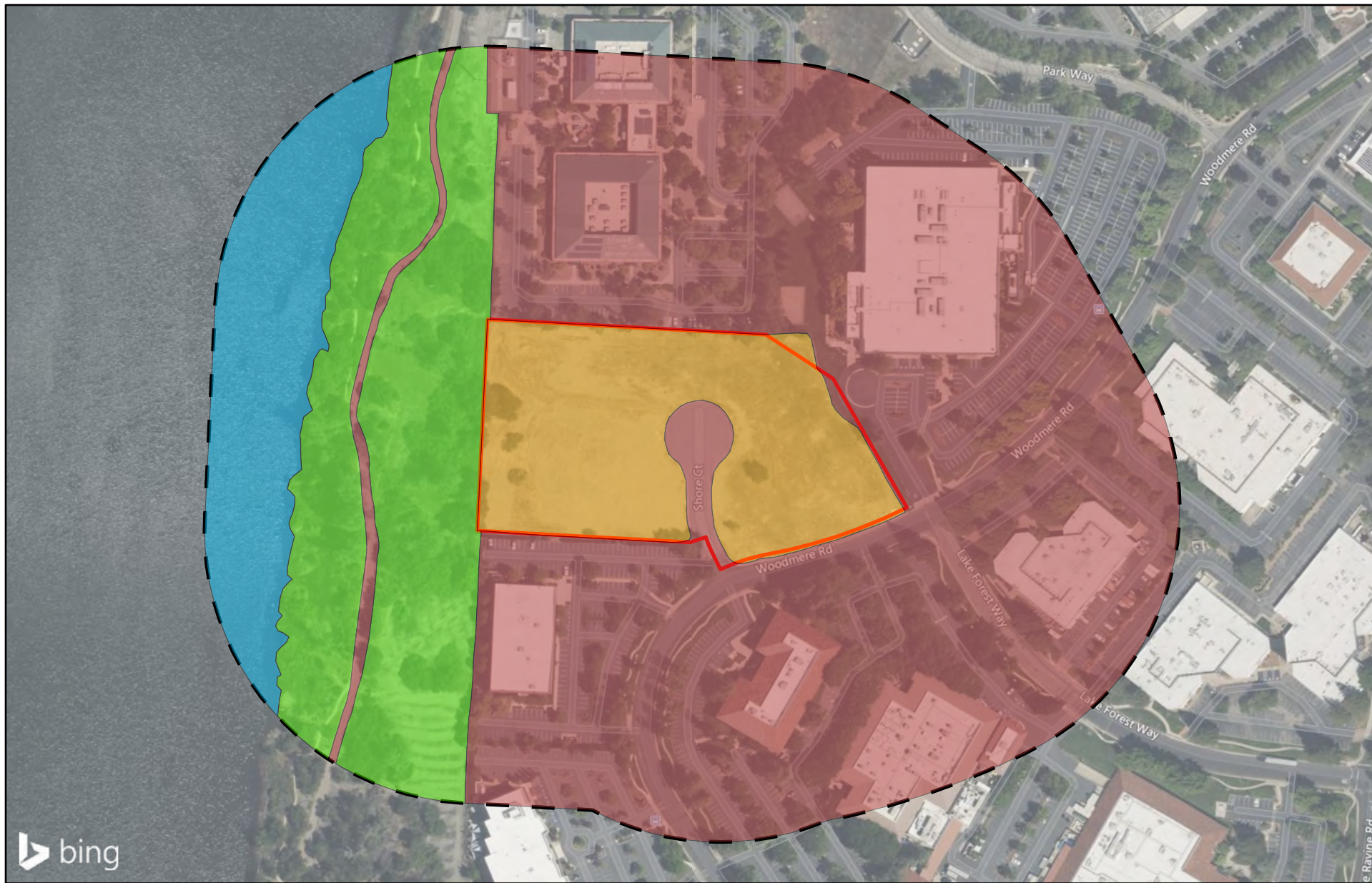
Special Status Plants

All four special-status plant species were determined to have no potential for occurrence within the Project site. Pincushion navarretia (*Navarretia myrsersii*), Sacramento Orcutt grass (*Orcuttia viscida*), and Boggs Lake hedge hyssop (*Gratiola heterosepala*) rely on vernal pools and lake margins to grow and reproduce. Similarly, Sanford's arrowhead (*Sagittaria sanfordii*) grows in marshes and swamps. The American River would be too large and swift to support these species.

Special Status Wildlife

Out of the 11 special-status wildlife species documented as occurring within the regional study area, four species are considered to have low or moderate potential to occur within the Project study area:

- Northwestern pond turtle (Federal candidate threatened) (Moderate);
- Monarch butterfly – California Overwintering Population (Federal candidate) (Low);
- Valley elderberry longhorn beetle (Federal threatened) (Low); and
- Swainson's hawk (California threatened) (Low).



bing

Source: Bing Maps Hybrid

0 100 200 Feet
1 inch = 252 feet

BARGAS
Environmental Consulting

 Project Site

 Biological Study Area (500' Buffer from Project Site)

 Disturbed (5.73-acres)

 Riparian (8.77-acres)

 Riverine (4.19-acres)

 Urban Developed (30.05-acres)

**Figure 3.4-1
Habitat Components**

*SMUD
Folsom Office Building Project*

Of the species with the potential to occur within the biological study area, only northwestern pond turtle was determined to have a moderate potential for occurrence within the Project site. Northwestern pond turtle requires slow moving ponded water and upland refugia for nesting. Backwaters associated with the Lake Natoma portion of the BSA provide habitat for this species. Riparian habitat and upland areas within the BSA provide moderate nesting habitat. The upland habitat available for nesting is narrow and surrounded by development. The Project site is not likely to support this species as the perimeter fencing would exclude it from entering.

Wildlife Movement

The riparian area adjacent to the Project site within the BSA is a corridor for animals moving along the river. Migrating species such as birds and Monarch butterfly have the potential to pass through the area.

Nesting Birds

Few trees are within the Project site itself, which limits the opportunities for birds to nest. However, the extensive gravels within the Project site provide ideal habitat for nesting Killdeer.

The abundance of trees in the riparian habitat within the riparian portion of the BSA provide good habitat for migrating and nesting birds. Due to a high presence of large oaks and willows, there is a moderate to high chance that some birds may nest in the riparian area in the BSA.

3.4.2 Discussion

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

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. No impacts to special-status species or habitat are expected to result from implementation of the Project. The Project site has already been disturbed and provides little to no habitat for wildlife with the exception of ground-nesting rodents, killdeer, and songbirds. Raptors may utilize the open area within the Project site for hunting lizards and small rodents, but no trees within the Project site are tall enough to support nesting by raptors.

There are three (3) species with low potential to occur within the Project site, including monarch butterfly, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, and Swainson's hawk and one species, northwestern pond turtle with moderate potential to occur within the study area. The Project could have a potentially significant impact to these special-status species, and mitigation is required.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-1: Impacts to Special-Status Species, Sensitive Habitats, and Aquatic Resources:

The following actions shall be undertaken to reduce impacts to special-status species:

1. A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) shall be developed prior to the ground disturbing activities. The SWPPP shall identify specific best management practices

(BMPs) which shall be implemented during construction to prevent discharges of sediment, oil, turbid water, and/or other potential toxic or hazardous substances to surface waters. The BMPs shall be installed and maintained so that they demonstrate effectiveness.

2. All areas of earth disturbance remaining after project implementation shall be stabilized and revegetated with a native seed mix.
3. Avoided trees shall be protected during construction activities. Specifically, work shall not be conducted within dripline of native oak trees to prevent vehicles from damaging the roots.
4. Removal of any native oak trees shall adhere to the replacement ratios required by the Sacramento County Tree Ordinance.
5. All work equipment shall be washed at an offsite location.
6. All fueling and maintenance of vehicles and equipment shall occur a minimum of 100 feet from aquatic resources and away from the dripline of native oak trees.
7. All vehicles and equipment shall be inspected for leaks prior to use.
8. Prior to construction, but not more than 14 days before grading, demolition or site preparation activities, a qualified biologist shall conduct a pre-construction survey to determine the presence of western pond turtles on or adjacent to the Project site. A temporary non-climbable fencing (or other solid fencing/barrier) shall be installed along the Project boundary adjacent to Lake Natoma as to exclude turtles from the active construction zone. If turtles are found within the construction zone, they shall be moved out of harm's way to appropriate areas by a qualified biologist as approved by CDFW and/or USFWS.
9. No elderberry shrubs (potential habitat for VELB) were observed within the Biological Study Area during the survey conducted on February 15, 2024. If more than two years have passed since the site visit, additional surveys for the elderberry shrubs shall be conducted by a qualified biologist prior to the start of work. If present, the USFWS shall be consulted to determine appropriate avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures.
10. Pre-construction surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist during the appropriate bloom time to determine if milkweed (host plant for the monarch butterfly) is present. If present, CDFW shall be consulted to determine appropriate avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures.
11. To avoid impacts to common and special-status migratory birds pursuant to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and CDFW Codes, a nesting survey shall be conducted prior to construction activities if the work is scheduled between February 1 and August 31. The pre-construction nesting bird surveys will identify on-site bird species. If no nesting birds are found in or within 500 feet of the Project alignment during the pre-construction clearance surveys, construction activities may proceed as scheduled.

If pre-nesting behavior is observed, but an active nest has not yet been established (e.g., courtship displays, but no eggs in a constructed nest), a nesting bird deterrence and

removal program will be implemented. Such deterrence methods include removal of previous year's nesting materials and removal of partially completed nests in progress. Once a nest is situated and identified with eggs or young, it is considered to be "active" and the nest cannot be removed until the young have fledged.

If an active nest is found in or within 500 feet of the Project alignment during construction, a "No Construction" buffer zone will be established around the active nest (usually a minimum radius of 50 feet for passerine birds and 500 feet for raptors) to minimize the potential for disturbance of the nesting activity. The Project biologist/biological monitor will determine and flag the appropriate buffer size required, based on the species, specific situation, tolerances of the species, and the nest location. Project activities will resume in the buffer area when the Project biologist/biological monitor has determined that the nest(s) is (are) no longer active or the biologist has determined that with implementation of an appropriate buffer, work activities would not disturb the birds nesting behavior.

If special-status bird species are found nesting in or within 500 feet of the Project site, SMUD's Environmental Services shall notify CDFW or USFWS, as appropriate, within 24 hours of first nesting observation shall be consulted to determine appropriate avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures.

Significance after Mitigation

With implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.4-1, the impact to special-status species would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

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

No Impact. The Project site does not contain riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities. Therefore, there would be no impact on riparian habitat or sensitive natural communities.

- 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?**

No Impact. No aquatic resources were observed within the Project site. A formal U.S. Army Corps of Engineers protocol-level wetland delineation was not conducted within the Project site, but no signatures of wetlands were present. The site is relatively flat with only one distinct depression. Lake Natoma was determined to be the only aquatic resource observed within the study area, and a search of the USFWS National Wetland Inventory did not reveal any other wetlands within the study area. Therefore, the Project would have no substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands, and there would be no impact.

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

Less than Significant. The riparian area adjacent to the Project site within the study area is a corridor for animals moving along the river. Migrating species such as birds and Monarch butterflies have the potential to pass through the area. However, implementation of the Project would not have a direct impact on the movement of wildlife. While construction noise may temporarily deter movement through the riparian area adjacent to the American River, construction would be limited to daylight hours and wildlife would not be disturbed during the times they typically travel such as dawn, dusk, and night. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

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

No Impact. The Project does not conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources.

Specifically, the Project would be constructed in consistency with the requirements of the River District Master Plan which is currently being developed. The Project would also be consistent with the goals and policies outlined in the Folsom 2035 General Plan. For example, the Project would not conflict with Policies NCR 1.1.1: Habitat Preservation, NCR 1.1.2: Preserve Natural Resources, as well as NCR 1.1.8: Planting in New Development.

The Project has been designed to avoid sensitive habitats to the extent feasible. The Project could require the removal of a few interior, live oak trees that are currently within the Project site. However, pursuant to subsection 12.16.050(C)(11) of the Folsom Municipal Code, SMUD is exempt from the requirements of City's Tree Preservation Ordinance, as a public utility performing tree removal activities to maintain a safe operation of SMUD facilities. The Project would result in **no impact** due to a conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources.

- 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?**

No Impact. The Project site is not located within the plan area of an adopted habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plan or other applicable and approved habitat conservation plan. As a result, it would not conflict with the provisions of any such plan. Therefore, the Project would result in no impact, and no mitigation is required.

3.5 Cultural Resources

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
V. Cultural Resources.				
Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

This discussion of the environmental setting and project impacts of the Project to cultural resources is based on the Cultural Resources Assessment prepared by the Bargas Environmental Consulting, included as **Appendix C**. The Cultural Resources Assessment also references a prior site evaluation conducted by AECOM, on behalf of SMUD.

3.5.1 Environmental Setting

In May 2023, AECOM contacted the North Central Information Center (NCIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) located at California State University, Sacramento with a request for a records search. The purpose of this review was to determine whether any portion of the Project site has been surveyed for cultural resources and whether known archaeological or historic-era resources are documented in the immediate area. The NCIC provided the results of a record search dated June 2, 2023 and identified six (6) previously recorded resources within a quarter-mile radius of the Project site. Of these, two (2) resources were identified within and immediately adjacent to the Project site.

P-34-000206, is a pre-contact milling feature that was originally mapped on the western boundary of the Project site. However, documentation provides a location within the American River Canyon, which is now inundated by Lake Natoma.

P-34-000335 (CA-SAC-308H), is the historic-era Folsom Mining District, which represents the extensive placer mining activities that occurred in the area and includes thousands of linear feet of dredge tailings and other mining features covering thousands of acres in and around Folsom. Components of this district (P-34-002276 Loci C-1) are adjacent to the western edge of the Project site. The district has been

determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) and is therefore considered a historical resource for CEQA purposes.

The Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD) was reviewed to identify any built environment resources within or in the vicinity of the Project site. Historic maps as well as historic aerial photographs were also reviewed to determine the extent of past land use within the Project site. No built environment resources were identified within 0.25-mile of the Project site.

Data on known cultural resources, literature on ethnographic villages, proximity to fresh water, and geologic sediment types were reviewed to assess the buried site sensitivity of the Project site. Soils within the Project site are comprised of non-marine sedimentary rock from the Pleistocene/Holocene Period. These older sediments, which predate pre-contact occupation of California, have a low potential for buried archaeological deposits. When considered with the paucity of pre-contact sites within 0.25 miles, lack of recorded ethnographic village sites, and the older age of the geologic sediments, the Project site has a relatively low potential for buried archaeological materials.

A qualified archaeologist conducted a pedestrian survey of the Project site on February 15, 2024. The survey consisted of north-to-south 15-meter transects across the Project site. Visible inspections of the ground surface were conducted to identify pre-contact and historic-period cultural material. Periodic boot scrapes were employed to increase ground surface visibility. No pre-contact material was identified during the pedestrian survey.

One historic-era resource was identified during the survey. This resource is an update to P-34-002276, a component of the Folsom Mining District. Within the Project site the updated resource consists of a small tailings pile and associated depression. The tailings pile measures 8 to 10 feet in diameter by 3 to 4 tall. The depression is roughly 25 feet southeast of the tailings pile and is roughly 20 feet in diameter and 6-feet-deep at the center. Cobbles are present along the base and edge of the depression. No diagnostic artifacts or other features consistent with historic-era placer mining were identified. Aerial photography shows that the entire lot was cleared in the 1980s, when Shore Court and the surrounding industrial/office buildings were constructed. The closest recorded component of the Folsom Mining District is P-34-002276 Loci C-1, which is just west and adjacent to the western border of the Project site.

3.5.2 Discussion

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

No Impact. The cultural resources assessment identified one resource, an update to P-34-002276, within the Project site. This resource is a contributing element to P-34-000335, the Folsom Mining District, which has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register and is therefore considered a historical resource for CEQA purposes. However, based on the documented cultural constituents associated with the update to P-34-002276, destruction of this resource in the Project site would not cause a substantial adverse change in the overall significance to the Folsom Mining District. The Project would not materially alter in an adverse manner the overall physical characteristics of the Folsom Mining

District that account for its inclusion in the National Register or its identification as a historical resource. Therefore, based on this assessment, there would be no impacts to historical resources from implementation of the Project and no mitigation is required.

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

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. No pre-contact archaeological resources were identified within the Project site and the archaeological sensitivity assessment determined a relatively low potential to uncover buried archaeological resources in the Project site. While unlikely, there remains the possibility that archaeological resources could be found during ground disturbing activities associated with construction of the Project. Potential significant impacts to previously undiscovered archaeological resources would be avoided through implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.5-1.

Mitigation Measure 3.5-1: Worker Environmental Awareness and Cultural Respect Training and Procedures for Inadvertent Discovery of Cultural Resources

Prior to excavation or other subsurface disturbance activities, individuals conducting the work will be required to participate in Worker Environmental Awareness and Cultural Respect Training. Workers will be advised to watch for cultural resource materials. If workers observe any evidence of pre-contact cultural resources (freshwater shells, beads, bone tool remnants or an assortment of bones, soil changes including subsurface ash lens or soil darker "midden" in color than surrounding soil, lithic materials such as flakes, tools or grinding rocks, etc.), or historic cultural resources (adobe foundations or walls, structures and remains with square nails, refuse deposits or bottle dumps, often associated with wells or old privies), all ground-disturbing activity within 100 feet of the discovery must immediately cease and a qualified archaeologist must be consulted to assess the significance of the cultural materials. SMUD will be notified of the potential find and a qualified archeologist shall be retained to investigate its significance. If the qualified archaeologist determines the archaeological material to be Native American in nature, Mitigation Measure 3.18-1 shall be implemented. If the find is determined to be significant by the archaeologist (i.e., because it is determined to constitute a unique archaeological resource), the archaeologist shall work with SMUD to develop and implement appropriate procedures to protect the integrity of the resource and ensure that no additional resources are affected. Procedures could include but would not necessarily be limited to preservation in place, archival research, subsurface testing, or contiguous block unit excavation and data recovery.

Significance after Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.5-1 would reduce potential impacts to archaeological resources discovered during Project construction activities to a less-than-significant level.

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

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. There are no known past cemeteries or burials on the Project site or immediate area. While unlikely, because earthmoving activities associated with Project construction would occur, there is potential to encounter buried human remains or unknown cemeteries in areas with little or no previous disturbance. This impact would be potentially significant.

Mitigation Measure 3.5-2: Procedures for Discovery of Human Remains

If human remains are discovered, all work within a 100 feet of the find must immediately cease, and the local coroner must be contacted. Procedures for the discovery of human remains will be followed in accordance with provisions of the State Health and Safety Code, Sections 7052 and 7050.5 and the State Public Resources Code Sections 5097.9 to 5097.99. If the Coroner determines that the remains are those of Native American origin, the Coroner shall contact the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) and subsequent procedures shall be followed, according to State Public Resources Code Sections 5097.9 to 5097.99, regarding notification of the Native American Most Likely Descendant. Following the coroner's and NAHC's findings, SMUD and the NAHC-designated Most Likely Descendant shall determine the ultimate treatment and disposition of the remains and take appropriate steps to ensure that additional human interments are not disturbed.

Significance after Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.5-2 would reduce potential impacts related to human remains to a less-than-significant level.

3.6 Energy

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
VI. Energy.				
Would the project:				
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.6.1 Environmental Setting

California's energy system includes electricity, natural gas, and petroleum fuels. According to the California Energy Commission (CEC), in 2022, California's energy system generated 52 percent of the electricity, 48 percent of the natural gas, and less than one percent of the petroleum consumed or used in the state. The rest of the state's energy is imported and includes electricity from the Pacific Northwest and the Southwest; natural gas purchases from Canada, Rocky Mountain states, and the southwest; and petroleum imported from Alaska and foreign sources (CEC, 2022a; 2022b; 2021a). The total amount of energy consumed in Sacramento County in 2022 from residential and non-residential sectors was 11,410 gigawatt-hours (GWh) (CEC, 2024).

SMUD is a community owned electricity utility that serves Sacramento County and adjoining parts of Placer and Yolo County. It provides a combination of mainly solar, wind, and hydroelectric power, with other renewables like biomass and geothermal power, and natural gas power (SMUD, 2022).

Gasoline is by far the largest transportation fuel by volume used in California. Nearly all the gasoline used in California is obtained through the retail market. In 2023, approximately 13.5 billion gallons of gasoline were sold in California's retail market (California Department of Tax and Fee Administration [CDTFA], 2023a). Diesel fuel is the second largest transportation fuel by volume used in California behind gasoline. It is estimated that nearly 51 percent of all diesel sales are retail sales. In 2023, 3 billion gallons of diesel were sold in California (CDTFA, 2023b). According to the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration, nearly all semi-trucks, delivery vehicles, buses, trains, ships, boats and barges, farm, construction, and military vehicles and equipment have diesel engines.

Regular unleaded gasoline is used primarily to fuel passenger cars and small trucks. Diesel fuel is used primarily in large trucks and construction equipment. Both fuels are used widely within Sacramento

County. The CEC estimates that 535 million gallons of gasoline and approximately 51 million gallons of diesel were sold in 2022 in Sacramento County (CEC, 2023).

3.6.2 Discussion

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

Construction Energy Use

Less than Significant. Construction of the Project would result in the consumption of energy in the form of transportation fuels (i.e., diesel and gasoline fuel) from a variety of sources, including off-road construction equipment and on-road workers, vendors, and hauling vehicles. The level of energy consumption would fluctuate depending on the type of construction activities underway during any particular time period. Energy use would be higher during the period of construction involving the initial site clearance, above earth-moving/grading, and building construction, where the largest and most powerful equipment would be required to excavate, lift, and transport large volumes of soil and building materials (such as concrete and asphalt) from the site. Gasoline and diesel fuel would be the primary energy source for vehicles driven by construction crews and to power the large trucks used to deliver and remove construction equipment and materials.

Phase 1

Based on the Project's estimated equipment use and construction duration for Phase 1, the construction of the Project is estimated to result in the consumption of a total of approximately 212,586 gallons of diesel fuel, and a total of approximately 6,194 gallons of gasoline during the construction period. Fuel use during Phase 1 construction would represent 0.42 percent of diesel and less than 0.01 percent of gasoline sold in Sacramento County in 2022. Therefore, fuel use during construction would be minimal in comparison to the overall usage within Sacramento County.

Phase 2

Based on the Project's estimated equipment use and construction duration for Phase 2, the construction of the Project is estimated to result in the consumption of a total of approximately 155,900 gallons of diesel fuel, and a total of approximately 3,449 gallons of gasoline during the construction period. Fuel use during Phase 2 construction would represent 0.31 percent of diesel and 0.001 percent of gasoline sold in Sacramento County in 2022. Therefore, fuel use during construction would be minimal in comparison to the overall usage within Sacramento County.

Operational Energy Use

Less than Significant. Project operations would require long-term consumption of energy in the form of electricity, natural gas, gasoline, and diesel fuel. The electricity, natural gas, and water usage that would be required for operation of the Project have been estimated based on specific building area estimates

and CalEEMod default factors. Mobile source fuel use associated with the operation of the Project was estimated based on vehicle miles travelled (VMT). The VMT data were used to estimate diesel fuel, and gasoline consumption volumes for the Project's buildout conditions based on vehicle fleet-average fuel estimated using the EMFAC2021 emissions inventory model.

The annual energy use requirements estimated for full buildout operations of the Project are summarized in **Table 3.6-1** by energy use type. The energy use presented in **Table 3.6-1** does not discount the existing energy use associated with those land uses, and as such, the reported Project's energy uses estimates are considered conservative.

Table 3.6-1 Summary of Project Operational Energy Consumption (Annual)

Energy Use Type	Energy Consumption: Phase 1 Operations	Energy Consumption: Phase 2 Operations	Full Buildout
Electricity (MWh/year)			
Total Electricity Generation/Use	1,257	610	1,867
Total Water Use	155	76	231
Natural Gas (MMBtu/year)			
Total Natural Gas Use	0	0	0
Diesel (gallons/year)			
Total Diesel Use	176	93	269
Gasoline (gallons/year)			
Total Gasoline Use	42,788	22,678	65,466
NOTES: Project energy consumption for building electricity, and building natural gas were estimated using CalEEMod® 2022.1.1. Abbreviations: MMBTU - million British Thermal Units; MWh - megawatt-hour SOURCE: ESA 2024.			

The anticipated operational energy consumption for electrical usage is approximately 2,098 MWh/year. This represents less than 0.0001 percent of the total 2022 Sacramento County electricity usage. Based on this comparison, the Project-related electricity consumption would not cause adverse effects on local and regional energy supplies nor require additional generation capacity. Fuels would also be utilized to maintain equipment during operation and would be used in vehicles related to employees' travel. Project operation would generate vehicle trips associated with ongoing operation of the office building. These vehicle trips by SMUD employees would be essential to ensuring that the new office building is safe and functional. The building will not include any natural gas usage. Therefore, the Project would not result in an inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. This impact would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation is required.

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

Less than Significant. During construction of all the Project components, construction activities would comply with State and local requirements designed to minimize idling and associated emissions, which also minimizes fuel use. Construction equipment used would be subject to CARB's In-Use Off Road Diesel-Fueled Fleets regulation, which applies to certain off-road diesel engines, or equipment greater than 25 hp. The regulation (1) imposes limits on idling, requires a written idling policy, and requires a disclosure when selling vehicles; (2) requires that all vehicles be reported to CARB (using the Diesel Off-Road Online Reporting System) and labeled; (3) restricts the addition of older vehicles into fleets after January 1, 2014; and (4) requires that fleets reduce their emissions by retiring, replacing, or repowering older engines or installing Verified Diesel Emission Control Strategies (i.e., exhaust retrofits).

Construction activities would use fuel-efficient equipment and on-road vehicles consistent with federal and state regulations, such as the fuel efficiency regulations in CARB's Pavley Phase II standards for light-duty vehicles like worker commute and vendor vehicles; the anti-idling regulation in 13 CCR section 2485; and fuel requirements for stationary equipment in 17 CCR section 93115 (concerning the Airborne Toxic Control Measures). In accordance with 13 CCR sections 2485 and 2449, idling by commercial vehicles heavier than 10,000 pounds and off-road equipment greater than 25 hp would be limited to a maximum of five minutes. The intent of these regulations is to reduce construction emissions; however, compliance with the anti-idling and emissions reduction regulations would also result in fuel savings from the more efficient use of equipment.

Sacramento's 2030 General Plan Policy LU 8.1.5 requires new or renovated City-owned buildings to be energy efficient and meet, as appropriate, LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver or equivalent standard. The Project would be required to comply with the California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen) and target LEED[™] certification rating of Silver or equivalent standard. Consistent with SMUD's 2030 Zero Carbon Plan, the Project's objectives contribute to SMUD's goals for ensuring electrical service reliability, provide safe and reliable electrical service to existing and proposed developments in the Folsom region, and minimize impacts to nearby sensitive receptors and sensitive natural communities.

All relevant provisions that are designed to conserve and reduce energy consumption would be implemented. Overall, energy use during construction and operation activities associated with the Project would not be considered, nor would any sources or activities conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

3.7 Geology and Soils

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less- Than- Significant Impact	No Impact
VII. Geology and Soils.				
Would the project:				
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to California Geological Survey Special Publication 42.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994, as updated), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.7.1 Environmental Setting

A Geotechnical Engineering Report was prepared for the subject property by Wallace Kuhl & Associates in 2005 (see **Appendix D**). The following discussion is based primarily on this report.

The Project site is at an elevation of approximately 150 feet above mean sea level (msl) and is relatively flat to gently undulating with the exception of the mid-point of the western perimeter of the site. A circular depression approximately three to five feet deep is located on the western central portion of the site and is filled with mature oak trees and brush. Just west of the western perimeter of the site the surface slopes down at a 1:1 slope towards the American River. These site features are shown in **Figure 2-2**.

Surface material across the majority of the site consists of rounded cobbles and gravels. Site soils are a mixture of gravel and cobbles with varying percentages of sand and silt. According to Wallace Kuhl & Associates (2005), several test pits encountered gravel and cobbles with very little fine-grain soils (leveled tailings piles).

Dredging operations were performed at the site in the early to mid-1900's. These operations utilized large floating dredges to mine alluvial deposits for gold. Piles and ridges ("windrows") of gravel and cobbles were formed during the dredging operations and low areas between the piles and ridges were filled with sand, silt, and clay. Sand, silt and clay suspended in the water used to float the dredges gradually settled to the bottom of the ponds. The sand, being heaviest, settled out first and the clay settled last and generally came to rest on top of the sand and silt. The windrows and piles of cobbles are commonly referred to as dredge tailings and the silt and clay are referred to as "slickens" deposits.

The dredge tailings were leveled, and the low areas were filled during grading operations performed in the mid-1980's. Thick growths of trees and vegetation were removed and soils containing predominantly cobbles and boulders from the tailing deposits were placed and compacted in the low areas. The site was graded essentially level by about 1986, with only slight elevation differences.

3.7.2 Discussion

- a) **Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:**
 - i) **Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to California Geological Survey Special Publication 42.)**

Less than Significant. There are no Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones within Sacramento County (DOC 2021). Based on the published geologic maps and aerial photographs reviewed by Wallace Kuhl & Associates (2005), no active or potentially active faults are known to underlie the Project area. Furthermore, Wallace Kuhl & Associates did not observe any surface evidence of faulting during their

site reconnaissance. Therefore, ground rupture at the site resulting from seismic activity is considered unlikely and this impact would be less than significant.

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

Less than Significant. The Project site is located in the Sacramento Valley, which has historically experienced a low level of seismic ground shaking. The California Geological Survey has identified the region as an area of low to moderately low earthquake shaking potential (CGS 2016).

Depending on the strength of groundshaking, it is possible that structures in the area could be damaged during such an event. However, the Project would be constructed in a manner consistent with California Building Code (CBC) Title 24, which identifies specific design requirements to reduce damage from strong seismic ground shaking, ground failure, landslides, soil erosion, and expansive soils. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Less than Significant. Wallace Kuhl & Associates (2005) determined that based on the known geologic, seismologic, groundwater, and soils conditions of the Project site, the potential for liquefaction to occur beneath the site is very low. It was further determined that the potential for ground lurching, differential settlement, or lateral spreading occurring during or after seismic events near the site is also low, provided prudent geotechnical engineering recommendations are following during site preparation.

The Project would comply with CBC Title 24, which includes specific design requirements to reduce damage from ground failure. The Project would also be required to comply with the specific recommendations of the Geotechnical Engineering Report prepared for the Lake Forest Technical Center. Compliance with these requirements and recommendations would reduce this impact to a level that is less than significant.

iv) Landslides?

Less than Significant. The Project site is essentially flat and has been mass graded. The Project is anticipated to require excavation and removal of existing soil and import of backfill to re-establish grade within the site. Excavations would also be needed for building foundations and installation of infrastructure. According to Wallace Kuhl & Associates (2005), the native soils are readily excavatable with conventional methods and are not susceptible to caving or sloughing. However, where fill materials were encountered, caving and sloughing of test pit sidewalls was observed at depths greater than about five feet. As such, the Geotechnical Engineering Report recommends sloping of the sides of the building pad excavation if loose soils are encountered as well as sloping of all excavations deeper than five feet in accordance with OSHA regulations. Compliance with existing OSHA requirements and the recommendations of the Geotechnical Engineering Report prepared for the Lake Forest Technical Center would reduce this impact to a level that is less than significant.

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

Less than Significant. The Project site has been cleared and graded exposing soils to wind erosion and surface water runoff during storm events. Project construction would involve grading, excavating, trenching, and cut/fill within the Project site. Sediment from construction activities could be transported within stormwater runoff and could drain to Lake Natoma and degrade local water quality.

The Project would be subject to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Statewide Construction General NPDES permit for stormwater runoff (Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ and NPDES No. CAS 000002 [Construction General Permit]) and would be required to implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP would include Best Management Practices (BMPs) to be implemented and maintained on the site both during and post-construction to prevent erosion and protect water quality. Additionally, the Project must comply with the City's Grading Ordinance (Folsom Municipal Code 14.29) which requires submittal of an erosion and sediment control plan as part of the improvement plans. The City's stormwater inspector inspects construction projects for compliance with the City's stormwater regulations.

Furthermore, and as noted above, the Project would be constructed in accordance with CBC standards. These standards require that appropriate soil and geotechnical reports be prepared and that site-specific engineering design measures, including those related to general site grading, clearing and grubbing, soil stabilization, and general erosion control, be implemented to appropriately minimize potential adverse impacts related to erosion. This, coupled with preparation of a SWPPP and an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan, would minimize potential adverse impacts related to erosion and loss of topsoil at the Project site, resulting in a less than significant impact related to soil erosion or the loss of topsoil.

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?

Less than Significant. As discussed previously, the site's geologic and soils conditions were analyzed as part of the Geotechnical Engineering Report prepared for the Project. Wallace Kuhl & Associates (2005) determined that site soils are adequate for development and that the potential for landslide and ground failure is very low with implementation of the recommended measures. Compliance with the recommended measures would be required as a condition of project approval of City entitlements, which are required for implementation of the Project. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

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

Less than Significant. Expansive soils shrink and swell as a result of moisture change. These volume changes can result in damage over time to building foundations, underground utilities, and other subsurface facilities and infrastructure if they are not designed and constructed appropriately to resist

the damage associated with changing soil conditions. According to Wallace Kuhl & Associates (2005), most of the native soils are essentially granular, and are anticipated to have a low expansion potential. Special reinforcement of foundations and floor slabs, and special moisture conditioning during site grading to resist soil expansion pressures were determined not to be necessary. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

- 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?**

No Impact. The Project would be served by the City's sewer system and would not require the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. Therefore, there would be no impact.

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

Less than Significant. The Project site has been heavily disturbed by past dredging operations and, more recently, mass grading of the site. Therefore, the potential to encounter intact paleontological resources during ground-disturbing activities would be low. Nonetheless, further ground-disturbing activities could result in uncovering currently unknown resources and cause a substantial change in the significance of an undiscovered unique paleontological resource or geologic feature.

To avoid impacts to paleontological resources, the Folsom General Plan provides Implementation Program NCR 8 (Management of Paleontological Resources), which requires the paleontological sensitivity of the geologic units affected by a discretionary project to be determined through literature review and records research. If a project area is determined to be sensitive for paleontological resources, conditions must be added to the project approval to monitor for and salvage paleontological resources during ground-disturbing activities.

According to geologic maps of the Project area (California State Parks 2004), the site overlies mine and dredge tailings originating from Quaternary sediments. Given the disturbed nature of mine and dredge tailings the sensitivity of the site for paleontological resources is considered low. The University of California Museum of Paleontology's (UCMP; 2024) records of paleontological localities show that fossil remains have been found at 13 localities in Sacramento County. Most of these localities are underlain by Mariposa and Riverbank geologic formations which are not found near the Project site. Based on these findings, the Project site is not considered sensitive for paleontological resources and no project conditions are required to avoid impacts. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

3.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less- Than- Significant Impact	No Impact
VIII. Greenhouse Gas Emissions.				
Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.8.1 Environmental Setting

Greenhouse gases (GHGs) trap heat by preventing some of the solar radiation that hits the earth from being reflected back into space. Some GHGs occur naturally and are needed to keep the earth's surface habitable. Over the past 100 years, human activity has substantially increased the concentration of GHGs in our atmosphere. This has intensified the greenhouse effect, increased average global temperatures, and resulted in climate change.

Carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O) are the principal GHGs of concern. CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O occur naturally and through human activity. Emissions of CO₂ are largely by-products of fossil fuel combustion, CH₄ results from off-gassing associated with agricultural practices and landfills, and N₂O is emitted during agricultural, land use, and industrial activities.

CO₂ is the reference gas for climate change because it is the predominant GHG emitted. The effect that each of the gases can have on global warming is a combination of the mass of their emissions and their global warming potential (GWP). GWP indicates, on a pound-for-pound basis, how much a gas contributes to global warming relative to how much warming would be predicted to be caused by the same mass of CO₂. CH₄ and N₂O are substantially more potent GHGs than CO₂, with 100-year GWPs of 25 and 298 times that of CO₂, respectively (IPCC 2007). In emissions inventories, GHG emissions are typically reported in metric tons of CO₂ equivalents (MTCO₂e). CO₂e is calculated as the product of the mass emitted of a given GHG and its specific GWP. While CH₄ and N₂O have much higher GWPs than CO₂, CO₂ is emitted in such vastly greater quantities that it accounts for the majority of GHG emissions in CO₂e.

The state of California is leading the nation in setting goals and regulating GHG reduction. The most notable of these is Assembly Bill (AB) 32 – California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32),

which requires that ARB adopt a quantified cap on GHG emissions representing 1990 emissions levels, disclose how it arrives at the cap, institute a schedule to meet the emissions cap, and develop tracking, reporting, and enforcement mechanisms to ensure that the state achieves reductions in GHG emissions necessary to meet the cap.

The Legislature enacted AB 1279 on September 16, 2022. AB 1279 establishes the policy of the State to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions, carbon neutrality, as soon as possible, but no later than 2045 and achieve and maintain net negative greenhouse gas emissions thereafter. Additionally, AB 1279 ensures that by 2045 Statewide anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions are reduced at least 85 percent below 1990 levels. SB 1279 also requires the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to ensure that the Scoping Plan identifies and recommends measures to achieve carbon neutrality, and to identify and implement policies and strategies for carbon dioxide removal solutions and carbon capture, utilization, and storage technologies.

The 2022 Scoping Plan, adopted by CARB in December 2022, expands on prior Scoping Plans and responds to AB 1279 by outlining a technologically feasible, cost-effective, and equity-focused path to achieve the state's climate target of reducing anthropogenic emissions to 85 percent below 1990 levels and achieving carbon neutrality by 2045 or earlier (CARB 2022). The 2022 Scoping Plan outlines the strategies the state will implement to achieve carbon neutrality by reducing GHGs to meet the anthropogenic target and by expanding actions to capture and store carbon through the state's natural and working lands and using a variety of mechanical approaches.

Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) is the primary agency responsible for addressing air quality concerns in Sacramento County and has established quantitative significance thresholds for evaluating GHG emissions. The SMAQMD guidance establishes a threshold of 1,100 MTCO₂e per year from construction. For operational emissions, the SMAQMD takes a tiered qualitative approach such that projects that implement applicable Best Management Practices (BMPs) demonstrate consistency with the Climate Change Scoping Plan and would have a less than significant impact (SMAQMD 2020).

3.8.2 Discussion

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

Less than Significant. GHG emissions from construction activities were estimated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) (version 2022.1.1) with the same assumptions as discussed in Section 3.3, *Air Quality*. **Table 3.8-1** and **Table 3.8-2** present the maximum annual construction GHG emissions for the Project. It is estimated that the maximum annual concentration will be 1,023 MTCO₂e in Phase 1 (year 2026) and 1,061 MTCO₂e in Phase 2 (year 2028). This is less than the SMAQMD threshold of 1,100 MTCO₂e per year; therefore, construction of the Project would not result in a significant impact.

Table 3.8-1. Phase 1 Annual Construction GHG Emissions (MTCO₂e per Year)

Construction Year	Project Construction GHG Emissions	Exceeds Threshold of 1,100 MTCO ₂ e?
2025	433	No
2026	1023	No
2027	784	No

Table 3.8-2. Phase 2 Annual Construction GHG Emissions (MTCO₂e per Year)

Construction Year	Project Construction GHG Emissions	Exceeds Threshold of 1,100 MTCO ₂ e?
2027	159	No
2028	1061	No
2029	409	No

Table 3.8-3 presents the annual GHG emission for the Project. GHG emissions during operations would primarily occur from mobile source emission by employee vehicle trips to the operational office building. GHG emissions would also be generated from the electricity used to treat, pump and deliver water and wastewater generated by the staff, as well as from disposal of solid waste generated. The Project would not utilize natural gas and would therefore not generate direct natural gas GHG emissions from building energy use. It is estimated that the Project’s operational activities would result in the generation of approximately 817 MTCO₂e in Phase 1 operations and 393 MTCO₂e in Phase 2 operations, combined for a total of 1,073 MTCO₂e per year once fully operational. Per SMAQMD thresholds, the Project would be required to implement tier 1 BMPs (BMP 1 & 2).

- BMP 1 - projects shall be designed and constructed without natural gas infrastructure.
- BMP 2 - projects shall meet the current CalGreen Tier 2 standards, except all electric vehicle capable spaces shall instead be electric vehicle ready.

Table 3.8-3. Annual Operational GHG Emissions (MTCO₂e per Year)

Source	Phase 1 Operation	Phase 2 Operation	Full Operation MT CO ₂ e per year
Mobile	450	228	678
Area	1.05	0.54	1.59
Energy	214	104	318
Water	9.76	5.06	14.82
Waste	14.5	7.69	22.19
Refrigerant	0.02	0.01	0.03
Stationary	38.2	-	38.2
Total Project Emissions	817	392	1,073
SMAQMD Threshold	1,100	1,100	1,100
Significant?	No	No	No
NOTES: The GHG total emissions may not add up due to rounding. SOURCE: ESA 2024			

Based on the above, the construction and operational GHG emissions in all years and phases of the Project would not exceed the applicable thresholds of significance, resulting in a less than significant impact.

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

Less than Significant. The applicable plans adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions is CARB's 2022 Scoping Plan Update (2022 Update). The 2022 Update does not contain any actions or measures that address GHG emissions from construction, as the majority of typical land use development project GHG emissions come from the operational phase and therefore most plans target reducing operational GHG emissions. Any electrical power required during construction will be supplied from Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD), which is required to comply with SB 100 and the Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS). SB 100 requires that the proportion of electricity from renewable sources be 60 percent by 2030 and 100 percent renewable power by 2045. The goals in the SMUD Zero Carbon Plan align with SB 100 energy requirements.

Additionally, the Project would be required to implement the SMAQMD's identified Basic Construction Emissions Control Practices (BCECPs), which are considered by the SMAQMD to be the applicable construction BMPs. The Project would be required to implement the SMAQMD's tier 1 BMPs (BMP 1 & 2), as described in the section above, which are considered as the required operational BMPs.

The Project would be consistent with 2022 Update, SMAQMD BMPs, and would not obstruct the goals in the SMUD 2030 Zero Carbon Plan. As a result, the Project would not conflict with any applicable GHG reduction plans and impacts would be less than significant.

3.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
IX. Hazards and Hazardous Materials.				
Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and/or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.9.1 Environmental Setting

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (Phase I ESA) was prepared for the Project on August 17, 2023, to assess the existing environmental conditions of the Project site with respect to hazardous conditions

and substances (Brown and Caldwell, 2023; see **Appendix E**). According to the Phase I ESA, there are no permanent structures on the site and no hazardous materials or visual signs of contamination were noted during the site inspection. Brown and Caldwell (2023) did not identify any Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs)³ and concluded that no further investigation of the site is warranted.

3.9.2 Discussion

- a) **Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?**
- b) **Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and/or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?**

Less than Significant. Construction activities would involve the temporary use of hazardous materials, such as fuels, solvents, lubricants, asphalt, and oil on the Project site. The use and storage of these materials could potentially expose and adversely affect workers, the public, or the environment as a result of improper handling or use, accident, environmentally unsound disposal methods, fire, explosion, flooding, wildfire or other emergencies, resulting in adverse health or environmental effects.

The California Highway Patrol and Caltrans are responsible for enforcing regulations related to the transportation of hazardous materials on local roadways, and the use of these materials is regulated by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), as outlined in CCR Title 22. SMUD and its construction contractors would be required to comply with the California Environmental Protection Agency's (Cal EPA's) Unified Program, which protects Californians from hazardous waste and hazardous materials by ensuring consistency throughout the state regarding the implementation of administrative requirements, permits, inspections, and enforcement at the local regulatory level. Regulated activities would be managed in accordance with the regulations included in the Unified Program by the Sacramento County Environmental Management Department, which is the designated Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) for Sacramento County and its incorporated cities, including Folsom. These regulations include, but are not limited to, hazardous materials release response plans and inventories and California Uniform Fire Code hazardous materials management plans and inventories. Compliance with these existing regulations under the authority of the Sacramento County Environmental Management Department would reduce the potential for accidental release of hazardous materials during project construction.

During operation, the Project would require the storage of diesel fuel to power the proposed onsite backup generators. It is anticipated that fuel storage for the generators would total approximately 1,300 gallons within two 650-gallon storage tanks. Sacramento County requires businesses handling or storing

³ Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs) as defined in ASTM 1527-13 means the presence or likely presence of any hazardous substances or petroleum products on a property that indicates an existing release, a past release, or a material threat of a release of any hazardous substances or petroleum products, both unauthorized and permitted, into the ground, groundwater, or surface water of the property

hazardous substances in volumes greater than 55 gallons to prepare a Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMBP) including an emergency response plan and obtain a permit. The Sacramento County Environmental Management Department would provide oversight including inspections and hazardous materials incident response to ensure public safety. Project operation would also involve the routine use of common hazardous substances used for cleaning, building maintenance, landscaping, and vehicle use. These materials, if present, would be in small quantities and would be used, stored, and disposed of in accordance with product labeling and applicable regulations. Compliance with these existing regulations would ensure that this impact would be less than significant.

c) 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 Project site is within an existing business park. There are no schools or similar uses within one-quarter mile. Furthermore, the Project would not involve any activities that would emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials. Therefore, there would be no impact.

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

Less than Significant. Government Code Section 65962.5 requires that DTSC compile and maintain a list of hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action, land designated as hazardous waste property, or hazardous waste disposals on public land. This list is known as the Cortese List and can be accessed on Cal EPA's website. As part of the Phase I ESA completed for the Project site, a search of federal and State databases containing known and suspected sites of environmental contamination was completed by Environmental Data Resources, Inc. (EDR). No such sites were identified on or adjacent to the Project site. The EDR search did reveal multiple sites within the radius search required by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standard practice (see Appendix E for a complete list). Due to distance from the Project site, current cleanup status, or the nature of the contamination, Brown and Caldwell (2023) Bole & Associates (2019) determined that none of these sites are considered RECs and would not affect development of the Project site as proposed.

In addition, the Phase I ESA found no record of previous site uses which may have involved hazardous substances and no signs of potential contamination on the site such as the presence of storage tanks or containers, old buildings, pits, ponds, or lagoons, solid waste dumping, stained soils, or stressed vegetation. Based on their findings, Brown and Caldwell (2023) Bole & Associates (2019) concluded that no further investigations are warranted. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

- 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?**

No Impact. Airports closest to the Project site include Sacramento Mather Airport (8.5 miles southwest); Cameron Airpark (11 miles east); and Sacramento McClellan Airport (11 miles west). The Project site is not within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, or within the vicinity of a private air strip. Therefore, implementation of the Project as proposed would not result in an aviation-related safety hazard for people residing or working in the Project area. Therefore, there would be no impact.

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

Less than Significant. Project construction may temporarily generate truck trips on Folsom Boulevard and require temporary lane closures on Woodmere Road/Blue Ravine Road as materials and equipment are transported to the site. These traffic obstructions could interfere with or slow emergency vehicles, temporarily increasing response times and impeding existing services on these roadways. However, any Project activities that may involve public right of way would be required to obtain an encroachment permit from either Caltrans or the City of Folsom. As part of this encroachment permit application, SMUD would be required to prepare and submit a traffic control plan providing measures to ensure maintenance of emergency access during construction (City of Folsom 2023). Project operations would be similar to the adjacent office uses and would not interfere with emergency response or evacuation plans. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

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

Less than Significant Impact. The Project is in an urban area generally surrounded by existing development and separated from open space areas by Lake Natoma on the west and US 50 on the south. The trail corridor just west of the site as well as the Willow Creek Recreation Area just to the south contain trees and vegetation but are separated from larger open space areas and the area is routinely maintained by the State. Development of the site and operation of the proposed facility would not expose people or structures to significant risk involving wildland fires. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

3.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less- Than- Significant Impact	No Impact
X. Hydrology and Water Quality.				
Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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 on- or offsite erosion or siltation;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.10.1 Environmental Setting

Surface Water

The Project site is within the Willow Creek Watershed, which drains to Willow Creek and ultimately Lake Natoma. The Project site does not contain any surface water features and has been previously graded.

Groundwater

The Project site is within the Sacramento River Hydrologic Basin, as defined by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR). Wallace Kuhl & Associates (2005) reviewed the Spring 2003 *Groundwater Elevations* map prepared by the Sacramento County Department of Public Works, Water Resources Division and determined that regional groundwater flow is predicted to be southwesterly. It was further determined that groundwater beneath the Project area is at an elevation of approximately 110 feet above msl, or roughly 40 feet below the ground surface of the site.

Stormwater Drainage

As described previously, the Project site is relatively flat to gently undulating apart from a circular depression approximately three to five feet deep located in the site's west-central portion that is filled with mature oak trees and brush. Just west of the site's western boundary the surface slopes down at a 1:1 slope.

As described in greater detail in Section 3.19, Utilities and Service Systems, drainage infrastructure runs through the site from the property to the north to Shore Court within an existing access easement.

Flooding Hazards

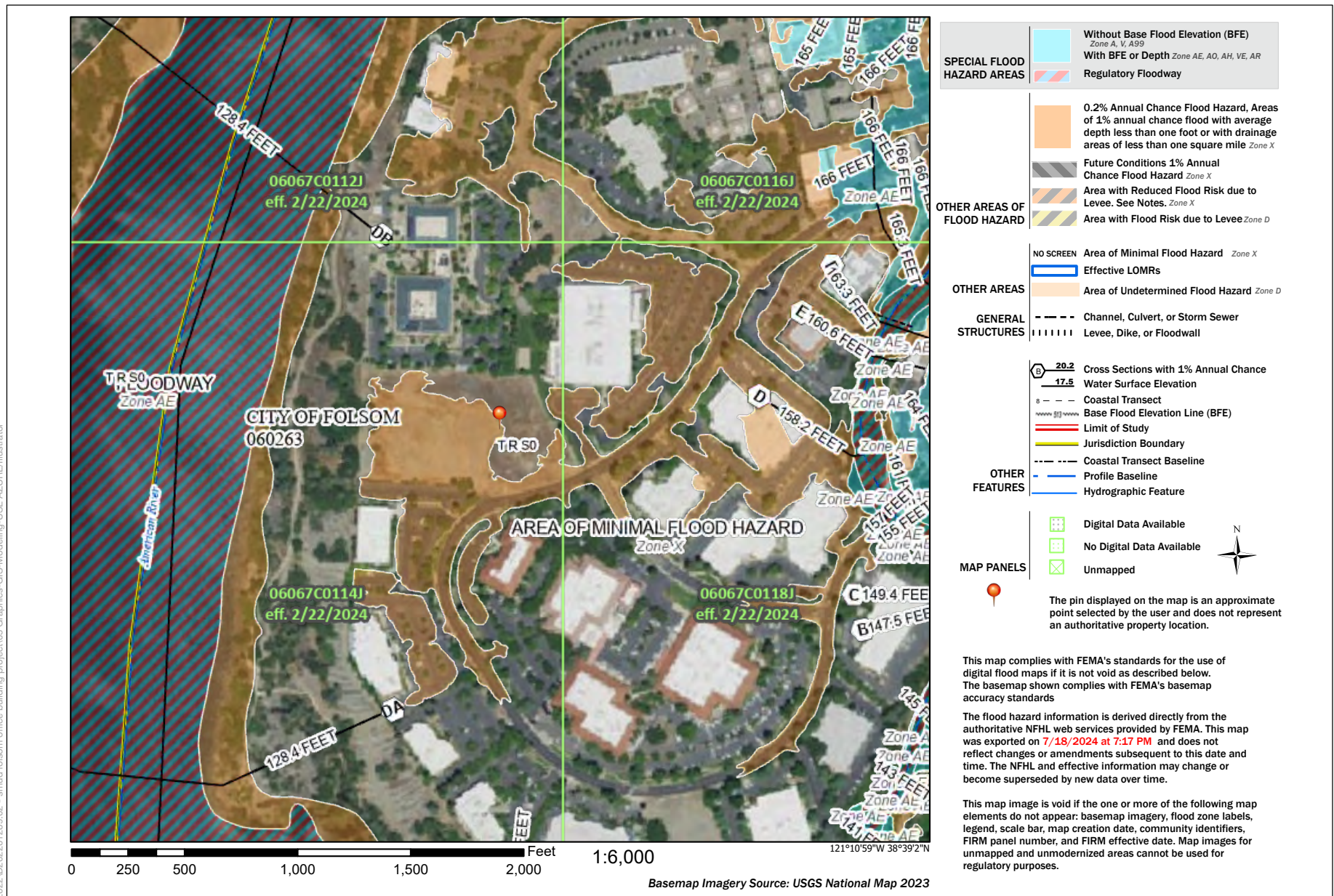
According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA; 2024), the Project site is in an area of 0.2 percent chance of flooding (Zone X 500-year floodplain). **Figure 3.10-1** illustrates the FEMA flood hazard zones on and around the Project site.

3.10.2 Discussion

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

Less than Significant. The City of Folsom has a Phase I National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit and is part of the Sacramento Stormwater Quality Partnership (SSQP). The City of Folsom is regulated by Order No. R5-2002-0206 NPDES No. CAS082597, "Waste Discharge Requirements for County of Sacramento and the Cities Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, Folsom, Galt and Sacramento Storm Water Discharges From Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems Sacramento County" issued by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB).

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SOURCE: FEMA

SMUD Folsom Office Building Project

Figure 3.10-1
FEMA Flood Designation Map

The City of Folsom participates in the County-wide Sacramento Stormwater Quality Improvement Program (SQIP), which was established in 1990 to reduce the pollution carried by stormwater into local creeks and rivers. The SQIP is based on the NPDES municipal stormwater discharge permit. The comprehensive SQIP includes pollution reduction activities for construction sites, industrial sites, illegal discharges and illicit connections, new development, and municipal operations.

Stormwater runoff generated during both construction and operation of the Project could degrade water quality by increasing sedimentation and by increasing the volume and flow rate of runoff. Site preparation would involve excavations and fill to raise the building pad, trenching for the relocation and installation of utilities, and further grading to create building pads and appropriate slopes for drainage. During these early stages of construction, the potential exists for wind and water erosion to discharge sediment and/or pollutants into stormwater runoff. Once constructed, runoff flowing across the site could carry pollutants such as oils and grease from vehicles and pesticides and fertilizers used in landscaping into the public storm drainage system. The discharge of sediment and pollutants into stormwater runoff could adversely affect the water quality in the Project area. However, the SWRCB adopted statewide general NPDES permits for stormwater discharge associated with construction and operation that requires implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to protect water quality.

The Project would be required to implement all applicable goals, policies, and BMPs set forth by the above programs. BMPs to be implemented during Project construction would likely include, but are not limited to, installation of storm drain inlet protection, stabilization of construction exits, and proper maintenance of material stockpiles. BMPs to be implemented during Project operation would include the diversion of stormwater through water quality swales and routine inspection and maintenance of onsite BMPs.

The Project's compliance with the requirements of the CVRWQCB, the SQIP, and the City of Folsom's Stormwater Quality Program would ensure that neither construction nor operation of the Project results in degradation of downstream water quality or an increase in erosion. The Project would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

b) 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. Water would be supplied to the Project site by the City of Folsom exclusively from the Folsom Lake reservoir which is supplied by the south fork of the American River. Thus, the Project would have no potential to directly decrease groundwater supplies. According to the City's 2020 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP; City of Folsom 2021), the City overlies two subbasins: the North American Subbasin and the South American Subbasin, which are part of the Sacramento Valley Groundwater Basin. The site was previously cleared and graded, and soils have become compacted prohibiting significant groundwater recharge from occurring. Thus, development of the site would not be expected to further impede groundwater recharge. Conversely, the proposed drainage plan would divert drainage to a swale and landscaped areas to treat drainage and allow for percolation into the soil,

thereby contributing to groundwater recharge. Furthermore, the Project site is designated for urban development and the loss of groundwater infiltration due to its development was addressed in the City of Folsom's General Plan PEIR. This impact would be less than significant.

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 on- or offsite erosion or siltation;

Less than Significant. See Section 3.7, Geology and Soils, Response (b) and Section 3.10, Hydrology and Water Quality, Response (a). The Project has been previously graded in preparation for development and is essentially flat. However, construction would disturb and expose site soils to erosion and sediment could be transported in stormwater runoff degrading local water quality. As discussed previously, the Project would be subject to multiple layers of regulations intended to protect water quality during and post construction including the NPDES statewide permits requiring implementation of a SWPPP, the City's Grading Ordinance requiring implementation of an erosion and sediment control plan, and the CBC standards related to erosion and sediment control. Compliance with these existing regulations would minimize potential adverse impacts related to erosion or siltation at the Project site. Therefore, this impact would be 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. See Section 3.10, Hydrology and Water Quality, Response (a). Development of the Project site with the proposed building, tower, paved parking areas, and other impervious surfaces would increase the volume and flow rate of surface runoff on the site. Conformance with City of Folsom Municipal Code Sections 14.29.321 and 14.29.322 would include preparation of a drainage plan. The drainage plan would describe the existing and proposed site contours and surface water flow patterns on the site, proposed building and road elevations, and existing and proposed drainage channels. The drainage plan would demonstrate that the proposed drainage facilities would not result in stormwater runoff that could cause flooding, ponding, soil erosion, sediment production, or sediment pollution. Implementation of the proposed drainage and landscaping plans would ensure that site runoff would not result in flooding on- or off-site. 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; or

Less than Significant. As described previously, the Project would prepare a drainage plan as part of conformance with City of Folsom Municipal code. In accordance with City of Folsom Municipal Code Section 14.29.322, the Project's drainage facilities must not result in stormwater runoff that could cause flooding or ponding. The Project proposes to direct stormwater runoff to a drainage swale and other landscaped areas of the site which would reduce the volume and flow rate of runoff prior to discharge to

the City's stormwater drainage system. Compliance with existing City regulations would reduce this impact to a level that is less than significant.

iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?

Less than Significant. The Project site is in an area of minimal flood risk (FEMA 2024) that is designated for urban development in local land use plans and surrounded by similar development. Construction activities and staging would only occur onsite and would be halted during storm event to protect water quality. Therefore, construction equipment and activities would not impede runoff in public roadways or drain inlets during a storm events. Once construction is completed, the proposed building would be raised out of the 500-year floodplain and floodwaters would flow unimpeded through the proposed parking areas and surrounding roadways. This impact would be less than significant.

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

Less than Significant. Tsunamis are defined as sea waves created by undersea fault movement, whereas a seiche is a long-wavelength, large-scale wave action set up in a closed body of water, such as a lake or reservoir. The Project site is not located in proximity to a coastline and would not be at risk of flooding from a tsunami. The Project site is located adjacent to Lake Natoma; however, the Project area historically has been subject to minimal seismic activity and the lake has a relatively small surface area. Furthermore, the Project would not require the use or storage of substantial quantities of hazardous substances which could be released in the event of site inundation. The risk of inundation from a seiche is minimal and does not represent a significant project impact.

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

Less than Significant. See Response (a) above. The Project would avoid and/or minimize its effects on water quality through its compliance with the requirements of the CVRWQCB, the SQIP, and the City of Folsom's Stormwater Quality Program. Neither construction nor operation of the Project would result in the degradation of local water quality. Therefore, the Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan. See Response (b) above. The Project would not directly or indirectly decrease groundwater levels or otherwise conflict with a sustainable groundwater management plan. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

3.11 Land Use and Planning

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than- Significant Impact	No Impact
XI. Land Use and Planning.				
Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.11.1 Environmental Setting

The Project site is located within the incorporated City of Folsom and is identified as APN 069-0240-031. The site lies west of Folsom Boulevard, south of the Lake Forest Industrial Park, east of Lake Natoma and the American River, and north of the Willow Creek Recreation Area. The unincorporated community of Orangevale is located further to the west, across Lake Natoma. The site is vacant and has been previously mass graded. Land uses immediately surrounding the Project site include existing office and industrial uses to the north, south, and east and open space/recreation to the west.

The *Folsom General Plan 2035* (adopted 2018; amended 2021) designates the site as “Industrial/Office Park (IND).” This designation provides for office, research and development, wholesale, light industrial and similar uses with a floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.2 to 1.2.

The City’s zoning regulations are contained in Title 17, *Zoning*, of the City’s Municipal Code. The City has zoned the site as “M-1 (Light Industrial)” with a “PD (Planned Development)” combining district. The M-1 zoning district allows for all uses permitted within the C-3 (Heavy Commercial) zoning district which allows for all commercial uses but is intended for the highest-intensity commercial uses. The PD combining district is intended to allow greater flexibility in the design of integrated developments and to encourage the creative and efficient use of land.

The site is part of the established Lake Forest Technical Center business park for which the *Lake Forest Technical Center Development Standards* were adopted by the City in 1981 (Ordinance No. 425). The development standards are intended to provide for the development of a visually attractive, well-maintained and functional industrial park consistent with the character of Folsom and to mitigate and/or avoid potential impacts of such development to the unique and sensitive open space lands along Lake Natoma and Willow Creek.

The Project site is adjacent to Lake Natoma and land that is within the American River Parkway (Parkway). The Parkway is an open space greenbelt that extends from Folsom Dam approximately 29 miles southwest to the American River's confluence with the Sacramento River. The Parkway crosses multiple jurisdictional boundaries and includes portions of unincorporated Sacramento County, the cities of Sacramento and Rancho Cordova, and the Lake Natoma portion of the Folsom Lake State Recreational Area. The American River Parkway Plan (Sacramento County 2008) provides guidance for land use decisions affecting the Parkway and specifically addresses the preservation, use, development, and administration of the Parkway. The plan was most recently updated in 2008.

3.11.2 Discussion

a) Physically divide an established community?

No Impact. The Project site is located within a developed business park in an urban area of the city. While the site is within an established community, the Project proposes a use that is consistent with adjacent uses and with local land use plans. The Project does not propose any new roadways or other linear barriers to the movement of people through the area. There would be no impact.

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

Less than Significant. As described in greater detail in the following discussion, if the Project and the entitlements it requests are approved, the Project would be consistent with all applicable local land use plans, policies, and regulations and this impact would be less than significant.

Folsom General Plan 2035

As discussed below, the Project would be consistent with the goals and policies of the Folsom General Plan 2035 adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect:

- **Land Use Element:** Office and similar uses, such as the Project, are allowable uses within the Industrial/Office Park (IND) land use designation. The proposed facility would have a 75,000-square-foot building footprint on an approximately 218,236 square-foot parcel which equates to an FAR of 0.33. This is consistent with the allowable density/intensity range of FAR 0.2 to 1.2 for the IND land use designation. The Project would also be consistent with the more restrictive 50 percent maximum lot coverage (FAR 0.5) imposed by the Lake Forest Technical Center Development Standards (see further discussion of the Project's consistency with these standards below).
- **Mobility Element:** The Project does not propose any improvements to the existing roadways or bicycle/pedestrian facilities along Woodmere Road and would be consistent with the City's Pedestrian Master Plan (Policy M 2.1.1) and Bikeway Master Plan (Policy M 2.1.5).

- **Natural and Cultural Resources Element:** The Project would be consistent with the City's policies to protect natural and cultural resources by proposing to shield and direct outdoor lighting downward to avoid impacts to views, the night sky, and wildlife within the adjacent open space corridor (Policies NCR 1.1.7 and NCR 2.1.3). In addition, the Project proposes landscaping throughout the site to reduce the heat island effect consistent with Policy NCR 1.1.8. The Project would protect scenic views by complying with the City's development standards related to building form, materials, and colors and through the use of landscaping as screening (Policies NCR 2.1.1 and 2.1.2) (see also Section 3.1, Aesthetics). As discussed further in Section 3.10, Hydrology and Water Quality, the Project would avoid and minimize effects on water quality consistent with the policies under Goal NCR 4.1 through the implementation of BMPs during construction and operation.
- **Public Facilities and Services Element:** The Project would be served by existing utility systems with sufficient capacities and would not increase demand for public services consistent with the City's Public Facilities and Services goals and policies (see Section 3.15, Public Services, and Section 3.19, Utilities and Service Systems). Project landscaping would meet the requirements of the City's Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (Policy PFS 3.1.3). Furthermore, the Project proposes an onsite drainage system with adequate capacity to serve the site consistent with the policies under Goal PFS 5.1.
- **Safety and Noise Element:** As discussed in Section 3.9, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, the Project would not impede emergency operations and would be consistent with the City's Emergency Operations Plan (Policy SN 1.1.1) and Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. As discussed in Section 3.7, Geology and Soils, the Project site is on dredge tailings and would conform to the guidelines and regulations of the California Geological Survey.

Folsom Zoning Code and Lake Forest Technical Center Development Standards

The M-1 (Light Industrial) zoning designation allows for business and professional office uses by right and conditionally allows for new telecommunications towers. As the site is also zoned PD (Planned Development), the conditional approval of the proposed telecommunications tower would be approved through a Use Permit from the City. The Project site is also subject to the development standards adopted for the Lake Forest Technical Center including a maximum building height of 40 feet. The PD combining district allows for variances from the regulations of the underlying zone relating to height, setback, lot area and coverage, and parking. The proposed site design would conform to the M-1 zoning regulations and Lake Forest Development Standards related to setbacks, building coverage, building exteriors, landscaping and screening, fencing, and signs. However, the proposed 100-foot telecommunications tower would exceed the height limit and require a variance, which would be approved through a Planned Development Permit. The Project would undergo concurrent design review by the City to determine Project consistency with applicable standards. Thus, approval of the Planned Development Permit and Conditional Use Permit would ensure Project consistency with the City's zoning regulations.

American River Parkway Plan

The Project is adjacent to Lake Natoma and a narrow corridor of public open space that is managed under the American River Parkway Plan. Project activities would be limited to the Project site and would not encroach on the Parkway during construction or operation. The Project would not conflict with implementation of the American River Parkway Plan.

3.12 Mineral Resources

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
XII. Mineral Resources.				
Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3.12.1 Environmental Setting

The Project is located in the northeastern portion of Sacramento County. Principal mineral resources in Sacramento County include construction aggregates (sand and gravel) and natural gas. Natural gas production areas are located in the southwestern extent of the county and aggregate deposits are located south of the American River (Sacramento County 1993). There are no mineral resource extractions activities near the Project site.

Under the State Mining and Reclamation Act, areas containing economically significant mineral deposits are classified and mapped. The Project site is not classified as an area that is likely to contain substantial mineral deposits (DOC 2018).

3.12.2 Discussion

- 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?**

Less than Significant Impact. The Project site is classified as MRZ-2 indicating a high likelihood for the occurrence of significant aggregate deposits. However, as discussed above, MRZ classifications are determined without regard to existing land use. The site is within an established business park that has been almost entirely developed. Thus, even if mineral resources are present, the Project area has been committed to urban uses and is not available for mineral resource development. Furthermore, the City has zoned the site for development indicating that any potential mineral resources in the area are not of significant value to the region or its residents. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

- 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?**

No Impact. The Project site and surrounding area are not designated as a locally important mineral resource recovery site (City of Folsom 2018). Therefore, there would be no impact.

3.13 Noise

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
XIII. Noise.				
Would the project result in:				
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 in other applicable local, state, or federal standards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3.13.1 Environmental Setting

Sound is mechanical energy transmitted by pressure waves through a medium such as air. Noise can be defined as unwanted sound. Sound is characterized by various parameters that include the rate of oscillation of sound waves (frequency), the speed of propagation, and the pressure level or energy content (amplitude). In particular, the sound pressure level has become the most common descriptor used to characterize the loudness of an ambient sound level. Sound pressure level is measured in decibels (dB), with 0 dB corresponding roughly to the threshold of human hearing, and 120 to 140 dB corresponding to the threshold of pain.

The typical human ear is not equally sensitive to all frequencies of the audible sound spectrum. As a consequence, when assessing potential noise impacts, sound is measured using an electronic filter that de-emphasizes the frequencies in a manner corresponding to the human ear's decreased sensitivity to low and extremely high frequencies instead focusing on the frequency mid-range. This method of frequency weighting is referred to as A weighting and is expressed in units of A weighted decibels (dBA). All sound pressure levels and sound power levels reported below are A-weighted.

Noise Exposure and Ambient Noise

An individual's noise exposure is a measure of the noise experienced by the individual over a period of time. A noise level is a measure of noise at a given instant in time. However, noise levels rarely persist consistently over a long period of time. In fact, noise varies continuously with time with respect to the contributing sources in the noise environment. Noise is primarily the product of many distant noise sources, which constitute a relatively stable background noise exposure, with the individual contributors unidentifiable. Background noise levels change throughout a typical day, but do so gradually, corresponding with the addition and subtraction of distant noise sources and atmospheric conditions. The addition of short duration single event noise sources (e.g., aircraft flyovers, motor vehicles, sirens) makes noise constantly variable throughout a day.

These successive additions of sound to the noise environment vary the noise level from instant to instant, requiring the measurement of noise exposure over a period of time to legitimately characterize a noise environment and evaluate noise impacts. This time-varying characteristic of environmental noise is described using statistical noise descriptors. Different noise descriptors used to characterize environmental noise are summarized below:

- L_{eq} : The equivalent sound level is used to describe noise over a specified period of time, in terms of a single numerical value. The L_{eq} is the constant sound level which would contain the same acoustic energy as the varying sound level, during the same time period (i.e., the average noise exposure level for the given time period).
- L_{dn} : The energy average of the A-weighted sound levels occurring during a 24-hour period, and which accounts for the greater sensitivity of most people to nighttime noise by weighting noise levels at night ("penalizing" nighttime noises). Noise between 10 p.m. and seven a.m. is weighted (penalized) by adding 10 dBA to take into account the greater annoyance of nighttime noises. L_{dn} is also referred to as DNL.
- L_{max} : The instantaneous maximum noise level measured during the measurement period of interest.

Effects of Noise on People

The effects of noise on people can be placed into three categories:

- subjective effects of annoyance, nuisance, dissatisfaction;
- interference with activities such as speech, sleep, learning; and
- physiological effects such as hearing loss or sudden startling.

Environmental noise typically produces effects in the first two categories. Workers at industrial plants often experience noise in the last category. There is no completely satisfactory way to measure the subjective effects of noise, or the corresponding reactions of annoyance and dissatisfaction. A wide

variation exists in the individual thresholds of annoyance, and different tolerances to noise tend to develop based on an individual's past experiences with noise.

Thus, an important way of predicting a human reaction to a new noise environment is the way the new noise compares to the existing noise levels that one has adapted to, which is referred to as the "ambient noise" level. In general, the more a new noise exceeds the previously existing ambient noise level, the less acceptable the new noise will be judged by those hearing it. With regard to increases in A weighted noise level, the following relationships occur:

- Except in carefully controlled laboratory experiments, a change of 1 dBA cannot be perceived;
- Outside of the laboratory, a 3-dBA change is considered a just-perceivable difference when the change in noise is perceived but does not cause a human response;
- A change in level of at least 5 dBA is required before any noticeable change in human response would be expected; and
- A 10-dBA change is subjectively heard as approximately a doubling in loudness, and can cause an adverse response.

These relationships occur in part because of the logarithmic nature of sound and the decibel system. The human ear perceives sound in a non-linear fashion; hence, the decibel scale was developed. Because the decibel scale is based on logarithms, two noise sources do not combine in a simple additive fashion, rather they combine logarithmically. For example, if two identical noise sources produce noise levels of 50 dBA, the combined sound level would be 53 dBA, not 100 dBA. However, where ambient noise levels are high in comparison to a new noise source, there will be a small change in noise levels. For example, when 70 dBA ambient noise levels are combined with a 60 dBA noise sources, the resulting noise level equals 70.4 dBA.

Vibration

Vibration is an oscillatory motion through a solid medium in which the motion's amplitude can be described in terms of displacement, velocity, or acceleration. There are several different methods that are used to quantify vibration. The peak particle velocity (PPV) is defined as the maximum instantaneous peak of the vibration signal and is typically expressed in units of inches per second (in/sec). The PPV is most frequently used to describe vibration impacts on buildings. The root mean square (RMS) amplitude is most frequently used to describe the effect of vibration on the human body. The RMS amplitude is defined as the average of the squared amplitude of the signal. Decibel notation (VdB) is commonly used to measure RMS. The decibel notation acts to compress the range of numbers required to describe vibration (FTA, 2018). Typically, ground-borne vibration generated by man-made activities attenuates rapidly with distance from the source of the vibration.

Some common sources of ground-borne vibration are trains, heavy trucks traveling on rough roads, and construction activities such as blasting, pile driving, and operation of heavy earth-moving equipment.

The effects of ground-borne vibration include movement of the building floors, rattling of windows, shaking of items on shelves or hanging on walls, and rumbling sounds. In extreme cases, vibration can cause damage to buildings. Building damage is not a factor for most projects, with the occasional exception of blasting and pile-driving during construction. In residential areas, the background vibration velocity level is usually around 50 VdB (approximately 0.0013 in/sec PPV).

Sensitive Receptors

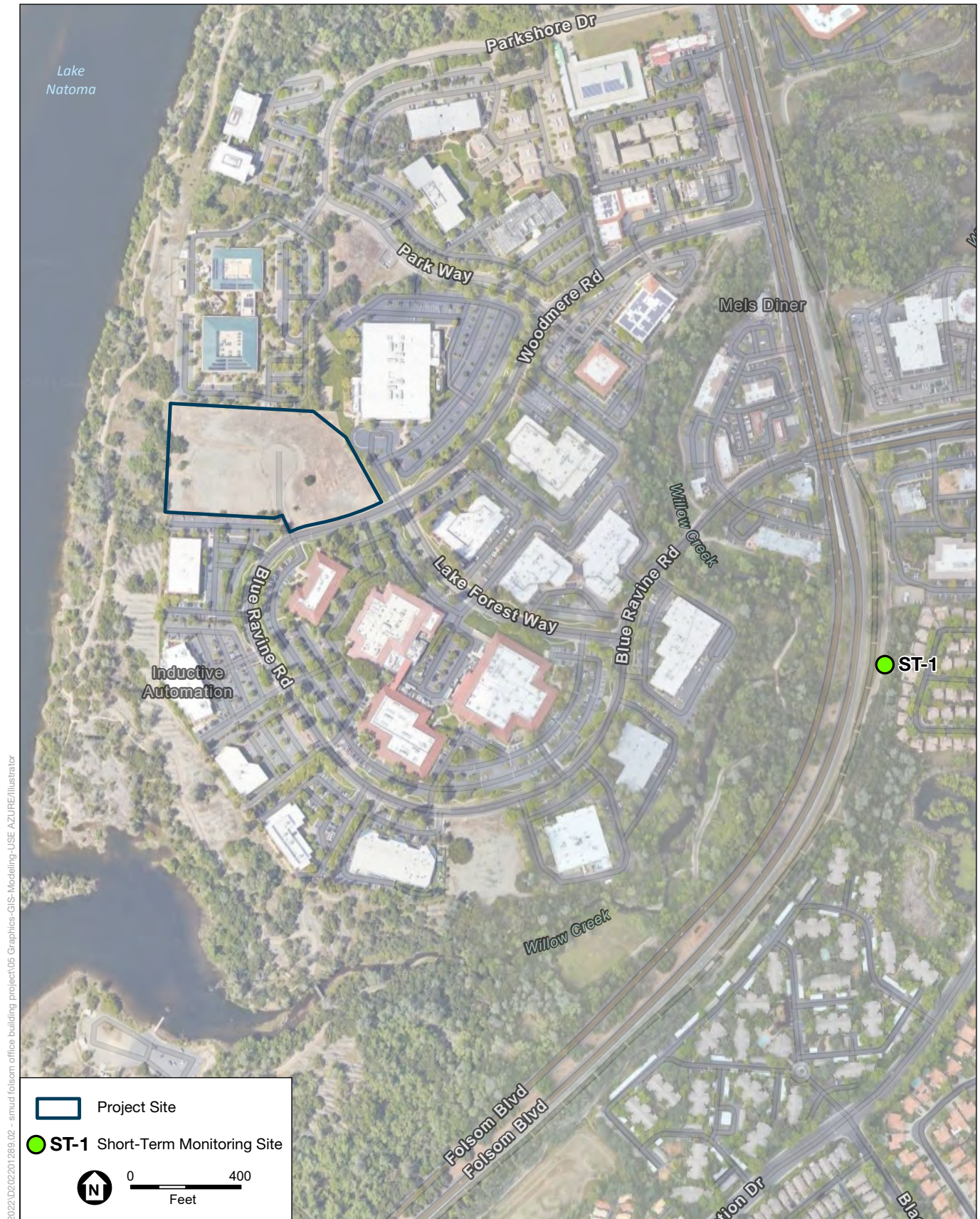
Human response to noise varies considerably from one individual to another. Effects of noise at various levels can include interference with sleep, concentration, and communication, and can cause stress and hearing loss. Given these effects, some land uses are considered more sensitive to ambient noise levels than others. In general, residences, schools, hotels, hospitals, and nursing homes are considered to be the most sensitive to noise. Places such as churches, libraries, and cemeteries, where people tend to pray, study, and/or contemplate are also sensitive to noise. Commercial and industrial uses are considered the least noise-sensitive.

The Project is in a suburban area. Sensitive receptors in the vicinity include single-family residences located on Coventry Circle approximately 1,940 feet to the southeast of the Project site.

To quantify the ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the Project, a noise measurement survey was conducted on March 7, 2024, near sensitive land uses that could be impacted by noise generated by the Project. The noise measurement was conducted using calibrated Larson Davis 831 noise meter. The noise measurement survey consisted of two 15-minute short-term (ST) noise measurements. Noise measurement results and location are shown in **Table 3.13-1** and **Figure 3.13-1**, respectively.

Table 3.13-1. Short-Term Noise Measurement Data

Measurement Location	Measurement Location Description	Major Noise Sources	Start Time	Noise Level (dBA) Leq
ST-1	Behind residences on Coventry Circle, east of Folsom Boulevard	Distant traffic on Folsom Boulevard	11:14 a.m.	60.7
Notes: ST=short-term Source: ESA 2024.				



SOURCE: ESRI, 2023; Sacramento County, 2023; ESA, 2024

SMUD Folsom Office Building Project

Figure 3-4
Noise Monitoring Location

3.12.3 Regulatory Setting

Federal, state, and local agencies regulate different aspects of environmental noise. Federal and state agencies generally set noise standards for mobile sources such as aircraft and motor vehicles, while regulation of stationary sources is left to local agencies. Local regulation of noise involves implementation of general plan policies and noise ordinance standards. Local general plans tend to identify general principles intended to guide and influence development plans; local ordinances establish standards and procedures for addressing specific noise sources and activities.

Federal

Truck Operations

Federal regulations establish noise limits for medium and heavy trucks (more than 4.5 tons, gross vehicle weight rating) under 40 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 205, Subpart B. The federal truck pass-by noise standard is 80 dBA at 15 meters (approximately 50 feet) from the vehicle pathway centerline. These regulatory controls are implemented on truck manufacturers.

Vibration

The FTA has adopted vibration standards that are used to evaluate potential building damage impacts related to construction activities. The vibration damage criteria adopted by the FTA are shown in **Table 3.13-2**.

Table 3.13-2. Construction Vibration Damage Criteria

Building Category	PPV (in/sec)
I. Reinforced-concrete, steel, or timber (no plaster)	0.5
II. Engineered concrete and masonry (no plaster)	0.3
III. Non-engineered timber and masonry buildings	0.2
IV. Buildings extremely susceptible to vibration damage	0.12
Source: FTA, 2018.	

State

Vehicle Operations

The State of California establishes noise limits for vehicles licensed to operate on public roads. The pass-by standard for heavy trucks is consistent with the federal limit of 80 dBA. The pass-by standard for light trucks and passenger cars (less than 4.5 tons, gross vehicle rating) is also 80 dBA at 15 meters from the centerline. These standards are implemented through controls on vehicle manufacturers and by legal sanctions on vehicle operators by State and local law enforcement officials.

Vibration

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has developed guidance on addressing vibration issues associated with construction, operation, and maintenance of transportation projects (Caltrans, 2013a). **Table 3.13-3** shows the Caltrans criteria for human response to transient vibration.

Table 3.13-3. Human Response to Transient Vibration

Human Response	PPV (inches/second)
Severe	2.0
Strongly Perceptible	0.9
Distinctly Perceptible	0.24
Barely Perceptible	0.035
Source: Caltrans, 2013.	

*Local*City of Folsom General Plan 2035

Noise is addressed in the City of Folsom General Plan within the Safety and Noise Element (City of Folsom, 2018). The following goals and policies from the General Plan, relevant to noise and vibration are applicable to the Project.

Goal: Protect the citizens of Folsom from the harmful effects of exposure to excessive noise and to protect the economic base of Folsom by preventing the encroachment of incompatible land uses within areas affected by existing noise-producing uses.

Policy 6.1.1: Noise Mitigation Strategies Ensure. Develop, maintain, and implement strategies to abate and avoid excessive noise exposure in the city by requiring that effective noise mitigation measures be incorporated into the design of new noise-generating and new noise-sensitive land uses.

Policy 6.1.2: Noise Mitigation Measures. Require effective noise mitigation for new development of residential or other noise sensitive land uses to reduce noise levels as follows:

1. For noise due to traffic on public roadways, railroad line operations, and aircraft: achieve compliance with the performance standards within Table SN-1 (see **Table 3.13-4**).
2. For non-transportation-related noise sources: achieve compliance with the performance standards contained within Table SN-2 (see **Table 3.13-5**).

3. If compliance with the adopted standards and policies of the Safety and Noise Element will not be achieved even with feasible mitigation measures, a statement of overriding considerations for the Project must be provided.

Table 3.13-4. (Table SN-1) Noise Compatibility Standards

Exterior Noise Level Standard for Outdoor Activity Areas ^a	Major Noise Sources	Interior Noise Level Standard	
	Ldn/CNEL, dB	Ldn/CNEL, dB	Leq, dBb ^b
Residential (Low Density Residential, Duplex, Mobile Homes)	60 ^c	45	N/A
Residential (Multi-Family)	65 ^d	45	N/A
Transient Lodging (Motels/Hotels)	65	45	N/A
Mixed-Use Developments	70	45	N/A
Schools, Libraries, Churches, Hospitals, Nursing Homes, Museums	70	45	N/A
Theaters, Auditoriums	70	N/A	35
Playgrounds, Neighborhood Parks	70	N/A	N/A
Golf Courses, Riding Stables, Water Recreation, Cemeteries	75	N/A	N/A
Office Buildings, Business Commercial and Profession	70	N/A	45
Industrial, Manufacturing, and Utilities	75	N/A	45

Notes: Where a proposed use is not specifically listed on this table, the use shall comply with the noise exposure standards for the nearest similar use as determined by the Community Development Department.

a) Outdoor activity areas for residential developments are considered to be the back yard patios or decks of single-family residential units, and the patios or common areas where people generally congregate for multifamily development. Outdoor activity areas for nonresidential developments are considered to be those common areas where people generally congregate, including outdoor seating areas. Where the location of outdoor activity areas is unknown, the exterior noise standard shall be applied to the property line of the receiving land use. 9-12 Adopted August 28, 2018; Amended August 24, 2021

b) As determined for a typical worst-case hour during periods of use.

c) Where it is not possible to reduce noise in outdoor activity areas to 60 dB, Ldn/CNEL or less using a practical application of the best-available noise reduction measures, an exterior level of up to 65 dB, Ldn/CNEL may be allowed provided that available exterior noise level reduction measures have been implemented and interior noise levels are in compliance with this table.

d) Where it is not possible to reduce noise in outdoor activity areas to 65 dB, Ldn/CNEL or less using a practical application of the best-available noise reduction measures, an exterior level of up to 70 dB, Ldn/CNEL may be allowed provided that available exterior noise level reduction measures have been implemented and interior noise levels are in compliance with this table.

Source: City of Folsom General Plan 2035

Table 3.13-5. (Table SN-2) Noise Level Standards from Stationary Sources

Noise Level Descriptor	Daytime (7:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M.)	Nighttime (10:00 P.M. to 7:00 A.M.)
Hourly Leq, dB	55	45
Maximum level, dB	70	65
Notes: Noise levels are measured at the property line of the noise-sensitive use. Source: City of Folsom General Plan 2035		

Policy 6.1.3: Acoustical Analysis. Require an Acoustical Analysis prior to approval of proposed development of residential or other noise-sensitive land uses in a noise-impacted area.

Policy 6.1.7: If noise barriers are required to achieve the noise level standards contained within this Element, the City shall encourage the use of these standards:

1. Noise barriers exceeding six feet in height relative to the roadway should incorporate an earth berm so that the total height of the solid portion of the barrier (such as masonry or concrete) does not exceed six feet.
2. The total height of a noise barrier above roadway elevation should normally be limited to 12 feet.
3. The noise barriers should be designed so that their appearance is consistent with other noise barriers in the Project vicinity.

Policy 6.1.8: Vibration Standards. Require construction projects and new development anticipated to generate a significant amount of vibration to ensure acceptable interior vibration levels at nearby noise-sensitive uses based on Federal Transit Administration criteria as shown in Table SN-3 (Groundborne Vibration Impact Criteria for General Assessment).

City of Folsom Municipal Code

Section 8.42.040 of the City of Folsom Municipal Code established exterior noise level standards for sensitive receptors. As shown in **Table 3.13-6**, the City's daytime noise standards are from the hours of 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., and the nighttime noise standards are from the hours of 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. The ordinance further states that if the measured ambient noise level exceeds the applicable noise level standard, then the measured ambient noise level becomes the new standard. Also, Section 8.42.060 states that construction activities are prohibited between the hours of 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. on weekdays, and between the hours of 5p.m. and 8 a.m. on weekends.

Table 3.13-6. (Table 8.42.040) Exterior Noise Level Standards, dBA

Noise Level Category	Cumulative Number of minutes in any 1-hour time period	dBA Daytime (7 a.m. to 10 p.m.)	dBA Nighttime (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.)
1	30	50	45
2	15	55	50
3	5	60	55
4	1	65	60
5	0	70	65
Source: City of Folsom Municipal Code Section 8.42.040			

3.13.2 Discussion

- 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 in other applicable local, state, or federal standards?**

Construction-Related Noise

Less than Significant. The proposed Project would generate noise primarily during construction as discussed below.

Construction of the proposed Project would take place over a period of 17 months from April 2024 to July 2025. Construction activities associated with the proposed Project are detailed in Section 2 of the Project Description.

Construction would involve use of equipment that could generate substantial noise at and adjacent to construction areas. Noise impacts from construction would depend on the type of activity being undertaken and the distance to the receptor location. Construction noise impacts are most severe if construction activities take place during noise-sensitive hours (early morning, evening, or nighttime hours), in areas immediately adjoining noise-sensitive land uses, and/or when construction duration lasts over extended periods of time.

Table 3.13-7 shows typical noise levels produced by the types of construction equipment that are expected to be used for Project construction.

Construction of the Project would occur within the City's construction exempt hours. The nearest off-site sensitive land use to the Project are residences located approximately 1,940 feet southeast from the Project site.

Table 3.13-7. Typical Noise Levels From Construction Equipment

Human Response	PPV (inches/second)	
Dump Truck	84	80/40%
Air Compressor	80	76/40%
Concrete Mixer (Truck)	85	81/40%
Scraper	85	81/40%
Jack Hammer	85	78/20%
Dozer	85	81/40%
Paver	85	82/50%
Generator	82	79/50%
Backhoe	80	76/40%
Source: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Roadway Construction Noise Model User's Guide, 2018		

Noise from construction activities generally attenuates at a rate of 6 to 7.5 dBA for every doubling of distance (Caltrans, 2013a). Assuming an attenuation rate of 7.5 dBA per doubling of distance and two of the loudest pieces of construction equipment (i.e., Loaders, Tractors) operating at the same time, the nearest sensitive land uses located 2,390 feet from the center of the proposed Project site would be exposed to a noise level of approximately 48 dBA L_{eq} . However, because construction would occur during the exempt daytime hours, construction of the Project would not generate a substantial temporary increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the Project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance. This impact would be considered less than significant.

Operational Noise

Less than Significant. The Project would generate operational noise from activities associated with the proposed commercial activities in the Project vicinity.

Commercial uses proposed as part of the Project would generate operational noise from Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) units, and backup generators. However, this noise would be minimal and would not be audible to the nearest receptors, the residents located to the southeast of the Project site.

HVAC Noise

HVAC units can generate noise levels of approximately 51 dBA L_{eq} at a reference distance of 100 feet from the operating units during maximum heating or air conditioning operations. HVAC units are typically housed in equipment rooms or in exterior enclosures on the building's rooftop. The nearest proposed sensitive land use is located approximately 2,230 feet southeast of Phase 2 building where operational HVAC noise levels would be 24 dBA, L_{eq} . Therefore, the nearest sensitive land use would not

be exposed to noise generated by the onsite HVAC equipment that would exceed the City's nighttime noise standard of 45 dBA. Therefore, the impact from HVAC operations would be less than significant.

Backup Generator Noise

Regular maintenance operation testing of the Project building emergency standby generators would occur for approximately one hour per week (50 hours annually). These emergency generators are proposed to be located adjacent to the west of the Phase 1 buildings' ground floor.

A recent acoustical study for an emergency generator modeled noise from such a facility to be 82 dBA at 23 feet (ESA, 2023). The emergency generator noise from the Project was conservatively modeled assuming operation of the Project emergency generator unit located closest to the nearest off-site sensitive residential receptors and conservatively did not account for noise reduction that would be afforded by their enclosures. Modeled noise levels from operation of this generator are predicted to be 41 dBA at the nearest residential receptor at approximately 2,660 feet. As shown in Table 3.13-1, the existing ambient noise levels at the nearest receptor is 61 dBA. Given the substantial distance of the nearest residential receptors from the Project site buildings, the contribution of emergency generator noise would not exceed the daytime 61 dBA threshold and would, therefore, be less than significant.

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

Construction

Less than Significant. Operation of the Project would not include any activities that would generate significant levels of vibration. Therefore, it is not anticipated that Project operation would expose the nearest sensitive receptors or structures to vibration levels that would result in annoyance. For this reason, the following analysis of the Project's vibration impacts evaluates only the effects of on-site construction activities.

Construction activity can result in varying degrees of ground-borne vibration, depending on the type of soil, equipment, and methods employed. Operation of construction equipment can cause ground vibrations that spread through the ground and diminish in strength with distance. Buildings on the soil near the construction site respond to these vibrations with varying results, ranging from no perceptible effects at the lowest levels, low rumbling sounds and perceptible vibrations at moderate levels, and slight damage at the highest levels. While ground vibrations from construction activities do not often reach the levels that can damage structures, fragile buildings must receive special consideration.

There are no structures of historical significance in the vicinity of the proposed Project alignment that would be impacted by the proposed Project. The nearest structures are commercial buildings located from the south, east, and north of the Project site and both are approximately 80 feet from the Project boundary. Therefore, the analysis below uses a vibration threshold of 0.5 in/sec which is consistent with the FTA's construction vibration criteria for buildings of modern, conventional construction and the Caltrans-identified vibration level that could generate a distinctly perceptible human response to assess impacts.

Construction vibration may generate perceptible vibration when impact equipment (i.e., jack hammer, drill rig) or heavy earth moving equipment (i.e., front end loader, roller compactor, excavator) are used.

Based on groundborne vibration levels for standard types of construction equipment provided by the FTA, other than pile driving equipment, the use of a vibratory roller would be expected to generate the highest vibration levels. Vibratory rollers typically generate vibration levels of 0.210 in/sec PPV at a distance of 25 feet (FTA, 2018). Even if such equipment operated as close as 25 feet from existing adjacent structures to the south and east of the Project site, vibration levels would be less than the 0.5 in/sec PPV threshold. In addition, the operation of each piece of construction equipment at the Project site would not be constant throughout the day, equipment would be operating at different locations within the Project site and would not always be operating concurrently. Consequently, vibration levels during the majority of the construction period at the nearest receptors would be much lower. Project construction would be restricted to the hours of the day consistent with the City of Folsom Municipal Code and reduce nuisance impacts from both construction noise and vibration by prohibiting such activity during sensitive time periods. Therefore, the Project would have a less-than-significant impact with regard to ground-borne vibration during construction.

Operation

No Impact. Once operational, the Project would not include any sources of vibration. Therefore, there would be no impact.

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

No Impact. The nearest airfield to the Project area is the Sacramento Mather Airport located approximately 8 miles to the southwest of the Project site. The 60 CNEL noise contour for airport operations is well over 3.5 miles from the Project site (Sacramento County, 1998). As a result, development allowed under the Project would not expose people residing or working in the area to excessive noise levels from aircraft, and no impact would occur.

3.14 Population and Housing

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
XIV. Population and Housing.				
Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3.14.1 Environmental Setting

As of January 1, 2023, the City of Folsom had a population of 85,498 residents living in 32,083 households for an average household size of 2.67 (DOF 2023). The Project site is currently vacant and does not provide housing for any residents.

3.14.2 Discussion

- 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)?**

Less than Significant Impact. The Project involves the development of a new SMUD facility that would be staffed primarily by workers relocated from an existing SMUD facility elsewhere in the Sacramento region. While some new workers would be added, the Project site is zoned for development with an office or commercial use which would be expected to create substantially more new employment opportunities. Furthermore, the Project site is within an established business park and would not extend any roads or infrastructure to previously unserved areas. Therefore, the Project would directly or indirectly induce population growth. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

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

No Impact. No persons or homes would be displaced as a result of Project implementation. Therefore, there would be no impact.

3.15 Public Services

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than- Significant Impact	No Impact
XV. Public Services.				
Would the project:				
a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3.15.1 Environmental Setting

The Project site is in the City of Folsom and is served by City of Folsom and Sacramento County public services (law enforcement, fire protection, schools, parks, and libraries).

Fire Protection Services

Fire Protection Services are provided to the Project area by the City of Folsom Fire Department (FFD). The Fire Department is a full-service fire department, providing emergency medical, fire suppression, water and technical rescue, hazardous materials response, fire prevention, and public education to the community. Calls for FFD service in 2023 totaled 9,527. The fire station closest to the Project site is Station 35, located at 535 Glen Drive, about 1.6 miles to the northeast (FFD 2024).

Law Enforcement Services

Law enforcement services in the Project area are provided by the City of Folsom Police Department (FPD). The Folsom Police Station is located at 46 Natoma Street about 2.5 miles northeast of the Project

site. According to the Police Department's 2022 Annual Report, the Department has 28 officers supervised by five corporals and six sergeants as well as one community service officer and two cadets. The Department answered 38,305 calls for service in 2022 (FPD 2022).

Schools

The Project site is within the Folsom Cordova Unified School District (FCUSD). The FCUSD operates 21 elementary schools, four middle schools, and three high schools with a total student enrollment of about 21,000 (FCUSD 2024). The nearest public school to the site is the Natoma Station Elementary School, approximately 0.6 miles to the east.

Parks and Recreational Facilities

See Section 3.16, Recreation, for a discussion of parks and recreational facilities.

3.15.2 Discussion

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

Fire Protection

Less than Significant. Implementation of the Project would not significantly increase demand for fire protection services because the Project would not generate new residents, which is the driving factor for fire protection services. As discussed in Section 3.14, Population and Housing, the Project is a new use on the site but would be staffed by employees relocated from SMUD's existing facility. Furthermore, the Project proposes construction of a standard office building that would comply with the City's development standards and would not require special equipment for fire suppression or generate higher than anticipated calls for service. The Project would not result in the need for new or expanded Fire Department facilities. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

Police Protection

Less than Significant Impact. Implementation of the Project would not significantly increase demand for law enforcement services because the Project would not generate new residents or create a use that exhibits higher than normal calls for law enforcement services. The Project would not result in the need for new or expanded Police Department facilities. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

Schools

Less than Significant Impact. The Project would not provide any new housing that would generate new student enrollments at public schools. As discussed in Section 3.14, Population and Housing, the Project is a new use on the site but would be staffed by employees relocated from SMUD's existing facility.

Regardless, the Project would be required to pay development impact fees to the Folsom Cordova Unified School District to mitigate any potential increase in demand for public school facilities. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

Parks

Less than Significant Impact. The Project would not directly or indirectly induce unplanned population growth in the Project area. The Project would not increase the use of existing parks or recreational facilities necessitating new or expanded facilities. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

Other Public Facilities

No Impact. As described previously, the Project would not induce substantial population growth in the Project area and would have no impact on other public facilities such as the Sacramento County Library System. Therefore, there would be no impact.

3.16 Recreation

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
XVI. Recreation.				
Would the project:				
a) 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3.16.1 Environmental Setting

The Project site is in the City of Folsom within an area of abundant recreational facilities primarily associated with Lake Natoma, which lies immediately to the west. The lake and adjacent Jedidiah Smith Memorial Trail are part of the American River Parkway and the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area. Just south of the Lake Forest Technical Center, where Willow Creek drains into Lake Natoma, is the Willow Creek Recreation Area and boat launch. West of the site and Lake Natoma is the Mississippi Bar area with an extensive system of hiking, biking, and equestrian trails. The nearest developed park is the Natoma Station Neighborhood Park and Ernie Sheldon Youth Sports Park about one half mile east of the Project site on Natoma Station Drive.

3.16.2 Discussion

- a) **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. As discussed in Section 3.14, Population and Housing, the Project would not directly or indirectly induce unplanned population growth in the Project area. The Project would not have the potential to significantly increase the use of existing parks or recreational facilities in the area. Therefore, there would be no impact.

- b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

No Impact. The Project would not include or require the construction or expansion of any recreational facilities. Therefore, no impact would occur.

3.17 Transportation

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
XVII. Transportation.				
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.17.1 Environmental Setting

The Project site is approximately 0.9 miles north of Highway 50 and approximately 0.3 miles west of Folsom Boulevard, a four-lane, two-way major arterial roadway. The Project site can currently be accessed through Shore Court off Woodmere Road, which is a minor collector roadway that becomes Blue Ravine Road southwest of the Project site. Woodmere Road intersects Folsom Boulevard perpendicularly as it continues to the east.

Bicycle facilities include routes along Jedediah Smith Memorial Trail immediately west of the site as well as Willow Creek Trail to the southeast continuing north. Additionally, Folsom Boulevard contains a designated bike lane along the east of the site.

The Sacramento Regional Transit Gold Line Train runs along Folsom Boulevard, with the nearest stops at Glenn Station approximately 0.7 miles northeast of the site, and at Iron Point Station approximately 0.6 miles south.

Pedestrian access to the site is provided via sidewalks along Blue Ravine Road/Woodmere Road. Additional pedestrian facilities exist along Jedediah Smith Memorial Trail to the west, Parkshore Drive to the northeast, as well as Lake Forest Way to the southeast.

3.17.2 Discussion

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

No Impact. The Project would not conflict with plans and policies related to the circulation system. The Project would not modify existing roadways, transit facilities, pedestrian or bicycle facilities. There would be no roadway improvements along roadways within the Project vicinity such as Woodmere Road or Folsom Boulevard. The Project would not create new housing or otherwise increase demand for transportation facilities beyond what is already planned by local agencies. There would therefore be a no impact related to a conflict with program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system.

b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b), which pertains to vehicle miles travelled?

Less than Significant. The Project would not create a significant increase in VMT. It would not add capacity to existing roadways nor would it create new housing or businesses that stimulate regional VMT.

Temporary construction activities would result in temporary increases in vehicle trips associated with worker commutes and equipment and materials delivery. Construction activities are estimated to require an average daily worker population of approximately 50 workers, with up to approximately 70 workers during peak construction activities.

Operational vehicle trips can be characterized through use of the SACOG Work VMT per Job map. To support SB 743 implementation, SACOG developed a screening map specific to employment using outputs from the 2016 base year model run of the SACSIM travel demand model for the 2020 MTP/SCS. SACOG's Work VMT per Job map uses "HEX" geography, wherein average work VMT per job is calculated for each HEX by tallying all work VMTs generated by both internal and external workers traveling to the HEX to work and dividing by the total number of jobs in that HEX. SACOG has made updates to this map since 2020, as data has been updated.

The Project is an employment-generating project and the Work VMT per Job map is thus applicable. Based on the most current map, the Project would be located between two HEXs. The HEX encompassing the northern half of the site generates approximately 81.0% of the regional average work VMT per job. The HEX encompassing the southern half of the site generates approximately 88.2% of the regional average work VMT per job. Because both HEXs cover approximately equal portions of the Project site, it is reasonable to conclude that the Project would generate approximately 84.6% of the regional average work VMT per job, or an average of the two HEXs. This value correlates to an average work VMT per job of 18.02.

SACOG's HEX maps show that the workplace VMT per job for the Project would fall below the 85% threshold used to typically identify a significant VMT impact, as described in the OPR Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA (2018). Because work VMT would be less than the recommended threshold of significance, the impact would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

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

Less Than Significant. The Project proposes to add an additional access driveway along the eastern edge of the site. The Project is not a public facility and there is no public ingress or egress. Neither the temporary increase in truck traffic onto the Project site during construction, nor the ongoing intermittent use of the new proposed access driveways would have a significant impact on the circulation system or roadway safety. The Project does not involve substantial changes in road geometry or incompatible uses. Therefore, the impact is less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

Less than Significant. As previously described, primary and secondary access would be provided to the Project site via Woodmere Road at the southeast edge of the site as well as along the eastern edge of the site to the adjacent property. These entrance points would provide adequate access to emergency responders in case of a fire or other emergency.

During construction, the Project would install temporary signage alerting drivers of the potential for truck traffic entering and exiting the site. The Project does not propose traffic control to stop, reroute, or block traffic. There would be a **less-than-significant** impact for emergency providers, and no mitigation is required.

3.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
XVIII. Tribal Cultural Resources.				
Has a California Native American Tribe requested consultation in accordance with Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1(b)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes		<input type="checkbox"/> No	
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:				
a) 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)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.18.1 Environmental Setting

The United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC), Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians (SSBMI), Lone Band of Miwok, and Wilton Rancheria are federally recognized Tribes comprised of both Miwok and Maidu (Nisenan) Indians and are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the proposed Project area. Although boundaries with neighboring Tribes were often fluid and overlapping, traditional Nisenan territory extended from the southern boundary beginning below the Consumnes River, north to Gold Lake then west along ridges and canyons to the south fork of the Feather River, then southwest to the Sacred Mountain, 'Estom Yanim (Marysville Buttes), and from the west bank of the Sacramento River east to Kyburz. Today, many descendants of Nisenan still reside on lands once inhabited by their ancestors or on lands set aside for Tribal communities by the federal government in California which may or may not have been traditionally inhabited by their ancestors. The Tribes possess the expertise concerning Tribal cultural resources in the area and are contemporary stewards of their culture and the landscapes. These Tribal communities represent a continuity and endurance of their ancestors by maintaining their

connection to their history and culture. It is the Tribe's goal to ensure the preservation and continuance of their cultural heritage for current and future generations.

Under PRC section 21080.3.1 and 21082.3, SMUD must consult with Tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the Project area that have requested formal notification and responded with a request for consultation (PRC 21080.3.1(b)). Consultation is deemed concluded when the parties agree to measures to mitigate or avoid a significant effect on a Tribal cultural resource when one is present (PRC 21080.3.2(b)(1)) or when a party concludes that mutual agreement cannot be reached (PRC 21080.3.2(b)(2)). Mitigation measures agreed on during the consultation process must be included in the environmental document.

Tribal Consultation

On November 29, 2023, SMUD sent notification letters, as required by PRC 21080.3.1(d), to the four Native American Tribes that had previously requested such notifications: Wilton Rancheria, UAIC, SSBMI, and Lone Band of Miwok Indians. The notification included a brief description of the Project and its location.

On November 30, 2023, the Lone Band of Miwok Indians requested that consultation be deferred to other interested tribes, and that if no interested tribes request consultation to reach out again to the Tribe for their consideration of further consultation.

On November 30, 2023, the UAIC stated that no areas of concern were identified through their internal registry, but stated an increased sensitivity is possible due to the Project's proximity to the American River and Lake Natoma, and requested that their unanticipated discovery measures and Traditional Cultural Resources recommendations be utilized.

No additional responses were received.

3.18.2 Discussion

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:

- a) **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)?**

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The identification of Tribal cultural resources for this Project by UAIC and the Lone Band of Miwok Indians included a review of pertinent literature and historic maps, and a records search using Tribal historic records and information databases. These Tribal databases are composed of areas of oral history, ethnographic history, and places of cultural and religious significance, including Sacred Lands that are submitted to the NAHC.

The resources shown in this region also include previously recorded indigenous resources identified through the CHRIS NCIC as well as historic resources and survey data. The UAIC reviewed the proposed Project site within their database – UAIC requested the standard mitigation measure for inadvertent discoveries to be included for this Project.

Under the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) criterion for a historical resource, the Project would not affect unique ethnic cultural values or religious, sacred uses as the consultation from NAHC did not turn up any sacred lands files. However, in the event Tribal cultural resources are found within the proposed Project site during construction, the standard mitigation measure for inadvertent discoveries, Mitigation Measure 3.18-3, has been included to ensure this impact is ***less-than significant***.

- b) **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. Consultation with UAIC, Wilton Rancheria and SSBMI revealed no known Tribal cultural resources on the Project site as defined in PRC Section 21074; however, the area is potentially sensitive for unknown Tribal cultural resources. Therefore, it is possible that yet-undiscovered Tribal cultural resources could be encountered or damaged during ground-disturbing construction activities. This impact would be ***potentially significant***, and mitigation is required.

Mitigation Measure 3.18-1: Worker Environmental Awareness and Cultural Respect Training and Procedures for Discovery of Potential Tribal Cultural Resources

All construction personnel must receive Tribal Cultural Resources Sensitivity and Awareness Training (Worker Environmental Awareness Program [WEAP]), including field consultants and construction workers. The WEAP shall be developed in coordination with interested Native American Tribes.

The WEAP shall be conducted before any project-related construction activities begin at the Project site. The WEAP will include relevant information regarding sensitive cultural resources and Tribal cultural resources, including applicable regulations, protocols for avoidance, and consequences of violating State laws and regulations. The WEAP will also describe appropriate avoidance and impact minimization measures for cultural resources and Tribal cultural resources that could be located at the Project site and will outline what to do and who to contact if any potential cultural resources or Tribal cultural resources are encountered. The WEAP will emphasize the requirement for confidentiality and culturally appropriate treatment of any discovery of significance to Native Americans and will discuss appropriate behaviors and responsive actions, consistent with Native American Tribal values. The training may be done in coordination with the Project archaeologist.

All ground-disturbing equipment operators shall be required to receive the training and sign a form that acknowledges receipt of the training.

During excavation or other substantial subsurface disturbance activities, all construction personnel must follow procedures and the direction of archeologists and Tribal monitors if any cultural resource materials are observed.

Mitigation Measure 3.18-2: Spot Check Monitoring for Tribal Cultural Resources

SMUD shall invite representatives of UAIC to periodically inspect the active areas of the Project, including any soil piles, trenches, or other disturbed areas. UAIC shall be notified at least 48 hours prior to start of construction.

Mitigation Measure 3.18-3: Unanticipated Discovery of Tribal Cultural Resources

If any suspected TCRs are discovered by any person on site during ground disturbing construction activities all work shall cease within 100 feet of the find, or an agreed upon distance based on the project area and nature of the find. A Tribal Representative from the consulting Tribe or a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with a geographic area shall be immediately notified and shall determine if the find is a TCR (PRC §21074). The Tribal Representative will make recommendations for further evaluation and treatment as necessary.

Preservation in place is the preferred option for mitigation of TCRs under CEQA and Tribal protocols, and every effort shall be made to preserve the resources in place, including through project redesign. If adverse impacts to TCRs, unique archeology, or other cultural resources occurs, then consultation with Tribes regarding mitigation contained in the Public Resources Code §21084.3(a) and (b) and CEQA Guidelines §15370 should occur, in order to coordinate for compensation for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

Culturally appropriate treatment may be, but is not limited to, processing materials for reburial, minimizing handling of cultural objects, leaving objects in place within the landscape, or returning objects to a location within the project area where they will not be subject to future impacts. Permanent curation of TCRs and cultural belongings will not take place unless approved in writing by the consulting Tribe.

Treatment that preserves or restores the cultural character and integrity of a TCR may include paid Tribal Monitoring, culturally appropriate recovery of cultural objects, and reburial of cultural objects or cultural soil. These recommendations will be documented in the project record. For any recommendations made by traditionally and culturally affiliated Native American Tribes that are not implemented, a justification for why the recommendation was not followed will be provided in the project record.

SMUD shall preserve TCR's in place, avoid, or minimize impacts to the resource, including, but not limited to, facilitating the appropriate Tribal treatment of the find, as necessary. Treatment that preserves or restores the cultural character and integrity of a TCR may include Tribal Monitoring,

culturally appropriate recovery of cultural objects, and reburial of cultural objects and belongings or cultural soil.

Work at the discovery location cannot resume until all necessary investigation and evaluation of the discovery under the requirements of CEQA, including AB52, have been satisfied.

Mitigation Measure 3.5-2: Procedures for Discovery of Human Remains (Described in Section 3.5, Cultural Resources)

Significance after Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.18-1, 3.18-2, 3.18-3, and 3.5-2 would reduce impacts to Tribal cultural resources to a ***less than significant*** level.

3.19 Utilities and Service Systems

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less- Than- Significant Impact	No Impact
XIX. Utilities and Service Systems.				
Would the project:				
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunication facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have insufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project that it has inadequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand, in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Fail to comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.19.1 Environmental Setting

All utilities necessary to support the Project, including electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater drainage services would be provided to the Project site by way of new connections to existing infrastructure in the immediate Project area. Following is a discussion of each utility service including provider and current capacity to serve new development:

Electricity, Natural Gas, and Telecommunications

Electric service is provided to the Project area by SMUD. Natural gas service is provided by Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E). Telecommunications services would be provided by AT&T and Comcast/Xfinity. Existing infrastructure is available within public right-of-way adjacent to the Project site.

Water

Water service would be provided to the Project by the City of Folsom Environmental and Water Resources Department via an existing water main located within Shore Court/Woodmere Road. The City's water supply is obtained solely from Folsom Lake and is treated prior to delivery at the City's water treatment plant located on Natoma Street.

Wastewater

Sanitary sewer services would be provided to the Project site by the City of Folsom Wastewater Collection Division, which is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the sewer system, including 271 miles of pipeline and 11 sewer lift stations. The sewer lift stations pump raw wastewater that is collected throughout the City to the Sacramento County Regional Sanitation District Wastewater Treatment Plant (Sacramento Regional WWTP), which is located over 20 miles southwest of the Project site. The Sacramento Regional WWTP treats an average of 135 million gallons per day (mgd) serving a population of 1.6 million in the region (Regional San 2023).

Stormwater Drainage

The City's stormwater drainage system is operated and maintained by its Public Works Streets Division and includes 190 miles of pipe, 23 miles of natural drainage channels and creeks, 30 flood control and/or water quality detention basins, and more than 200 outfalls to creeks and rivers.

Solid Waste

Solid waste, recyclable materials, and compostable materials are collected and transported by the City's Public Works Department to the Sacramento County Landfill located on Kiefer Boulevard (Kiefer Landfill). The Kiefer Landfill has a permitted disposal area of 660 acres and is permitted to accept up to a maximum of 10,815 tons of waste per day. Recently expanded, the Kiefer Landfill has a total permitted capacity of 117,400,000 cubic yards. According to the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle 2024), the facility has a remaining capacity of 112,900,000 cubic yards, or 96 percent.

3.19.2 Discussion

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

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The Project site is within a developed business park. All utilities exist within the adjacent public right-of-way at sufficient capacities to serve the proposed facility. The Project would not require the construction of new or the relocation of existing offsite facilities and would not exceed the capacities of any utility systems requiring their expansion, with the exception of the required relocation of the existing drainage infrastructure within the Project site. The relocation of drainage facilities would place all accesses within existing public right of way, as required by the City of Folsom's Environmental & Water Resources Department. The potential environmental effects of onsite construction, including the installation of water and sewer lines and construction of the proposed drainage easement and associated facilities are identified throughout this document and, where necessary, mitigation measures are provided to reduce them to less than significant levels. These include Mitigation Measure 3.3-1, which requires adherence to all applicable SMAQMD construction emissions control practices; Mitigation Measure 3.4-1, which requires various measures to avoid impacts to special-status species and habitats; Mitigation Measures 3.5-1 and 3.5-2, which provide procedures to avoid impacts to cultural resources and human remains; and, Mitigation Measures 3.18-1 through 3.18-3, which provide procedures to avoid impacts to tribal cultural resources. The full text of these measures is provided in the applicable technical sections of this initial study for each.

Mitigation Measure 3.3-1. Implement SMAQMD Emissions Controls and BMPs.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-1. Impacts to Special-Status Species, Sensitive Habitats, and Aquatic Resources.

Mitigation Measure 3.5-1. Worker Environmental Awareness and Cultural Respect Training and Procedures for Inadvertent Discovery of Cultural Resources.

Mitigation Measure 3.5-2. Procedures for Discovery of Human Remains.

Mitigation Measure 3.18-1. Worker Environmental Awareness and Cultural Respect Training and Procedures for Discovery of Potential Tribal Cultural Resources.

Mitigation Measure 3.18-2. Spot Check Monitoring for Tribal Cultural Resources.

Mitigation Measure 3.18-3. Unanticipated Discovery of Tribal Cultural Resources.

Significance After Mitigation

The mitigation measures listed above would reduce this impact to a less than significant level by requiring implementation of various measures during construction activities to avoid or minimize adverse effects to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, and tribal cultural resources. With implementation of these measures, this impact would be less than significant.

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

Less than Significant. The Project proposes an office use with limited staffing and would have a correspondingly low water demand compared to offices of similar size. Given that the Project would be consistent with the City's General Plan zoning and land use designation, water demand associated with buildout of the Project site with an office use has been anticipated by the City and accounted for in regional planning efforts, including development of the City's 2020 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP). According to the 2020 UWMP, which projects limited population growth for Folsom West until stagnating after 2030, water supplies are projected to meet expected demand for normal year, single-dry year, and multiple-dry year scenarios through 2045 (City of Folsom 2021). Therefore, sufficient water supplies would be available to serve the Project and this impact would be less than significant.

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

Less than Significant. The Project would be served by the City's public wastewater collection and treatment system and would connect with an existing sewer line in the adjacent public right-of-way along Shore Court/Woodmere Road. As an office use, the Project would generate a low level of wastewater and would not exceed the existing capacity of either the City's conveyance system or Regional San's WWTP. Furthermore, given that the Project would be consistent with the City's General Plan land use designation, wastewater generated by a business use operating on the Project site has been anticipated by the City and County and was accounted for in regional planning efforts. Therefore, adequate wastewater system capacity is available to serve the Project and this impact would be less than significant.

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

Less than Significant. The Project would cause a temporary increase in the generation of solid waste during construction; however, project construction waste is not expected to be substantial as no demolition would be required. The Project would be subject to the City's Construction and Demolition Debris Ordinance (Municipal Code Chapter 8.30), which requires submittal of a waste management plan identifying the selected waste hauler and describing how the Project would meet the diversion requirements. Once constructed, the Project would not be expected to generate significant solid waste. Furthermore, the site has been designated for development for many years and would have been accounted for in long range plans for solid waste service and disposal.

3.20 Wildfire

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
XX. Wildfire.				
Is the project located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as high fire hazard severity zones?				
If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Require the installation 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3.20.1 Environmental Setting

The Project site is not located in a fire hazard severity zone (CAL FIRE 2024). The Project site is within a Local Responsibility Area (CAL FIRE 2024). Local Responsibility Areas are incorporated cities and urban regions, agriculture lands, and portions of the desert where the local government is responsible for wildfire protection (CAL FIRE 2022). The Project site is primarily surrounded by existing industrial land uses with the American River Parkway and Lake Natoma to the west. The Folsom Fire Department provides fire protection and emergency rescue services in the Project area. Folsom Fire Department Station No. 35 is located at 535 Glenn Drive, approximately 1.5 miles northeast of the Project site. Additionally, Folsom Fire Department Station No. 37 is located approximately 3 miles east of the Project area (City of Folsom 2024).

3.20.2 Discussion

- a) **Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?**
- 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?**
- c) **Require the installation 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?**
- 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?**

No Impact. The Project would not exacerbate wildfire risks because the Project site is not located within a fire hazard severity zone and would not expose people or structures to wildfire risks. Construction equipment would be stored away from vegetation that could provide fire fuel if ignited. In addition, vegetation would be removed or trimmed on the Project site, as needed, to ensure that construction activities do not increase risks associated with wildfires. Thus, the Project would not affect the potential for wildfires to ignite or spread within areas surrounding the Project site. There would be no impact, and no mitigation is required.

3.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
XXI. Mandatory Findings of Significance.				
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 an endangered, rare, or threatened species, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.21.1 Discussion

- 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 an endangered, rare, or threatened species, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?**

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. As discussed in Section 3.4, "Biological Resources," of this IS/MND, the Project has potential to adversely affect special status species, including the monarch butterfly, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, northwestern pond turtle, Swainson's hawk and Other Nesting Birds. Potentially significant impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level with implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.4-1.

As discussed in Section 3.5, “Cultural Resources,” proposed ground-disturbing activity for Project construction could result in the disturbance of undiscovered archaeological materials or remains. Mitigation Measures 3.5-1 and 3.5-2 would reduce potential impacts to archaeological resources and/or human remains discovered during Project construction activities to a ***less than significant*** level by requiring construction worker training, and, in the case of a discovery, preservation options (including data recovery, mapping, capping, or avoidance) and proper curation if significant artifacts are recovered. Similarly, in Section 3.18, “Tribal Cultural Resources,” proposed ground-disturbing activity for Project construction could result in the disturbance of undiscovered Tribal cultural resources. Mitigation Measures 3.18-1 would reduce potential impacts to Tribal cultural resources discovered during Project construction activities to a ***less than significant*** level by requiring construction worker training, and, in the case of a discovery, preservation options or other options, including reburial or culturally appropriate recovery, mapping, capping, or avoidance).

- 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. The Project is not growth inducing and impacts would primarily be related to construction activities. Project impacts would be individually limited due to the temporary and site-specific nature of the potential impacts. Potential short-term, cumulative impacts would only occur if construction of the Project occurred simultaneously with other projects in the area, which is not anticipated. Therefore, Project impacts would not combine with the impacts of other cumulative projects to result in a cumulatively considerable impact on the environment as a result of project implementation. Therefore, this impact would be ***less than significant***.

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

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The Project would have potentially significant impacts related to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, Tribal cultural resources, and Utilities and Service Systems. However, all of these impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels with incorporation of the mitigation measures included in the respective section discussions above. These measures include Mitigation Measure 3.3-1, which would reduce air quality emissions, Mitigation Measures 3.5-1 and 3.5-2, which, as described previously, would reduce potential impacts to archaeological and/or human remains, as well as Mitigation Measures 3.18-1, 3.18-2, and 3.18-3, which would implement procedures for the discovery of tribal cultural resources. No other direct or indirect impacts on human beings were identified in this IS/MND. Therefore, this impact would be ***less than significant***.

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE EVALUATION

4.1 Introduction

At present, there are no direct references to the evaluation of environmental justice (EJ) as an environmental topic in the Appendix G Environmental Checklist, CEQA statute, or State CEQA Guidelines; however, requirements to evaluate inconsistencies with general, regional, or specific plans (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15125[d]) and determine whether there is a “conflict” with a “policy” “adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect” (Environmental Checklist Section XI[b]) can implicate EJ policies. As additional cities and counties comply with Senate Bill (SB) 1000 (2016), which requires local jurisdictions to adopt EJ policies when two or more general plan elements are amended, environmental protection policies connected to EJ will become more common.

“Environmental Justice” is defined in California law as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of people of all races, cultures, incomes, and national origins with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies (California Government Code Section 30107.3[a]). “Fair treatment” can be defined as a condition under which “no group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group, shall bear a disproportionate share of negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies” (USEPA 2011).

SMUD created the Sustainable Communities Initiative, which encompasses the framework of EJ, to help bring environmental equity and economic vitality to all communities in SMUD’s service area with special attention to historically underserved neighborhoods. The initiative focuses on the development of holistically sustainable neighborhoods through partnerships and collaboration. The goal of this effort is to ensure the advancement of prosperity in the Sacramento region regardless of zip code or socioeconomic status by focusing on equitable access to mobility, a prosperous economy, a healthy environment, and social well-being. To support the initiative, SMUD teams are working internally and with community partners to improve equitable access to healthy neighborhood environments, energy efficiency programs and services, environmentally friendly transit modes (including electric vehicles), and energy-related workforce development and economic development prospects. To the extent these goals seek to avoid environmental impacts affecting vulnerable communities, the State CEQA Guidelines already require consideration of whether a proposed project may conflict with goals that support sustainable communities. The following analysis has been provided by SMUD, as a proactive evaluation in excess of CEQA requirements, to identify any localized existing conditions to which the Project, as proposed, may worsen adverse conditions and negatively impact the local community, and identify the need for implementation of additional site or local considerations, where necessary. Environmental justice issues are being considered in this CEQA document to help inform decision makers about whether the Project supports SMUD's goal of helping to advance environmental justice and economic

vitality to all communities in SMUD's service area with special attention to historically underserved neighborhoods.

4.2 Regulatory Context

California legislation, state agency programs, and guidance have been issued in recent years that aim to more comprehensively address EJ issues, including SB 1000 (2016), SB 535 (2012) and AB 1550 (2016), AB 617 (2017), the California Department of Justice Bureau of Environmental Justice, the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen), and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research's (OPR's) 2020 General Plan Guidelines, Environmental Justice Element. In particular, SB 1000 has provided an impetus to more broadly address EJ; coupled with the existing requirements of CEQA, it is now time to elevate the coverage of significant environmental impacts in the context of EJ in environmental documents. These other bills have also provided the necessary policy direction to address EJ under CEQA.

4.2.1 Senate Bill 1000

SB 1000, which was enacted in 2016, amended California Government Code Section 65302 to require that general plans include an EJ element or EJ-related goals, policies, and objectives in other elements of general plans with respect to disadvantaged communities (DACs) beginning in 2018. The EJ policies are required when a city or county adopts or revises two or more general plan elements and the city or county contains a DAC. EJ-related policies must aim to reduce the disproportionate health risks in DACs, promote civic engagement in the public decision-making process, and prioritize improvements that address the needs of DACs (CCR Section 65302[h]). Policies should focus on improving the health and overall well-being of vulnerable and at-risk communities through reductions in pollution exposure, increased access to healthy foods and homes, improved air quality, and increased physical activity.

4.2.2 Senate Bill 535 and Assembly Bill 1550

Authorized by the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32), the cap-and-trade program is one of several strategies that California uses to reduce GHGs that cause climate change. The state's portion of the cap-and-trade auction proceeds are deposited in the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) and used to further the objectives of AB 32. In 2012, the California Legislature passed SB 535 (de Leon), directing that 25 percent of the proceeds from the GGRF go to projects that provide a benefit to DACs. In 2016, the legislature passed AB 1550 (Gomez), which now requires that 25 percent of proceeds from the GGRF be spent on projects located in DACs. The law requires the investment plan to allocate (1) a minimum of 25 percent of the available moneys in the fund to projects located within and benefiting individuals living in DACs; (2) an additional minimum of 5 percent to projects that benefit low-income households or to projects located within, and benefiting individuals living in, low-income communities located anywhere in the state; and (3) an additional minimum of 5 percent either to projects that benefit low-income households that are outside of, but within 0.5 mile of, DACs, or to projects located within the boundaries of, and benefiting individuals living in, low-income communities that are outside of, but within 0.5 mile of, DACs.

4.2.3 Assembly Bill 617

AB 617 of 2017 aims to help protect air quality and public health in communities around industries subject to the state's cap-and-trade program for GHG emissions. AB 617 imposes a new state-mandated local program to address nonvehicular sources (e.g., refineries, manufacturing facilities) of criteria air pollutants and toxic air contaminants. The bill requires ARB to identify high-pollution areas and directs air districts to focus air quality improvement efforts through the adoption of community emission reduction programs in these identified areas. Currently, air districts review individual stationary sources and impose emissions limits on emitters based on best available control technology, pollutant type, and proximity to nearby existing land uses. This bill addresses the cumulative and additive nature of air pollutant health effects by requiring communitywide air quality assessment and emission reduction planning, called a community risk reduction plan in some jurisdictions. ARB has developed a statewide blueprint that outlines the process for identifying affected communities, statewide strategies to reduce emissions of criteria air pollutants and toxic air contaminants, and criteria for developing community emissions reduction programs and community air monitoring plans.

4.2.4 California Department of Justice's Bureau of Environmental Justice

In February 2018, California Attorney General Xavier Becerra announced the establishment of a Bureau of Environmental Justice within the Environmental Section at the California Department of Justice. The purpose of the bureau is to enforce environmental laws, including CEQA, to protect communities disproportionately burdened by pollution and contamination. The bureau accomplishes this through oversight and investigation and by using the law enforcement powers of the Attorney General's Office to identify and pursue matters affecting vulnerable communities.

In 2012, then Attorney General Kamala Harris published a fact sheet, titled "Environmental Justice at the Local and Regional Level," highlighting existing provisions in the California Government Code and CEQA principles that provide for the consideration of EJ in local planning efforts and CEQA. Attorney General Becerra cites the fact sheet on his web page, indicating its continued relevance.

4.2.5 California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool

CalEnviroScreen Version 4.0 is a mapping tool developed by the Office of Environmental Health Hazards Assessment (OEHHA) to help identify low-income census tracts in California that are disproportionately burdened by and vulnerable to multiple sources of pollution. It uses environmental, health, and socioeconomic information based on data sets available from state and federal government sources to produce scores for every census tract in the state. Scores are generated using 20 statewide indicators that fall into four categories: exposures, environmental effects, sensitive populations, and socioeconomic factors. The exposures and environmental effects categories characterize the pollution burden that a community faces, whereas the sensitive populations and socioeconomic factors categories define population characteristics.

CalEnviroScreen prioritizes census tracts, based on their combined pollution burden and population characteristics score, from low to high. A percentile for the overall score is then calculated from the ordered values. The California Environmental Protection Agency has designated the top 25 percent of highest scoring tracts in CalEnviroScreen (i.e., those that fall in or above the 75th percentile) as DACs, which are targeted for investment proceeds under SB 535, the state's cap-and-trade program.

4.2.6 Governor's Office of Planning and Research's 2020 Updated EJ Element Guidelines

OPR published updated General Plan Guidelines in June 2020 that include revised EJ guidance in response to SB 1000. OPR has also published example policy language in an appendix document along with several case studies to highlight EJ-related policies and initiatives that can be considered by other jurisdictions. Section 4.8 of the General Plan Guidelines contains the EJ guidance. The guidelines offer recommendations for identifying vulnerable communities and reducing pollution exposure related to health conditions, air quality, project siting, water quality, and land use compatibility related to industrial and large-scale agricultural operations, childcare facilities, and schools, among other things. It provides many useful resources, including links to research, tools, reports, and sample general plans.

4.3 Sensitivity of Project Location

4.3.1 Community Description

As part of its Sustainable Communities Initiative, SMUD created and maintains the Sustainable Communities Resource Priorities Map 2.0,⁴ which reflects several data sets related to community attributes that SMUD uses to identify historically underserved communities. One of the key components of the map is the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen Version 4.0), which identifies communities facing socioeconomic disadvantages or health disadvantages such as multiple sources of pollution. The Sustainable Communities Resource Priorities map provides an analysis of current data sets to indicate areas ranging from low to high sensitivity and can be used to describe the relevant socioeconomic characteristics and current environmental burdens of the Project area. This map analyzes current data to indicate the local areas most likely to be underserved or in distress from environmental burdens, lack of community development, income, housing, employment opportunities, transportation, and more. SMUD has determined that it would evaluate EJ effects for projects located in, adjacent to, or proximate to (e.g., within 500 feet of) a high-sensitivity area as shown on the Sustainable Communities Resource Priorities Map or located in a census tract with a CalEnviroScreen score of 71 percent or greater. The map was launched in 2020 and updated in December 2022.

⁴ The Sustainable Communities Resource Priorities Map is Available:
<https://smud.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=1a42c034497c47b0b3c3c84f10c7d541>.

The Project site is located in a medium-low (on a scale of low, medium-low, medium, medium-high, and high) sensitivity area per the Sustainable Communities Resource Priorities Map (SMUD 2022). The nearest high-sensitivity area is located more than 15 miles east of the Project site in Folsom.

The Project site is located within the census tract of 6067008504, which was in the 18th percentile for the overall CalEnviroScreen score, indicating that the area is not substantially burdened by vulnerabilities due to environmental pollutants. The results for each indicator range from 0-100 and represent the percentile ranking of census tract 6067008504 relative to other census tracts.

The CalEnviroScreen score is driven by environmental conditions such as multiple potential exposures to pollutants and adverse environmental conditions caused by pollution, and high health and socioeconomic vulnerability to pollution. The pollution burden of the Project census tract is in the 33rd percentile, with the most significant indicators being traffic and Diesel Particulate Matter. These exposures and consequent environmental conditions caused by pollution are expected in this area due to the current land uses and proximity to major arterial roads and highways. The population characteristics of the Project census tract that contribute to the community's pollution burden and vulnerability fell within the 14th percentile, with the most significant indicator being cardiovascular disease.

Additional indicators were utilized by the Sustainable Communities Resource Priorities Map in identifying and targeting communities with a greater sensitivity to social, economic, and environmental vulnerabilities. These other sources, which are used as tools for targeting economic development, indicated that the Project site is not located in an Opportunity Zone, a Sacramento Promise Zone, or designated as a Disadvantaged Community by state Senate Bill 535. Additionally, the Project site is not designated as an area with consistent high rates of poor health outcomes on the Health Equity index by Be Healthy Sacramento and the Healthy Sacramento Coalition, or designated by the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) as a Medically Underserved Area or as having a Medically Underserved Population.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (CDC/ATSDR) Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) identifies areas with a population that is highly vulnerable and susceptible to harm from exposure to a hazard, and its ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from hazards. The Project site is located in a low sensitivity area for social vulnerability according to the CDC/ATSDR SVI. This means that the area surrounding the Project site does not experience high levels of social vulnerability.

4.3.2 Environmental Conditions

This discussion references the analysis conducted in the Environmental Checklist of the IS/MND and provides additional detail with respect to the current environmental conditions in the Project area. The focus of this discussion is on environmental justice issues relevant to the Project.

- **Aesthetics:** The visual characteristics of the Project site and adjacent uses are an existing or planned employment center land uses. The area immediately surrounding the Project site is relatively flat and developed for office industrial uses or open space to the west. The Project area does include a scenic vistas around the Folsom Lake SRA but does not contain designated scenic highway.
- **Air Quality:** The Project site is located in Sacramento County, which is currently designated as nonattainment for both the federal and state ozone standards, the federal PM_{2.5} standard, and the state PM₁₀ standard. The region is designated as in attainment or being unclassifiable for all other NAAQS and CAAQS (ARB 2023). Air quality in Sacramento County is influenced by a variety of factors, including topography, local and regional meteorology.
- **Cultural Resources:** The Project site is within a district that contains historic resources with some resources occurring near and within the Project site.
- **Energy:** The Project area is served by SMUD, which offers the Greenergy program with electricity generated by 100 percent renewable and carbon free resources.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change Vulnerabilities:** GHG emissions in the region are associated primarily with transportation (passenger vehicles and heavy-duty vehicles are top contributors), followed by industrial/manufacturing activities, electricity generation and consumption, residential and commercial on-site fuel use, and agriculture (including livestock) (ARB 2022). As the climate changes, the Project area would likely be subject to increased heat stress and increased risk of flooding.
- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** There are no recognized environmental conditions or known hazards in the Project vicinity.
- **Noise:** Noise sources in the Project area include vehicle and highway traffic, as well as noise associated with nearby industrial operations. Sensitive receptors (i.e., residences) are located adjacent to the east of the Project site, across Folsom Boulevard to the east of the Project site.
- **Public Services:** Public services such as police and fire protection are available in the area.
- **Recreation:** The Project site is within the City of Folsom within an area of abundant recreational facilities. The nearest developed park is the Natoma Station Neighborhood Park and Ernie Sheldon Youth Sports Park about one half mile east of the Project site on Natoma Station Drive. The lake and adjacent Jedidiah Smith Memorial Trail are part of the American River Parkway and the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area.
- **Transportation:** The Project area includes paved roads, pedestrian sidewalks, bicycle facilities, directly accessible public transit access points (e.g., light rail, bus, and train).

- **Tribal Cultural Resources:** There are no known Tribal cultural resources on or immediately adjacent to the Project site.
- **Utilities:** The Project area is serviced by SMUD for electricity and water is provided by the City of Folsom Environmental and Water Resources Department. Sewer service is provided by the City of Folsom Wastewater Collection Division which conveys wastewater to the Sacramento County Regional Sanitation District Wastewater Treatment Plant.

4.4 Evaluation of the Project's Contribution to a Community's Sensitivity

The Project consists of constructing and operating a new administrative operations facility that would replace the existing administrative operations facility at the SMUD Headquarters Campus. Following construction of all Project features and transmission of administrative operations to the new project, the new administrative operations facility would operate in a manner substantially similar to existing conditions. The Project's contributions to the community's sensitivity are as follows:

- **Aesthetics:** Direct public views of the Project would be available from Woodmere Road, and areas to the east, and Lake Natoma and the Folsom Lake SRA. There would be temporary and minor modification of views in the Project area during construction activities due to the presence of construction equipment and the Project would add to views of existing developed areas adjacent to the Folsom Lake SRA. Impacts to public viewers is considered less than significant.
- **Air Quality:** Excavation and general construction activities would be required during project construction. This would result in emissions of DPM and fugitive dust at the Project site, as discussed in Section 3.3., Air Quality. Considering the highly dispersive properties of diesel PM, the relatively low mass of diesel PM emissions that would be generated at any single place during Project construction, and the relatively short period during which diesel-PM-emitting construction activities would take place, construction-related TACs would not expose sensitive receptors to an incremental increase in cancer risk that exceeds 10 in one million. Soil stabilization and dust suppression activities would be used as part of the SWPPP and would satisfy the requirements of Fugitive Dust Rule 403, set forth by SMAQMD, which would minimize emissions of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. These measures would be consistent with the best management practices and best available control technology practices required by SMAQMD.
- **Cultural Resources:** The Project would have a less than significant affect on known cultural resources. Mitigation measures identified in Section 3.5 would be implemented to reduce, to the extent feasible, significant impacts to any inadvertent discoveries.
- **Energy:** The Project would not affect access to electricity because electrical service would be maintained throughout construction. Temporary use of grid-sourced energy and other fuel

consumption would be associated with construction and decommissioning work. Operation and maintenance of the administrative operations facility would require on-site electricity and periodic utilization of fuels.

- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change Vulnerabilities:** Project operation would not generate substantial GHG emissions. The Project would generate less-than-significant volumes of GHGs during construction from the use of heavy-duty off-road construction equipment and vehicle use for worker commutes. The Project would not worsen the area's flooding vulnerabilities because it would not affect the area's topography or levee system.
- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** The use and handling of hazardous materials during construction would be conducted in a manner consistent with existing regulations, including CCR Title 27.
- **Noise:** Noise would be generated during construction, but it would be temporary. No substantial increases in ambient noise levels at sensitive receptors in the area would occur.
- **Public Services:** As the majority of construction activities would occur on private property, the Project would not interrupt or otherwise affect the provision of public services to the area. The Project would not increase the demand for fire or police protection services.
- **Recreation:** The Project would not affect any parks or recreational opportunities.
- **Transportation:** The Project would not affect existing roadways, public transit access points, or bike lanes.
- **Tribal Cultural Resources:** The Project would not affect known Tribal cultural resources. Mitigation measures identified in Sections 3.18 would be implemented to reduce, to the extent feasible, significant impacts to any inadvertent discoveries.
- **Utilities:** The Project would not adversely affect provision of utilities to existing and future uses in the Project area. The Project is intended to ensure continued and reliable electrical service within the SMUD service area, and no interruption or reduction in service capacity would occur as a result of the Project.

As described for each environmental resource area, the Project would not contribute to the community's current sensitivity.

4.5 Summary of Environmental Justice Assessment

Per SMUD's Sustainable Communities Resource Priorities Map which reflects several data sets related to community attributes that SMUD uses to identify historically underserved communities, the Project site is located in a medium-low sensitivity area (SMUD 2022). The

Project does not have the potential to affect the community and/or worsen existing adverse environmental conditions. Therefore, ***no existing environmental justice conditions would be worsened*** as a result of the Project.

Although the Project would not worsen existing environmental justice conditions, as a leader in building healthy communities, one of SMUD's Sustainable Communities goals is to help bring environmental equity and economic vitality to all communities. By investing in underserved neighborhoods and working with community partners, SMUD is part of a larger regional mission to deliver energy, health, housing, transportation, education and economic development solutions to support sustainable communities. The following Sustainable Communities programs sponsored by SMUD serve the Project area.

- SMUD partners with the Sacramento Tree Foundation to provide free shade trees to beautify neighborhoods and improve air quality throughout Sacramento County.
- SMUD offers Energy HELP to assist qualified customers who cannot pay their bill due to financial hardship and who are at risk of having their power turned off. 100 percent of contributions go directly to pay a recipient's electric bill through partnerships with community charities.
- SMUD offers the Energy Careers Pathways program which brings education, workforce development and renewable energy to underserved communities in Sacramento County.

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Appendix B

Project Communications Tower Visual Simulations



Figure 1a Viewpoint 1: View facing northeast from a scenic overlook along the American River bike trail located approximately 1.2 miles from the Project site (equivalent location as Scenic America letter Figure A-7).



Figure 1b Viewpoint 1: View from the scenic overlook with the proposed monopine tower shown undisclosed and blended in with the existing trees surrounding the project site.



Figure 1c Viewpoint 1: View from the scenic overlook with the proposed monopine tower disclosed on the project site.



Figure 2a Viewpoint 2: View facing east from the west shoreline of Lake Natoma that is directly across the project site at a distance of 0.2 mile (equivalent location as Scenic America letter Figure A-6).



Figure 2b Viewpoint 2: View from the west shoreline with the proposed monopine tower shown undisclosed and blended in with the existing trees surrounding the project site.



Figure 2c Viewpoint 2: View from the west shoreline with the proposed monopole tower disclosed on the project site.



Figure 3a Viewpoint 3: View facing southeast along the American River bike trail on the west side of Lake Natoma across the project site at approximately 0.45 mile.



Figure 3b Viewpoint 3: View from the American River bike trail with the proposed monopole tower shown undisclosed and blended in with the existing trees surrounding the project site.



Figure 3c View from the American River bike trail with the proposed monopole tower disclosed on the project site.



Figure 4a Viewpoint 4: View facing southeast along the American River bike trail on the west side of Lake Natoma at approximately 0.7 mile from the project site (equivalent location as Scenic America letter Figure A-5).



Figure 4b Viewpoint 4: View from the American River bike trail with the proposed monopole tower shown undisclosed and blended in with the existing trees surrounding the project site.



Figure 4c Viewpoint 4: View from the American River bike trail with the proposed monopole tower disclosed on the project site.



Figure 5a Viewpoint 5: View facing the project site from Woodmere Road.



Figure 5b Viewpoint 5: Architectural rendering of the project site with conceptual building, landscaping, and monopine tower. It should be noted surrounding existing trees are not shown.



Figure 6a Viewpoint 7: View from the WAPA substation site along the adjacent American River bike trail at approximately 645 feet from the project site (picture is zoomed in, but taken from same location as Figures 6b and 6c).



Figure 6b Viewpoint 7: View from the American River bike trail with the proposed monopole tower shown undisclosed and blended in with the existing trees surrounding the project site.



Figure 6c Viewpoint 7: View from the American River bike trail with the proposed monopole tower disclosed on the project site.



Figure 7a Conceptual architectural rendering of the project site at full buildout with screening trees along the west perimeter at 5 years of growth as viewed from the adjacent American River bike trail.



Figure 7b Conceptual architectural rendering of the project site at full buildout with screening trees along the west perimeter at 10 years of growth as viewed from the adjacent American River bike trail.

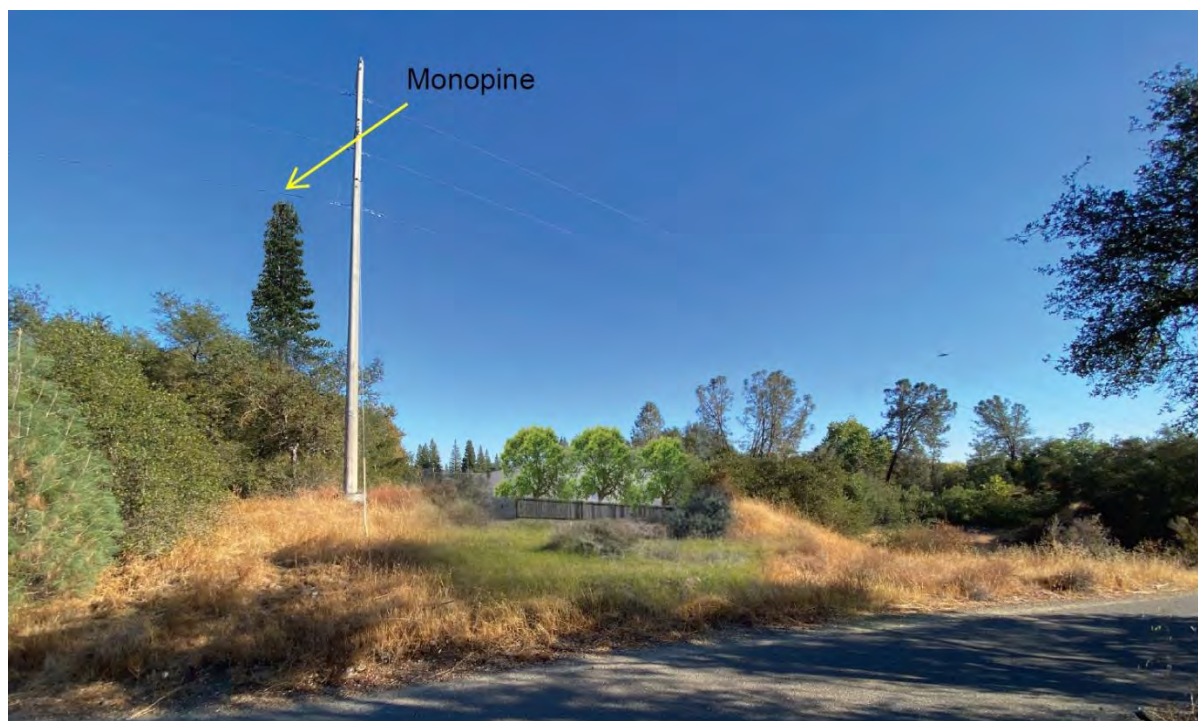


Figure 7c Conceptual architectural rendering of the project site at full buildout with screening trees along the west perimeter at 15 years of growth as viewed from the adjacent American River bike trail.



Figure 9a Elevated view facing east from Horse Shoe Mountain directly across Lake Natoma with the proposed monopole tower shown undisclosed and blended in with the existing trees surrounding the project site at a distance of approximately 0.3 mile.

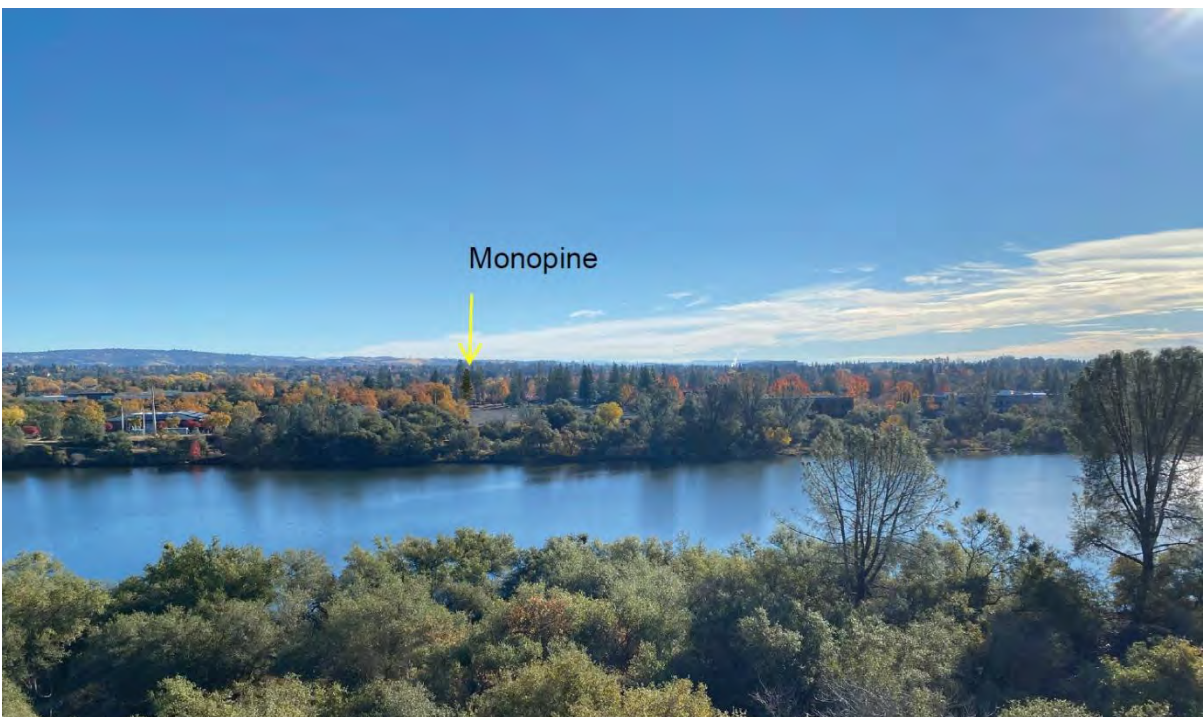


Figure 9b Elevated view from Horse Shoe Mountain with the proposed monopole tower disclosed on the project site.

Appendix C

Project Area Built Environment Photographs



Figure 1

This photograph captures the existing project area view to the east of the bicycle trail with dense vegetation in the foreground and the Dokken Engineering Building visible in the background. The open space contains grass, shrubs, and trees, providing a natural buffer around the existing development.



Source: SMUD

Figure 2

This image captures a view to the northeast of the bike trail under existing site conditions, from an area to the south of the project site, with the e.Republic Building visible in the background, partially obscured by natural vegetation and trees. The foreground features uneven terrain, consisting of dry grass, scattered rocks, and a gravel mound.



Source: SMUD

Figure 3

This image provides a wide-angle view to the east from the west side of Lake Natoma across a calm body of water, showcasing the project site framed by dense natural vegetation. The midground highlights the tree canopy and open grasslands, while the background features distant hills and skyline.



Source: SMUD

Figure 4

This photo provides a view to the northeast from a location on the bike trail south of the project site, which captures the Inductive Automotive building, visible in the midground, surrounded by gravel mounds and dry vegetation. The foreground highlights a paved path leading towards the building, with scattered rocks and grass providing context for the undeveloped conditions of the site. Tall evergreen trees frame the background under the skyline.



Source: SMUD

Figure 5

This image provides a view to the east from a point on the bike trail to the south of the project site, which highlights the natural vegetation and overgrown conditions surrounding the Jackson Property, which is partially visible in the midground. The foreground showcases dense shrubs, trees, and dry grass, while the partially obscured structure provides context for existing development.



Source: SMUD

Figure 6

This image captures a wide view of Lake Natoma looking northeast from a point to the south of the project site, with the Jackson Property visible through a dense line of trees and vegetation along the shoreline. The foreground highlights the reflective water surface, while utility lines run overhead, providing visual context for the project's proximity to existing infrastructure.



Source: SMUD

Figure 7

This image provides a perspective of the SMUD Project Site as viewed from the water level in the middle of Lake Natoma to the west of the project site. The shoreline vegetation, including deciduous trees and grasses, creates a natural buffer around the site. Utility poles and overhead lines are prominent features within the landscape, indicating existing infrastructure conditions.



Source: SMUD

Figure 8

This image showcases a view from the water in the middle of Lake Natoma to the northeast, which features the WAPA Substation and Power School. Tall trees and thick vegetation partially obscure the substation, while utility poles and overhead lines highlight the area's electrical infrastructure.



Source: SMUD

Figure 9

This image captures a view directly east from the water in the middle of Lake Natoma to the west of the project site, which features the WAPA facility. The shoreline is lined with dense vegetation, while utility poles and wires run through the midground, providing context for the area's power infrastructure.



Source: SMUD

Figure 10

This image shows a view to the northeast from the bike trail which features the Power School building situated on elevated terrain. The foreground features dry grass, natural shrubs, and an asphalt path, while the building is partially surrounded by trees and vegetation.



Source: SMUD

Figure 11

This image provides a closer perspective of the Power School building and its surrounding natural vegetation as viewed from a point on the bike trail to the north of the project site, closer to the Power School building. The terrain consists of sloping hills with dry grass and exposed soil, with prominent trees framing the background.



Source: SMUD

Figure 12

This image captures view from the western the shoreline of Lake Natoma looking east, which features the eastern shoreline and adjacent project site across the lake. The water body dominates the foreground, with dense vegetation along the shoreline and power infrastructure visible in the background.



Source: SMUD

Figure 13

This image focuses on the SMUD Project Site as viewed from the bicycle trail to the east, showing natural vegetation and uneven terrain in the foreground. The surrounding trees and shrubs partially obscure the site, while power lines are visible overhead.



Source: SMUD

Figure 14

This alternate perspective highlights the SMUD Project Site as viewed from the bicycle trail to the east, from a vantage point further north than the point featured in Figure 13, with a clear focus on the natural slope, dry grass, and vegetation. The background includes dense tree cover and utility poles along the site boundary.



Source: SMUD

Figure 15

This image highlights the SMUD Project Site as viewed from the bicycle trail to the west, from a vantage point further north than the point featured in Figure 14, with dry grass, uneven terrain, and a utility pole located in the midground. The background includes dense vegetation and trees under partially filtered sunlight.



Source: SMUD

Figure 16

This image shows a steep gravel slope as visible to the east of the bike trail from a point to the north of the SMUD Project Site, bordered by dry grass and mature trees. A fence and the WAPA building are partially visible in the background above the slope.



Source: SMUD

Figure 17

This image depicts the WAPA facility's access area as viewed from the bike path from a point to the northwest of the project site, including a gravel pathway leading toward the SMUD facilities. The terrain consists of dry grass and scattered vegetation, with trees and fencing framing the midground.



Source: SMUD

Figure 18

This image provides a view toward the project site from a point on the bike trail to the northeast of the project site, which captures the utility infrastructure, including power poles, located at the WAPA facility. The foreground consists of dry grass and sloped terrain, while trees and fencing are visible along the site perimeter.



Source: SMUD

Figure 19

This image shows the eastern shoreline of Lake Natoma, as viewed from the water at appoint to the southeast of the project site, looking to the northeast. Vegetation, including grasses and small trees, lines the shore, with a tall utility pole prominent in the midground. The Inductive Automation building is partially visible in the background.