Exhibit D

COMBIE ROAD CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Nevada County
Combie Road (State Route 49 to Magnolia Road)

INITIAL STUDY WITH PROPOSED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Prepared by the:
Nevada County Department of Public Works

October 2016

NEVADA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

PROPOSED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

To:	Nevada County Council	CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
	Nevada County Transit Services	Central Valley Water Quality Control Board
	Nevada County Transportation Commission	Northern Sierra Air Quality Mgt. Dist.
	Nevada County Consolidated Fire District	Native American Heritage Comm.
	Nevada Irrigation District*	California State Clearinghouse
	Hank Weston District 4 Supervisor	United Auburn Indian Community
	Rural Quality Coalition	Sacramento District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
	* Note: NOA and site plan only	

File No: **440814**

Applicant: Nevada County

Project Location: Combie Road, Nevada County

Project Description: **Combie Road Corridor Improvement Project**

This Notice of Availability serves as public notice that the County of Nevada has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project identified above. As mandated by Public Resources Code § 21091, the minimum public review period for this document is 30 days. The public review period for the proposed project is from August 1, 2016 to August 30, 2016. **Comments must be received by 5 p.m. on the last day of the comment period, August 30, 2016.** Send comments to Joshua H. Pack, P.E., at Joshua.Pack@co.nevada.ca.us, or mail comments to:

Joshua H. Pack, P.E.
Principal Civil Engineer
Nevada County Public Works
950 Maidu Avenue
Nevada City, CA 95959

Prior to approval of the project, the Board of Supervisors will consider comments received on this Initial Study. The Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing before it considers certification of the Initial Study and approval of the proposed project.

The Initial Study prepared for this project and the documents used in preparation of this Study are available for reviewed at the Nevada County Public Works, 950 Maidu Ave., Nevada City, California or online at http://www.mynevadacounty.com/nc/cda/pw/Pages/Combie.aspx. Pursuant to the State of California Public Resources Code and the "Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970," as amended to date, a Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared because no substantial evidence exists, as indicated in the attached Initial Study, that the proposed project may have a significant environmental effect.

Prepared by:

Joshua H. Pack, P.E.

9/21/16

Date

NEVADA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
INITIAL STUDY

To:

Nevada County Council	CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
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* Note: NOA and site plan only

Date: October 2016

Prepared by:

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(530) 265-7038
Email: Joshua.Pack@co.nevada.ca.us

Project Location: Combie Road, near the Lake of the Pines/Higgins Corner communities, in Grass Valley, California

INTRODUCTION

The Nevada County Department of Public Works (County) is proposing to implement the Combie Road Corridor Improvement Project (proposed project) located in Nevada County. The project site is within the Higgins Area Plan, with the proposed project identified as a circulation improvement (see Circulation Policy 42) necessary to implement the goals and objectives of the Plan (Nevada County, 2000). Combie Road is located in the southwestern portion of Nevada County near the Lake of the Pines/Higgins Corner communities, in Grass Valley, California (see **Figure 1**). The project study area limits extend eastward from the intersection of State Route (SR) 49 and Combie Road to the intersection of Combie Road/Magnolia Road, a distance of approximately 4,800 feet (see **Figure 2**).

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

As part of the proposed project, the County plans to widen Combie Road to 5 lanes, construct a traffic signal at the Combie Road/Higgins Road intersection, and construct a separate bicycle and pedestrian pathway. When these locally funded improvements are complete, all intersections within the corridor should operate at an acceptable LOS "C" or better in the year 2030, which exceed the County's minimum acceptable standard of LOS "D". These improvements should also significantly improve corridor safety and reduce the number of collisions each year.

Consequently, the proposed project objectives are to:

- Accommodate increased traffic demand generated by approved/planned development in the region;
- Reduce travel time and congestion along the Combie Road corridor;
- Improve safety-related design features along the Combie Road corridor, with emphasis on promoting safe emergency vehicle transition to Combie Road from the Higgins Area Fire Station; and

- Coordinate roadway improvements with other key infrastructure improvements along the corridor including PG&E's undergrounding of overhead utilities and the Combie Road Shared Use Pedestrian/Bicycle Project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Phasing

As part of a coordinated approach with other key infrastructure projects in the area, the County is proposing the following phased approach to development of the project. **Figure 2** provides an overview of the project phasing, with **Appendix A** (see **Figures A1-A7)** providing details on the following improvements as to their location within the study area and construction footprint.

Phase 1: Utility Undergrounding – Higgins Marketplace Area

- Undergrounding of overhead utilities, including utility poles, and infrastructure cabinets within the Higgins Marketplace Area and surrounding vicinity.

Phase 2: Combie Roadway Improvements (SR 49 to a point near the PG&E Substation)

- Adding a travel lane in each direction, resulting in four (4) twelve (12) foot travel lanes.
- Providing a shared use bicycle/pedestrian path along the north side of Combie Road.
- Installing curb, gutter, and sidewalks at several locations along the roadway corridor.
- Modifying existing traffic signals at the Combie Road/SR 49 intersection.
- Installing a new traffic signal at the Combie Road/Higgins Road intersection.
- Implementing sight distance improvements along the roadway corridor.
- Extension of sewer line from Cascade Crossing Road to the Caltrans right-of-way near the intersection of State Route 49.
- Installation of LED street lighting.
- Installing a number of drainage improvements.

Phase 3: Combie Roadway Improvements (PG&E Substation to Magnolia Road)

Phase 3 includes all the improvements identified above under Phase 2, and the following:

- Adding a (12) foot wide two-way center turn lane, with left turn pockets at Cascade Crossing Road, Armstrong Road, and Magnolia Road.
- Drainage and culvert improvements including the realignment of roughly 410 feet of Ragsdale Creek.

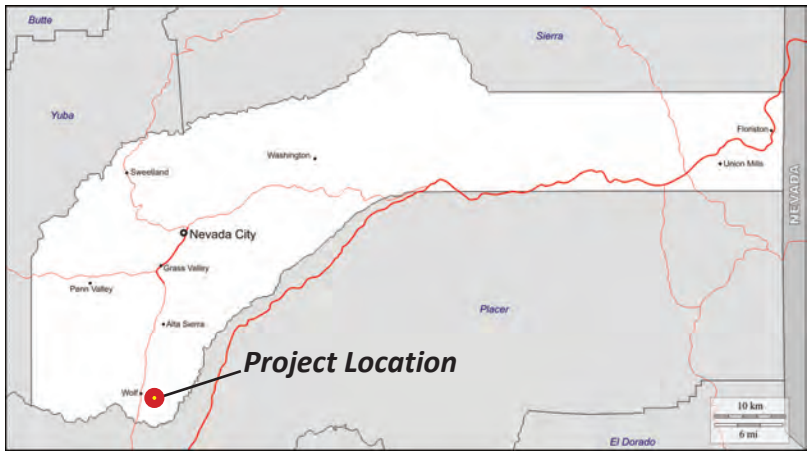
Utilities

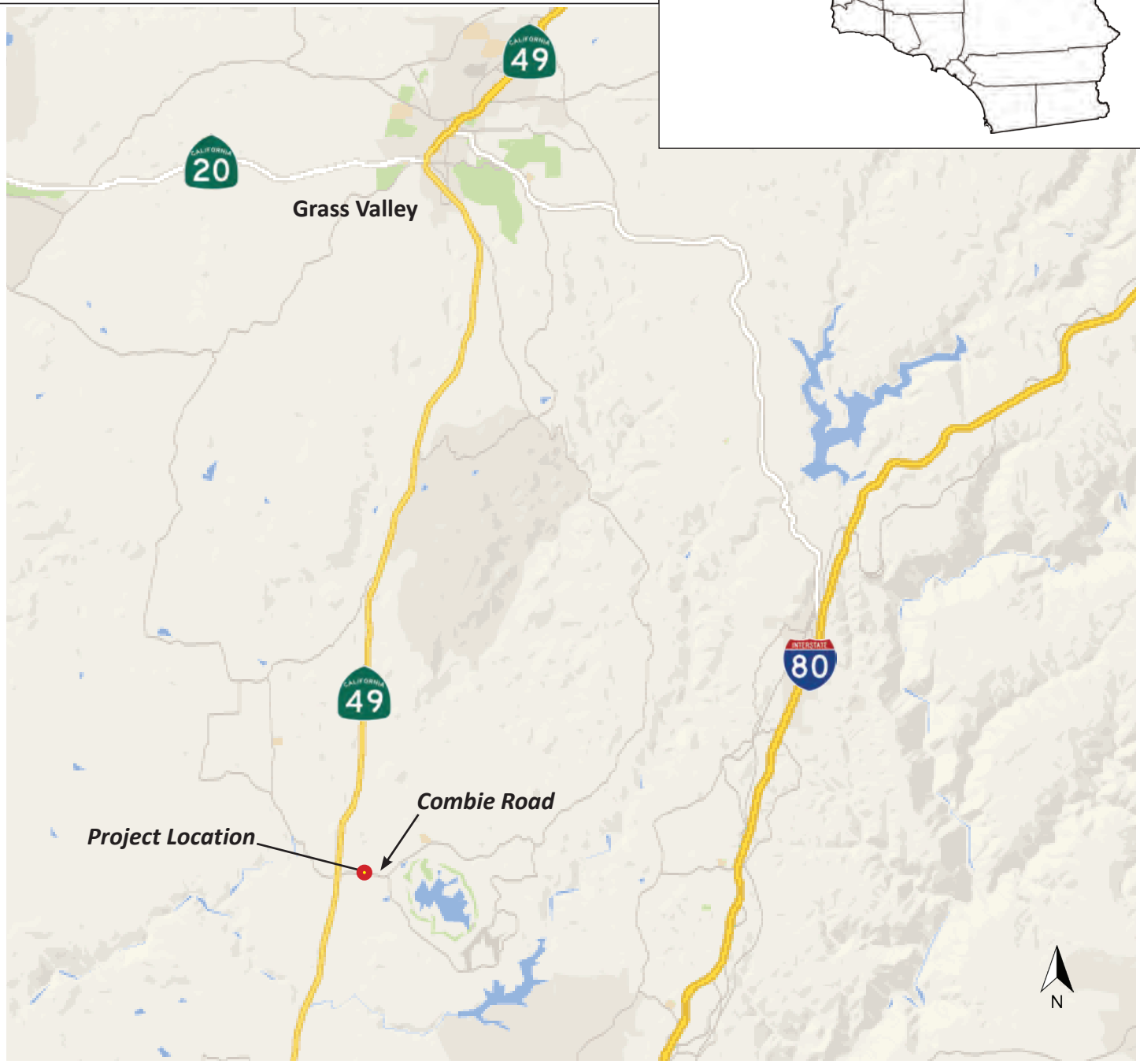
The proposed project will require the relocation of the following utility infrastructure, including a waterline, three (3) fire hydrants and two (2) AT&T infrastructure cabinets. Additionally, the proposed project will include the undergrounding of several electricity poles and related infrastructure. Relocation of all utility infrastructure will be coordinated with the responsible utility provider to ensure customers experience no service disruptions. The project will also include the installation of LED street lighting along Combie Road. All street light fixtures will be located, aimed or shielded to minimize stray light trespassing across property boundaries.

QUINCY ENGINEERING

Figure 1: REGIONAL LOCATION

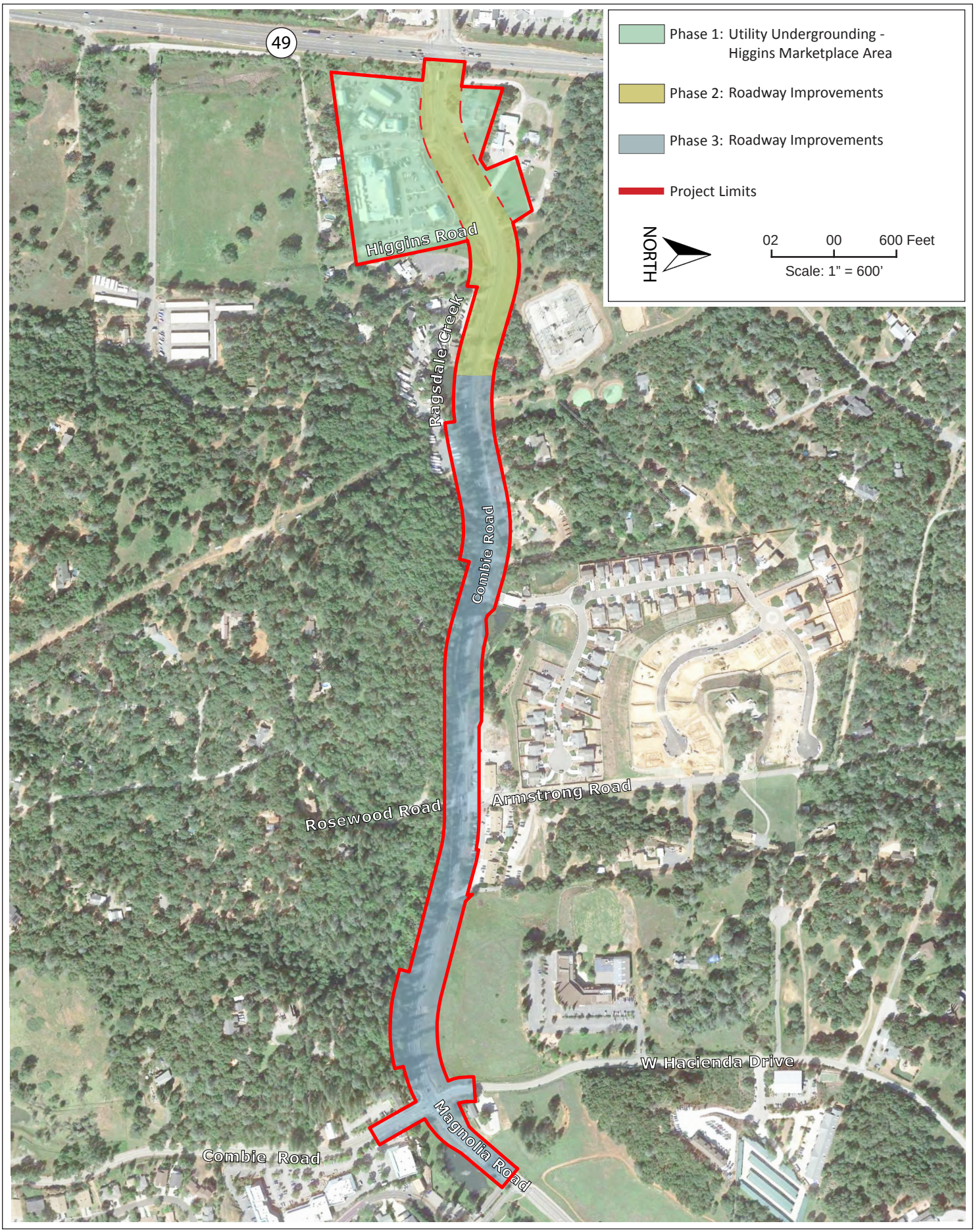
COMBIE ROAD PROJECT





QUINCY ENGINEERING

Figure 2: STUDY AREA LIMITS AND PROJECT PHASING **COMBIE ROAD PROJECT**



Ragsdale Creek and Drainage Improvements

The widening of Combie Road will infill roughly 410 feet of Ragsdale Creek. Consequently, the affected portion of the creek will require realignment approximately 13 feet to the south of the creek's existing location. To maintain the existing hydrology of the creek corridor, the fore slope of the realigned creek channel requires construction at 2:1 and the back slope at 1.5:1. Creek realignment will require extension of the upstream culvert approximately 25 feet south to the new creek connection point. Similarly, the downstream reinforced concrete box will require reconstruction to receive the new creek alignment. The newly realigned creek profile will follow the existing creek profile. Following realignment of the creek channel, the newly defined creek banks and other temporarily affected areas within the study area will be re-vegetated with native plant species.

Right of Way

Additional right of way is required for the roadway improvements, including permanent acquisition and several temporary construction easements (TCEs) for equipment staging and related activities. **Table 1** provides a summary of the affected parcels and associated right of way needs for the project.

Table 1
Property Acquisition Necessary for the Proposed Project

APN/Address	Type of Acquisition	Amount
57-260-04 / 10063 Combie Road	Permanent / Higgins Road Realignment	350 sq. feet
57-141-32 / 21515 Higgins Road	Permanent / Higgins Road Realignment	100 sq. feet
57-141-32 / 21515 Higgins Road	TCE / Culvert Realignment	4,800 sq. feet
57-141-34 / 10193 Combie Road	TCE / Ragsdale Creek Realignment	7,800 sq. feet
57-200-15 / 10801 Combie Road	TCE / Fill Slope	3,000 sq. feet

Construction Approach, Equipment, and Staging Areas

Phase 1: Utility Undergrounding – Higgins Marketplace Area

Phase 1 of the project, the undergrounding of utility infrastructure within the Higgins Marketplace commercial area, would occur during the spring/summer of 2017, with construction taking approximately 4 to 6 weeks. While the project site is predominately landscaped, disturbed, or paved, the project contractor will be required to comply with local tree ordinance requirements (for trenching near affected trees) and conduct pre-construction nesting bird surveys, as appropriate. At the completion of all construction-related activities, all affected pavement and landscaped areas, within the construction footprint, will be returned to pre-project conditions. A construction crew of 4 to 5 workers will use smaller scale equipment including a bulldozer, concrete drill, paver, and water truck during this phase of the construction project.

Phase 2 and 3: Combie Road Improvements

Under Phase 2 and 3 of the project, the other improvements within the roadway corridor would occur during the late summer/early fall months when water levels in Ragsdale Creek are at their lowest levels. Each construction phase would last between 3 to 4 months, with the most extensive construction activity occurring for approximately 6 to 8 weeks under each phase. Construction work hours are anticipated to occur Monday through Saturday between the hours of 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Construction staging areas will be located within the County's roadway right-of-way, predominately along the northern boundary of the roadway. The construction contractor will return all open space areas temporarily affected by the project (including Ragsdale Creek) to pre-project conditions using native trees and vegetation. A construction crew of between 15 to 25 workers will use the equipment identified in **Table 2** below.

Table 2
Construction Equipment

Construction Purpose/Activity	Equipment
Clearing and Grubbing /Earthwork	Bulldozer, Scraper, Haul Truck
Soil Manipulation, Drainage, Fill Material Delivery, and Removal	Backhoe, Dump & Haul Truck, Excavator, Front-end Loader
Ground Leveling and Compaction	Grader, Roller
Paving, and Finishing	Asphalt Concrete Paver, Paver
Erosion Control, Landscaping, and Stream Revegetation	Truck with Seed Sprayer, Backhoe, Bobcat
Dust Suppression / Equipment and Material Deliveries	Water Truck /Pick-up Truck

To minimize construction-related impacts to surrounding land uses, the County will ensure that the construction contractor implement a number of best management practices as part of the proposed project. For example, onsite watering will minimize fugitive dust impacts where ground disturbing or grading activities are necessary. Additionally, the construction contractor will implement Standard Best Management Practices (BMPs) to ensure erosion control and address water quality impacts, as part of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).

Traffic Controls
The construction contractor will implement a variety of traffic controls during construction, although minimal traffic restrictions will be necessary. The project contractor will prepare a traffic control plan consistent with County procedures and the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

Operation and Maintenance
The proposed project will not require additional or special maintenance, outside of standard County practice.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Combie Road (within the study area limits) is primarily a 3- lane, east to west minor arterial that provides regional access to State Route 49 for local residents. The roadway is one of the most heavily travelled County-maintained roadways with 14,410 Average Daily Trips (ADT). Historically, the roadway corridor has higher collision rates than the County average each year. In consideration of planned growth within the region, Combie Road is anticipated to operate at Level-of-Service "F" by the year 2030 and is identified in the County's Traffic Mitigation Fee (TMF) Program.

Higgins Area Plan
The Higgins Area Plan ensures consistency with the goals and policies of the Nevada County General Plan, while ensuring that the unique "Village Center" (i.e., pedestrian/bicycle connectivity) concept and other cultural and natural resources unique to the planning area are maintained. The Higgins Area Plan encompasses approximately 246 acres and designates a variety of land uses (including commercial and residential) and infrastructure improvements (including the proposed project) throughout the planning area. The County Board of Supervisors approved the plan in December 2000, with a mitigated negative declaration prepared to ensure compliance with CEQA.

Combie Road Shared Use Pedestrian/Bicycle Facility
Similar to the proposed project, this shared use pedestrian/bicycle facility is also a component of the Higgins Area Plan, which identifies a continuous multipurpose path on the north side of Combie and Magnolia Roads from SR 49 to the Magnolia Intermediate School on Kingston Lane. The Magnolia Road portion of the project from Lakeshore to Kingston Lane is completed. The remaining segment provides for an extension of the existing pedestrian path from W. Hacienda Drive to State Route 49 (approximately 0.83 miles). The County approved this project in June 2012, with a mitigated negative declaration prepared to ensure compliance with CEQA. Construction of the remaining portion will be coordinated with construction of the proposed project.

Utility Undergrounding Project
PG&E is currently undergrounding overhead utilities, utilizing the Public Utility Commission's Rule 20A program. Within the study area, utility undergrounding activities have their own distinct phasing plan, with Phase 1 (Combie Road to Magnolia Road) already completed. Completion of Phase 2 (Combie Road from Magnolia Road, west to SR 49) and Phase 3 (Higgins Marketplace Area) will occur as part of the proposed project. The new underground joint trench will include power, underground telephone, and underground street lighting.

Other Permits Which May Be Necessary: Based on initial comments received, the following permits may be required from the designated agencies:

1. Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan – Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
2. Section 401 Permit – Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
3. Section 404 Permit – US Army Corps of Engineers
4. Streambed Alteration Agreement – California Department of Fish and Wildlife
5. Dust control and operations permits - Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District
6. Encroachment Permit – California Department of Transportation District 3

Environmental Factors Potentially Affected: All of the following environmental factors have been considered. Those environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is "Less Than Significant with Mitigation" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

__	1. Aesthetics	__	2. Agriculture / Forestry Resources	✓	3. Air Quality
✓	4. Biological Resources	✓	5. Cultural Resources	✓	6. Geology / Soils
__	7. Greenhouse Gas Emissions	__	8. Hazards / Hazardous Materials	✓	9. Hydrology / Water Quality
__	10. Land Use / Planning	__	11. Mineral Resources	✓	12. Noise
__	13. Population / Housing	__	14. Public Services	__	15. Recreation
✓	16. Transportation / Circulation	__	17. Utilities / Service Systems	✓	18. Mandatory Findings of Significance

SUMMARY OF IMPACTS and PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

AIR QUALITY. To offset the potential air quality impacts associated with the project's construction activities, implementation of the following dust suppression and emission reduction measures will be required:

Mitigation Measure AQ-1: Implement NSAQMD Dust Suppression Measures. Construction contractor shall prepare and submit a Dust Suppression Control Plan to the NSAQMD, prior to implementing the construction phases of the project. Potential measures that might be included in the plan could include, but are not limited to, the following measures:

- Obtain appropriate permits from the NSAQMD for portable equipment.
- The applicant will implement all dust control measures in a timely manner during all phases of project development and construction.
- All material excavated, stockpiled or graded will be sufficiently watered, treated or covered to prevent fugitive dust from leaving the project boundaries and causing a public nuisance or a violation of an ambient air standard. Watering should occur at least twice daily, with complete site coverage.
- All areas (including unpaved roads) within the project limits with vehicle traffic will be watered or have dust palliative applied as necessary for regular stabilization of dust emissions. The installation of gravel pads at the exits onto active roadways is encouraged and may be required if regular sweeping proves to be inadequate.
- All land clearing, grading, earth moving, or excavation activities at the project site will be suspended as necessary to prevent excessive windblown dust when winds are expected to exceed 20 mph.
- All on-site vehicle traffic will be limited to a speed of 15 miles per hour (mph) on unpaved roads.
- All inactive disturbed portions of the site will be covered, seeded or watered until a suitable cover is established. Alternatively, the applicant will be responsible for applying non-toxic soil stabilizers to all inactive construction areas.
- All material transported off-site will be either sufficiently watered or securely covered to prevent public nuisance.
- Should serpentine or ultramafic rock be encountered during construction, the NSAQMD will be notified no later than the next business day and the California Code of Regulations, Title 17, Section 9315 applies.
- Care shall be taken to minimize the exposure of pedestrians to construction dust. Specifically, if dust is visible in the proximity of pedestrians, measures shall be taken immediately to control dust emissions. These measures may include additional watering, wet sweeping of paved areas, and the temporary cessation of dust generating activities until pedestrians pass the active portions of the site. Contractors should be aware of the times children are most likely to be walking past the project and plan their activities accordingly.

Mitigation Measure AQ-2: Implement NSAQMD Construction-Related Emission Measures. Construction contractor shall ensure that all NSAQMD best management practices designed to reduce air quality emissions (including NOx and ROG) are implemented as part of the proposed project. Potential measures could include, but are not limited to, the following measures:

- Open burning of site-cleared vegetation is prohibited, with suitable alternatives including chipping, mulching, or conversion to biomass fuel.
- Grid power shall be used (as opposed to diesel generators) for job site power needs where feasible during construction.
- Minimize idling time either by shutting equipment off when not in use or reducing the time of idling to 5 minutes (required by California Code of Regulations, Title 13, sections 2449(d)(3) and 2485). Provide clear signage that posts this requirement for workers at the entrance to the job site or staging area.
- Maintain all equipment in proper working condition according to manufacturer's specifications. The equipment must be checked by a certified mechanic and determine to be running in proper condition before it is operated.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES. To offset the potential biological resource impacts associated with the project's construction activities, implementation of the following avoidance and minimization measures will be required:

Mitigation Measure BR-1: Implement Western Pond Turtle Avoidance Measures. To minimize impacts to western pond turtle, the construction contractor shall implement the following avoidance and minimization measures:

- A qualified biologist shall conduct pre-construction surveys and be onsite during all initial stream realignment or other ground disturbance activities near ponds to monitor for western pond turtle nests. If a western pond turtle nest is uncovered, then the biologist shall stop work within a 25-foot radius (or other appropriate buffer as distinguished by the biologist) of the nest and contact CDFW for further guidance.
- Narrow screened fencing (no greater than 3-inch) or impassible barriers will be installed where the project intersects riparian habitat to prevent western pond turtle access to the construction site or encroachment by construction activities into those areas. Additionally, high visibility fencing shall also be established around ponds in areas where adjacent project activities will occur and where current fencing does not already occur. Establishment of fending shall occur prior to the start of project activities. Vegetation removal and construction sign establishment can occur without the establishment of fencing.
- If a western pond turtle is observed within the project site, then personnel shall stop work within a 50-foot radius of the sighting and notify the biologist or resident engineer (RE). Work shall not presume within the 50-foot radius buffer until the western pond turtle has left the project site on its own volition or after receiving further guidance by CDFW.
- If any incidental take of a western pond turtle or western pond turtle nest occurs during project activities, immediately notify the biologist and RE. The biologist or RE shall contact CDFW within 24 hours of the incidental take for further guidance.

Mitigation Measure BR-2: Implement Nesting Migratory Birds and Raptor Avoidance Measures. To minimize impacts to nesting migratory birds and raptors, the construction contractor shall implement the following avoidance and minimization measures:

- If possible, vegetation removal should occur outside the breeding season (February 15th – September 1st) for all bird species.
- If vegetation removal is to take place during the nesting season (February 15th –September 1st), a pre-construction nesting bird survey will be conducted within 7 days prior to vegetation removal. Within 2 weeks of the nesting bird survey, the construction contractor shall remove all vegetation cleared by the biologist.
- A minimum 100-foot no-disturbance buffer will be established around any active nest of protected song birds and a minimum 300-foot no-disturbance buffer will be established around any nesting raptor species. The contractor will immediately stop work in the nesting area until the appropriate buffer is established and is prohibited from conducting work that could disturb the birds (as determined by the project biologist and in coordination with wildlife agencies) in the buffer area until a qualified biologist determines the young have fledged. Establishment of a reduced buffer can occur if determined appropriate by the project biologist and approved by CDFW.
- If active nesting is identified within the ¼-mile radius, coordination with CDFW will be required.

Mitigation Measure BR-3: Implement Sensitive Habitat Restoration Measures. To minimize impacts to riparian, landmark grove trees, and other native trees, the following habitat restoration measures shall be implemented:

- Riparian habitat (including landmark grove trees) impacts associated with the realignment of Ragsdale Creek, will be replaced at a minimum ratio of 3:1; however, the final ratio will be identified through consultation and coordination with resource agencies (including CDFW and USACE) during the permitting process. Replacement will be completed through a combination of onsite revegetation (as part of Ragsdale Creek realignment) and through the purchase of in-lieu fees or mitigation bank credits.
- For onsite riparian and oak tree replacement, a revegetation plan will be developed and will include a summary of impacted vegetation, a planting plan, mitigation ratios, and success criteria based on resource agency requirements. The revegetation plan will be developed in coordination with and approved by the CDFW and USACE prior to implementation.
- Invasive plant species in the construction zone will be removed and disposed of in a manner that minimizes the potential for their reestablishment. Invasive plants will be identified by a biologist prior to their removal and removal procedures will follow the recommendations of the California Invasive Plant Council. If herbicides are applied, they will be applied in compliance with applicable state and federal laws.

Mitigation Measure BR-4: Implement Best Management Practices to Minimize Impacts to Sensitive Habitats and Local Wildlife. To minimize impacts to sensitive habitats and local wildlife, the following best management practices shall be implemented:

- Prior to the start of construction activities, the project limits in proximity to jurisdictional waters (including portions of Ragsdale Creek within the study area) will be marked with high visibility

ESA fencing or staking to ensure construction will not further encroach into waters. The project biologist throughout construction will periodically inspect the ESA to ensure sensitive locations remain undisturbed.

- Existing vegetation will be protected in place where feasible to provide an effective form of erosion and sediment control.
- Stabilizing materials will be applied to disturbed soil surfaces to prevent the movement of dust from exposed soil surfaces on construction sites resulting from wind, traffic, and grading activities.
- Prior to arrival at the project site and prior to leaving the project site, construction equipment that may contain invasive plants and/or seeds will be cleaned to reduce the spreading of noxious weeds.
- The contractor will not apply rodenticide or herbicide within the project area during construction.
- The contractor will dispose of all food-related trash in closed containers, and will remove it from the project area each day during construction. Construction personnel will not feed or attract wildlife to the project area.

Mitigation Measure BR-5: Implement Wetland Habitat Restoration Measures. To minimize impacts to wetland habitats, the following habitat restoration measures shall be implemented:

- Mitigation requirements for the fill of waters of the U.S. will be implemented through onsite restoration (associated with the realignment of Ragsdale Creek) and through participation with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Sacramento District California In-Lieu Fee Program. Approximately 0.075 acres of Ragsdale Creek will be realigned and mitigated onsite as part of the proposed project and the remaining impacts (0.049 acres) will be mitigated through purchase of mitigation credits from the Bear-Yuba Aquatic Resource Service Area (closest known mitigation area) at a minimum 1:1 ratio, with the final ratio to be determined by the USACE.
- For the realignment of Ragsdale Creek, both the revegetation plan and the final design plans will identify the realigned creek profile which will be designed to follow the existing creek profile to ensure the realigned section of creek maintains drainage flows and patterns and maintains, at a minimum, existing habitat values as documented in the revegetation plan. To maintain the existing geomorphology of the creek corridor, the fore slope of the realigned creek channel will be constructed at 2:1 and the back slope will be constructed at 1.5:1

CULTURAL RESOURCES. To offset potentially adverse cultural or historical resources impacts associated with the proposed activities on site, the following avoidance and minimization measure will be required:

Measure CR-1: Discovery of Cultural Resources during Ground-Disturbing Activities. The construction contractor shall cease work if prehistoric, or paleontological subsurface cultural resources are discovered during ground-disturbing activities. If cultural resources are discovered during ground-disturbing activities, all activity in the vicinity shall cease until an archaeologist or paleontologist who meets the requirements of the Secretary of the Interior's Qualification Standards evaluates the discovery. If the discovery is determined to be a significant resource, no further work near the resources shall take place until appropriate treatment is determined and implemented.

The need for archaeological and Native American monitoring during the remainder of the project will be re-evaluated by the archaeologist as part of the treatment determination, if deemed appropriate. The

archaeologist shall consult with appropriate Naïve American representatives in determining appropriate treatment for unearthed cultural resources if the resources are prehistoric or Native American in nature. In considering any suggested mitigation proposed by the archaeologist in order to mitigate impacts to cultural resources, the County will determine whether avoidance is necessary and feasible in light of factors such as the nature of the find, project design, costs, and other considerations. If avoidance is infeasible, other appropriate measures (e.g., data recovery) will be initiated.

Measure CR-2: Halt Work if Human Skeletal Remains are Identified during Construction. If human skeletal remains are uncovered during project construction, work must immediately halt and the Nevada County Coroner must be contacted to evaluate the remains; the procedures and protocols set forth in Section 15064.5 (e)(1) of the CEQA Guidelines must be followed. If the County Coroner determines that the remains are Native American, the project proponent will contact the NAHC, in accordance with Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, subdivision (c), and Public Resources Code 5097.98 (as amended by AB 2641). Per Public Resources Code 5097.98, the landowner shall ensure that the immediate vicinity, according to generally accepted cultural or archaeological standards or practices, where the Native American human remains are located, is not damaged or disturbed by further development activity until the landowner has discussed and conferred, as prescribed in this section (PRC 5097.98), with the most likely descendants regarding their recommendations, if applicable, taking into account the possibility of multiple human remains.

GEOLOGY AND SOILS. To offset the potential for adverse soils or erosion impacts to result from project grading and construction activities, the following erosion and soil stability measures will be required:

Measure GEO-1: Implement Erosion, Sediment, and Soil Stability Measures. Prior to issuance of final plans for all project-related grading including road construction and drainage improvements, said plans will incorporate, at a minimum, the following erosion, sediment, and soil stability control measures. Contract specifications will include the following best management practices, where applicable, to reduce erosion and ensure soil stability during construction:

- Prior to commencement of site work, fiber rolls and silt fencing will be installed down slope of all proposed areas of disturbance to reduce migration of sediment from the site. Fiber rolls on slopes are intended to reduce sediment discharge from disturbed areas, reduce the velocity of water flow, and aid in the overall revegetation of slopes. The fiber rolls and silt fence should remain in place until construction activity is complete and vegetation becomes established.
- All soil exposed in permanent slope faces should be hydroseeded or hand seeded/strawed with an appropriate seed mixture compatible with the soil and climate conditions of the site as recommended by the local Resource Conservation District.
- Following seeding, jute netting or erosion control blankets should be placed and secured over the slopes steeper than 2:1, horizontal:vertical (H:V).

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY. To offset the potential for adverse water quality impacts resulting from project grading and construction activities, the following best management measures will be required:

Mitigation Measure WQ-1: Implement Water Quality Best Management Practices. The proposed project has been designed to minimize all impacts to the maximum extent practicable with the use of BMPs and implementation of regulatory permit conditions. The following BNPs will be incorporated into the project design and construction specifications to minimize impacts on the environment including the release of pollutants (oils, fuels, etc.).

- Measures would be implemented during land-disturbing activities to reduce erosion and sedimentation. These measures may include mulches, soil binders and erosion control blankets, silt fencing, fiber rolls, temporary berms, sediment desilting basins, sediment traps, and check dams.
- Existing vegetation would be protected where feasible to reduce erosion and sedimentation. Vegetation would be preserved by installing temporary fencing, or other protection devices, around areas to be protected.
- Exposed soils would be covered by loose bulk materials or other materials to reduce erosion and runoff during rainfall events.
- Exposed soils would be stabilized, through watering or other measures, to prevent the movement of dust at the project site caused by wind and construction activities such as traffic and grading activities.
- All construction roadway areas would be properly protected to prevent excess erosion, sedimentation, and water pollution.
- All vehicle and equipment maintenance procedures would be conducted off-site. In the event of an emergency, maintenance would occur away from Ragsdale Creek.
- All concrete curing activities would be conducted to minimize spray drift and prevent curing compounds from entering the waterway directly or indirectly.
- All construction materials, vehicles, stockpiles, and staging areas would be situated outside of the stream channel as feasible. All stockpiles would be covered, as feasible.
- Energy dissipaters and erosion control pads would be provided at the bottom of slope drains. Other flow conveyance control mechanisms may include earth dikes, swales, or ditches. Stream bank stabilization measures would also be implemented.
- All erosion control measures and storm water control measures would be properly maintained until the site has returned to a pre-construction state.
- All disturbed areas would be restored to pre-construction contours and revegetated, either through hydroseeding or other means, with native or approved non-invasive exotic species.
- All construction materials would be hauled off-site after completion of construction.

NOISE. To offset the potential for construction-related noise impacts to sensitive receptors, the following noise reducing measure will be required:

Mitigation Measure N-1: Limit Construction Work Hours. During the construction period, the construction contractor shall ensure that construction work hours will be limited from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM.

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION. To offset the potential for circulation and access impacts resulting from construction-related activities, the following traffic control measures will be required:

Mitigation Measure TC-1: Implement Traffic Control Plan. The project contractor would be required to develop and implement a Traffic Control Plan, with subsequent review and approval required by the County prior to construction. This plan would include the following measures:

- Do not permit construction vehicles to block any roadways or private driveways.
- Provide access for the Higgins Area Fire Station and other emergency vehicles at all times.

- Select travel routes to avoid schools, parks, and high pedestrian use areas when possible. Crossing guards provided by the contractor would be used when truck trips coincide with school hours and when travel routes cross student travel paths.
- Obey all speed limits, traffic laws, and transportation regulations during construction.
- Use signs and flagmen, as needed, to alert motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians to avoid conflict with construction vehicles or equipment.
- Construction employee parking would be restricted to the designated staging areas.
- No road closures are anticipated; however, in the event that road closures are necessary, local agencies and affected organizations would be notified prior to construction.
- The temporary closure of any roadways or public access areas for construction use would be clearly fenced and delineated with appropriate closure signage.

INITIAL STUDY AND CHECKLIST

Introduction

This checklist is to be completed for all projects that are not exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The information, analysis, and conclusions contained in the checklist are the basis for deciding whether an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or Negative Declaration is to be prepared. If an EIR is determined to be necessary based on the conclusions of the Initial Study, the checklist is used to focus the EIR on the effects determined to be potentially significant. This Initial Study uses the following terms to describe the level of significance of adverse impacts. These terms are defined as follows.

- **No Impact**: An impact that would result in no adverse changes to the environment.
- **Less than Significant Impact**: An impact that is potentially adverse but does not exceed the thresholds of significance as identified in the impact discussions. Less than significant impacts do not require mitigation.
- **Less than Significant with Mitigation**: An environmental effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the environment without mitigation, but which is reduced to a level that is less than significant with mitigation identified in the Initial Study.
  Potentially Significant Impact: An environmental effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the environment; either additional information is needed regarding the extent of the impact to make the significance determination, or the impact would or could cause a substantial adverse change in the environment. A finding of a potentially significant impact would result in the determination to prepare an EIR.

Project Location and Surrounding Land Uses

Combie Road is located in the southwestern portion of Nevada County near the Lake of the Pines/Higgins Corner communities, in Grass Valley, California (see **Figure 1**). The project study area limits extend eastward from the intersection of State Route (SR) 49 and Combie Road to the intersection of Combie Road and Magnolia Road, a distance of approximately 4,800 feet (just under a mile). The study area's general topography consists of gentle to moderate slopes, with elevations ranging from 1,423 to 1,541 feet. **Figure 3** identifies common viewpoints along the road corridor within the study area.

Beginning at the intersection of SR 49 and Combie Road, commercial uses (i.e., Higgins Village Shopping Center) are the primary land use along the study area limits, with a fire station and a PG&E substation located along the northern boundary. Travelling eastward along Combie Road, surrounding land uses along both sides of the roadway transition to smaller scale commercial uses, interspersed with a mobilehome park, low density rural residential, and open space land uses. Ragsdale Creek meanders along the southern edge of Combie Road, with a short section of the creek crossing over to the north side of the road near Cascade Crossing. Oak woodlands and a variety of other open space areas are interspersed between the developed areas.

Land use designations adjacent to Combie Road are zoned Medium Density Residential, Public, and Commercial. Other nearby zoning includes Community Commercial and Residential Agriculture. General Plan designations include Planned Development, Public, and Urban Medium Density.

1. AESTHETICS

Existing Setting
While Combie Road is not an officially designated National Scenic Byway or a State Scenic Byway according to the Caltrans Map of Designated Scenic Routes (Caltrans 2015), it is a locally designated scenic corridor under the County's existing General Plan and the Higgins Area Plan. Motorists or pedestrians (using the existing section of completed multi-use trail) have views (see **Figure 3**) of low density residential and commercial uses interspersed within blue oak/foothill pine woodlands and Ragsdale Creek landscapes located adjacent to the roadway corridor. The nearest designated State Scenic Byway is SR 49, which is officially designated over its entire length through Nevada County.

The proposed project will widen the existing roadway consistent with the goals and objectives of the Higgins Area Plan's. While the proposed improvements will include the installation of LED street lighting at various points along the corridor, all light fixtures will be located, aimed or shielded to minimize stray light trespassing across property boundaries. As previously described, the proposed project is being coordinated with PG&E's overhead utility undergrounding project (Rule 20A program). No new vertical features, outside of street light posts, are included under the proposed project.

Would the proposed project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a. Result in demonstrable, negative, aesthetic effects on scenic vistas or views open to the public?			✓	
b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?			✓	
c. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?			✓	
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?			✓	
e. Create a visually incompatible structure within a designated historic district?				✓

Impact Discussion 1a&1c: The project site is comprised of the existing 3-lane roadway corridor (east to west minor arterial) with a separate shared pedestrian/bicycle path adjacent to portions of the roadway. Surrounding properties adjacent the roadway corridor range from planned commercial uses (i.e., Higgins Village Shopping Center) and service providers (fire station and PG&E substation) at the western boundary of the study area transitioning to smaller scale commercial uses, low density rural residential, and open space land uses along the eastern portion of the study area. Both Ragsdale Creek and oak woodlands are interspersed between theses developed areas. No officially designated scenic vistas or public viewpoints are located along the corridor.

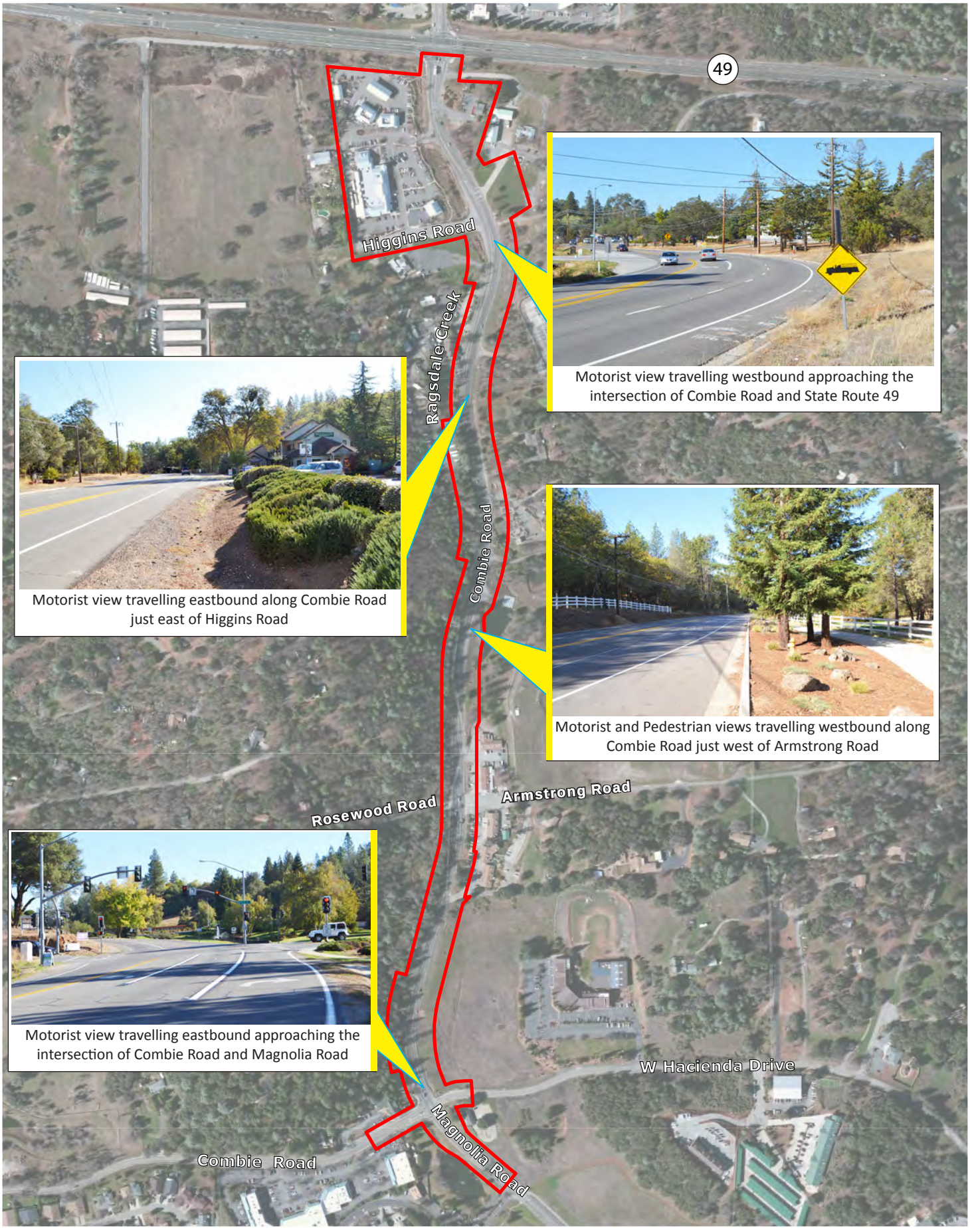
Implementation of the proposed project will widen the existing roadway to five lanes and complete an existing shared used pedestrian/bicycle trail consistent with goals of the Higgins Area Plan's "Village Center" concept. The project is also a circulation improvement identified under the Higgins Area Plan (see Circulation Policy 42), as necessary to implement the overall plan objectives. Implementation of the proposed project will require the removal of established trees along the existing roadway corridor and the relocation of approximately 410 feet of Ragsdale Creek. However, restoration (using native vegetation) of all open space areas temporarily affected by the project (consistent with the open space values of the Higgins Area Plan) will occur as part of the proposed project. While the project will result in short-term, construction-related visual impacts (i.e., dust, equipment, construction vehicles), no vertical features (such as cellular towers, storage tanks, or utility lines) are included with the project that would result in permanent

negative effects to existing open space views along the corridor. Therefore, the project (including all three phases) will not result in a negative adverse impact to a scenic vista; views open to the public or the visual character of the site. Consequently, this impact is ***less than significant***, with no mitigation measures required.

Impact Discussion 1b: While both SR 49 and Combie Road are officially designated as scenic roadways/corridors within the County, implementation of the proposed project is a circulation improvement identified under the Higgins Area Plan (see Circulation Policy 42) and will be developed consistent with the goals of the plan. Project related construction activities will require the removal of established trees along the existing roadway corridor and the relocation of approximately 410 feet of Ragsdale Creek. However, restoration (using native vegetation) of all open space areas temporarily affected by the project (consistent with Higgins Area Plan Design Policies Policy 1 "Site Grading", Policy 4 "Minimize Impacts to Native Trees", Policy 6 "Erosion Control Plan", and Policy 8 "Ragsdale Creek Riparian Mitigation Plan") will occur as part of the proposed project. While the project will result in short-term, construction-related visual impacts (i.e., dust, equipment, construction vehicles), no vertical features (as described above under the impact discussion for 1a and 1c) are part of the project that would result in permanent negative effects to existing open space views along the corridor. Therefore, the project (including all three phases) will not result in substantial damage to scenic resources along SR 49 and Combie Road. Consequently, this impact is ***less than significant***, with no mitigation measures required.

*Impact Discussion 1d***:** Commercial uses and scattered rural residential uses are located along the roadway corridor. Overall, the project site is located within a rural setting where current lighting is minimal, with the Higgins Marketplace, roadway vehicles and scattered development along the corridor generating the primary sources of nighttime light and daytime glare in the project vicinity. While the proposed project will include additional street lighting, the new street lighting will be required to meet all County standards regulating outdoor lighting in order to minimize spillover light impacts to adjacent properties. Additionally, the proposed project (including all three phases) will not include design features or materials (i.e., retaining walls, billboards, spotlights) that would introduce significant new sources of light and glare within the study area. Consequently, this impact is ***less-than-significant***, with no mitigation measures required.

Impact Discussion 1e: There is no special historic zoning designation in place at or near the project site. Implementation of the proposed project (including all three phases) will result in improvements to the existing roadway corridor, with temporary construction-related impacts to the existing visual character of the study area. The proposed project (all three phases) would have ***no impact***.



Motorist view travelling westbound approaching the intersection of Combie Road and State Route 49

Motorist view travelling eastbound along Combie Road just east of Higgins Road

Motorist and Pedestrian views travelling westbound along Combie Road just west of Armstrong Road

Motorist view travelling eastbound approaching the intersection of Combie Road and Magnolia Road

2. AGRICULTURAL/FORESTRY RESOURCES

Existing Setting
Agriculture and forest resources have been an integral part of Nevada County since the discovery of gold in California. Agriculture in Nevada County is a mosaic of farmland intermingled with other uses in the rural setting which typifies the county (Nevada County 2014a). Forest resources within the county consist of timberlands and woodlands, which provide commercial timber production as well as wildlife habitat, vegetation diversity, watershed protection and recreation (Nevada County 2014a).

Areas surrounding the project site are zoned Commercial (including C1-SC-SP and C2-SC-SP), Public (P-SC-SP), Open Space (OS-SC-SP), and Residential (R2-MH-SC-SP) (Nevada County 2015). There are no Prime or Unique Farmlands or Farmlands of Statewide Importance within or adjacent to the project site (CDOC 2012). Additionally, none of the parcels adjacent to the project site is under a Williamson Act contract (Nevada County 2014b).

Would the proposed project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
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 Department of Conservation's Division of Land Resource Protection, to non-agricultural use?				✓
b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or conflict with a Williamson Act contract?				✓
c. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resource Code section 12220(g)), timberland zoned Timberland Production Zone (per Section L-II 2.3.C of the Nevada County Land Use and Development Code)?				✓
d. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				✓
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?				✓

Impact Discussion 2a & 2b: The project site does not contain any Important Farmlands as identified by the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, agricultural lands, or parcels with an active Williamson Act contract. The proposed project (all three phases) would have ***no impact***.

Impact Discussion 2c & 2d: The project site is not within a designated Timberland Production Zone due to the lack of substantial timber resources in the study area. The proposed project (all three phases) would have ***no impact.***

Impact Discussion 2e: Project implementation (all three phases) would not result in the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses as noted above. The proposed project (all three phases) would have ***no impact***.

3. AIR QUALITY

An Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Assessment Report (Dudek, 2016a) was prepared to identify the study area's existing air quality conditions and identify the proposed project's emission impacts. The report provides much of the information used in the preparation of this section and includes emission estimates using the CALEEMod air quality emission modeling software. **Section 7** of this initial study provides an evaluation of project impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions.

Existing Setting

Nevada County is located in the Mountain Counties Air Basin. The overall air quality in Nevada County has improved over the past decade, largely due to vehicles becoming cleaner. State and Federal Air Quality Standards exist for specific "criteria" air pollutants including ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, lead, and particulate matter. In addition, there are State standards for visibility reducing particles, sulfates, hydrogen sulfide, and vinyl chloride, referred to as California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) (CEPA 2009). National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) refer to federal air quality standards (EPA 2015). NAAQS are composed of health-based primary standards and welfare-based secondary standards. State law requires that the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD) achieve and maintain both the CAAQS and NAAQS.

The County has two known air quality issues: ozone and PM10. Western Nevada County is designated Marginal Nonattainment for the 1997 ozone NAAQS, with a "Finding of Attainment" based on three years of "clean" data. The area is also designated Marginal Nonattainment for the 2008 ozone NAAQS and Nonattainment for the ozone CAAQS. Wind currents transport most of western Nevada County's ozone, which originates from the Sacramento area and, to a lesser extent, the San Francisco Bay Area. Ozone results from the interaction of Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) and Reactive Organic Gases (ROG), also known as Volatile Organic Compounds, in the presence of sunlight, especially when the temperature is high. Consequently, ozone is mainly a summertime problem, with the highest concentrations generally observed in July and August, especially in the late afternoon and evening hours.

Nevada County is also designated Nonattainment for the PM10 CAAQS, but Unclassified for the PM10 NAAQS due to lack of available recent data. The number after "PM" refers to maximum particle size in microns. PM10 is a mixture of dust, combustion particles (smoke) and aerosols, whereas PM2.5 is mostly smoke and aerosol particles. PM2.5 sources include woodstoves and fireplaces, vehicle engines, wildfires and open burning. PM10 sources include the PM2.5 plus dust, such as from surface disturbances, road sand, vehicle tires, and leaf blowers. Some pollen and mold spores are also included in PM10, but most are larger than 10 microns. All of Nevada County is Unclassifiable/Attainment for the PM2.5 NAAQS and Unclassified for the PM2.5 CAAQS.

Ultramafic rock and its altered form, serpentine rock (or serpentinite), both typically contain asbestos, a cancer-causing agent. Ultramafic rock and serpentine exist in several locations in Nevada County, mainly in the western half, but it is unlikely that these materials exist in the project area (USGS 2011).

Would the proposed project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a. Result in substantial air pollutant emissions or deterioration of ambient air quality?		✓		
b. Violate any air quality standard or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation?		✓		
c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?		✓		
d. Create objectionable smoke, ash, or odors?			✓	

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e. Generate dust?		✓		
f. Exceed any potentially significant thresholds adopted in County Plans and Goals?			✓	
g. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions that exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?		✓		

Impact Discussion 3a, 3b, 3e, & 3g: The proposed project is a roadway improvement project that would not result in additional operational vehicle trips, regional growth, or conflict with projected emission trends, beyond those accounted for under the NSAQMD's *Reasonably Available Control Technology (RACT) State Implementation Plan (SIP) for Western Nevada County 8-Hour Ozone Non-Attainment Area*. However, the construction phase of the project would result in short-term daily construction emissions of Nitrogen Oxides, Reactive Organic Gases, and PM10 that would exceed NSAQMD significance criteria (see **Table 3**, below). Specific construction activities generating these sort-term air pollutant emissions include grading/site preparation activities (fugitive dust – PM10 and PM2.5) and onsite/offsite vehicle/truck trips (Nitrogen Oxides and Reactive Organic Gases).

Table 3
Maximum Daily Construction Emissions (pounds/day)

	ROG	NO_x	CO	SO_x	PM_{10}[1]	$PM_{2.5}$[1]
Construction - Year 2016	1	11	10	0	1	1
Construction - Year 2017	3	34	26	0	5	3
Maximum Daily Emissions	*3*	*34*	*26*	*0*	*5*	*3*
NSAQMD Significance Threshold Level	*Level A*	*Level B*	*NA*	*NA*	*Level A*	*NA*
Significant (Yes/No or Potentially)?	Potentially	Potentially	NA	NA	Potentially	NA

Source: CalEEMod Version 2013.2.2. See the Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Assessment Report (Dudek, 2016a).
Notes: ROG = reactive organic gases; NO_x = oxides of nitrogen; CO = carbon monoxide; SO_x = sulfur oxides; PM_{10} = particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter equal to or less than 10 microns; $PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter equal to or less than 2.5 microns; NA = not applicable.
[1] A control efficiency of 55% was included when calculating the emissions of PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ to account for the fugitive dust and particulate matter emission controls in Rule 226.

Implementation of the proposed project (including all three phases) would also be subject to NSAQMD Rule 226, Dust Control (Dudek, 2016a) which requires the submittal and approval of a Dust Suppression Control Plan to the NSAQMD prior to commencement of the construction phase of the project. Implementation of **Mitigation Measure AQ-1** would ensure consistency with the NSAQMD's Dust Suppression Control Plan and **Mitigation Measure AQ-2** would require compliance with additional NSAQMD best management practices to reduce ozone emissions (i.e., open burning and use of grid power versus diesel generators) that would reduce daily construction emissions to less than significant levels. As the proposed project would not result in additional regional growth, generate additional operational vehicle trips, or otherwise result in conflicts with projected emission trends provided in the SIP, the project will not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to any criteria pollutant for which the region is classified

nonattainment under applicable federal or state ambient air quality standards. Consequently, this impact is ***less-than-significant*** with incorporation of **Mitigation Measures AQ-1** and **AQ-2**.

Impact Discussion 3c: Land uses such as day care providers, primary and secondary schools, hospitals, and convalescent homes are sensitive receptors to poor air quality because the very young, elderly, and the infirm are more susceptible to respiratory infections and other air quality related health problems compared to the public at large. Residential uses are also sensitive receptors because people in residential areas are often home for extended periods of time, which can result in extended exposure to air quality pollutants. Within the project study area, the nearest sensitive receptors are residents of the Lake Combie Mobile Home Village, with residential units located roughly 100 feet from the study area limits. A pond and associated vegetation (i.e., mature trees and shrubs) buffer the residential units from the existing roadway.

State law has established the framework for California's toxic air contaminants (TACs) identification and control program, which is generally more stringent than the federal program and focuses at TACs that are a problem in California. Health effects from carcinogenic air toxics are described in terms of cancer risk. "Incremental cancer risk" is the net increased likelihood that a person continuously exposed to concentrations of TACs resulting from a project over a 9, 30, and 70-year exposure period will contract cancer based on the use of standard Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) risk-assessment methodology. The greatest potential for TAC emissions to sensitive receptors during construction would be diesel particulate emissions from heavy equipment operations and heavy-duty trucks. However, construction activities are temporary and with project phasing, would occur over a relatively short time (approximately 8 weeks). Therefore, the total exposure time where some level of construction activity and subsequent diesel particulate emissions are occurring would be less than the minimum number of years recommended for a health risk assessment and less than 1% of the total exposure time for typical health risk assessment. Regarding long-term operations, the proposed project would not increase overall traffic volumes on Combie Road or the regional roadway network. Consequently, the proposed project would not result in long-term sources of TAC emissions.

The proposed project's generation of TACs is temporary and intermittent in nature, limited to the construction period. Because of this relatively low exposure period, in combination with the dispersive properties of diesel particulate emissions (Zhu and Hinds, 2002), the proposed project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. Additionally, with implementation of **Mitigation Measure AQ-2**, reductions in diesel particulate emissions would occur by limiting heavy-duty equipment idling time, limiting construction vehicle speeds, and by properly maintaining construction equipment. Consequently, this impact is ***less-than-significant*** with incorporation of **Mitigation Measure AQ-2**.

As noted above under the "existing setting", while ultramafic rock and serpentine exist in several locations within the western half of Nevada County, it is unlikely that these materials exist in the project area. Additionally, implementation of the NSAQMD's dust suppression measures provided under **Mitigation Measure AQ-1**) would reduce fugitive dust emissions and their resultant impact to a ***less-than-significant*** level.

Impact Discussion 3d&f: Nevada County's 1995 General Plan, Chapter 14 Air Quality Element, contains numerous policies to protect air quality in Nevada County. The proposed project is consistent with the objectives of the Higgins Area Plan and is consistent with local air quality policies, including those associated with the generation of objectionable smoke, ash or odors. Generally, the types of projects or activities that pose potential odor problems include refineries, chemical plants, wastewater treatment plants, or landfills. The proposed project is a road improvement project that would not create substantial/long term objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people. This impact is ***less-than-significant*** and no mitigation measures are required.

Mitigation
To offset the potential air quality impacts associated with the project construction activities, the following avoidance and minimization measures will be required:

Mitigation Measure AQ-1: Implement NSAQMD Dust Suppression Measures. Construction contractor shall prepare and submit a Dust Suppression Control Plan to the NSAQMD, prior to implementing the construction phases of the project. Potential measures that might be included in the plan could include, but are not limited to, the following measures:

- Obtain appropriate permits from the NSAQMD for portable equipment.
- The applicant will implement all dust control measures in a timely manner during all phases of project development and construction.
- All material excavated, stockpiled or graded will be sufficiently watered, treated or covered to prevent fugitive dust from leaving the project boundaries and causing a public nuisance or a violation of an ambient air standard. Watering should occur at least twice daily, with complete site coverage.
- All areas (including unpaved roads) within the project limits with vehicle traffic will be watered or have dust palliative applied as necessary for regular stabilization of dust emissions. The installation of gravel pads at the exits onto active roadways is encouraged and may be required if regular sweeping proves to be inadequate.
- All land clearing, grading, earth moving, or excavation activities at the project site will be suspended as necessary to prevent excessive windblown dust when winds are expected to exceed 20 mph.
- All on-site vehicle traffic will be limited to a speed of 15 miles per hour (mph) on unpaved roads.
- All inactive disturbed portions of the site will be covered, seeded or watered until a suitable cover is established. Alternatively, the applicant will be responsible for applying non-toxic soil stabilizers to all inactive construction areas.
- All material transported off-site will be either sufficiently watered or securely covered to prevent public nuisance.
- Should serpentine or ultramafic rock be encountered during construction, the NSAQMD will be notified no later than the next business day and the California Code of Regulations, Title 17, Section 9315 applies.
- Care shall be taken to minimize the exposure of pedestrians to construction dust. Specifically, if dust is visible in the proximity of pedestrians, measures shall be taken immediately to control dust emissions. These measures may include additional watering, wet sweeping of paved areas, and the temporary cessation of dust generating activities until pedestrians pass the active portions of the site. Contractors should be aware of the times children are most likely to be walking past the project and plan their activities accordingly.

Mitigation Measure AQ-2: Implement NSAQMD Construction-Related Emission Measures. Construction contractor shall ensure that all NSAQMD best management practices designed to reduce air quality emissions (including NOx and ROG) are implemented as part of the proposed project. Potential measures could include, but are not limited to, the following measures:

- Open burning of site-cleared vegetation is prohibited, with suitable alternatives including chipping, mulching, or conversion to biomass fuel.

- Grid power shall be used (as opposed to diesel generators) for job site power needs where feasible during construction.
- Minimize idling time either by shutting equipment off when not in use or reducing the time of idling to 5 minutes (required by California Code of Regulations, Title 13, sections 2449(d)(3) and 2485). Provide clear signage that posts this requirement for workers at the entrance to the job site or staging area.
- Maintain all equipment in proper working condition according to manufacturer's specifications. The equipment must be checked by a certified mechanic and determine to be running in proper condition before it is operated.

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

A Biological Resource Assessment (Gallaway Enterprises, 2016) (BRA) was prepared that included a biological evaluation, California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*) (CRLF) habitat assessment, botanical survey, native tree survey, and wetland delineation within the study area to evaluate site conditions and potential impacts to biological and botanical species from project activities. Other primary references consulted include species lists and information gathered using United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Information, Planning, and Conservation System (IPAC), California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB), the California Native Plant Society's (CNPS) list of rare and endangered plants, and literature review. The BRA conclusions are the result of field survey findings and research to determine the potential of special-status species to occur within the study area, and/or if these species could be impacted by project activities.

Existing Setting
The proposed project is located on Combie Road, near the communities of Lake of the Pines and Higgins Corner, Nevada County, California, Latitude 39.042581°, Longitude -121.094110°, Township 14N, Range 8E, Section 28. The project site is located in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountain range. The surrounding area consists of scattered rural residential houses and concentrated small urban and residential areas. The dominant vegetation community in the surrounding area consists of grey pine –blue oak woodlands and annual grasslands. Small stock ponds and residential aesthetic ponds are visible from aerial imagery throughout the area.

Primary habitats within the biological survey area consist of blue oak – foothill pine woodlands (BOP), annual grasslands (AGS), urban (URB), lacustrine (LUC) and riverine (RIV).

Blue Oak – Foothill Pine (BOP): A large area of undeveloped blue oak – foothill pine woodlands occurs along Combie Road for approximately 0.5 miles, within the center portion of the study area. There are also isolated patches of this habitat type interspersed along the rest of Combie Road. In some areas of the blue oak – foothill pine woodland, live oak (*Quercus virginiana*) is co-dominate with blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*). There are also small areas that contain riparian vegetation such as Fremont cottonwoods (*Populus fremontii*) and willow (*Salix spp.*). However, these areas are too small to be designated as riparian habitat. According to Mayer K.E and William F. Laudenslayer, 1988, *A Guide to Wildlife Habitats of California*, blue oak - foothill pine woodlands are comprised of a diverse horizontal and vertical structure. Hardwoods and conifers intermix to form an, often, open canopy layer while the understory comprises of shrub species that can be clumped together. Within this habitat, annual grasslands are common in interspersed patches. Dominate species within this habitat consist of blue oak and gray pine (*Pinus sabiniana*), with blue oak usually most abundant. Other species include buckbrush (*Ceanothus cuneatus*), whiteleaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos manzanita*), coffeeberry (*Rhamnus californica*), poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), interior live oak (*Quercus wislizeni*), scrub oak (*Quercus berberidifolia*) and ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*). Blue oak - foothill pine woodlands are an important habitat type for a diverse mix of wildlife species. Blue oaks produce an abundant seed crop every two to three years, which

provide an important food resource for many species such as acorn woodpeckers (*Melanerpes formicivorus*), deer, rodents and black bear (*Ursus americanus*).

Annual Grassland (AGS): Within the study area, an undeveloped parcel of annual grasslands extends approximately 700 feet along Combie Road. The entire grassland area is dominated by yellow star-thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*). Yellow star thistle is an invasive species that can often degrade the natural functions of the habitat and decrease the likely hood of the habitat to support a variety of wildlife species. Annual grassland habitats and species composition depend largely on annual precipitation, fire regimes and grazing practices (Mayer and Laudenslayer 1988). Wildlife species use grassland habitat for foraging but require some other habitat characteristic such as rocky out crops, cliffs, caves or ponds in order to find shelter and cover for escapement. For more intact habitats, common species found breeding in this habitat include a variety of ground nesting avian species and small mammals (Mayer and Laudenslayer 1988).

Urban (URB): Urban areas are common and occur throughout the study area. Commercial buildings, parking lots, and roadways make up the majority of the habitat within the study area. This environment can present a mosaic of vegetation or result in a monoculture of ornamental plants. Within the study area, the urban environment has little to no ornamental landscaping, with native plant species incorporated into commercial building landscape designs to the extent feasible. Generalist and invasive wildlife species often occupy urban habitat such as common raven (*Corvus corax*), house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), scrub jays (*Aphelocoma californica*), rock dove (*Columba livia*) and brewers blackbirds (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) as well as small to medium mammals (e.g raccoon, opossum, striped skunk) (Mayer and Laudenslayer 1988).

Lacustrine (LUC): Lacustrine habitats include four (4) ponds that intersect the study area. Three (3) of the ponds are perennial, and one (1) pond is ephemeral. The three (3) perennial ponds are connected to Ragsdale Creek. Some of the ponds contained wetland fringes predominately composed of *Typha spp.*, and yellow nut-sedge (*Cyperus esculentus*). *Salix spp.* and oak species made up the majority of the vegetation along the banks of the ponds. Lacustrine environments provide habitat for aquatic and semi-aquatic species. Species observed in this habitat during the biological evaluation and CRLF habitat assessment included American bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*), sierran treefrog (*Pseudacris sierra*), and various species of waterfowl. Other species often found in this habitat type include western toad (*Anaxyrus boreas*) and western pond turtle (*Emys marmorata*). Other wildlife species that use lacustrine habitats for foraging include avian species such as great egrets (*Ardea alba*) and green heron (*Butorides virescens*).

Riverine (RIV): Ragsdale Creek is an intermittent stream that meanders in and out of the study area. Ragsdale Creek drains water from the foothills and roadway runoff into a series of ponds and eventually into Wolf Creek. The creek runs through a series of culverts and ponds along Combie Road in a dynamic fashion, with some sections choked with *Typha spp.* and other sections that contain gravel streambed and minimal wetland fringes. Creek sections choked with *Typha spp.* function more as a wetland than a creek. Several creek sections with a high density of *Typha spp.* appear to have been recently mowed, as observed during field surveys conducted for the project. Recent observations also (during field surveys) identified American bullfrogs and sierra tree frogs in areas where small isolated pools remained in the channel.

Critical Habitat and Sensitive Natural Communities: There are no Sensitive Natural Communities (SNC) identified in the CNDDB within the study area. Additionally, there is no critical habitat for federally listed species within the study area.

Native Trees: The Nevada County Land Use and Development Code require a project to identify any landmark trees (any oak 36 inches in dbh or greater) or landmark groves (hardwood groves with 33% or greater canopy cover) that could be impacted by the activities resulting from implementation of the proposed project. While the proposed project would not affect individual landmark trees, an area near Ragsdale Creek meeting the criteria for a landmark grove along with several Valley and blue oaks occur within the study area.

Special-Status Species: Special-status species that have potential to occur in the study area are those that fall into one of the following categories:

- Listed as threatened or endangered, or are proposed or candidates for listing under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA, 14 California Code of Regulations 670.5) or the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA, 50 Code of Federal Regulations 17.12);
- Listed as a SSC by CDFW or protected under the California Fish and Game Code (i.e. Fully Protected Species);
- Ranked by the CNPS as 1A, 1B, or 2;
- Protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA);
- Protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act; or
- Species that are otherwise protected under policies or ordinances at the local or regional level as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, §15380).

In preparing the BRA, Gallaway Associates staff conducted a botanical survey within the study area on July 23, 2015, with no special-status species or suitable habitat for special status species observed within the study area. Consequently, there will be no impacts to special-status botanical species.

In addition to the botanical surveys, Gallaway Associates staff also conducted a biological evaluation and CRLF habitat assessment on July 23, 2015. Special-status wildlife species with suitable habitat within the study area include western pond turtle, CRLF, migratory birds and raptors.

Would the proposed project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?		✓		
b. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?		✓		
c. Result in a substantial reduction in the extent, diversity, or quality of native vegetation, including brush removal for fire prevention and flood control improvements?		✓		
d. Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?		✓		
e. 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?		✓		
f Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				✓

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
g. Introduce any factors (light, fencing, noise, human presence and/or domestic animals), which could hinder the normal activities of wildlife?			✓	

Impact Discussion 4a: Habitats and special-status species that may be affected either directly or indirectly through implementation of the proposed project include CRLF, western pond turtle, and several migratory birds and raptors. Each of these potentially affected species is described below.

California Red-Legged Frog

The CRLF is listed as threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) and a SSC in the State of California. The CRLF is a large frog with prominent dorsolateral folds, pointed nose and can vary in pattern and coloration. They occur predominantly along California coastal drainages and in isolated populations in the northern Sierra Nevada mountain range. Suitable habitat for the CRLF include springs, semi-permanent to permanent ponds, ponded and back water portions of streams, marshes, lagoons, and artificial impoundments such as stock ponds or irrigation ponds. Ideal aquatic habitat has varying levels of water depth, a mixture of herbaceous, hydrophytic vegetation for cover, egg laying, and foraging, and sloping shorelines with little to no vegetation for basking and larvae development. CRLFs lay their eggs in early fall to late spring (November – May) and usually travel to different aquatic habitat for holding over the summer. Some of the current threats facing the CRLF are loss of habitat, urban development, agricultural influences (i.e. pesticides, herbicides and channelizing streams), disease, and exotic and introduced species (USFWS 2002).

Four (4) ponds intersect the study area. Three (3) of the ponds are perennial and one (1) is ephemeral. The density of the ponds in a small location creates a complex of suitable breeding and summer holding habitat for CRLF. The perennial ponds are suitable for breeding and summer holding habitat as they provide stagnant water year round and are located in a semi-rural area. The ephemeral pond is suitable for breeding as it contains stagnant waters during the breeding season and is within close proximity to perennial water bodies. Although there was suitable habitat present within the study area, there were no CRLF observations during the CRLF habitat assessment and the closest CRLF know occurrence is 11 miles from the study area. Furthermore, the closest occurrence is in a different watershed than the study area, with no hydrological connection to the known population. Consequently, it is unlikely that the population 11 miles east of the study area will have an effect on the potential presence of CRLFs within the study area. Based on the closest known population of CRLFs occurring approximately 11 miles from the study area in a separate watershed, there is no potential for CRLFs to occur within the study area. With no hydrological connection to the known population of CRLFs and no potential for CRLFs to occur within the study area, no impacts to CRLFs would occur. The proposed project (all three phases) would have ***no impact***.

Western Pond Turtle

The western pond turtle is a species of special concern (SSC) in California. Western pond turtles are drab darkish colored turtles with a yellowish to cream colored head. They range from the Washington Puget Sound to the California Sacramento Valley. Suitable aquatic habitats include slow moving to stagnant water, such as backwaters and ponded areas of rivers and creeks, semi-permanent to permanent ponds and irrigation ditches. Preferred habitats include features such as hydrophytic vegetation, for foraging and cover, and basking areas to regulate body temperature. In early spring through early summer, female turtles begin to move over land in search for nesting sites. Typically, eggs are laid on the banks of slow moving streams between March and August (Zeiner, D.C. etal. 1990). The female digs a hole approximately four inches deep and lays up to eleven eggs. Afterwards the eggs are covered with sediment and are left to incubate under the warm soils. Current threats facing the western pond turtle include loss of suitable aquatic habitats due to rapid changes in water regimes and removal of hydrophytic vegetation.

Three (3) perennial ponds intersect the study area. These ponds contain stagnant waters, basking areas, and wetland fringes. Although there were no observations of western pond turtles during the biological evaluation, there is a CNDDB occurrence within one (1) mile that is hydrologically connected to the study area. Based on the presence of suitable habitat within the study area and CNDDB records within a one (1) mile radius, there is high potential for western pond turtles to occur within the study area. Construction-related activities (including realignment of Ragsdale Creek) may uncover western pond turtle nests or disturb western pond turtle habitat. However, implementation of avoidance measures consistent with **Mitigation Measure BR-1** and the water quality best management practices included in **Mitigation Measure WQ-1** (see Section 9. Hydrology/Water Quality) would minimize or avoid potential impacts to western pond turtle. Consequently, this impact is ***less-than-significant*** with incorporation of **Mitigation Measures BR-1 and WQ-1**.

Migratory Birds and Raptors
Most bird species, especially those that are breeding, migrating, or of limited distribution, are protected under federal and state regulations. Under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), migratory bird species and their nests and eggs are protected from injury or death. Project related disturbances must be reduced or eliminated during the nesting cycle. California Fish and Game Code Subsections 3503, 3503.5, and 3800 prohibit the possession, incidental take, or needless destruction of birds, their nests, and eggs. California Fish and Game Code Section 3511 lists birds that are "fully protected" (those species that may not be taken or possessed except under specific permit). Suitable nest trees for a variety of migratory birds and raptors are located along the project corridor within the Blue Oak – Foothill Pine (BOP) habitat. Construction-related activities (including tree removal within the construction footprint and realignment of Ragsdale Creek) may disturb nesting birds and their nests. However, implementation of avoidance measures consistent with **Mitigation Measure BR-2** would minimize or avoid potential impacts to species protected by the MBTA and other raptors. Consequently, this impact is ***less-than-significant*** with incorporation of **Mitigation Measure BR-2**.

Impact Discussion 4b&4c: Construction-related activities would affect riparian vegetation through the realignment of Ragsdale Creek and through the removal of native vegetation (valley and blue oaks) located adjacent to the existing roadway.

Under Section 1602 of the California Fish and Game Code, the limits of CDFW's jurisdiction is defined as the top of the bank to the top of the opposite bank of a stream, channel, or basin, or to the outer limit of riparian vegetation located within or immediately adjacent to the river, stream, creek, pond, or lake or other impoundment, whichever is greater. The widening of Combie Road will require realignment of 410 feet of Ragsdale Creek approximately 13 feet to the south of the creek's existing location. Additionally, the extension and reconstruction of upstream and downstream culverts necessary to connect with the new realigned channel will also result in permanent impacts to riparian vegetation associated with Ragsdale Creek. Approximately 0.4 acres of riparian habitat would be impacted by equipment access, construction activities, water diversion, and creek realignment activities.

The Nevada County Land Use and Development Code requires a project to identify any landmark trees (any oak 36 inches in dbh or greater) or landmark groves (hardwood groves with 33% or greater canopy cover) that could be impacted by the proposed project. While this project is not expected to affect any landmark trees, an area meeting the County's definition of a landmark grove will be partially affected by the removal of native trees (identified in **Table 4**) within the riparian zone affected by the realignment of Ragsdale Creek. As part of the proposed project, the County will obtain a California Fish and Game Code 1600-1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA) from the CDFW. Implementation of all SAA permit requirements and sensitive habitat restoration measures (**Mitigation Measure BR-3**) including riparian/native vegetation habitat re-planting requirements (currently anticipated at a 3:1 ratio), will be required to mitigate impacts resulting from the realignment of Ragsdale creek. Additionally, the implementation of best management practices to protect wildlife (**Mitigation Measure BR-4**), erosion

prevention measures (**Mitigation Measures GEO-1**), and water quality best management practices provided under **Mitigation Measure WQ-1**, would serve to further minimize impacts to riparian vegetation and landmark trees. Consequently, this impact is ***less-than-significant*** with incorporation of **Mitigation Measures BR-3, BR-4, GEO-1**, and **WQ-1.**

Table 4
Native Trees within the Landmark Grove/Riparian Zone of Ragsdale Creek

Species (Common Name)	Species (Scientific Name)	Number Removed
Ponderosa Pine	*Pinus ponderosa*	36
Grey Pine	*Pinus sabiniana*	9
Cottonwood	*Populus fremontii*	3
Valley oak	*Quercus lobate*	3
Live oak	*Quercus wislizeni*	21
Goodding's Black Willow	*Saliz gooddingii*	6

Source: Biological Resource Assessment (Gallaway Associates, 2016), page 32, Table 5.

The Nevada County Land Use and Development Code also describes valley oaks and blue oaks as having a limited distribution within Nevada County and are considered to be a sensitive species. A tree survey was conducted within the study area and a number of these oak species were found to occur within the Combie road right-of-way. Consequently, road widening activities would permanently impact up to 17 blue oaks and 18 valley oaks (with a dbh greater than 4 inches). However, implementation of tree replacement activities (**Mitigation Measure BR-3**) would minimize impacts to sensitive tree species within the study area. Consequently, this impact is ***less-than-significant*** with incorporation of **Mitigation Measure BR-3.**

Impact Discussion 4d: Potential jurisdictional wetlands and other waters of the U.S. were delineated within the study area and include Ragsdale Creek (see **Figures 4a-4d**). Construction-related activities would affect these potential wetland and other waters of the U.S. though the realignment of Ragsdale Creek and through road widening activities where the wetland areas are located within the construction footprint. Overall, permanent impacts to these wetland features are summarized in **Table 5**. As part of the proposed project, the County will obtain a Clean Water Act Section 404 Nationwide Permit from the USACE; a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification Waiver from the Regional Water Quality Control Board; and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Implementation of all permit requirements and wetland restoration measures (**Mitigation Measure BR-5**) will be required to mitigate these impacts. Additionally, the implementation of best management practices to protect wildlife (**Mitigation Measure BR-4**), erosion prevention measures (**Mitigation Measures GEO-1**), and water quality best management practices provided under **Mitigation Measure WQ-1**, would further minimize impacts to wetland habitats. Consequently, this impact is ***less-than-significant*** with incorporation of **Mitigation Measures BR-4, BR-5, GEO-1**, and **WQ-1.**

Table 5
Impacts to Waters of the United States within the Study Area

Waters of the U.S.	Linear Feet	Acres
Wetland Features	N/A	0.005
Other Waters	831.4	0.119
Total	831.4	0.124

Source: Biological Resource Assessment (Gallaway Associates, 2016), page 18, Table 3.

Impact Discussion 4e: While portions of Ragsdale Creek are culverted, managed, and surrounded by developed uses (Higgins Marketplace area), less developed portions of the creek may serve as a migration corridor for aquatic (turtles) and terrestrial species within the local and surrounding area. The existing roadway parallels the creek within the study area and implementation of the proposed project would involve realignment of approximately 410 feet of the creek. While the proposed project would include the realignment and restoration of the creek (in addition to other disturbed areas), implementation of habitat restoration measures (**Mitigation Measures BR-3** and **BR-5**), erosion prevention measures (**Mitigation Measures GEO-1**), and water quality best management practices provided under **Mitigation Measure WQ-1**, would minimize impacts to local wildlife, and migratory corridors within the study area. Consequently, this impact is ***less-than-significant*** with incorporation of **Mitigation Measures BR-3, BR-5, GEO-1,** and **WQ-1.**

Impact Discussion 4f: A number of local policies and ordinances that protect biological resources exist in Nevada County under the County's General Plan and the Higgins Area Plan. As previously described, implementation of the proposed project is a circulation improvement identified under the Higgins Area Plan (see Circulation Policy 42) and is being developed consistent with the design policies contained in the area plan (including Higgins Area Plan Design Policies Policy 1 "Site Grading", Policy 4 "Minimize Impacts to Native Trees", Policy 6 "Erosion Control Plan", and Policy 8 "Ragsdale Creek Riparian Mitigation Plan"). Overall, the proposed project is consistent with the Higgins Area Plan. There would be ***no impact***.

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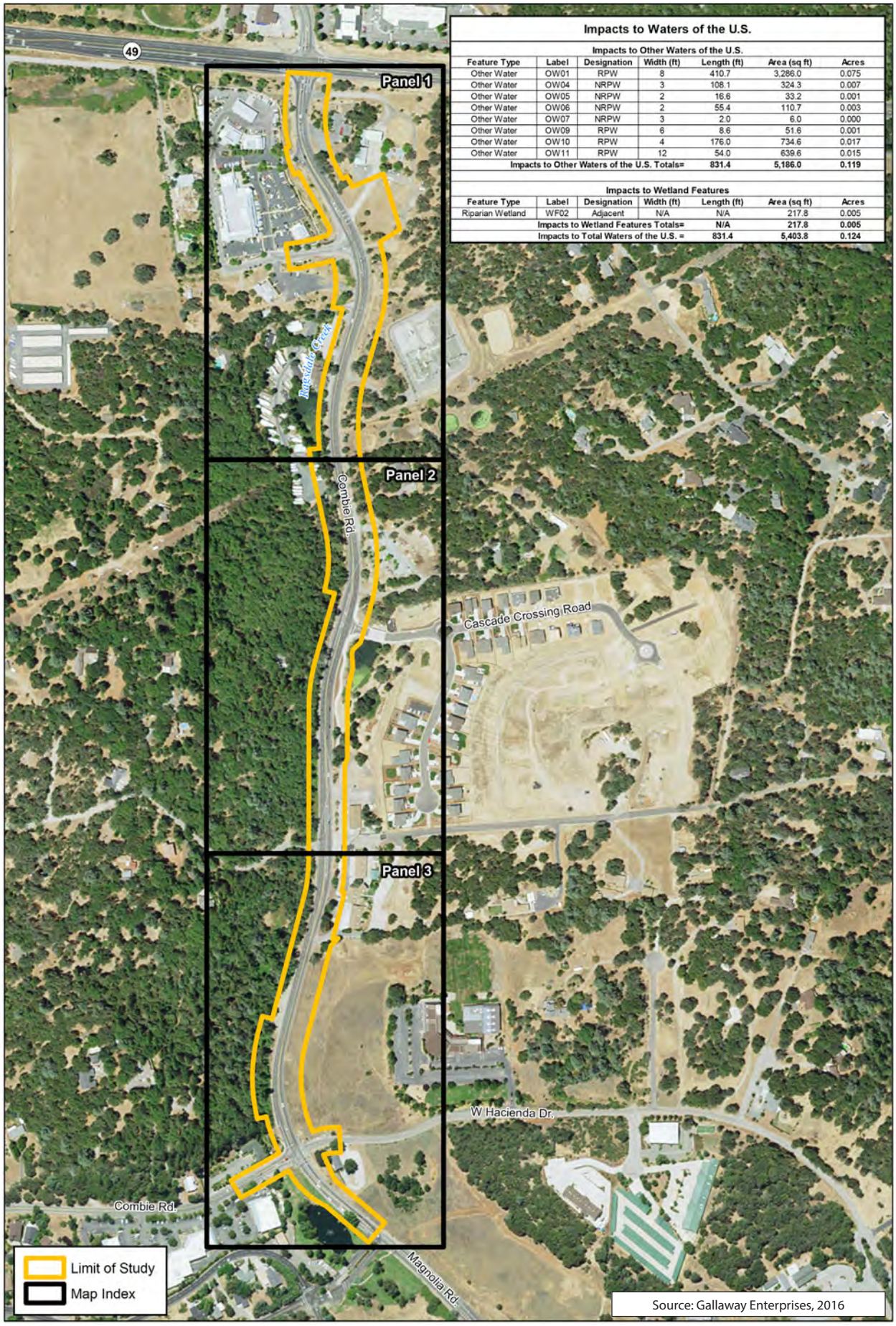
Figure 4a: Impacts to Other Waters of the U.S. and Wetland Features

COMBIE ROAD PROJECT



Impacts to Waters of the U.S.

Impacts to Other Waters of the U.S.

Feature Type	Label	Designation	Width (ft)	Length (ft)	Area (sq ft)	Acres
Other Water	OW01	RPW	8	410.7	3,286.0	0.075
Other Water	OW04	NRPW	3	108.1	324.3	0.007
Other Water	OW05	NRPW	2	16.6	33.2	0.001
Other Water	OW06	NRPW	2	55.4	110.7	0.003
Other Water	OW07	NRPW	3	2.0	6.0	0.000
Other Water	OW09	RPW	6	8.6	51.6	0.001
Other Water	OW10	RPW	4	176.0	734.6	0.017
Other Water	OW11	RPW	12	54.0	639.6	0.015
Impacts to Other Waters of the U.S. Totals=				**831.4**	**5,186.0**	**0.119**

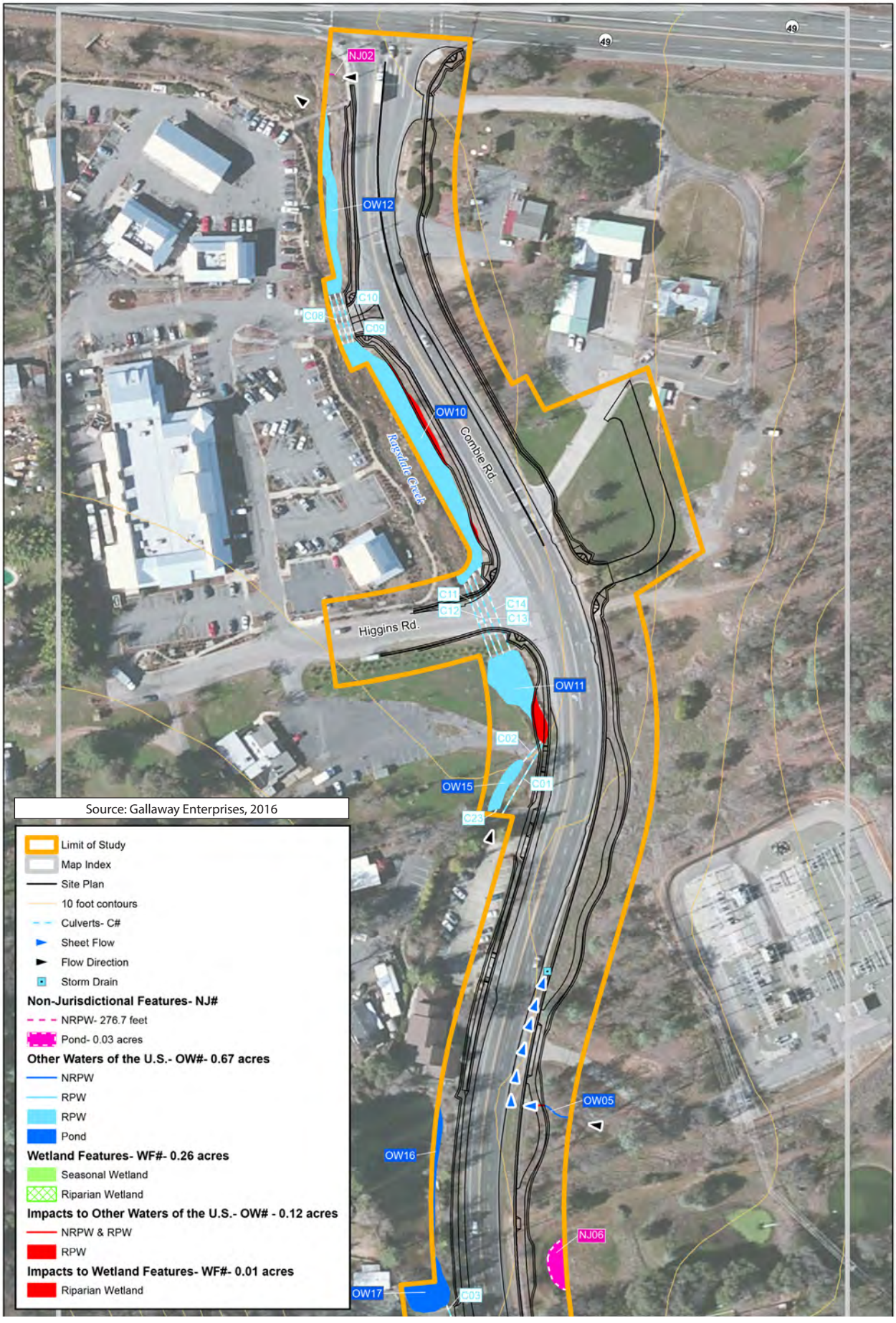
Impacts to Wetland Features

Feature Type	Label	Designation	Width (ft)	Length (ft)	Area (sq ft)	Acres
Riparian Wetland	WF02	Adjacent	N/A	N/A	217.8	0.005
Impacts to Wetland Features Totals=				**N/A**	**217.8**	**0.005**
Impacts to Total Waters of the U.S. =				**831.4**	**5,403.8**	**0.124**

QUINCY ENGINEERING

Figure 4b: Impacts to Other Waters of the U.S. and Wetland Features

COMBIE ROAD PROJECT



QUINCY ENGINEERING

Figure 4c: Impacts to Other Waters of the U.S. and Wetland Features

COMBIE ROAD PROJECT

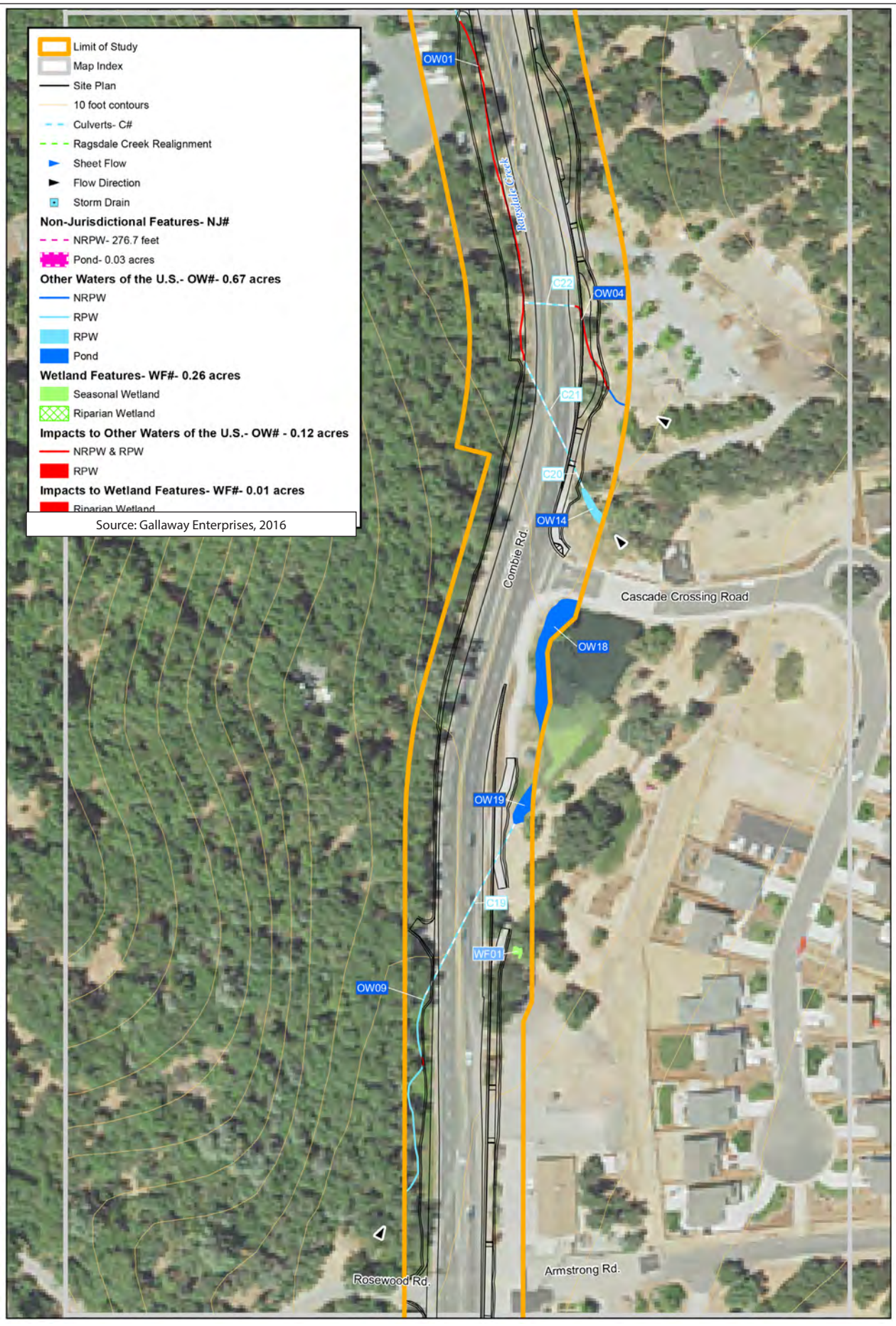
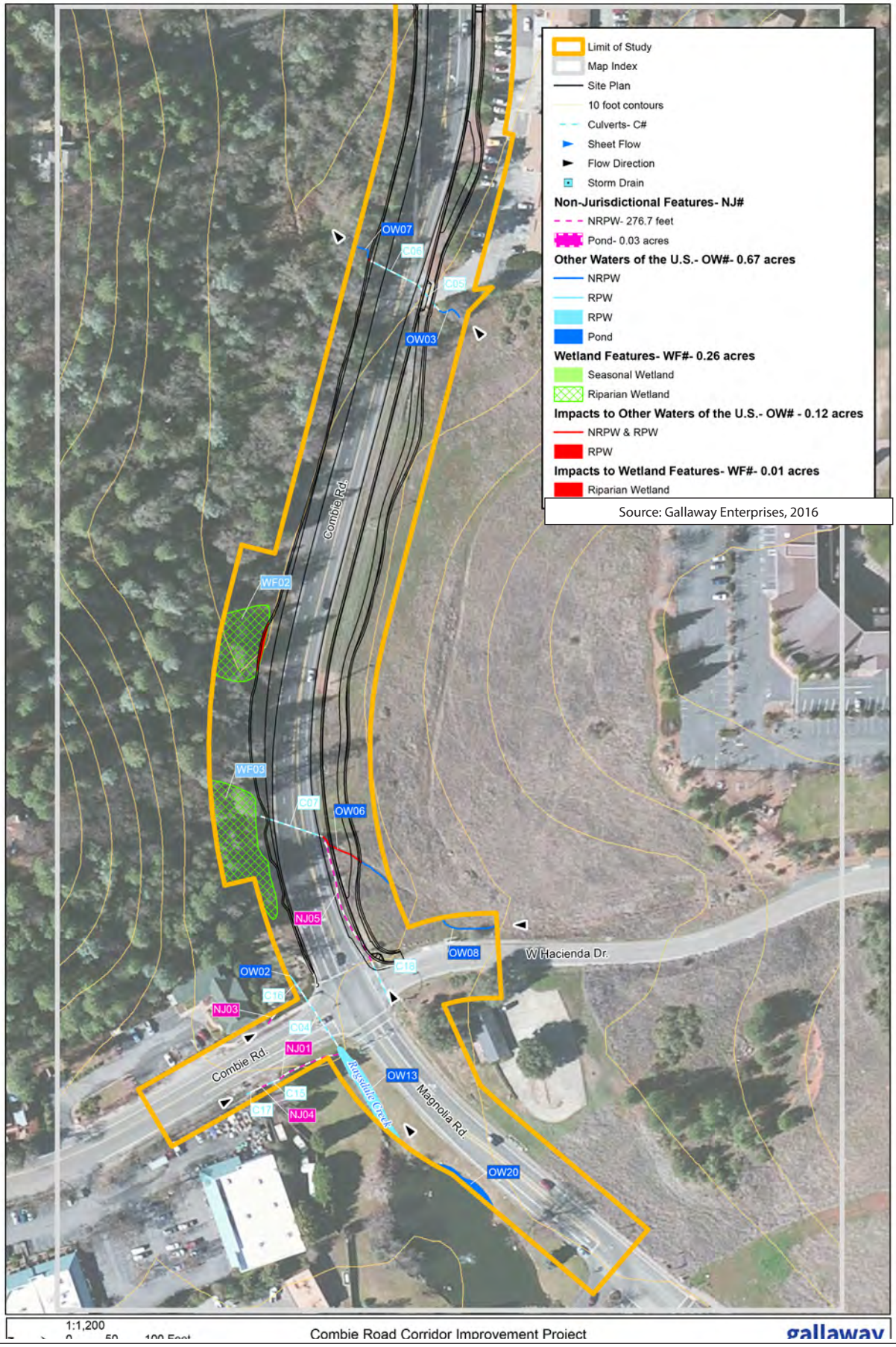


Figure 4d: Impacts to Other Waters of the U.S. and Wetland Features



Impact Discussion 4g: The proposed project will result in a temporary increase in noise and human activity during the construction phase of the project. The project area is located along an existing county road and construction activities would occur during daylight hours. Daytime noise impacts on wildlife from construction activities are not considered substantial because most activities would occur near the existing roadway. Therefore, this impact would be ***less-than-significant***.

Mitigation
To offset the potential biological resource impacts associated with the project construction activities, the following avoidance and minimization measures will be required:

Mitigation Measure BR-1: Implement Western Pond Turtle Avoidance Measures. To minimize impacts to western pond turtle, the following avoidance and minimization measures shall be implemented:

- A qualified biologist shall conduct pre-construction surveys and be onsite during all initial stream realignment or other ground disturbance activities near ponds to monitor for western pond turtle nests. If a western pond turtle nest is uncovered, the biologist shall stop work within a 25-foot radius (or other appropriate buffer as distinguished by the biologist) of the nest and contact CDFW for further guidance.
- Narrow screened fencing (no greater than 3-inch) or impassible barriers will be installed where the project intersects riparian habitat to prevent western pond turtle access to the construction site or encroachment by construction activities into those areas. Additionally, high visibility fencing shall also be established around ponds in areas where adjacent project activities will occur and where current fencing does not already occur. Establishment of fending shall occur prior to the start of project activities. Vegetation removal and construction sign establishment can occur without the establishment of fencing.
- If a western pond turtle is observed within the project site, personnel shall stop work within a 50-foot radius of the sighting and notify the biologist or resident engineer. Work shall not presume within the 50-foot radius buffer until the western pond turtle has left the project site on its own volition or after receiving further guidance by CDFW.
- If any incidental take of a western pond turtle or western pond turtle nest occurs during project activities, immediately notify the biologist and RE. The biologist or RE shall contact CDFW within 24 hours of the incidental take for further guidance.

Mitigation Measure BR-2: Implement Nesting Migratory Birds and Raptor Avoidance Measures. To minimize impacts to nesting migratory birds and raptors, the following avoidance and minimization measures shall be implemented:

- If possible, vegetation removal should occur outside the breeding season (February 15th – September 1st) for all bird species.
- If vegetation removal is to take place during the nesting season (February 15th –September 1st), a pre-construction nesting bird survey will be conducted within 7 days prior to vegetation removal. Within 2 weeks of the nesting bird survey, the construction contractor shall remove all vegetation cleared by the biologist.
- A minimum 100-foot no-disturbance buffer will be established around any active nest of protected song birds and a minimum 300-foot no-disturbance buffer will be established around any nesting raptor species. The contractor will immediately stop work in the nesting area until the appropriate buffer is established and is prohibited from conducting work that could disturb the

birds (as determined by the project biologist and in coordination with wildlife agencies) in the buffer area until a qualified biologist determines the young have fledged. Establishment of a reduced buffer can occur if determined appropriate by the project biologist and approved by CDFW.

- If active nesting is identified within the ¼-mile radius, coordination with CDFW will be required.

Mitigation Measure BR-3: Implement Sensitive Habitat Restoration Measures. To minimize impacts to riparian, landmark grove trees, and other native trees, the following habitat restoration measures shall be implemented:

- Riparian habitat (including landmark grove trees) impacts associated with the realignment of Ragsdale Creek, will be replaced at a minimum ratio of 3:1; however, the final ratio will be identified through consultation and coordination with resource agencies (including CDFW and USACE) during the permitting process. Replacement will be completed through a combination of onsite revegetation (as part of Ragsdale Creek realignment) and through the purchase of in-lieu fees or mitigation bank credits.
- For onsite riparian and oak tree replacement, a revegetation plan will be developed and will include a summary of impacted vegetation, a planting plan, mitigation ratios, and success criteria based on resource agency requirements. The revegetation plan will be developed in coordination with and approved by the CDFW and USACE prior to implementation.
- Invasive plant species in the construction zone will be removed and disposed of in a manner that minimizes the potential for their reestablishment. Invasive plants will be identified by a biologist prior to their removal and removal procedures will follow the recommendations of the California Invasive Plant Council. If herbicides are applied, they will be applied in compliance with applicable state and federal laws.

Mitigation Measure BR-4: Implement Best Management Practices to Minimize Impacts to Sensitive Habitats and Local Wildlife. To minimize impacts to sensitive habitats and local wildlife, the following best management practices shall be implemented:

- Prior to the start of construction activities, the project limits in proximity to jurisdictional waters (including portions of Ragsdale Creek within the study area) will be marked with high visibility ESA fencing or staking to ensure construction will not further encroach into waters. The project biologist throughout construction will periodically inspect the ESA to ensure sensitive locations remain undisturbed.
- Existing vegetation will be protected in place where feasible to provide an effective form of erosion and sediment control.
- Stabilizing materials will be applied to disturbed soil surfaces to prevent the movement of dust from exposed soil surfaces on construction sites resulting from wind, traffic, and grading activities.
- Prior to arrival at the project site and prior to leaving the project site, construction equipment that may contain invasive plants and/or seeds will be cleaned to reduce the spreading of noxious weeds.
- The contractor will not apply rodenticide or herbicide within the project area during construction.

- The contractor will dispose of all food-related trash in closed containers, and will remove it from the project area each day during construction. Construction personnel will not feed or attract wildlife to the project area.

Mitigation Measure BR-5: Implement Wetland Habitat Restoration Measures. To minimize impacts to wetland habitats, the following habitat restoration measures shall be implemented:

- Mitigation requirements for the fill of waters of the U.S. will be implemented through onsite restoration (associated with the realignment of Ragsdale Creek) and through participation with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Sacramento District California In-Lieu Fee Program. Approximately 0.075 acres of Ragsdale Creek will be realigned and mitigated onsite as part of the proposed project and the remaining impacts (0.049 acres) will be mitigated through purchase of mitigation credits from the Bear-Yuba Aquatic Resource Service Area (closest known mitigation area) at a minimum 1:1 ratio, with the final ratio to be determined by the USACE.
- For the realignment of Ragsdale Creek, both the revegetation plan and the final design plans will identify the realigned creek profile which will be designed to follow the existing creek profile to ensure the realigned section of creek maintains drainage flows and patterns and maintains, at a minimum, existing habitat values as documented in the revegetation plan. To maintain the existing geomorphology of the creek corridor, the fore slope of the realigned creek channel will be constructed at 2:1 and the back slope will be constructed at 1.5:1

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES

A Cultural Resources Technical Report (Dudek, 2016b) was prepared to document cultural resources within the project study area. This report was prepared in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior and California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) standards and guidelines, and in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The report includes a North Central Information Center (NCIC) records search, a Sacred Lands File search with the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), follow-up Native American information outreach, and an intensive pedestrian archaeological and built-environment survey of the project area. No cultural resources are within the project impact area or Area of Potential Effect (APE). Two newly recorded historic-era buildings (21515 Higgins Road and 10018 Combie Road) are within the historic architectural APE; however, no direct impacts to these resources (no historic properties affected) would occur by project activities. As part of the report, an evaluation of the resources recommended them to be not eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) under criteria 1-4 or the National Register of Historic Properties (NRHP) under criteria A-D. One previously recorded historic-era resource, the Higgins Corner Forest Fire Station (P-29-003126), is located within the architectural APE at 10106 Combie Road. However, this resource was previously evaluated as not significant and will not be directly impacted by the proposed project.

Existing Setting

The project vicinity was home to the Hill Nisenan (also known as the Southern Maidu) Native American people. Nisenan habitation areas were most commonly situated near primary drainages, along ridgelines with mild slopes, and other areas with southern facing exposures (Dudek, 2016b). Traditional village features included bedrock milling stations, granaries, conical house structures, as well as sweat and ceremonial houses. The Nisenan subsistence strategy was centered on fishing, hunting, and collecting vegetative resources. This group was highly mobile, with larger central habitation areas and surrounding satellite sites used during hunting excursions and for the pre-processing of collected vegetative resources such as acorns. During historic times, the discovery of gold caused an influx of miners into the Nevada

County area. As a result, many agricultural communities emerged in part to sustain the growing number of residents moving into the area and as a way for some of the miners to sustain financial stability.

Would the proposed project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines?				✓
b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines?				✓
c. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?				✓
d. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?		✓		
e. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource as defined in Public Resource Code 21074 (i.e. AB-52)?		✓		

Impact Discussion 5a-5c: As described above, a cultural resource investigation was conducted, which included an NCIC records search, NAHC and tribal consultation, and an intensive pedestrian survey of the project APE. Due to the highly disturbed nature of the area within the APE and the limited potential for surrounding sediments to support intact, developed cultural deposits, there appears to be a low potential for the proposed project to encounter unanticipated intact cultural features or deposits. Consequently, there will be no impacts to archaeological or built environment resources, including those defined in Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines. The proposed project (all three phases) would have ***no impact***.

Impact Discussion 5d: Disturbance to human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries is not anticipated because the project site is already highly disturbed from the existing roadway and surrounding development. In the unlikely event that human remains are discovered, work within the area will be stopped and the Nevada County Coroner will be notified immediately. Work will only resume after the investigation and in accordance with any requirements and procedures imposed by the Nevada County Coroner. In the event that the human remains most likely represent a Native American interment, the NAHC will be notified so that the most likely descendants can be identified and appropriate treatment can be implemented. Therefore, with the incorporation of these notification measures (as detailed in **Mitigation Measures CR-1** and **CR-2**), the proposed project would result in a ***less-than-significant*** impact with respect to disturbing any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.

Impact Discussion 5e: Tribal consultation under Public Resources Code 21074 was initiated as part of the project to determine potential impacts to tribal cultural resources (TRC). No TRCs were identified within the project area during the consultation period; however, as stipulated in **Mitigation Measures CR-1** and **CR-2**, should any previously unidentified cultural resources (including human remains) be discovered during construction of the project, construction work shall be immediately halted and appropriate steps taken to assess the properly treat any uncovered cultural resources. Therefore, with the incorporation of **Mitigation Measures CR-1** and **CR-2**, the proposed project would result in a ***less-than-significant*** impact to tribal resources.

Mitigation
To offset potentially adverse cultural or historical resources impacts associated with the proposed activities on site, the following avoidance and minimization measure will be required:

Mitigation Measure CR-1: Discovery of Cultural Resources during Ground-Disturbing Activities. The construction contractor shall cease work if prehistoric, or paleontological subsurface cultural resources are discovered during ground-disturbing activities. If cultural resources are discovered during ground-disturbing activities, all activity in the vicinity shall cease until an archaeologist or paleontologist who meets the requirements of the Secretary of the Interior's Qualification Standards evaluates the discovery. If the discovery is determined to be a significant resource, no further work near the resources shall take place until appropriate treatment is determined and implemented.

The need for archaeological and Native American monitoring during the remainder of the project will be re-evaluated by the archaeologist as part of the treatment determination, if deemed appropriate. The archaeologist shall consult with appropriate Naïve American representatives in determining appropriate treatment for unearthed cultural resources if the resources are prehistoric or Native American in nature. In considering any suggested mitigation proposed by the archaeologist in order to mitigate impacts to cultural resources, the County will determine whether avoidance is necessary and feasible in light of factors such as the nature of the find, project design, costs, and other considerations. If avoidance is infeasible, other appropriate measures (e.g., data recovery) will be initiated.

Mitigation Measure CR-2: Halt Work if Human Skeletal Remains are Identified during Construction. If human skeletal remains are uncovered during project construction, work must immediately halt and the Nevada County Coroner must be contacted to evaluate the remains; the procedures and protocols set forth in Section 15064.5 (e)(1) of the CEQA Guidelines must be followed. If the County Coroner determines that the remains are Native American, the project proponent will contact the NAHC, in accordance with Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, subdivision (c), and Public Resources Code 5097.98 (as amended by AB 2641). Per Public Resources Code 5097.98, the landowner shall ensure that the immediate vicinity, according to generally accepted cultural or archaeological standards or practices, where the Native American human remains are located, is not damaged or disturbed by further development activity until the landowner has discussed and conferred, as prescribed in this section (PRC 5097.98), with the most likely descendants regarding their recommendations, if applicable, taking into account the possibility of multiple human remains.

6. GEOLOGY / SOILS

Existing Setting
The soil in the study area is made primarily of the Boomer loam (5 to 15% slopes). These soil types are typically associated with a slow rate of water transmission and have a slight to high erosion potential depending on actual site conditions. (NRCS, 2015). The County's General Plan Background Report and Master Environmental Inventory show the project site as being in an area of low potential for landslide activity and does not map the site as being near a known earthquake fault (Nevada County 2014a).

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Result in exposure to or production of unstable earth conditions such as landslides, earthquakes, liquefaction, soil creep, mudslides, ground failure (including expansive, compressible, collapsible soils), or similar hazards?				✓
b. Result in disruption, displacement, compaction, or over-covering of the soil by cuts, fills, or extensive grading?		✓		

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				✓
d. 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?				✓
e. Result in any increase in wind or water erosion of soils, on or off the site?		✓		
f. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion, which may modify the channel of a river, or stream, or the bed any bay, inlet or lake?		✓		
g. Result in excessive grading on slopes of over 30 percent?		✓		

Impact Discussion 6a&6c: The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act was adopted in 1972 to prevent the construction of buildings in areas where active faults have surface expression. The study area is not within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone or within an area with known faults that cross through the study area (Nevada County, 2014a and California Department of Conservation, 2015). Generally, western Nevada County is located in the low intensity zone for earthquake severity. Due to the absence of any active faults onsite, the probability of damage due to surface rupture is low. In accordance with these site conditions, there would be ***no impact***.

Impact Discussion 6b&6g: The project construction activities would likely necessitate site grading within the project construction footprint to implement the roadway improvements, including fill slope grading, fill placement, and compaction. Implementation of erosion and soil stabilization measures consistent with **Mitigation Measure GEO-1** would minimize the disruption or displacement of soils within the project area. Consequently, this impact is ***less-than-significant*** with incorporation of **Mitigation Measure GEO-1**.

Impact Discussion 6d: The project site lacks septic tanks and alternative wastewater disposal systems. There would be ***no impact***.

Impact Discussion 6e-6f: The proposed project would occur within areas adjacent to disturbed or developed land uses subjected to wind and water erosion. Construction activities associated with the project would include disturbances to the ground surface from roadway widening, grading, and creek realignment. Removal of the existing riparian vegetation would increase the potential for slope erosion. These activities could potentially increase the amount of sediments entering Ragsdale Creek. Runoff during the winter season is of greater concern due to the potential erosion of unprotected or graded surfaces during rain events. Implementation of erosion and soil stabilization measures consistent with **Mitigation Measure GEO-1** would minimize the disruption or displacement of soils within the project area. Consequently, this impact is ***less-than-significant*** with incorporation of **Mitigation Measure GEO-1**.

Mitigation
To offset the potential for impacts to local soils, erosion, and water quality impacts resulting from project grading and other related construction activities, the following best management practices will be required:

Mitigation Measure GEO-1: Implement Erosion, Sediment, and Soil Stability Measures. Prior to issuance of final plans for all project-related grading including road construction and drainage improvements, said plans will incorporate, at a minimum, the following erosion, sediment, and soil stability control measures. Contract specifications will include the following best management practices, where applicable, to reduce erosion and ensure soil stability during construction:

- Prior to commencement of site work, fiber rolls and silt fencing will be installed down slope of all proposed areas of disturbance to reduce migration of sediment from the site. Fiber rolls on slopes are intended to reduce sediment discharge from disturbed areas, reduce the velocity of water flow, and aid in the overall revegetation of slopes. The fiber rolls and silt fence should remain in place until construction activity is complete and vegetation becomes established.
- All soil exposed in permanent slope faces should be hydroseeded or hand seeded/strawed with an appropriate seed mixture compatible with the soil and climate conditions of the site as recommended by the local Resource Conservation District.
- Following seeding, jute netting or erosion control blankets should be placed and secured over the slopes steeper than 2:1, horizontal:vertical (H:V).

7. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

An Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Assessment Report (Dudek, 2016a) was prepared to identify the study area's existing air quality conditions and identify the proposed project's emission impacts. The report provides much of the information used in the preparation of this section and includes emission estimates using the CALEEMod air quality emission modeling software.

Existing Setting
Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are those gases that trap heat in the atmosphere. GHGs are emitted by natural and industrial processes, and the accumulation of GHGs in the atmosphere regulates the earth's temperature. GHGs that are regulated by the State and/or Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), sulfur hexafluoride (SF6) and nitrous oxide (NO2). CO2 emissions are largely from fossil fuel combustion. In California, approximately 43 percent of the CO2 emissions come from cars and trucks. Electricity generation is another important source of CO2 emissions. Agriculture is a major source of both methane and NO2, with additional methane coming primarily from landfills. Most HFC emissions come from refrigerants, solvents, propellant agents and industrial processes, and persist in the atmosphere for longer periods of time and have greater effects at lower concentrations compared to CO2. The adverse impacts of global warming include impacts to air quality, water supply, ecosystem balance, sea level rise (flooding), fire hazards, and an increase in health related problems.

Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32), the California Global Warming Solutions Act, was adopted in September 2006 and requires that statewide GHG emissions be reduced to 1990 levels by the year 2020. This reduction will be accomplished through regulations to reduce emissions from stationary sources and from vehicles. The California Air Resources Board (ARB) is the State agency responsible for developing rules and regulations to cap and reduce GHG emissions. In addition, the Governor signed Senate Bill 97 in 2007 directing the California Office of Planning and Research to develop guidelines for the analysis and mitigation of the effects of greenhouse gas emissions and mandating that GHG impacts be evaluated in CEQA documents. CEQA Guidelines Amendments for GHG Emissions were adopted by OPR on December 30, 2009. The

NSAQMD has prepared a guidance document, *Guidelines for Assessing Air Quality Impacts of Land Use Projects.* Therefore, in order to satisfy CEQA requirements, projects should make a reasonable attempt to quantify, minimize and mitigate GHG emissions as feasible.

Would the proposed project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?			✓	
b. Conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?			✓	

Impact Discussion 7a&7b: The proposed project is anticipated to result in temporary increases in GHG emissions due to the use of construction equipment. Equipment anticipated for construction include excavators, concrete trucks, transportation trucks, and backhoes. Short-term construction GHG emissions associated with project construction were estimated using CalEEMod, which resulted in project-related emissions at approximately 41 MT CO2E (metric tons) over the entire construction period for each phase. Implementation of Phase 1 of the project would result in even lower emissions given the limited number of equipment that would be required for utility undergrounding activities. In regards to operations, the proposed road improvement project would not result in increased GHG emissions since it would not directly generate an additional on-road motor vehicle trips. For comparison, the project would be well below GHG emission thresholds considered by several California air districts (including the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District). Overall, total emissions from project construction would be below the applied threshold of 1,100 metric tons of CO2E per year screening GHG threshold. As GHG emissions would be short-term and minimal compared to other applied thresholds, this impact would be ***less-than-significant***. Additionally, implementation of the emission reducing measures provided in **Mitigation Measure AQ-2** would further ensure this impact remains ***less-than-significant.***

8. HAZARDS / HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Existing Setting

The property is not within or adjacent to any hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 (SWRCB, 2016). A review of the GeoTracker Database listed identical information provided in Department of Toxic Substances, EnviroStor Database (SWRCB, 2016). The study area is designated as a "Moderate Fire Hazard Area" for wildland fire; however, it is bordered on all sides by areas identified as "High Fire Hazard Areas" by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDFFP) or Calfire (CDFFP, 2016).

Would the proposed project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
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 accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?			✓	

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?			✓	
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, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?				✓
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 for people residing or working in the project area?				✓
f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				✓
g. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				✓
h. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?				✓

Impact Discussion 8a&8b: Construction-related activities resulting from the proposed project would involve the use, transportation, storage, and disposal of gasoline, oil, diesel fuel, solvents, paints, and other hazardous materials required for construction. Any transportation of hazardous materials will comply with all Caltrans, California Environmental Protection Agency, California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), California Highway Patrol, and California State Fire Marshal regulations. In addition, handling and disposal of hazardous materials would be in accordance with all other federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Additionally, the construction contractor would implement typical water quality and soil erosion best management practices, which would include the following provisions.

- Perform clearing and earth moving activities during dry weather.
- Limit construction access routes and stabilize designated access points.
- No cleaning, fueling, or maintaining vehicles onsite, except in a designated area where washwater is contained and treated.
- Properly store, handle, and dispose of construction materials and wastes to prevent contact with stormwater.
- Contractor will train and provide instruction to all employees and subcontractors on construction BMPs.
- Control and prevent the discharge of all potential pollutants, including pavement cutting wastes, paints, concrete, petroleum products, chemicals, washwater or sediments, and non-stormwater discharges to storm drains and watercourses.

Compliance with federal, state, and local laws and regulation and implementation of water quality and soil erosion BMPs would ensure impacts to the public and the environment are ***less-than-significant***.

Impact Discussion 8c: The eastern boundary of the project site is located roughly one-quarter mile from the Bear River High School. Compliance with federal, state, and local laws and regulation would minimize

impacts resulting from the use of hazardous materials and substances associated with standard construction practices at the project site. Compliance with these regulations along with the temporary nature of the construction period, would further ensure impacts to the school and students are ***less-than-significant***.

Impact Discussion 8d: The proposed project site is not included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, will not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment. There will be ***no impact***.

Impact Discussion 8e-8f: The proposed project would not result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area as the project is not within the vicinity of an airport land use plan or a private airstrip. There will be ***no impact***.

Impact Discussion 8g: Implementation of the proposed roadway improvements would ensure adequate levels of roadway service are maintained along Combie Road, which would allow for the continued safe access of the study area by the Higgins Area Fire Station, other emergency response vehicles, and the implementation of evacuation plans. Consequently, the proposed project would not impair or physically interfere with the County's adopted emergency response and evacuation plans. There will be ***no impact***. Additionally, implementation of the circulation measures included under **Mitigation Measure TC-1** (see Section 16. Transportation/Circulation) would minimize short-term construction-related roadway/access conflicts resulting from the project.

Impact Discussion 8h: The study area is designated as a "Moderate Fire Hazard Area" by the CDFFP. Operation of the improved roadway is not associated with a use that would significantly increase the risk from wildland fires to surrounding urbanized areas or residences. Additionally, during all construction phases of the project, open burning would be prohibited on site and the handling and disposal of all hazardous materials (including flammable substances or materials) would be conducted in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations (including those mandated by the California State Fire Marshal regulations). Implementation of these standard construction measures would reduce the risk of fire during construction. There will be ***no impact***.

9. HYDROLOGY / WATER QUALITY

Existing Setting
The project site is located in the Upper Bear Hydrologic Unit (#18020126) (USGS, 2016). The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) does not indicate Ragsdale Creek as a water feature of concern during a flood event (FEMA, 2016).

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?		✓		
b. Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level, which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?				✓
c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?		✓		

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d. Create or contribute to runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?			✓	
e. Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?		✓		
f. Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?				✓
g. Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures that would impede or redirect flood flows?				✓
h. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?				✓
i. Create inundation by mudflow?				✓

Impact Discussion 9a&9e: The project site is a mix of impervious surfaces (Combie Road) and undeveloped land (existing roadway shoulders and surround area). Addition of the roadway improvements would have the potential to increase stormwater runoff from the project site. Because the proposed project will disturb more than 1 acre of land, the project would be required to obtain a State Water Resources Control Board General Construction permit that would require the County to implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). This SWPPP would contain BMPs to protect stormwater runoff that may affect water quality. Project compliance with the SWPPP and Nevada County regulations would avoid degradation of water quality. In addition to these requirements, the implementation erosion prevention measures (**Mitigation Measures GEO-1**) and water quality best management practices provided under **Mitigation Measure WQ-1**, would minimize impacts to water quality. Consequently, this impact is ***less-than-significant*** with incorporation of Mitigation Measures **GEO-1** and **WQ-1.**

Impact Discussion 9b: The proposed project would not directly or indirectly result in the construction of uses that would utilize groundwater supplies. There would be ***no impact***.

Impact Discussion 9c&9d: Implementation of the proposed project would have the potential to increase stormwater runoff from the project site. However, all stormwater would be captured into the existing stormwater drainage system that will receive minor upgrades to accommodate the realignment of Ragsdale Creek. As previously described above in Section 4. "Biological Resources", the widening of Combie Road will infill roughly 410 feet of Ragsdale Creek. Consequently, the affected portion of the creek will require realignment approximately 13 feet to the south of the creek's existing location. To maintain the existing hydrology of the creek corridor, the fore slope of the realigned creek channel requires construction at 2 to 1 and the back slope at 1.5 to 1 (as more fully described under the project description and **Mitigation Measure BR-5)**. Creek realignment will require extension of the upstream culvert approximately 25 feet south to the new creek connection point. Similarly, the downstream reinforced concrete box will require reconstruction to receive the new creek alignment. The newly realigned creek profile will follow the existing creek profile to ensure no alterations to existing drainage patterns. As part of the proposed project, the County will obtain a California Fish and Game Code 1600-1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA) from the CDFW. As part of the SAA, a Restoration Plan will be submitted to the CDFW detailing re-planting requirements for the loss of riparian and landmark grove impacts (currently anticipated at a 3:1 ratio). While the proposed project includes plans to realign Ragsdale Creek in a manner that minimizes impacts to habitat and ensures continued functionality as a local drainage, implementation of wetland habitat restoration measures (**Mitigation Measures BR-3** and **BR-5**), erosion prevention measures (**Mitigation Measure GEO-1**), and water quality best management practices provided under **Mitigation Measure WQ-1**, would ensure existing drainage patterns continue to be maintained. Consequently, this

impact is ***less-than-significant*** with incorporation of **Mitigation Measures BR-3, BR-5, GEO-1,** and **WQ-1.**

Impact Discussion 9f-i: The FEMA FIRM does not indicate Ragsdale Creek as a water feature of concern during a flood event. The proposed project would not result in direct or indirect impacts to a levee or dam, and would not substantially contribute to storm water flows near a floodplain. There would be ***no impact***.

Mitigation
To offset the potential for impacts related to alteration of drainage features and storm water quality from operational activities, the following measures will be required:

Mitigation Measure WQ-1: Implement Water Quality Best Management Practices. The proposed project has been designed to minimize all impacts to the maximum extent practicable with the use of BMPs and implementation of regulatory permit conditions. The following BMPs will be incorporated into the project design and construction specifications to minimize impacts on the environment including the release of pollutants (oils, fuels, etc.).

- Measures would be implemented during land-disturbing activities to reduce erosion and sedimentation. These measures may include mulches, soil binders and erosion control blankets, silt fencing, fiber rolls, temporary berms, sediment desilting basins, sediment traps, and check dams.
- Existing vegetation would be protected where feasible to reduce erosion and sedimentation. Vegetation would be preserved by installing temporary fencing, or other protection devices, around areas to be protected.
- Exposed soils would be covered by loose bulk materials or other materials to reduce erosion and runoff during rainfall events.
- Exposed soils would be stabilized, through watering or other measures, to prevent the movement of dust at the project site caused by wind and construction activities such as traffic and grading activities.
- All construction roadway areas would be properly protected to prevent excess erosion, sedimentation, and water pollution.
- All vehicle and equipment maintenance procedures would be conducted off-site. In the event of an emergency, maintenance would occur away from Ragsdale Creek.
- All concrete curing activities would be conducted to minimize spray drift and prevent curing compounds from entering the waterway directly or indirectly.
- All construction materials, vehicles, stockpiles, and staging areas would be situated outside of the stream channel as feasible. All stockpiles would be covered, as feasible.
- Energy dissipaters and erosion control pads would be provided at the bottom of slope drains. Other flow conveyance control mechanisms may include earth dikes, swales, or ditches. Stream bank stabilization measures would also be implemented.
- All erosion control measures and storm water control measures would be properly maintained until the site has returned to a pre-construction state.
- All disturbed areas would be restored to pre-construction contours and revegetated, either through hydroseeding or other means, with native or approved non-invasive exotic species.
- All construction materials would be hauled off-site after completion of construction.

10. LAND USE / PLANNING

Existing Setting

As previously described, the study area includes a range of developed and open space uses. Developed uses dominate the western end of the study area and include the Higgins Marketplace area, a fire station and a PG&E substation located along the northern boundary. Travelling eastward along Combie Road, surrounding land uses along both sides of the roadway transition to smaller scale commercial uses, interspersed with a mobilehome park, low density rural residential, and open space land uses. Ragsdale Creek meanders along the southern edge of Combie Road, with a short section of the creek crossing over to the north side of the road near Cascade Crossing. Oak woodlands and a variety of other open space areas are interspersed between the developed areas.

Land use designations adjacent to Combie Road are zoned Medium Density Residential, Public, and Commercial. Other nearby zoning includes Community Commercial and Residential Agriculture. General Plan designations include Planned Development, Public, and Urban Medium Density.

Would the proposed project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a. Result in structures and/or land uses incompatible with existing land uses?				✓
b. The induction of growth or concentration of population?				✓
c. The extension of sewer trunk lines or access roads with capacity to serve new development beyond this proposed project?				✓
d. Result in the loss of open space?				✓
e. Substantially alter the present or planned land use of an area, or conflict with a general plan designation or zoning district?				✓
f. Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?				✓
g. Disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of an established community, including a low-income or minority community?				✓

Impact Discussion 10a, 10e, and 10g: The proposed project involves a variety of roadway improvements that area compatible with existing land uses and consistent with the Higgins Area Plan. Additionally, the project would not disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of any established community. There would be ***no impact***.

Impact Discussion 10b-10c: Implementation of the proposed project is consistent with the Higgins Area Plan and growth-inducing impacts are not anticipated by the project. The project does not contain new water lines or additional access roads to attribute to future development. There would be ***no impact***.

Impact Discussion 10d: The project site is not designated as open space; however, small amounts of undisturbed land adjacent to the existing roadway would be converted to developed uses. Please see Section 4 "Biological Resources" for a discussion of these impacts and resultant mitigation.

11. MINERAL RESOURCES

Existing Setting
The project area is not mapped within a Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ), or area of known valuable mineral deposits.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				✓
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?				✓

Impact Discussion 11 a-b: Because the proposed project is not mapped within a known mineral resource area and would not change existing land uses on the project site. There would be ***no impact***.

12. NOISE

An Acoustical (Noise) Report (Dudek, 2015) was prepared to evaluate the existing and future traffic noise levels associated with implementation of the proposed roadway improvement project. The study documents the existing noise levels of the study area and is based on noise measurements completed using a calibrated Larson-Davis Laboratories Model 820 (S.N. 1534) integrating sound level meter and modeling. Future noise levels were calculated based on the proposed project's roadway design and traffic volume conditions.

Sound (noise) levels are measured in decibels (dB). Community sound levels are typically measured in terms of the A-weighted sound level (dBA). The A-weighted scale approximates the frequency response of the average ear when listening to most ordinary everyday sounds. When people make relative judgments of the loudness or annoyance of a sound, their judgments correlate well with the A-weighted scale sound levels of those sounds. All sound levels discussed in this report are A-weighted.

A noise descriptor commonly used for environmental noise is the Noise Level Day/Night (LDN). LDN is an average A-weighted sound level during a 24-hour period, after the addition of ten decibels to the average sound levels at night (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.). The ten decibel penalties are applied to account for the increased noise sensitivity during the nighttime hours.

Existing Setting
The project study area is within the Higgins planning area, a developing area of rural Nevada County. The principal noise source controlling the noise environment within the project vicinity is Combie Road, with existing traffic volumes at approximately 14,410 average daily trips (ADT) on Combie Road west of Hacienda Road (Fehr & Peers, June 2015). Existing noise sensitive land uses located adjacent to Combie Road include mobile homes, single family residences (near Cascade Crossing Road), and a church (near Armstrong Road). Existing noise levels at these locations range from approximately 47 to 66 dBA LDN at outdoor use areas associated with these noise sensitive land uses.

Nevada County has established noise guidelines in the Noise Element of the County's General Plan. These guidelines identify compatible exterior noise levels for various land use types (Directive Policy 9.1), with the maximum allowable noise exposure varying and depending on the land use. New single family residential, schools, and churches are subject to a "normally acceptable" maximum exterior noise level of

60 dBA LDN; a "Conditionally Acceptable" maximum exposure level of 65 LDN is identified for new residences if a detailed noise evaluation is prepared which demonstrates compliance with the interior noise criterion can be achieved.

The County of Nevada has not adopted specific road widening significance thresholds for existing noise sensitive land uses. For the purposes of this study, the noise impact is significant if the traffic noise level increase exceeds three dBA LDN and either elevates noise levels above the County's noise criteria limits or exceeds a three-dBA increase above an already noisy existing condition (i.e., 60 dBA LDN for residential development). A noise level change of three dBA is generally considered to be a just perceptible change in environmental noise. The comparison of future without project conditions to future with project conditions is the basis for determination of significance.

The Nevada County Noise Element (Directive Policy 9.1[f]) states that noise standards identified as part of Policy 9.1 shall not apply to activities associated with construction of a project. The Nevada County Zoning Ordinance (Sec. L-II 4.1.7 Noise, D [8]) also specifically states that noise standards are not applicable to construction projects.

Would the proposed project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a. Expose persons to or generate noise levels in excess of the County's adopted standards established in the General Plan and Land Use and Development Code?		✓		
b. Expose persons to or generate excessive ground borne vibration or ground borne noise levels (e.g., blasting)?				✓
c. Result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?			✓	
d. Result in a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?		✓		
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 expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				✓
f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				✓

Impact Discussion 12a, 12c, & 12d: Future traffic volumes for Combie Road are projected to be approximately 16,350 ADT along Combie Road west of Hacienda Road (Fehr & Peers, 2015). Because these traffic volumes are consistent with local planning documents, they would occur with or without the project. While implementation of the proposed project would increase the number of travel lanes along Combie Road, with some travel lanes shifting closer to noise-sensitive land uses located along the corridor, overall traffic volumes per travel lane could decrease (due to the additional travel lanes). The resultant future traffic noise levels would range from approximately 48 to 67 dBA LDN at the same outdoor use areas for the sensitive receptor locations described above. Overall, this increase represents a minor or less than one dBA increase at these locations compared to a no project LDN. The noise level at the Combie Road Mobile Home Village residences would continue to exceed a LDN of 60 dBA. Consequently, operation-related noise impacts are ***less-than-significant*** with no mitigation required.

Average construction-related noise resulting from the project could reach exterior noise levels up to 89 dBA LEQ at the Combie Lake Mobile Home Village (the nearest mobile home is approximately 55 feet from the edge of pavement), which would be noticeable and may at times disrupt daytime activities inside the mobile home residences. Other sensitive receptors (church and single family residences) are at greater distances from the construction site and would therefore be exposed to lower construction noise levels. Overall, the Nevada County Noise Ordinance exempts construction noise, which is considered short-term and temporary in nature. However, as construction-related noise can result in short term elevated noise conditions to sensitive receptors within the study area, the implementation of limitations on evening construction activities provided under **Mitigation Measure N-1**, would minimize construction-related noise impacts to sensitive receptors. Consequently, this impact is ***less-than-significant*** with incorporation of **Mitigation Measure N-1.**

Impact Discussion 12b: The proposed project would not result in blasting or other activities that could cause substantial vibration impacts. There would be ***no impact***.

Impact Discussion 12e&12f: The project is not located in or within 2 miles of an airport boundary or within the immediate vicinity of a private airport; therefore, ***no impact*** would arise from the exposure of people residing or working within the project area to excessive noise levels from airport activities.

Mitigation
To offset the potential for construction-related noise impacts to sensitive receptors, the following noise reducing measure will be required:

Mitigation Measure N-1: Limit Construction Work Hours. During the construction period, the construction contractor shall ensure that construction work hours will be limited from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM.

13. POPULATION / HOUSING

Existing Setting
As previously described, the study area includes a range of developed and open space uses. Developed uses dominate the western end of the study area and include the Higgins Marketplace area, a fire station and a PG&E substation located along the northern boundary. Travelling eastward along Combie Road, surrounding land uses along both sides of the roadway transition to smaller scale commercial uses, interspersed with a mobilehome park, low density rural residential, and open space land uses. Land use designations adjacent to Combie Road are zoned Medium Density Residential, Public, and Commercial. Other nearby zoning includes Community Commercial and Residential Agriculture. General Plan designations include Planned Development, Public, and Urban Medium Density.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Induce substantial 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)?				✓
b. Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				✓
c. Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				✓

Impact Discussion 13a-13c: Implementation of the proposed project is consistent with the Higgins Area Plan and does not contain any new water lines or additional access roads to attribute to future development. The project would not result in population growth or the displacement of housing or people. Therefore, the proposed project would have ***no impact*** related to these issues.

14. PUBLIC SERVICES

Existing Setting
The Higgins Area Fire Station is located along the western boundary of the study area. No other public services are located within the study area.

Would the proposed project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of or 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 following the public services:				
1. Fire protection?				✓
2. Police protection?				✓
3. Schools?				✓
4. Parks?				✓
5. Other public services or facilities?				✓

Impact Discussion 14a1-5: Implementation of the proposed roadway improvements is consistent with the goals of the Higgins Area Plan. Implementation of the proposed project is not associated with uses that would generate substantial population growth within the area and would, therefore, not substantially increase the demand for existing public services levels, negatively affect service response times, or result in the physical deterioration of existing public services facilities. Consequently, there would be ***no impact***. Additionally, implementation of the circulation measures included under **Mitigation Measure TC-1** (see Section 16 "Transportation and Circulation", below) would ensure roadway/access conflicts are minimized at the existing Higgins Area Fire Station during the short-term construction period.

15. RECREATION

Existing Setting
Recreational facilities located within or in close proximity to the study area include a neighborhood park within the Cascade Crossing housing development and a planned multi-use trail along Combie Road. A continuous multi-use (pedestrian/bicycle) path consistent with the Higgins Area Plan is planned for the north side of Combie and Magnolia Roads from SR 49 to the Magnolia Intermediate School on Kingston Lane. With small segments of the trail previously completed (Magnolia Road from Lakeshore to Kingston Lane and a short segment near Cascade Crossing Road), the proposed project includes construction of the remaining segments to complete the trail.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				✓
b. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?				✓
c. Conflict with established recreation uses of the area, including biking, equestrian and/or hiking trails?				✓

Impact Discussion 15a-15c: Implementation of the proposed roadway improvements and multi-use trail are consistent with the goals of the Higgins Area Plan. Implementation of the proposed project is not associated with uses that would generate substantial population growth within the area and would, therefore, not substantially increase the demand for existing neighborhood or regional parks, or result in the physical deterioration of existing recreational facilities. In fact, implementation of the multi-use trail component of the project would increase the opportunity for recreational trail uses within the study area and provide linkages for residential uses to access surrounding educational facilities (including the Bear Valley High School) or the Higgins Marketplace area using a variety of transportation modes. Consequently, there would be ***no impact***.

16. TRANSPORTATION / CIRCULATION

Existing Setting

The study area encompasses Combie Road from its intersection with SR 49 to the Combie/Magnolia Road intersection. As shown in **Figure 2** (see above), a number of local streets intersect Combie Road and provide direct access to surrounding commercial businesses, neighborhoods, churches, and surrounding rural areas.

The County's Transit Services Division is responsible for the administration and delivery of fixed route public transit and paratransit services in western Nevada County. Local public transit service within the study is provided by the Gold Country Stage Route 5 line, which serves the Combie Road corridor from SR 49 to the Lake Center on Combie Road, south of Magnolia Road. In addition to local corridor service, this route provides regional access via SR49 to Grass Valley and Auburn.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Result in an increase in traffic that is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume-to-capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?		✓		
b. Result in a need for private or public road maintenance, or new roads?		✓		
c. Result in effects on existing parking facilities, or demand for new parking?		✓		
d. Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., a sharp curve or dangerous intersection) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?				✓

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e. Result in a substantial impact upon existing transit systems (e.g., bus service) or alteration of present patterns of circulation or movement of people and/or goods?			✓	
f. Result in an alteration of waterborne, rail, or air traffic patterns or levels?				✓
g. Result in an increase in traffic hazards to motor vehicles, bicyclists, or pedestrians, including short-term construction and long-term operational traffic?				✓
h. Result in inadequate: Sight distance? Ingress/egress? General road capacity? Emergency access (4290 Standard)?				✓
i. Result in inconsistency with adopted policies supporting the provision of transit alternatives to automobile transportation on an equitable basis with roadway improvements, e.g. clustered development, commuter-oriented transit, bus turnouts, sidewalks, paths, and bicycle racks?				✓

Impact Discussion 16a-16c: Unlike a new residential or commercial development that generates both construction (at time of project development) and operation-related (day-to-day use of facility or residence) traffic, vehicle trips generated by the project would be temporary and largely resulting from the construction phase of the project. These temporary workers (estimated at 20 to 25 during peak construction times) are assumed to come from the existing labor pool of residents in the surrounding area and would not generate a large number of vehicle trips that would degrade peak hour roadway/intersection level of service. Additionally, once the construction phase is complete, project-related vehicle traffic would cease other than existing County roadway maintenance workers. Project-related traffic would also include a small number of equipment/material deliveries (by heavy trucks) to designated construction laydown areas throughout the study area. During the construction period, access to driveways and roadways intersecting Combie Road within the study area (see **Figures A1-A7** in **Appendix A**) may be temporarily restricted for short periods of time as equipment/trucks move within the construction area or improvements occur near affected roadway or driveway access points. While these impacts are considered short-term and temporary in nature, implementation of the circulation measures included under **Mitigation Measure TC-1** would ensure roadway/access conflicts are minimized by maintaining constant access for the Higgins Area Fire Station, other emergency vehicles travelling along Combie Road, private driveways, and local businesses within the study area. Consequently, this impact is ***less-than-significant*** with incorporation of **Mitigation Measure TC-1**.

Impact Discussion 16d, 16e, 16g, and 16i: Design features would comply with County development standards. The proposed project would not result in the development of uses that would substantially increase traffic nor is the project site located near an existing air operation. The Gold Country Stage Route 5 transit line provides service along Combie Road and could experience temporary service delays during peak construction periods. However, these impacts are anticipated to be temporary and passenger access to bus routes and stops would be maintained over the duration of the construction period. The roadway improvements will be consistent with existing corridor features and would not result in traffic hazards or inadequacy of roadway travel. The project would not conflict with rideshare programs or other policies supporting alternative transportation. As impacts to public transit would be considered short-term and temporary in nature, construction-related impacts to existing transit service are ***less-than-significant*** with no mitigation required.

Impact Discussion 16f: The project is not located near any established waterborne, rail or air traffic patterns. In fact, implementation of the multi-use trail component of the project would increase the opportunities for alternative transportation modes such as local biking and pedestrian use. There would be ***no impact.***

Mitigation
To offset the potential for circulation and access impacts resulting from construction-related activities, the following traffic control measures will be required:

Mitigation Measure TC-1: Implement Traffic Control Plan. The project contractor would be required to develop and implement a Traffic Control Plan, with subsequent review and approval required by the County prior to construction. This plan would include the following measures:

- Do not permit construction vehicles to block any roadways or private driveways.
- Provide access for the Higgins Area Fire Station and other emergency vehicles at all times.
- Select travel routes to avoid schools, parks, and high pedestrian use areas when possible. Crossing guards provided by the contractor would be used when truck trips coincide with school hours and when travel routes cross student travel paths.
- Obey all speed limits, traffic laws, and transportation regulations during construction.
- Use signs and flagmen, as needed, to alert motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians to avoid conflict with construction vehicles or equipment.
- Construction employee parking would be restricted to the designated staging areas.
- No road closures are anticipated; however, in the event that road closures are necessary, local agencies and affected organizations would be notified prior to construction.
- The temporary closure of any roadways or public access areas for construction use would be clearly fenced and delineated with appropriate closure signage.

17. UTILITIES / SERVICE SYSTEMS

Existing Setting
A variety of existing utility and service systems are located within the study area.

Would the proposed project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a. Result in a need for the extension of electrical power or natural gas?				✓
b. Require the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?				✓
c. Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?				✓
d. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?				✓
e. Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?				✓

Would the proposed project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
f. Be served by a landfill or transfer station with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?				✓
g. Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?				✓
h. Require a need for the extension of communication systems?				✓

Impact Discussion 17a-17h: As previously described, implementation of the proposed roadway improvements is consistent with the goals of the Higgins Area Plan. Implementation of the proposed project is not associated with uses that would generate substantial population growth within the area and would not substantially increase the demand for additional utilities or utility infrastructure. The project would also not generate substantial solid waste during operation and construction-related waste generation would not exceed landfill capabilities. Because the proposed project would involve the undergrounding of some overhead utilities, implementation of the proposed project would be coordinated with all utility service providers, including PG&E's current overhead utility undergrounding program (utilizing the Public Utility Commission's Rule 20A program). Therefore, there would be ***no impact***.

18. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of major periods of California's history or prehistory?		✓		
b. Does the project have environmental effects that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of the project are considered when viewed in connection with the effects of past, current, and probable future projects.)		✓		
c. Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?			✓	
d. Does the project require the discussion and evaluation of a range of reasonable alternatives, which could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the project?				✓

Impact Discussion 18a: Development of the proposed project would comply with all local, state, and federal laws governing general welfare and environmental protection. The project will not substantially reduce habitat for fish or wildlife, cause wildlife populations to decrease, threaten plant and animal communities or restrict plant and animals range leading to California's history or prehistory. Project implementation, during construction, will result in potential impacts. However, potential impacts to biological resources will result in a ***less than significant with mitigation*** impact.

Impact Discussion 18b: The proposed project is not growth inducing; thus, it would not contribute to the cumulative effects of population growth. The cumulative impacts due to hydrology and water quality, air quality, and noise would be reduced to less than significant levels by adhering to local, regional, state, and federal impact standards and by the adherence to the project-specific mitigation measures outlined in this Initial Study. Collectively, these potentially negative impacts are not cumulatively considerable and will result in a ***less than significant with mitigation*** impact.

Impact Discussion 18c: The proposed project will comply with all local, state, and federal laws governing general welfare and environmental protection. Project implementation would not substantially degrade the quality of the existing environment, since the proposed project is the widening of an existing roadway and a multi-use trail improvement (designed to enhance local recreational opportunities and benefits) which would not result in any significant adverse and un-mitigatable impacts that could cause adverse effects to humans. Therefore, project impacts on human beings would be ***less than significant***, and no additional mitigation is required.

Impact Discussion 18d: The project will have no significant impacts; therefore, no project alternatives are required to be analyzed. This project will have ***no impact*** to basic objectives of the project.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE PROJECT PLANNER

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

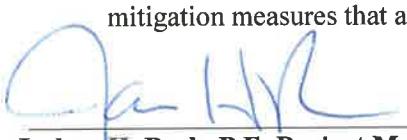
_____ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

_X_ 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 a "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 will 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.



Joshua H. Pack, P.E. Project Manager

9/21/16

Date

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APPENDIX A – Figures A1 to A7 (Project Features and Study Area)

LEGEND

- Bicycle/Pedestrian Path
- Overhead Utility
- Underground Utility
- Drainage Culverts/Improvements

APN 57-141-30
APN 57-141-31
APN 57-260-04
APN 57-260-18
APN 57-260-02
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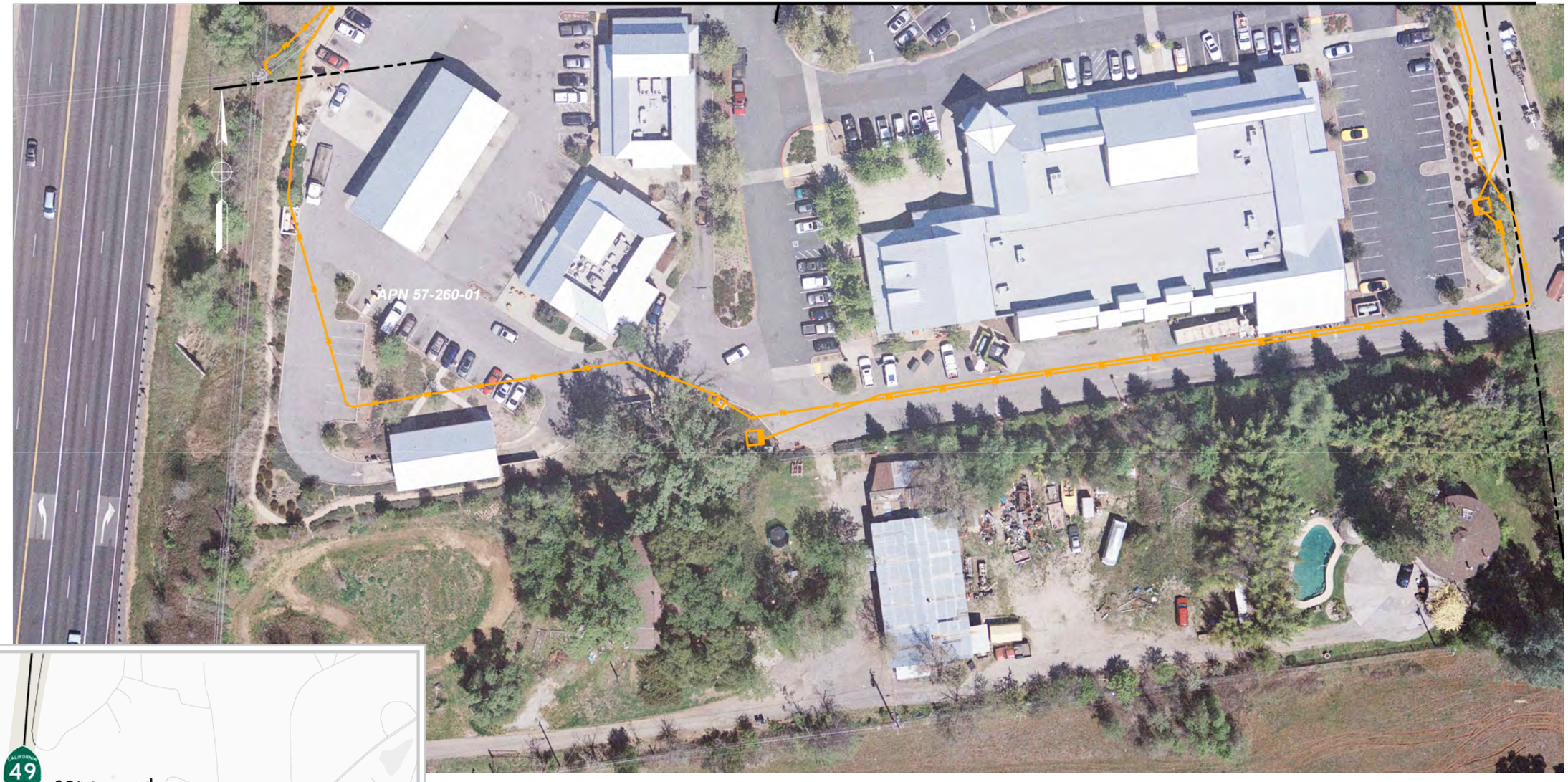
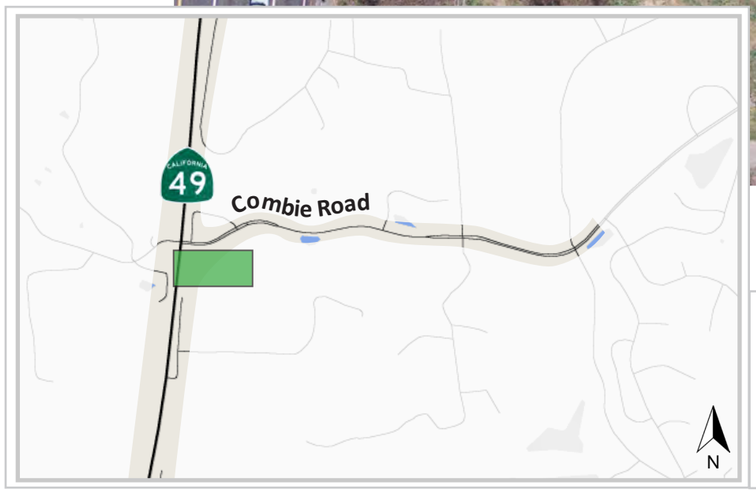
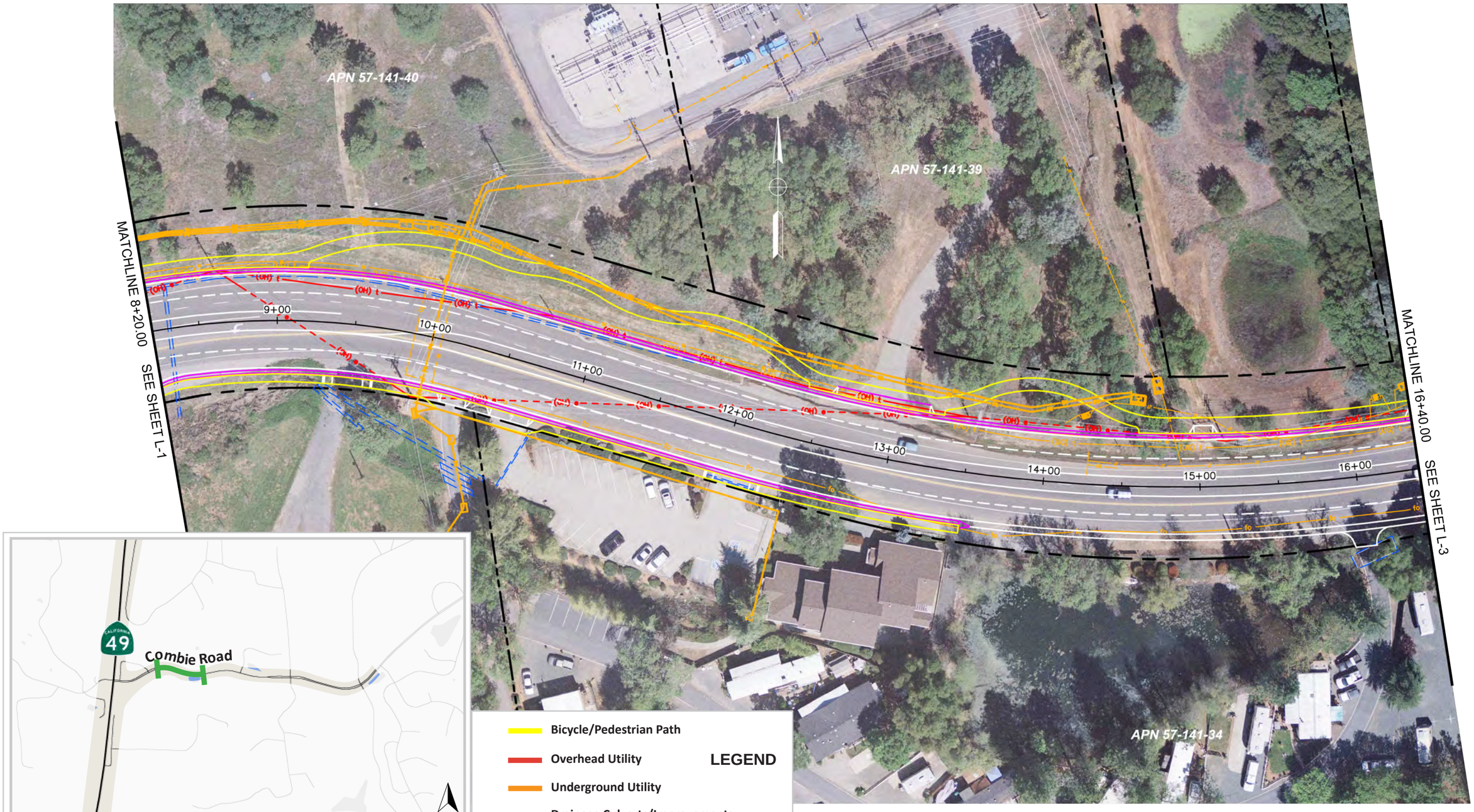




LEGEND

- Bicycle/Pedestrian Path
- Overhead Utility
- Underground Utility
- Drainage Culverts/Improvements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Bicycle/Pedestrian Path
Overhead Utility
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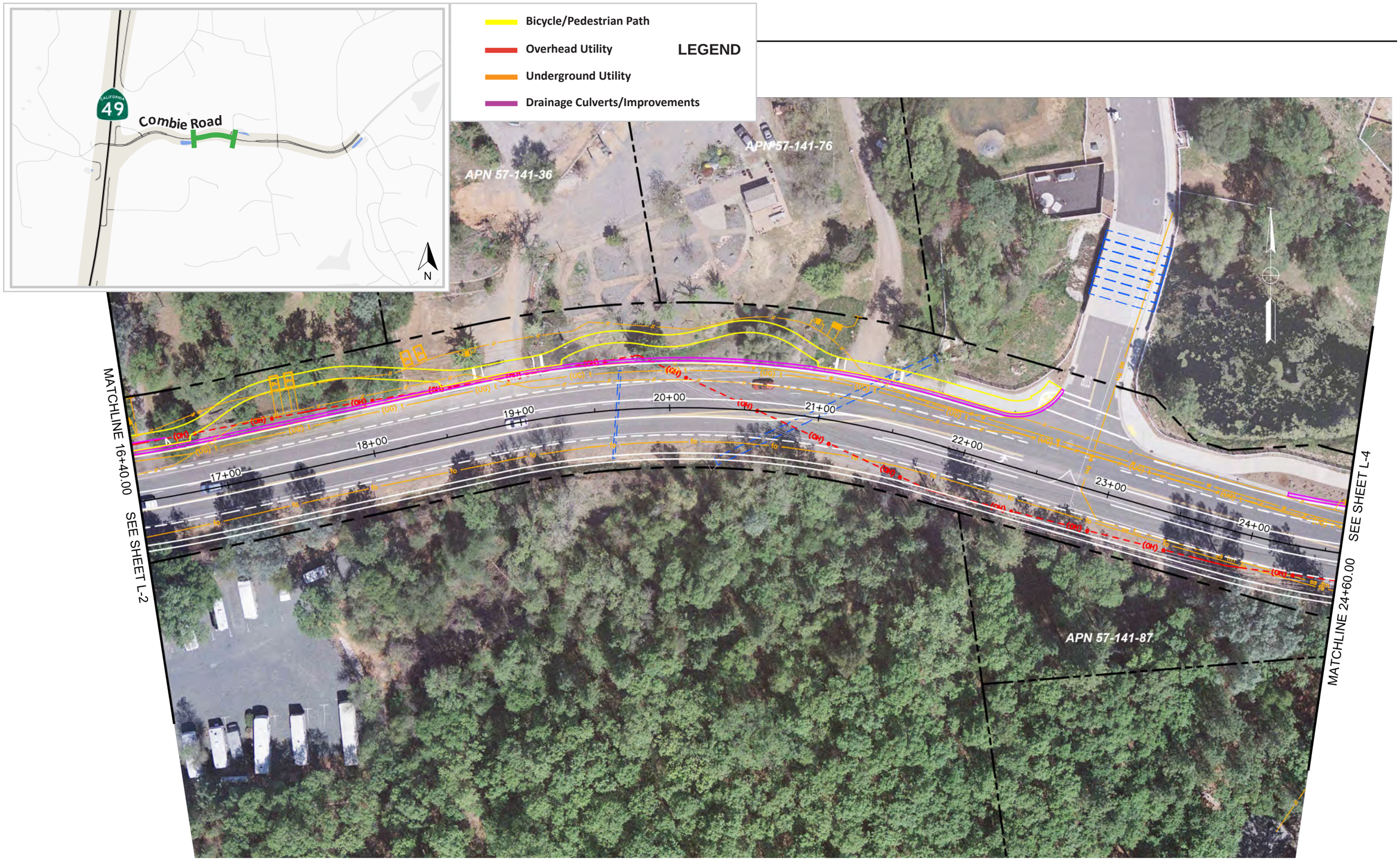
Drainage Culverts/Improvements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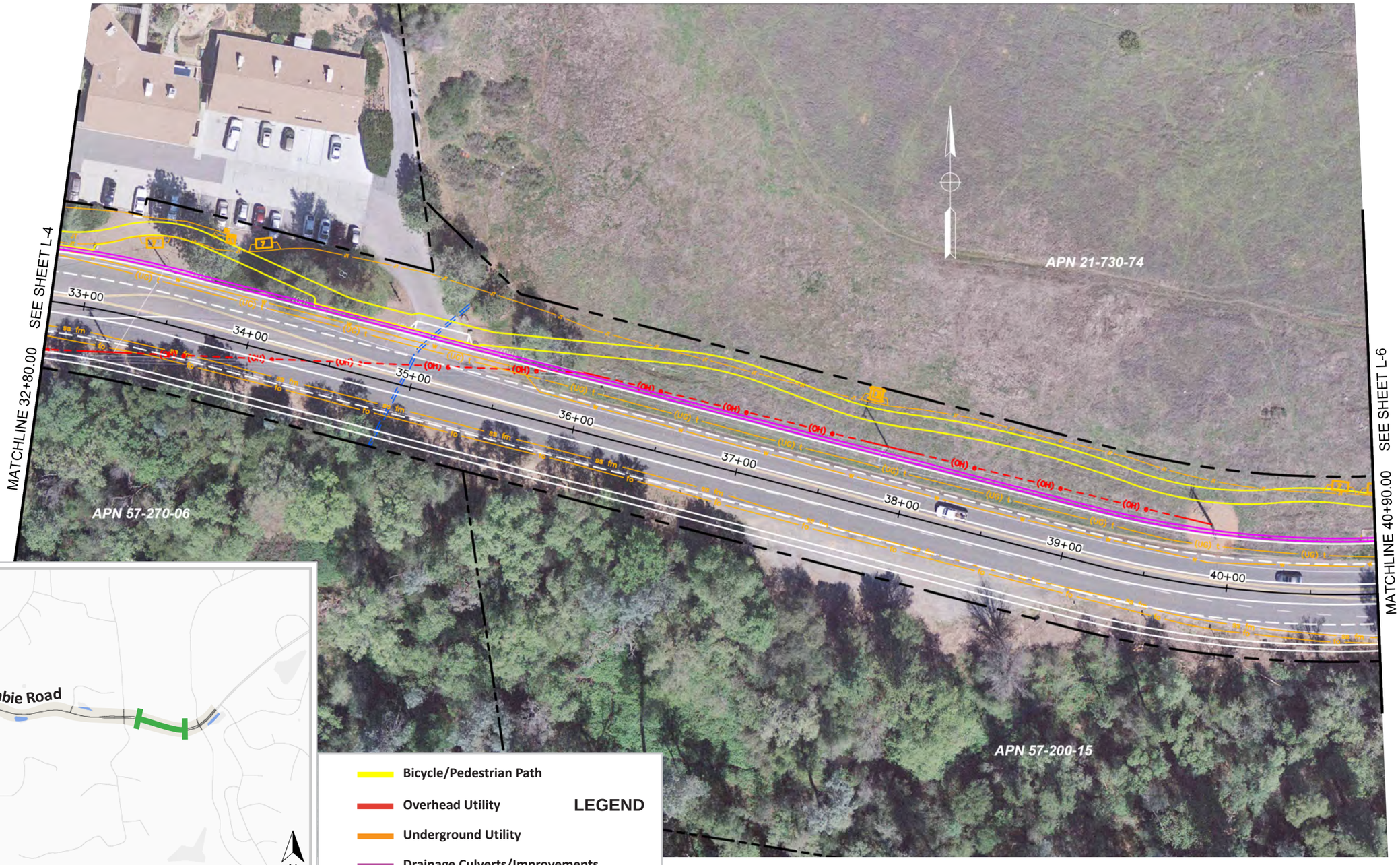
Underground Utility
Drainage Culverts/Improvements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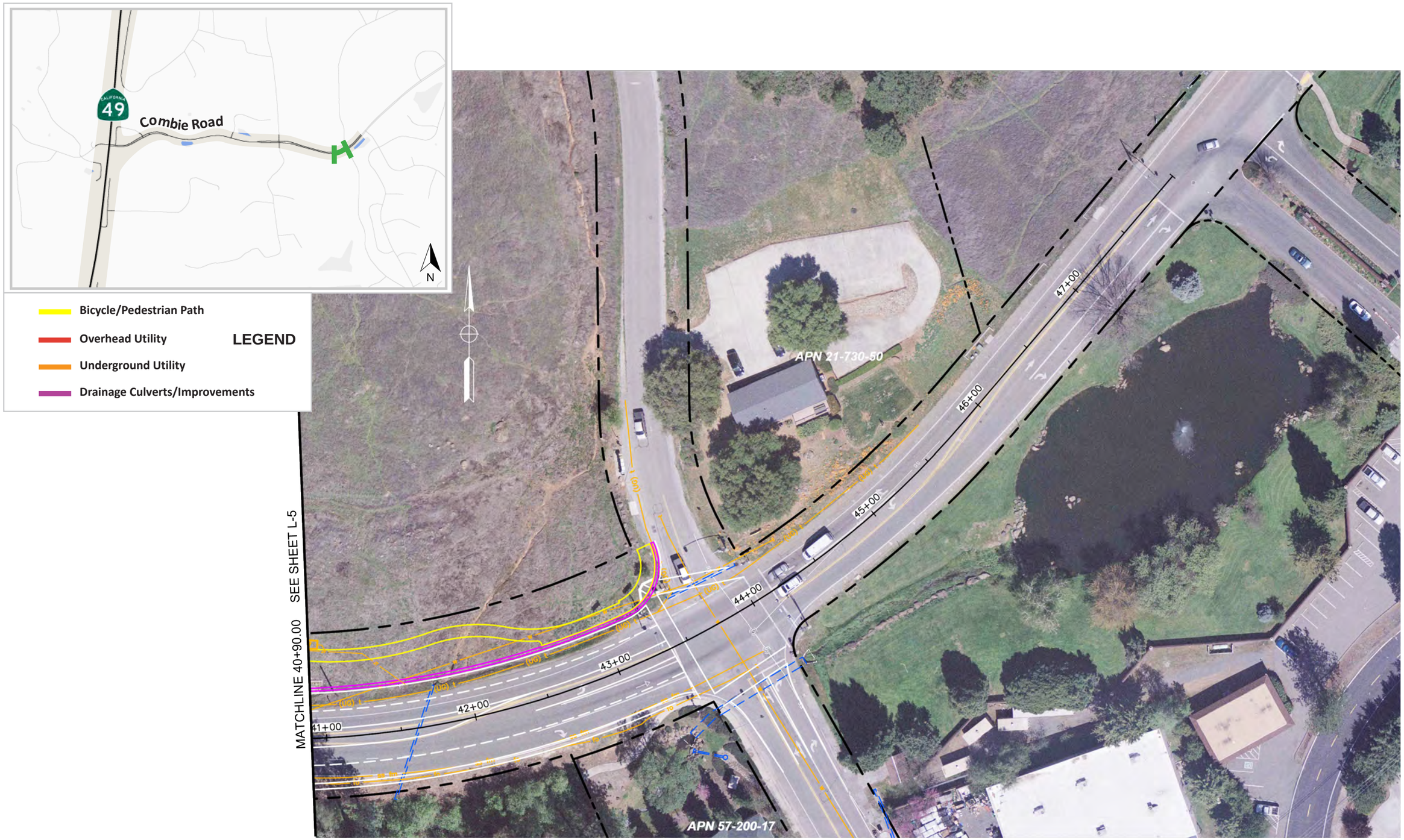
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APPENDIX B – Draft IS/MND Comment Letters and Responses

This appendix includes the comment letters received during the agency/public review period for the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (from August 1, 2016 to August 30, 2016). The following provides a summary of the comment letters received (see **Table B1**), copies of the letters, and concludes with responses (see **Table B2**) to the comment letters.

Table B1
Summary of Comment Letters

Letter Date	Letter Type	Commenter
August 2, 2016	Agency	Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District
August 24, 2016	Agency	Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
August 26, 2016	Non-Agency Stakeholder	United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria
August 29, 2016	Agency	California Department of Transportation – District 3
August 31, 2016	Agency	Governor's Office of Planning and Research – State Clearinghouse

Ray Weiss

To: Joshua Pack
Subject: RE: Combie Road Corridor Improvement

From: Sam Longmire [mailto:nsaqmd.sam@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, August 2, 2016 9:50 AM
To: Joshua Pack <Joshua.Pack@co.nevada.ca.us>
Cc: Gretchen Bennitt <gretchen@myairdistrict.com>
Subject: Combie Road Corridor Improvement

Dear Mr. Pack:

The Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD) has reviewed the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Combie Road Corridor Improvement project. The mitigation measures included in the MND appear to be adequate except that there should be additional provisions to further minimize dust impacts to nearby residents and pedestrians (especially children walking to and from school) during construction, as addressed in the following paragraph. Note that previous road work along Combie Road has resulted in validated dust complaints to the NSAQMD, requiring the incorporation of additional dust control measures to prevent children being exposed to excessive dust.

The NSAQMD approves Mitigation Measure AQ-1 as a Dust Control Plan for the project with the addition of the following measures:

1) Care shall be taken to minimize the exposure of pedestrians to construction dust. Specifically, if dust is visible in the proximity of pedestrians, measures shall be taken immediately to control dust emissions. These measures may include additional watering, wet sweeping of paved areas, and the temporary cessation of dust generating activities until pedestrians pass the active portions of the site. Contractors should be aware of the times children are most likely to be walking past the project, and plan their activities accordingly.

2) In order to minimize dust generation from passing vehicles, paved streets adjacent to the project shall be swept or washed at the end of each day, or more frequently if necessary, to remove accumulations or visibly raised areas of soil which may have resulted from activities at the project site. The installation of gravel pads at the exits onto active roadways is encouraged, and may be required if regular sweeping proves to be inadequate.

Please contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Sam Longmire, APCS

--
Samuel F. Longmire, MSES
Air Pollution Control Specialist III
Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District
PO Box 2509
200 Litton Drive, Suite 320
Grass Valley, CA 95945
Phone: (530) 274-9360 x106

California Water Boards

Edmund G. Brown Jr.
Governor

Matthew Rodriquez
Secretary for
Environmental Protection

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

24 August 2016

Joshua Pack
Nevada County Public Works
950 Maidu Avenue
Nevada City, CA 95959

CERTIFIED MAIL
91 7199 9991 0735 8360 9973

COMMENTS TO REQUEST FOR REVIEW FOR THE NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY FOR PUBLIC REVIEW PROPOSED INITIAL STUDY AND MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION, COMBIE ROAD CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT, NEVADA COUNTY

Pursuant to the Nevada County Public Works' 1 August 2016 request, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) has reviewed the *Request for Review for the Notice of Availability for Public Review Proposed Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration* for the Combie Road Corridor Improvement Project, located in Nevada County.

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.

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 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/.

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 Policy is available on page IV-15.01 at:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalleywater_issues/basin_plans/sacsjr.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.

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 Activities (Construction General Permit), Construction General Permit Order No. 2009-009-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:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/constpermits.shtml.

Phase I and II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permits[1]

The Phase I and II MS4 permits require the Permittees reduce pollutants and runoff flows from new development and redevelopment using Best Management Practices (BMPs) to the maximum extent practicable (MEP). MS4 Permittees have their own development standards, also known as Low Impact Development (LID)/post-construction standards that include a hydromodification component. The MS4 permits also require specific design concepts for LID/post-construction BMPs in the early stages of a project during the entitlement and CEQA process and the development plan review process.

For more information on which Phase I MS4 Permit this project applies to, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/storm_water/municipal_permits/.

For more information on the Phase II MS4 permit and who it applies to, visit the State Water Resources Control Board at:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/phase_ii_municipal.shtml

Industrial Storm Water General Permit

Storm water discharges associated with industrial sites must comply with the regulations contained in the Industrial Storm Water General Permit Order No. 2014-0057-DWQ.

For more information on the Industrial Storm Water General Permit, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/storm_water/industrial_general_permits/index.shtml.

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 (USACOE). If a Section 404 permit is required by the USACOE, 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

[1] Municipal Permits = The Phase I Municipal Separate Storm Water System (MS4) Permit covers medium sized Municipalities (serving between 100,000 and 250,000 people) and large sized municipalities (serving over 250,000 people). The Phase II MS4 provides coverage for small municipalities, including non-traditional Small MS4s, which include military bases, public campuses, prisons and hospitals.

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 USACOE at (916) 557-5250.

Clean Water Act Section 401 Permit – Water Quality Certification

If an USACOE 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.

Waste Discharge Requirements – Discharges to Waters of the State

If USACOE 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 Water Quality Certification and WDR processes, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/help/business_help/permit2.shtml.

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 Risk General Order) 2003-0003 or the Central Valley Water Board's Waiver of Report of Waste Discharge and Waste Discharge Requirements (Low Risk Waiver) R5-2013-0145. 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.

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

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/adopted_orders/waivers/r5-2013-0145_res.pdf

Regulatory Compliance for Commercially Irrigated Agriculture

If the property will be used for commercial irrigated agricultural, the discharger will be required to obtain regulatory coverage under the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. There are two options to comply:

1. **Obtain Coverage Under a Coalition Group.** Join the local Coalition Group that supports land owners with the implementation of the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. The Coalition Group conducts water quality monitoring and reporting to the Central Valley Water Board on behalf of its growers. The Coalition Groups charge an annual membership fee, which varies by Coalition Group. To find the Coalition Group in your area, visit the Central Valley Water Board's website at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/irrigated_lands/app_approval/index.shtml; or contact water board staff at (916) 464-4611 or via email at IrrLands@waterboards.ca.gov.

2. **Obtain Coverage Under the General Waste Discharge Requirements for Individual Growers, General Order R5-2013-0100**. Dischargers not participating in a third-party group (Coalition) are regulated individually. Depending on the specific site conditions, growers may be required to monitor runoff from their property, install monitoring wells, and submit a notice of intent, farm plan, and other action plans regarding their actions to comply with their General Order. Yearly costs would include State administrative fees (for example, annual fees for farm sizes from 10-100 acres are currently $1,084 + $6.70/Acre); the cost to prepare annual monitoring reports; and water quality monitoring costs. To enroll as an Individual Discharger under the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program, call the Central Valley Water Board phone line at (916) 464-4611 or e-mail board staff at IrrLands@waterboards.ca.gov.

Low or 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 *Dewatering and Other Low Threat Discharges to Surface Waters* (Low Threat General Order) or the General Order for *Limited Threat Discharges of Treated/Untreated Groundwater from Cleanup Sites, Wastewater from Superchlorination Projects, and Other Limited Threat Wastewaters to Surface Water* (Limited Threat General Order). A complete application must be submitted to the Central Valley Water Board to obtain coverage under these General NPDES permits.

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/centralvalley/board_decisions/adopted_orders/general_orders/r5-2013-0074.pdf

For more information regarding the Limited Threat General Order and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/adopted_orders/general_orders/r5-2013-0073.pdf

NPDES Permit

If the proposed project discharges waste that could affect the quality of the 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:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/help/business_help/permit3.shtml

If you have questions regarding these comments, please contact me at (916) 464-4644 or Stephanie.Tadlock@waterboards.ca.gov.

Stephanie Tadlock

Stephanie Tadlock
Environmental Scientist

MIWOK MAIDU United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria

Gene Whitehouse, Chairman | John L. Williams, Vice Chairman | Danny Rey, Secretary | Jason Camp, Treasurer | Calvin Moman, Council Member

August 26, 2016

Joshua H. Pack
County of Nevada
950 Maidu Ave, Suite 170
Nevada City, CA 95959

Subject: Proposed Initial Study and Mitagted Negative Decalration Combie Road Corridor Improvement Project Nevada County, CA

Dear Joshua H. Pack,

Thank you for requesting information regarding the above referenced project. The United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC) of the Auburn Rancheria is comprised of Miwok and Southern Maidu (Nisenan) people whose tribal lands are within Placer County and whose service area includes El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, and Yuba counties. The UAIC is concerned about development within its aboriginal territory that has potential to impact the lifeways, cultural sites, and landscapes that may be of sacred or ceremonial significance. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this and other projects in your jurisdiction. The UAIC would like to consult on this project.

In order to ascertain whether the project could affect cultural resources that may be of importance to the UAIC, we would like to receive copies of any archaeological reports that are completed for the project. We also request copies of future environmental documents for the proposed project so that we have the opportunity to comment on potential impacts and proposed mitigation measures related to cultural resources. The UAIC would also like the opportunity to have our tribal monitors accompany you during the field survey. The information gathered will provide us with a better understanding of the project and cultural resources on site and is invaluable for consultation purposes.

The UAIC's preservation committee has identified cultural resources in and around your project area, and would like to request a site visit to confirm their locations. Thank you again for taking these matters into consideration, and for involving the UAIC early in the planning process. We look forward to reviewing the documents requested above and consulting on your project. Please contact Marcos Guerrero, Cultural Resources Manager, at (530) 883-2364 or by email at mguerrero@auburnrancheria.com if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Gene Whitehouse,
Chairman

CC: Marcos Guerrero, CRM

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DISTRICT 3
703 B STREET
MARYSVILLE, CA 95901
PHONE (530) 741-4286
FAX (530) 741-4245
TTY 711
www.dot.ca.gov/dist3

Serious drought.
Help save water!

August 29, 2016

Mr. Joshua Pack
Principal Civil Engineer
Nevada County Public Works
950 Maidu Avenue
Nevada City, CA 95959

Combie Road Corridor Improvement Project

Dear Mr. Pack:

Thank you for including California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) review for Combine Road Corridor Improvement Project. Caltrans' new mission, vision, and goals signal a modernization of our approach to California's transportation system. We review this local development for impacts to the State Highway System in keeping with our mission, vision and goals for sustainability/livability/economy, and safety/heath. We provide these comments consistent with the state's mobility goals that support a vibrant economy, and build communities, not sprawl.

The proposed project includes widening Combie Road to 5 lanes, constructing a traffic signal at the Combie Road/Higgins Road intersection, and construct a separate bicycle and pedestrian pathway. The following comments are based on the IS/MND received:

Transportation & Circulation

Under the "Transportation/Circulation" section, starting on page 51 in the IS/MND, include mentioning that an encroachment permit will be required for work within the State's right-of-way (ROW).

Enclosed is recommended crosswalk marking patterns for work that is proposed within the State's ROW at State Route (SR) 49/Combie Road/Wolf Road intersection. The crosswalk marking pattern was developed to minimize the need for frequent replacement of markings in the wheel tracks of the traveled way.

Hydraulics/Hydrology

A drainage report addressing the following details should be included for review:

- No net increase in discharge shall be directed to the State's ROW as a consequence of future development. Conveyance facilities within the State's ROW shall not have their capacity reduced as a consequence of development, resulting in run-off encroachment into the traveled way.
- All grading and/or drainage improvements must perpetuate, maintain, or improve existing drainage pathways, both within and outside of the State's ROW, and may not result in adverse hydrologic or hydraulic conditions within the State's ROW or to Caltrans drainage facilities.

In order to adequately evaluate project impacts upon the State's ROW and Caltrans drainage facilities, we recommend the following documents from the project proponent: detailed drainage plans, drawings or calculations, hydrologic/hydraulic study or report, or plans showing the "pre-construction" and "post-construction" coverage quantities for buildings, streets, parking, etc. Please provide a copy of any reports or documents to the address below:

Office of Transportation Planning
703 B Street
Marysville, CA 95901

Runoff from the proposed project that may enter the State's ROW and/or Caltrans drainage facilities must meet all Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board water quality standards prior to entering the State's ROW and/or Caltrans drainage facilities. Appropriate storm water quality Best Management Practices (BMPs) may be applied to ensure that runoff from the site meets these standards (i.e., is free of oils, greases, metals, sands, sediment, etc.). Once installed, the property owner must properly maintain these systems.

Encroachment Permit

Any work or traffic control that encroaches upon the State's ROW will require a Caltrans issued encroachment permit. To apply, a completed encroachment permit application, environmental documentation, and five sets of plans indicating State ROW must be submitted to the address below:

Office of Permits
Caltrans - District 3
703 B Street
Marysville, CA 95901

Traffic-related mitigation measures should be incorporated into the construction plans prior to the encroachment permit process. Please visit the following URL for additional information: http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/developserv/permits/.

Please provide our office with copies of any further actions regarding this project. We would appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on any changes related to this development.

If you have any question regarding these comments or require additional information, please contact Jennifer Jacobson, Intergovernmental Review Coordinator for Nevada County, by phone (530) 741-5435 or via email to jennifer.jacobson@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

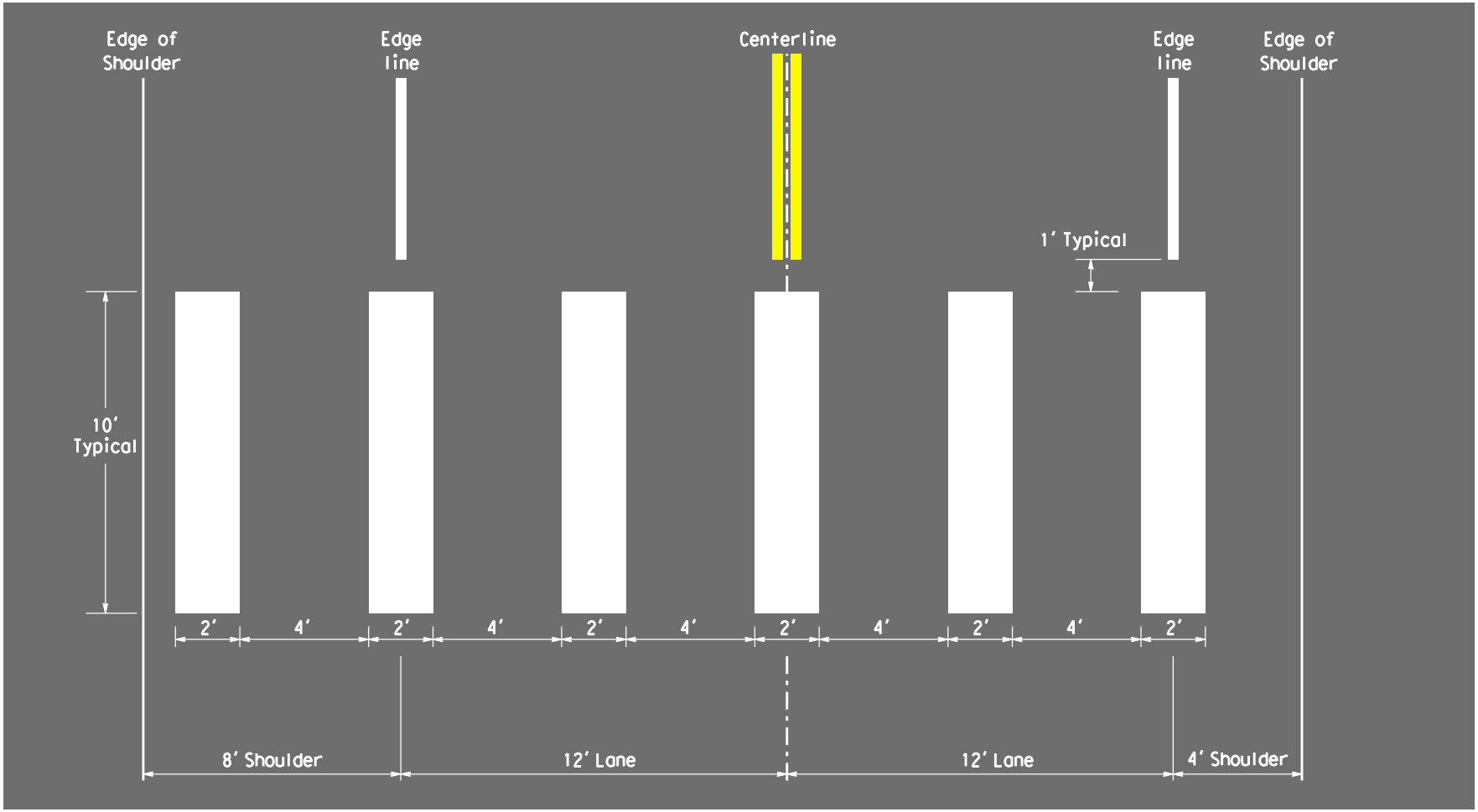
KEVIN YOUNT, (Acting) Branch Chief
Office of Transportation Planning
Regional Planning Branch—North

Enclosures

c: Scott Morgan, State Clearinghouse

Caltrans®

CROSSWALK LAYOUT TO AVOID WHEEL TRACKS



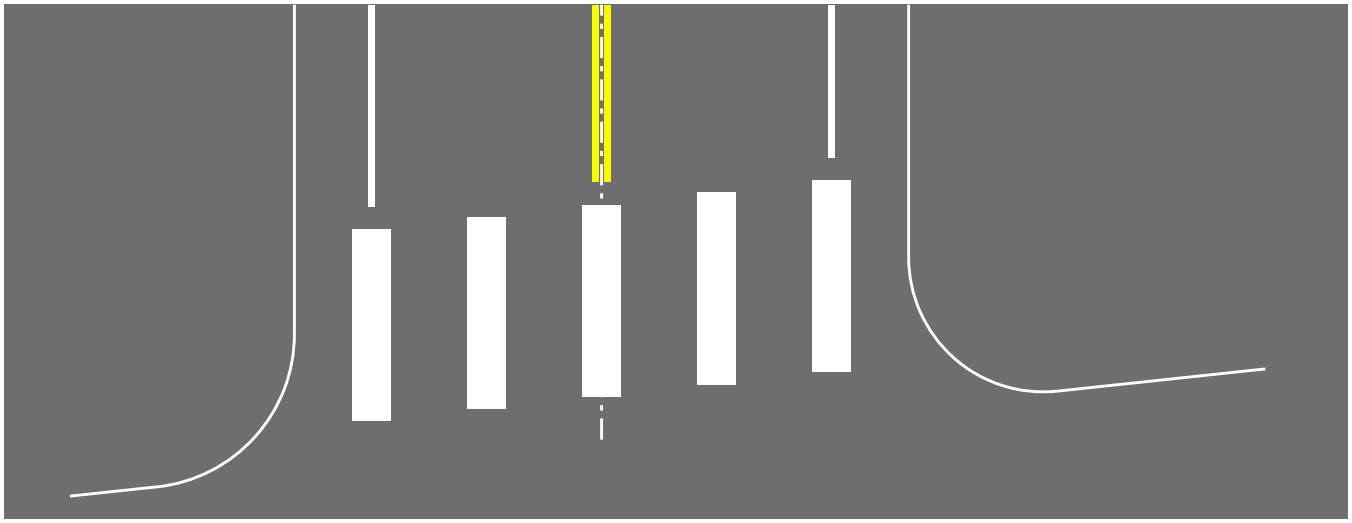
Last revised March 4, 2013

Scale 1" = 5'

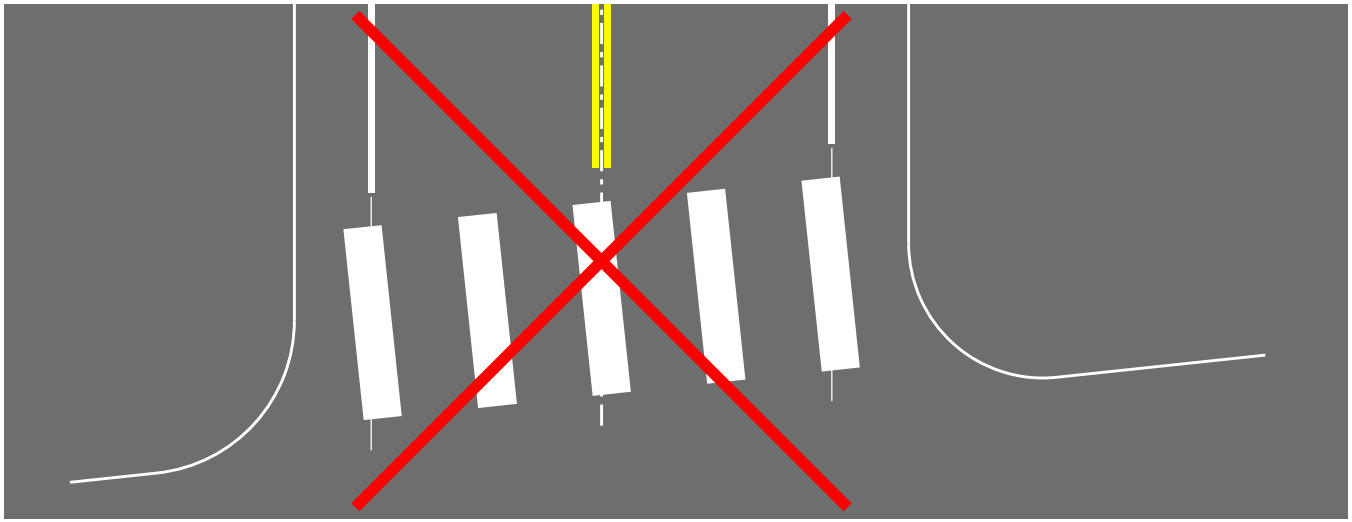
Notes: 1) Typical shoulder widths of 8' and 4' shown.
Omit markings for paved shoulder widths less than 7'.
2) If lanes are less than 12' wide, reduce the gap widths for the wheel tracks.
3) If lanes are more than 12' wide, increase the gap widths for the wheel tracks to 5' maximum.
4) Mark bars parallel to the centerline, even if the crosswalk is skewed.

Caltrans®

CROSSWALK LAYOUT TO AVOID WHEEL TRACKS - DETAILS



PLACE CROSSWALK MARKINGS PARALLEL TO CENTERLINE...



...NOT PERPENDICULAR TO THE INTERSECTING STREET
OR THE CROSSWALK ALIGNMENT

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE *of* PLANNING AND RESEARCH

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE AND PLANNING UNIT

EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

KEN ALEX
DIRECTOR

August 31, 2016

RECEIVED
SEP 01 2016
PUBLIC WORKS

Joshua H. Pack
Nevada County
950 Maidu Avenue
Nevada City, CA 95959

Subject: Combie Road Corridor Improvement Project
SCH#: 2016072072

Dear Joshua H. Pack:

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named Mitigated Negative Declaration to selected state agencies for review. The review period closed on August 30, 2016, and no state agencies submitted comments by that date. This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

Please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process. If you have a question about the above-named project, please refer to the ten-digit State Clearinghouse number when contacting this office.

Sincerely,

Scott Morgan
Director, State Clearinghouse

Document Details Report
State Clearinghouse Data Base

SCH# 2016072072
Project Title Combie Road Corridor Improvement Project
Lead Agency Nevada County

Type **MND** Mitigated Negative Declaration

Description Combie Rd is located in the southwestern portion of Nevada County near the Lake of Pines/Higgins Corner communities, in Grass Valley, CA. The project study area limits extend eastward from the intersection of SR 49 and Combie Rd to the intersection of Magnolia Rd and Lakeshore Dr, a distance of approximately 5,300 ft (just over a mile). As part of the proposed project, the County plans to widen Combie Rd to 5 lanes, construct a traffic signal at the Combie Rd/Higgins Rd intersection, and construct a separate bicycle and pedestrian pathway. With completion of these locally funded improvements, all intersections within the corridor should operate at an acceptable LOS "C" or better in the year 2035, which exceed the County's min acceptable standard of LOS "D". Improvements will also improve corridor safety.

Lead Agency Contact

Name Joshua H. Pack
Agency Nevada County
Phone (530) 265-1411 **Fax**
email
Address 950 Maidu Avenue
City Nevada City **State** CA **Zip** 95959

Project Location

County Nevada
City
Region
Lat / Long
Cross Streets SR 49, Magnolia Rd, and Lakeshore Dr
Parcel No. various
Township **Range** **Section** **Base**

Proximity to:

Highways SR 49
Airports
Railways
Waterways Ragsdale Creek
Schools Bear Valley HS
Land Use Medium density res, public and commercial. Nearby zoning community commercial and residential ag.

Project Issues Aesthetic/Visual; Agricultural Land; Air Quality; Archaeologic-Historic; Biological Resources; Drainage/Absorption; Flood Plain/Flooding; Forest Land/Fire Hazard; Geologic/Seismic; Minerals; Noise; Population/Housing Balance; Public Services; Recreation/Parks; Schools/Universities; Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading; Solid Waste; Toxic/Hazardous; Traffic/Circulation; Vegetation; Water Quality; Water Supply; Wetland/Riparian; Growth Inducing; Landuse; Cumulative Effects

Reviewing Agencies Resources Agency; Department of Fish and Wildlife, Region 2; Department of Parks and Recreation; Department of Water Resources; California Highway Patrol; Caltrans, District 3 N; Air Resources Board, Transportation Projects; Regional Water Quality Control Bd., Region 5 (Sacramento); Native American Heritage Commission

Date Received 07/29/2016 **Start of Review** 08/01/2016 **End of Review** 08/30/2016

Note: Blanks in data fields result from insufficient information provided by lead agency.

Table B2
Responses to Comment Letters

Letter	Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District

Response: The commenter has reviewed the IS/MND and considers the existing dust control measures referenced under Mitigation Measure AQ-1 as adequate. To help further minimize dust impacts to nearby residents and pedestrians, the NSAQMD also recommends incorporating additional dust control measures into Mitigation Measure AQ-1.

Construction related activities will be focused along Combie Road, west of the existing Bear Valley High School and are not expected to directly affect pedestrians walking to school. Additionally, Mitigation Measure AQ-1 includes several measures to ensure watering occurs during multiple times of the day. However, to ensure construction-related dust emissions are minimized to pedestrians and residents alike, the following revisions (underline text) to Mitigation Measures AQ-1 are proposed as follows.

The revisions to Mitigation Measure AQ-1 are also referenced on page 8 (see Summary of Impacts and Proposed Mitigation Measures) of this IS/MND.

Mitigation Measure AQ-1: Implement NSAQMD Dust Suppression Measures. Construction contractor shall prepare and submit a Dust Suppression Control Plan to the NSAQMD, prior to implementing the construction phases of the project. Potential measures that might be included in the plan could include, but are not limited to, the following measures:

- Obtain appropriate permits from the NSAQMD for portable equipment.
- The applicant will implement all dust control measures in a timely manner during all phases of project development and construction.
- All material excavated, stockpiled or graded will be sufficiently watered, treated or covered to prevent fugitive dust from leaving the project boundaries and causing a public nuisance or a violation of an ambient air standard. Watering should occur at least twice daily, with complete site coverage.
- All areas (including unpaved roads) within the project limits with vehicle traffic will be watered or have dust palliative applied as necessary for regular stabilization of dust emissions. The installation of gravel pads at the exits onto active roadways is encouraged, and may be required if regular sweeping proves to be inadequate.
- All land clearing, grading, earth moving, or excavation activities at the project site will be suspended as necessary to prevent excessive windblown dust when winds are expected to exceed 20 mph.
- All on-site vehicle traffic will be limited to a speed of 15 miles per hour (mph) on unpaved roads.
- All inactive disturbed portions of the site will be covered, seeded or watered until a suitable cover is established. Alternatively, the applicant will be responsible for applying non-toxic soil stabilizers to all inactive construction areas.
- All material transported off-site will be either sufficiently watered or securely covered to prevent public nuisance.
- Should serpentine or ultramafic rock be encountered during construction, the NSAQMD will be notified no later than the next business day and the California Code of Regulations, Title 17, Section 9315 applies.
- Care shall be taken to minimize the exposure of pedestrians to construction dust. Specifically, if dust is visible in the proximity of pedestrians, measures shall be taken immediately to

control dust emissions. These measures may include additional watering, wet sweeping of paved areas, and the temporary cessation of dust generating activities until pedestrians pass the active portions of the site. Contractors should be aware of the times children are most likely to be walking past the project, and plan their activities accordingly.

Letter	Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

Response: The commenter identifies potential types of permits that could be required from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB). Water quality permit requirements are detailed in section 3.9, Hydrology and Water Quality. As described in Section 9 Hydrology/Water Quality (see page 44 of 56), the proposed project would be required to obtain a State Water Resources Control Board General Construction permit that would require the County to implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). In addition to these requirements, the County will implement a variety of erosion prevention measures (Mitigation Measures GEO-1) and water quality best management practices (Mitigation Measure WQ-1) ensuring water quality impacts are minimized.

Letter	United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria

Response: The commenter requests to review the technical studies prepared for the proposed project and the opportunity to review future environmental documents prepared for the project. The commenter also requests an opportunity to visit the project site with the County to better understand the project and to share information regarding important cultural resources in the area. The County is consulting directly with the United Auburn Indian Community to address these requests.

Letter	California Department of Transportation – District 3

Response: The commenter mentions that a Caltrans issued encroachment permit may be required to implement the project. The IS/MND section "Other Permits Which May Be Necessary" (page 7) will be updated to include this potential permitting requirement. Caltrans also requests that the drainage report prepared for the proposed project be forwarded for review.

Letter	Governor's Office of Planning and Research – State Clearinghouse

Response: The commenter outlines specific activities conducted by the State Clearinghouse regarding the distribution and review of the IS/MND by other State agencies. No further response necessary.