

# Sonoma County Comprehensive Cannabis Program Update

## Project Specific Analysis for Cannabis Projects

Prepared for:

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAAQS	California ambient air quality standards
CDFA	California Department of Food and Agriculture
CDPR	California Department of Pesticide Regulation
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
ESA	Endangered Species Act
GHG	greenhouse gas
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
VMT	Vehicle miles traveled

# 1 INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT HISTORY

In 2025, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors approved the Sonoma County Comprehensive Cannabis Program Update (Cannabis Program Update) to regulate commercial cannabis operations in the unincorporated area of the county. The County certified an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (State Clearinghouse No. 2023020144) for the Cannabis Program Update that evaluated the environmental impacts associated with cannabis operations based on the assumptions in the Cannabis Program Update.

The EIR was prepared at the program “first-tier” level of environmental review consistent with the requirements of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Sections 15152 and 15168. The program-level analysis considered the broad environmental impacts of the overall Cannabis Program Update, including permit applications in process during preparation of the EIR. The EIR acknowledged that subsequent projects/actions under the Cannabis Program Update would occur in multiple years and locations. As those projects/actions are proposed, such as the project, they are being evaluated to determine whether the entitlements/actions proposed fall within the scope of the approved EIR and incorporate all applicable performance standards and mitigation measures identified therein. Should the subsequent projects/actions not be consistent with the approved Cannabis Program Update, additional environmental review through the subsequent review provisions of CEQA may be warranted (CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162 through 15164).

Consistent with the process described, the County is evaluating the project application to determine what type of additional environmental review would be required. This environmental analysis has been prepared to determine whether the environmental impacts of the project are within the scope of the Cannabis Program Update EIR, or if changed environmental conditions that are of sufficient magnitude result in new or substantially more severe environmental impacts, as compared to those considered in the Cannabis Program Update EIR. This analysis also considers whether there is new information of substantial importance showing that new or substantially more severe environmental impacts would occur compared to that evaluated in the Cannabis Program Update EIR.

The project proposal includes a total of 15,000 square feet of cultivation inclusive of 5,000 square feet of indoor cultivation in a new 6,480 square foot structure and 10,000 square feet of mixed light cultivation in a new 12,960 square foot greenhouse, and both processing and accessory indoor propagation in a new 10,000 square foot structure. The proposed project site is located in a previously graded, flat, graveled area on portion of the parcel formerly used as a quarry decommissioned prior to 1980. The project footprint occupies approximately 2.5-acres of the parcel and includes approximately 29,440-square feet of new permanent structures. The project is proposed on an agriculturally zoned parcel in unincorporated Sonoma County. Because the project proposes cultivation and support uses in agricultural zoning without event facilities, this analysis is specific to the portions of the EIR that discuss impacts from cannabis uses in agricultural and resource zones.

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## 2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project proposal includes a total of 15,000 square feet of cultivation inclusive of 5,000 square feet of indoor cultivation in a new 6,480 square foot structure and 10,000 square feet of mixed light cultivation in a new 12,960 square foot greenhouse, and both processing and accessory indoor propagation in a new 10,000 square foot structure (Figure 3 Site Plan). The proposed project site is located in a previously graded, flat, graveled area on portion of the parcel formerly used as a quarry decommissioned prior to 1980 (Figure 4 Site Photos). The project footprint occupies approximately 2.5-acres of the parcel and includes approximately 29,440-square feet of new permanent structures.

The mixed-light and indoor cultivation operations will operate year-round, seven days a week generally during daylight hours from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, with expected extended hours during harvest periods typically 7:00 am to 7:00 pm, although operations would be permitted 24-hours a day 7-days a week as needed. Deliveries and shipping activities would be limited to 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. Management will be on-call 24 hours a day, seven days per week, to address any operational or emergency issues. The cannabis operation would hire up to 19 employees including full and part time staff.

The project is consistent with the Cannabis Program Update. The project requires a Cannabis Use Permit approval by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors Upon appeal.

### 2.2 PROJECT LOCATION

The project site is located within a rural agricultural area in southwest Sonoma County approximately 3 miles southwest of the City of Sebastopol and 6 miles west of the Cities of Rohnert Park and Cotati, and is within the Census Designated Place known as Bloomfield.

## 2.3 EXISTING SETTING

Nearly all the surrounding lands are open grassland and pasture with very low-density residential uses. The parcel contains three existing onsite wells which supply water for the current agricultural uses and potable water supply for the parcel.

The General Plan Land Use Designation on the parcel is Land Extensive Agriculture with a 160-acre density. The site is also designated Land Extensive Agriculture by the Petaluma Dairy Belt Area Plan. The project is not located on an existing or proposed bikeway. The closest proposed Class II bikeway is Valley Ford Road approximately 1.5 miles to the south.

Regional access to the project site is from Bloomfield Road, which is identified as a Minor Collector.

According to the Cal Fire developed Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map, the project site is located within a State Responsibility Area within a Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone and not within the wildland urban interface.

The site is located within Sonoma County Groundwater Availability Class 2 (Major natural recharge) groundwater zone, and not within a priority groundwater basin.

The parcel is located within the Estero American Sub-watershed, and there are no Class I or II streams on site; however, there are several Class III drainages that originate on site<sup>1</sup>. The nearest creek is an unnamed tributary to the Americano Creek that borders Bloomfield Road. The unnamed tributary is roughly 100-feet from the parcel boundary on the opposite side of Bloomfield Road from the project site. A 50-foot County-designated Riparian Corridor setback associated with the off-site drainage extends onto the project parcel in a few locations along Bloomfield Road, but the parcel does not contain any riparian habitat.

## 2.4 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Cannabis Program Update, are to:

- A. Protect environmental resources and minimize environmental impact.
- B. Ensure cannabis uses are compatible with areas of concentrated residential uses.
- C. Ensure compatibility between cannabis and existing non-residential uses.
- D. Regulate cannabis located on agricultural lands more similarly to other agricultural uses, while recognizing its Federal classification, legal history, crop value, transaction security, distinct odor, and energy and water requirements.

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<sup>1</sup> Hurvitz Environmental Services, Inc., " Hydrogeologic Assessment Report, 4707 Bloomfield Rd, Petaluma, CA", dated January 26, 2022.

- E. Regulate cannabis supply chain uses and cultivation located in industrial and commercial areas more similarly to other industrial and commercial uses.
- F. Reduce barriers to entry by allowing by right uses where appropriate and eliminating duplicative regulations that unnecessarily bog down permitting without adding value in order to streamline permit processes.
- G. Increase business opportunities for the cannabis industry and supporting industries by allowing an expansion in cannabis uses including cultivation, supply chain, additional support and accessory uses. Allow for multiple cannabis uses within a single operation i.e., vertical integration.
- H. Recognize competing and evolving community values and interests related to the cannabis industry when implementing the above objectives.
- I. Consider the protection of public health and safety and racial and socio-economic equity when implementing the above objectives.

## 2.5 PROJECT ELEMENTS

### Project Overview

The project proposal includes a total of 15,000 square feet of cultivation inclusive of 5,000 square feet of indoor cultivation in a new 6,480 square foot structure and 10,000 square feet of mixed light cultivation in a new 12,960 square foot greenhouse, and both processing and accessory indoor propagation in a new 10,000 square foot structure (Figure 3 Site Plan). The proposed project site is located in a previously graded, flat, graveled area on portion of the parcel formerly used as a quarry decommissioned prior to 1980 (Figure 4 Site Photos). The project footprint occupies approximately 2.5-acres of the parcel and includes approximately 29,440-square feet of new permanent structures.

The mixed-light and indoor cultivation operations will operate year-round, seven days a week generally during daylight hours from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, with expected extended hours during harvest periods typically 7:00 am to 7:00 pm, although operations would be permitted 24-hours a day 7-days a week as needed. Deliveries and shipping activities would be limited to 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. Management will be on-call 24 hours a day, seven days per week, to address any operational or emergency issues. The cannabis operation would hire up to 19 employees including full and part time staff..

### Odor and Climate Control

All cultivation and processing areas would be equipped with odor control filtration and ventilation systems to control odors, humidity, and mold.

To control odor and maintain air quality, the project structures would be equipped with a filtration and ventilation system so that odors are not detectable outside the structure. These systems would be integrated into the design of the cultivation and processing areas to maintain consistent air quality and environmental conditions year-round.

The project would also implement dust control measures on access roads and during all ground-disturbing activities to reduce airborne particulates.

### Access and Parking Improvements

Access to the project site will be provided via two existing compacted gravel driveways directly off Bloomfield Road. The entrances will be gated and secured with commercial-grade non-residential locks. The gated entrance will be designed to be at least 2-feet wider than the lane serving the gate and be located at least 30-feet from the roadway. The project includes 21 parking spaces including one accessible space and path of travel, and one delivery space in front of the proposed processing building. A fire truck turnaround is centrally located in front of proposed structures.

All vendors and visitors would be required to check in with staff prior to entering the project site and will remain accompanied by staff while on site.

#### Water Supply and storage

Irrigation water will be supplied through a combination of groundwater and rainwater capture. Groundwater used for cannabis irrigation, will come from the sites primary domestic well located near the southwest corner of the parcel. Rainwater used for cannabis irrigation will be captured off the roofs of the proposed structures and stored in a proposed ~250,000-gallon steel water holding tank. The two other domestic wells onsite will be utilized as backup wells for the site. A 20,000-gallon water tank will be installed for potable water use, irrigation water supply, and emergency fire suppression use.

#### Solid Waste and Wastewater Disposal

Cannabis green waste will be disposed of via a specialized cannabis waste hauler. All other non-cannabis waste would be stored in lidded containers and transferred by an employee of the operation once a week to Sonoma County Solid Waste Transfer Facility located in Guerneville for proper disposal.

Wastewater from the project will be collected from sumps and reused. Domestic wastewater will be disposed of in the proposed septic system.

#### Construction

No existing structures would be used for the proposed project. The project would construct all new structures for project operation. Construction activities are expected to occur over one construction season. Project construction work hours would be from 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday and 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on weekends and holidays as weather permits, and no construction grading or heavy construction during holidays. Rough grading activities would include building pad preparation and grading for access and walkways to elevations shown on final improvement plans, and installation of sediment and erosion control features. Concrete slab foundations for each new structure would be constructed next, followed by vertical construction of new buildings. The final phase would include finished hardscapes, installation of fencing, landscaping, and water storage/irrigation systems. A variety of construction equipment would likely be used, including an excavator, bulldozer, backhoe, grader, cement mixers, pavers, and other general construction equipment.

## 2.6 REQUIRED ACTIONS

The following actions have been taken on this use permit application by the County:

- The Board of Zoning adjustments approved the project and adopted the revised Mitigated Negative Declaration on August 22, 2024. This decision was appealed by neighbors of the project Ayris Hatton and Allan Kipperman within ten business days of that decision on August 27, 2024.

The project would require the following actions by the County for project approval.

- Cannabis Use Permit approval by Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors

## **3 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS FOR SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

### **3.1 EXPLANATION OF ANALYSIS EVALUATION CATEGORIES**

The purpose of this analysis is to evaluate the categories in terms of any "changed condition" (i.e., changed circumstances, project changes, or new information of substantial importance) that may result in environmental impact significance conclusions different from those found in the Cannabis Program Update EIR. The titles of the analysis include the full range of environmental topics, as presented in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. The below titles of the analysis have been modified from the Appendix G presentation to help answer the questions to be addressed pursuant to CEQA Section 21166 and State CEQA Guidelines Section 15162.

### **3.2 DISCUSSION AND MITIGATION SECTIONS**

#### **3.2.1 Discussion**

A discussion of the elements of the analysis is provided under each environmental category to clarify the answers. The discussion provides information about the particular environmental issue, how the project relates to the issue, and the status of any mitigation that may be required or that has already been implemented.

#### **3.2.2 Mitigation Measures**

Applicable mitigation measures from the prior environmental review that would apply to the project are mentioned in the discussion under each environmental category. Mitigation measures adopted as part of the Cannabis Program Update approval is provided in Appendix A. New mitigation measures are included, if needed.

## 4 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Aesthetics

#### *Scenic Vistas, Scenic Highways, and Visual Character*

##### Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.1, "Aesthetics," agricultural uses are prevalent throughout the county; and, cannabis uses are similar in appearance to other agricultural uses. Because agricultural uses – both crop cultivation and developed uses – are defined features of the scenic landscapes within the county, future agricultural or cannabis uses would therefore be consistent with the rural nature of the county rather than dominant or intrusive features. Structures developed to support mixed-light, indoor, or accessory uses would not be substantially different in style or scale than other developed agricultural uses within the county. Additionally, cannabis uses would be subject to the same County requirements for scenic landscape unit, community separator, or scenic corridor, the design standards, as set forth under Article 64 of the Code. However, depending on the color and materials used, tarps and security fencing may be visually dissimilar and visible from a distance and could be considered a dominant and intrusive feature of a scenic vista or viewshed, including those from State Scenic Highways and County-designated scenic corridors, altering the visual character of the area. Therefore, this impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

##### Conclusion

Structures built to support cannabis uses are similar in style and scale to other agricultural operations and are subject to design review and thus will not have a significant impact. As discussed above, outdoor cannabis cultivation would generally have a similar visual appearance to other agricultural uses in the County. However, depending on the color and materials used, features may be visible from a distance and could be considered a dominant and intrusive feature of a scenic vista or viewshed. Therefore, this impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Implementation of adopted Mitigation Measure 3.1-1 would require coverings for hoop houses and weed block materials to be non-reflective and not plastic. Installation of solid fencing, including installation within scenic corridors, would be prohibited through the mitigation measure as well. With implementation of this mitigation measure, cannabis operations would appear substantially similar to other agricultural uses in the county, thus this impact was identified to be less than significant with mitigation incorporated in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The project is not in an area designated as visually sensitive by the Sonoma County General Plan (i.e., Scenic Landscape Unit, Scenic Corridor, Community Separator) or the Petaluma Dairy Belt Area Plan. The nearest designated visually sensitive area is approximately one-half mile east of the project site on Burnside Road and does not afford views of the project site. The project will include the construction of three new structures for cultivation and processing consisting of one greenhouse, one indoor cultivation structure, and one indoor propagation and processing structure. The structures are similar in style and scale to other agricultural structures in the County and those considered in the EIR. Some of the project site will be visible from Bloomfield Road which is not designated as a Scenic Corridor. It is not located on a scenic hillside, nor would it involve tree removal, grading or construction that would affect a scenic vista.

Additionally, the project is not located on or visible from a state scenic highway. The two officially designated state scenic highways in Sonoma County are Highway 12 and Highway 116. The project would not result in any impacts to scenic resources associated with a state scenic highway.

The existing visual character of the site and surrounding area is rural agricultural, primarily open grassland and grazing land, with scattered residential uses. Project structures would be visible from Bloomfield Road, but blend with the agrarian character of the site and surrounding area. Fencing is existing along the property boarding Bloomfield Road. Additional fencing will be constructed surrounding the cannabis premises, and landscaping planted at the front of the

parcel boarding Bloomfield Road. Although the fencing will be visible, the proposed landscaping would substantially soften the visual appearance. The greenhouse would be setback between the two indoor structures, which will screen most of the greenhouse. Design review of all commercial structures, including fencing, and landscaping will be required as a standard use permit condition of approval to ensure the approved fencing and landscaping is compatible with County requirements and with the surrounding area.

The project does not propose outdoor cultivation (such as with hoop houses and ground covering) and it is not within a designated Scenic Resource area, thus mitigation measure 3.1.1. does not apply.

## *Lighting and Glare*

### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.1, "Aesthetics," supply chain uses in agriculture and resource districts could include the installation of outdoor security lights, outdoor event lighting, or other outdoor lighting. The Sonoma County General Plan provides guidance on outdoor lighting, and some standards are provided in Section 26-18-115 of the County Code related to design review. However, new lighting could be substantial and affect nighttime views and existing Code standards may be insufficient to fully address this impact. Therefore, this impact was identified as insufficient to fully address in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

### **Conclusion**

Compliance with Sections 16304(a)(6) and 16304(a)(7) of the CCR, the County's General Plan, and the County's Zoning Code address the effects of light and glare from individual cannabis uses developed under the proposed Cannabis Program Update. However, the requirements provided in the Code may be insufficient to limit nighttime lighting or prevent glare from use of tarps. This impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Implementation of adopted Mitigation Measure 3.1-4a and 3.1-4b would require additional standards proposed in Sonoma County Code Section 26-18-115(C) regarding scenic resources and additional measures that would be imposed through the zoning permit, use permit, and design review with hearing processes that would prevent excess lighting and spillover of light onto adjacent properties and limit the types of materials used on buildings and at cultivation sites that could create glare. With implementation of these mitigation measures, there would not be substantial new sources of light or glare associated with the proposed Program. Therefore, this impact was identified to be less than significant with mitigation incorporated in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The proposed project includes one mixed-light greenhouse structure, two fully enclosed buildings for indoor cultivation and processing, and associated exterior security lighting. The introduction of these structures and lighting sources is consistent with the types of development evaluated in the Final EIR. The project does not propose any lighting type, operational characteristic, or structural material that was not contemplated in the program-level analysis of indoor and mixed-light cultivation facilities.

Interior lighting associated with mixed-light and indoor cultivation would be contained within enclosed structures. Exterior lighting would be limited to security and operational needs. As required by the certified Final EIR, Mitigation Measure 3.1-4b applies to the project ensuring that exterior lighting is shielded and directed downward, light does not spill over onto adjacent properties, and Building materials are reviewed to prevent substantial glare. The submitted lighting plan and glass reflectance specifications for the proposed project demonstrate the project complies with these requirements. All exterior lighting is downward cast, motion sensing, and fully shielded. The proposed greenhouse structure would utilize LLumar Decorative Textured Frost Series film or similar with a visible light reflectance between nine to twelve percent, which is below the fifteen percent threshold established by the EIR.

As a condition of approval, the project would be required to select a film option with a maximum visible light reflectance of 10%.

Mitigation Measure 3.1-4a does not apply because the project does not propose outdoor cultivation with hoop houses or ground covering and is not within a designated scenic landscape, scenic corridor, or community separator.

Accordingly, the project is within the scope of the certified Final EIR for purposes of lighting and glare, and impacts would remain less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

## **4.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources**

### *Agricultural Resources*

#### Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.2, "Agricultural and Forestry Resources," approximately 159,816 acres of Important Farmland are designated within the County. Development of a full projected area of 17 acres on Important Farmland would not substantially decrease the area of Farmland in the County, as it would only account for 0.01 percent of the total Farmland. Support uses would be critical to protect the future agricultural use of the county's agricultural lands. Thus, the loss of such a relatively small area would not significantly detract from future agricultural use in the unincorporated area. Additionally, cannabis would be considered an agricultural use under the Cannabis Program Update and sites subject to a Williamson Act contract would continue to be implemented. All use permits, zoning permits, and ministerial building permits on parcels subject to Williamson Act contracts would be reviewed for compliance with the contract, and would be amended as necessary to support allowable uses. Thus, there would be no conflict with Williamson Act Contracts within agricultural and resource districts. This impact was identified to be less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

#### Conclusion

No impact related to Williamson Act contracts would occur, compliance with a Williamson Act contract would continue to be implemented and all permits would be subject to review for compliance with the contract. Thus, no impact would occur related to zoning requirements for agricultural uses or any Williamson Act contracts. Potential new developed cannabis uses could be located on Farmland, but would not comprise a substantial area of the county's agricultural resources. Furthermore, support uses would be critical to protect the future agricultural use of the county's agricultural lands. Thus, the loss of such a relatively small area would not significantly detract from future agricultural use in the unincorporated area. This impact was identified to be less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR..

According to the California Department of Conservation's Sonoma County Important Farmland Map, the parcel is designated Farmland of Local Importance, Grazing Land, and other land.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the project would not convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to a non-agricultural use.

The parcel is zoned Land Extensive Agriculture (LEA). This land use designation is intended to enhance and protect lands best suited for permanent agricultural use and capable of relatively low production per acre of land. Agricultural Resource policies focus on establishing and maintaining parcel sizes that are conducive to continued agricultural production and restricting non-agricultural uses to those that are compatible with agriculture. The Zoning Designation

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<sup>2</sup> California Department of Conservation. California Important Farmland Finder. [DLRP Important Farmland Finder \(ca.gov\)](https://dcrp.ca.gov/important-farmland-finder/) Accessed January 12, 2023.

for the project site is also Land Extensive Agriculture, which allows commercial cannabis cultivation (up to 1 acre of cultivation area), including ancillary processing operations, with a use permit (Sec. 26-06-030).

The parcel is not subject to a Williamson Act Land Conservation Contract. Agricultural uses on the parcel include a horse training facility, commercial organic vegetable farm, bee keeping, and livestock grazing, which will continue to operate independent of the cannabis operation. Additionally, all structural development is limited to previously developed areas. The entire project footprint is within an existing previously disturbed area of the parcel formerly used as a rock quarry, decommissioned prior to 1980, then utilized for equipment staging and a parking area since 2001. The project site has been graded and contains compacted gravel. Therefore, the project would not conflict with the existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act Contract.

## *Forestry Resources*

### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.2 discussed impacts to "Agricultural and Forestry Resources." As identified in Section 26-06-020(B)(4), the intent of the RRD zone is to provide lands for a variety of natural resource uses (timber production, geothermal production, aggregate production, watershed protection, and agricultural production activities) as well as very low density residential and recreational uses. Cannabis uses are subject to minimum lot sizes, cultivation area limitations, setbacks, and implementation of best management practices. Additionally, the County has adopted various tree protection ordinances within the County Code to mitigate potential impacts to trees and forestland from cannabis uses and associated accessory uses. For parcels designated with timberland resources, any proposed permanent conversion of such resources would be required to undergo the County's Timberland Conversion permitting process. This impact was identified to be less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

### **Conclusion**

Of the zones where allowable cannabis uses could be developed and operated, only RRD allows for timber production (Section 26-06-020(B)(4)). However, implementation of proposed Cannabis Program Update would involve cannabis cultivation and accessory uses that are consistent with the allowed uses of the RRD zoning district and would not conflict with existing zoning for or cause the rezoning of forest land, timberland, or areas designated for timberland production or conflict with current or future timber production activities. Future cannabis operations that involve the removal of on-site trees would be required to comply with the requirements of the applicable County tree protection ordinance. Compliance with the County's tree protection ordinances would ensure adequate replacement or payment for the removed trees and would suffice in addressing the environmental impacts associated with the removal of on-site protected trees. Compliance with the County's tree protection ordinances would ensure impacts to forestland would be less than significant. Therefore, this impact was identified to be less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The project site is not in a Timberland Production (TP) or Resources and Rural Development (RRD) zoning district, and no commercial timberland is present. The project does not propose any tree removal and is located on a flat graded and graveled area of the parcel historically used for parking vehicles or equipment and previously operated as a quarry prior to 1980. Therefore, the project would not conflict with or cause rezoning of forest land or timberland zoned TP or RRD, and would not result in the loss or conversion of forest land.

### 4.3 Air Quality

#### *Air Quality Plan*

Final EIR Impact 3.3-1 evaluated obstruction of the BAAQMD's efforts to attain and maintain the NAAQS and CAAQS in the SFBAAB. Implementation of the Cannabis Program Update would not result in changes to land use designations, emissions from land uses have already been accounted for in the regional emissions modeling conducted by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), which informs the emissions reduction targets, strategies, and measures of the 2017 Clean Air Plan. Therefore, implementation of the Cannabis Program Update would not obstruct BAAQMD's efforts to attain and maintain the NAAQS and CAAQS in the SFBAAB. This impact was identified to be less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The project is located within the Bay Area Air Management District (BAAD), formerly known as and referred to as the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) until January 22, 2025, and within the San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin. According to California standards, the San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin is currently designated as a nonattainment area for particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in diameter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter (PM<sub>10</sub>), and ozone. Under national standards, the San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin is currently designated as nonattainment for PM<sub>2.5</sub> and 8-hour ozone. The Air Basin is in attainment (or unclassified) for all other air pollutants (BAAD 2025).

The BAAD's 2017 Clean Air Plan (published under the agency's former name, Bay Area Air Quality Management District, BAAQMD 2017a) is the applicable air quality plan for the San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin. The 2017 Clean Air Plan contains 85 individual control measures in nine economic sectors: stationary (industrial) sources, transportation, energy, buildings, agriculture, natural and working lands, waste management, water, and super-GHG pollutants. Many of these control measures require action on the part of the BAAD, the California Air Resources Board (CARB), or local communities, and are not directly related to the actions undertaken for an individual development project. The project would not prevent the BAAD from implementing these actions and none apply directly to the project. The project size would be well below emission threshold screening levels for ozone precursors as discussed below under Construction Air Quality Impacts. As a result, the project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the 2017 Clean Air Plan. The project would also implement required Air Quality Mitigation Measures 3.3-2 and 3.3-4 resulting in less than significant impacts with mitigation incorporated. No events, facilities to accommodate events, or outdoor cultivation are proposed as part of this project. Therefore, the project is consistent with the adopted EIR.

#### *Construction Air Quality Impacts*

Final EIR Impact 3.3-2 evaluated short-term air pollutant emissions associated with new development of cannabis operations. Construction of individual cannabis sites would not generate construction emissions of ROG, NOX, PM10 exhaust, or PM2.5 exhaust exceeding BAAQMD's average daily mass emissions thresholds of significance. However, because the Cannabis Program Update does not include BAAQMD's basic construction mitigation measures as a component of the proposed Cannabis Update Program. Implementation of adopted Mitigation Measure 3.3-2 would reduce construction-generated fugitive dust emissions through various mechanisms including speed limits, limited construction activity during conditions of high wind, watering of unpaved surfaces, covering of loose materials, and washing out of truck tires prior to leaving a construction site. Thus, this impact was identified to be less than significant with mitigation incorporated in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The project would include approximately 29,440-square feet of facilities on an approximately 2.5- acre portion of a 113-acre parcel. Construction activities would be temporary and typical of the types of development evaluated in the Cannabis Program Update EIR. Consistent with the EIR requirements, the project would implement Mitigation Measure 3.3-2, including BAAQMD's Basic Construction Mitigation Measures (e.g., watering exposed surfaces, covering haul

trucks transporting loose material, limiting vehicle speeds on unpaved roads, and cleaning track-out onto adjacent roadways).

Because the scale and nature of the proposed construction activities are consistent with the types of cannabis facilities analyzed in the Draft EIR and the project would implement the required construction dust control measures, the project would not result in construction air quality impacts beyond those evaluated in the Cannabis Program Update EIR and would therefore be consistent with the EIR's conclusions.

### *Operational Air Quality Impacts*

Final EIR Impact 3.3-3 evaluated long-term air pollutant emissions associated with new development of cannabis operations. Cannabis cultivation sites and associated supply chain uses under the Cannabis Program Update would not generate operational emissions of criteria air pollutants and ozone precursors exceeding BAAQMD's average daily mass emissions thresholds of significance. Thus, this impact was identified to be less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

#### *Operation:*

The applicable BAAQMD operational screening size for a light industrial facility is 541,000 square feet of facility, or a site that is 72 acres in size, or a project that includes 1,249 employees. The project would include approximately 29,440-square feet of facilities on an approximately 2.5-acre portion of a 113-acre parcel and would include up to 19 employees. The project would be less than the BAAQMD's operational criteria pollutant and precursor screening level and would not result in substantial long-term operational emissions of criteria air pollutants. Therefore, the project's contribution to a cumulative nonattainment criteria pollutant impact would be less than significant. The BAAQMD screening analysis for a carbon monoxide hotspot is whether a project would increase traffic volumes at a nearby intersection to more than 44,000 vehicles per hour. The project would generate 23 average daily trips. This amount of vehicle trips would not generate significant emissions, and therefore, would not significantly contribute to formation of a carbon monoxide hotspot in the project area. The project would have no long-term effect on PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>, as ground surfaces would be paved, landscaped or otherwise treated to stabilize bare soils after construction, and dust generation would be minimal. The project would generate ozone precursors from new vehicle trips, but would not have a cumulative effect on ozone as the project would not exceed the BAAQMD's thresholds of significance for ozone precursor and therefore is within the scope of the EIR and would result in a less than significant impact.

### *Odors*

#### **Beta Myrcene**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.3, "Air Quality," Sonoma County commissioned Trinity Consultants to evaluate the potential for toxics risk and community exposure of beta-myrcene related to cannabis cultivation. The study included the development of an occupation exposure level (OEL), with the intent of determining the potential to adversely affect members of the public with proximity to cannabis cultivation. Based on a review of readily available clinical and nonclinical data an OEL of 5 mg/m<sup>3</sup> as an 8-hour time-weighted average was recommended. To determine the potential for exposure on the general public, air dispersion modeling was completed to estimate ground-level beta myrcene concentrations at a distance of 100 feet for two hypothetical outdoor cannabis growing operations: a 1-acre facility and a 10-acre facility. The results showed that the maximum concentration of airborne beta-myrcene generated by 1-acre and 10-acre cannabis fields at a distance of 100 feet from the edge of a field would be 0.1 mg/m<sup>3</sup> (23 percent of REL) and 0.3 mg/m<sup>3</sup> (64 percent of REL), respectively. Additionally, at 600 feet, the setback required for residential zoning under the Cannabis Program Update, airborne concentrations of beta myrcene would be reduced to 0.04 mg/m<sup>3</sup> for a 1-acre site and 0.1 mg/m<sup>3</sup> for a 10-acre site. Levels at Cannabis Program defined sensitive land uses, which would be setback at least 1,000 feet from a cannabis premises under the Cannabis Program

Update, would be reduced further. Therefore, based on the established REL, which was developed by experts that relied on substantial evidence (i.e., scientific research), emissions of beta-myrcene would not be at a concentration high enough to cause the community harms related to pharmacological and other adverse effects (e.g., sneezing, itching, nasal congestion and irritation, drowsiness, moderate skin and eye irritations). Moreover, effects such as reproductive and developmental effects only occur at levels higher than 145,000 times higher than the REL and thus are not likely to occur. Thus, while the exposure rate from a 1-acre or 10-acre outdoor operation would already be below the REL, it is reasonable to assume an individual would be exposed to concentrations even further below the calculated 0.1 – 0.3 mg/m<sup>3</sup> on a continuous basis throughout a year. Therefore, with reliance on data and analysis based on scientific evidence, the general public would not experience adverse health effects due to exposure to beta myrcene emissions from an outdoor cannabis cultivation site that could be allowed under the proposed Cannabis Program Update.

### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

Within agricultural and resources districts, new structures could be developed and operated for cultivation, wholesale nursery, centralized processing, and events. Additionally, accessory uses to cultivation would be allowed, such as manufacturing, processing, and packaging. Under the proposed Program Update, specific setback requirements for existing permits and applications, existing cannabis premises may be expanded to meet the proposed Cannabis Program Update allowances, and would remain largely subject to existing setbacks. Proposed Code Section 26-18-115(c)(4)(c) requires cannabis premises to be setback at least 100 feet from the property line; 1,000 feet from incorporated city boundaries and parcels zoned for residential uses (i.e., zones R1, R2, R3, RR, AR, and PC); 500 feet from off-site residences and non-grazing agricultural activities on adjacent parcels; and, 1,000 feet from schools providing education to K-12 grades, public parks, daycare centers, and alcohol or drug treatment facilities. For approved permits and applications in process, outdoor and mixed-light cultivation must be setback 100 feet from property lines and 300 feet from offsite residences. Generally, odor perception tends to decrease with distance; thus, these setback requirements would place limits on odor perceptibility on parcels supporting sensitive land uses and residences. Whether the odor is acceptable or objectionable at various strengths and distances as perceived by individual sensitive receptors varies. While odor levels would decrease substantially by 600 feet and further at 1,000 feet, cannabis odors may be detected as far as 2 miles away. Without installation of adequate odor-reducing systems and continued system maintenance, odors from cultivation, centralized processing, and accessory manufacturing and processing, may be perceptible by sensitive receptors. Thus, this impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

### **Conclusion**

Potentially objectional cannabis odors are associated with cultivation, processing, manufacturing, and consumption (i.e., smoking) of products. While odors decrease with distance and through implementation of odor control systems, remnant offsite odor levels could be detected by receptors and considered a nuisance. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.3-4a and 3.3-4b would reduce potential odor impacts through additional requirements for odor control and require air filtration systems, nuisance odor impacts may continue to occur due to the infeasibility of ventilation and filtration standards on outdoor and mixed-light cultivation and allowable outdoor smoking at events and lounges. While odor control equipment for cultivation, nurseries, centralized processing, and accessory manufacturing and processing operations contained within buildings or greenhouses would mitigate odor impacts, detectable cannabis odors from cultivation, nurseries, centralized processing, and accessory manufacturing and processing operations not contained within buildings cannot be completely eliminated in all circumstances. Thus, this impact was determined to be significant and unavoidable in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

This project application conforms to the setbacks currently effective in Sec. 26-88-254 as well as those studied under the EIR for approved permits and applications in process. Specifically, all mixed-light cultivation is over 100 feet from property lines and 300 feet from offsite residences, and indoor cultivation and support uses exceed the setbacks of the base zone for structural development.

Specifically, the nearest off-site is 330 feet away from the nearest proposed project structure and 400 feet from the proposed mixed light greenhouse. The next closest 5 residences are between 1,000-2,000 feet away. The nearest cluster of residentially zoned parcels with a higher density (5-acres per dwelling unit) are about 3,000 feet, which is slightly over half a mile, to the east of the project site. Those parcels are still relatively large, ranging between approximately five to ten acres in size.

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) consider schools, schoolyards, parks and playgrounds, daycare facilities, nursing homes, hospitals, and residential areas as sensitive air quality land uses and receptors (CARB, 2005). Potential sensitive air quality receptors adjacent to, or in close proximity to, the perimeter of the proposed project sites include the scattered rural residences mentioned above. The project site is located in a rural area with relatively large parcels in the general vicinity ranging from 30 to over 200 acres in size with a mix of vacant and developed parcels, and development, where it exists, is typically 1,000 feet or more apart between adjacent parcels, and away from institutional receptors (the nearest known school is Twin Hills Middle School over 3 miles to the northeast).

As discussed outdoor cultivation and events are not proposed as part of this project, only indoor and mixed light cultivation in addition to processing. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.3-4a would ensure odor related impacts were reduced to a less than significant impact.

#### **4.4 Biological Resources**

The project site is located in and surrounded by the following US Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute quadrangles: Two Rock 7.5-minute USGS quadrangle. A search of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) and California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Rare Plant Inventory was conducted to identify the special-status plants and wildlife that have been documented in these quadrangles (CNDDDB 2024; CNPS 2024). The results of these searches are included in Appendix B.

##### *Special-Status Plant Species and Habitat*

##### Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.4, "Biological Resources," habitat potentially suitable for special-status plants occurs throughout the agriculture and resource districts. Proposed allowable uses in agriculture and resource districts could include construction, grading, other ground disturbance, and vegetation removal. All of these allowable uses have the potential to have significant impacts on special-status plants either by direct loss of special-status plants or their habitat. Special-status plants can be adversely affected by trampling or through direct removal of individuals and/or their habitat, as well as by being excluded from habitat due to the introduction of invasive species. Thus, this impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

##### Conclusion

the Cannabis Program Update could result in trampling or removal of special-status plants and their habitat, as well as exclusion from their habitat due to the introduction of invasive species, due to construction of new structures to support cannabis uses, new cultivation activities on agricultural and resources lands, and operation of small and large cannabis events. Therefore, this impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Implementation of adopted Mitigation Measures 3.4-1a through 3.4-1c would require applicants to identify and avoid special-status plants and would prevent the spread of invasive weeds by removing existing populations on-site and inspecting machinery. These mitigation measures are consistent with the requirements of Attachment A (Section 1, General Requirements and Prohibitions) of SWRCB Order WQ 2023-0102-DWQ and were determined to mitigate this impact to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, this impact was identified to be less than significant with mitigation incorporated in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

A Biological Resources Assessment was prepared for the project site, including database searches (CNDDDB and CNPS), literature review, and two site visits<sup>3</sup>. The site consists of previously graded and compacted quarry lands characterized by gravel, bare ground, ruderal vegetation, and developed agricultural uses. Native soils and intact habitat are largely absent within the 2.5-acre development footprint.

The parcel ranges from relatively flat to moderately sloping in some areas. The parcel contains grassland, some planted ornamentals, and a stand of Eucalyptus over 300 feet to the west of the project site. The project site itself is graded and flat composed of compacted gravel, bare dirt, gravel access roads, and areas of sparse ruderal vegetation.

A literature review revealed eight (8) documented occurrences of special status plant species within Study Area. Although considered important biological resources regionally, none of these plants are expected to occur on the project site because their primary habitat requirements are lacking. Almost all of the species are associated with habitat types which do not occur on or adjacent to the project, such as vernal pools and seasonal wetlands, chaparral, coastal prairie and coastal scrub, forest, and woodland. Many species also require special soil types, such as adobe clay, volcanic, serpentine, or sand, all of which are lacking in the project site. The project site consists of previously graded and disturbed areas, where former quarry uses have removed most of the topsoil and native seedbank, and the property as a whole and project site are actively maintained.

Surveys were performed within the project site January 6, and November 30, 2019. No special-status plant species were observed during the surveys. Although the surveys were conducted outside the blooming period of most plant species, the biologist was able to conclude that the sparse ruderal grassland habitats within the project site would have low to no potential to support special status plant species, and that no significant impacts to special status plants or potentially suitable habitat would occur. Thus, Mitigation Measures 3.4-1b and 3.4-1c are not applicable to the project.

### *Special-Status Wildlife Species and Habitat*

## **Summary of Effects on Special-Status Wildlife Species and Habitat**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.4, "Biological Resources" potential effects to special-status wildlife species and their habitats from land use conversion and development cannabis cultivation and supply chain uses is discussed. Special-status wildlife species summarized in this impact included the following:

- Special-Status Amphibians: California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*), California giant salamander (*Dicamptodon ensatus*), foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylei*), northern red-legged frog (*Rana aurora*), Pacific tailed frog (*Ascaphus truei*), red-bellied newt (*Taricha rivularis*), and southern torrent salamander (*Rhyacotriton variegatus*);
- Northwestern pond turtle (*Emys marmorata*);
- Nesting Raptors (Excluding Northern Spotted Owl): American peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*), bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), long-eared owl (*Asio otus*), northern harrier (*Circus hudsonius*), short eared owl (*Asio flammeus*), Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), and white-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*);
- Northern Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*);
- Other Special-Status Bird Species: bank swallow (*Riparia riparia*), black swift (*Cypseloides niger*), California black rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis contorniculus*), California Ridgway's rail (*Rallus obsoletus*), grasshopper sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*), loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), marbled murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*), purple martin (*Progne subis*), saltmarsh common yellow throat (*Geothlypis trichas sinuosa*), San

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<sup>3</sup> Bill Arnerich "Biological Resource Assessment, 4707 Bloomfield Road, Petaluma, Sonoma County, California,94952" December 11, 2019.

Pablo song sparrow (*Melospiza melodia samuelis*), tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*), Vaux's swift (*Chaetura vauxi*), western snowy plover (*Anarhynchus nivosus nivosus*), western yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*), yellow rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*), yellow warbler (*Setophaga petechia*), yellow-breasted chat (*Icteria virens*), and yellow-headed blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*);

- Crotch bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*);
- Monarch (*Danaus plexippus plexippus*);
- Other Special-Status Butterfly Species: Behren's silverspot butterfly (*Speyeria zerene behrensii*), Callippe silverspot butterfly (*Speyeria callippe callippe*), and Myrtle's silverspot butterfly (*Speyeria zerene myrtleae*);
- California Freshwater Shrimp (*Syncaris pacifica*);
- American Badger (*Taxidea taxus*);
- Northern California Ringtail (*Bassariscus astutus raptor*);
- Special-Status Bats: pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), and western red bat (*Lasiurus frantzii*); and
- Sonoma Tree Vole (*Arborimus pomo*).

### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

Habitat potentially suitable for special-status wildlife occurs throughout the agriculture and resource districts. Proposed allowable uses in agriculture and resource districts could include construction of new buildings to support cannabis uses, as well as ground disturbance and vegetation removal. All of these allowable uses have the potential to have significant impacts on special-status wildlife either by direct loss of special-status wildlife or their habitat. Special-status wildlife can be adversely affected by crushing or trampling or removal of habitat. Special-status wildlife can also be adversely affected by light and noise from project activities as well as from new operations once construction of facilities are completed. Thus, this impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

### **Conclusion**

The Cannabis Program Update could result in crushing, removal, or disturbance of special-status wildlife and their habitat. Thus, this impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Implementation of Final EIR adopted Mitigation Measures 3.4-1a and 3.4-2a through 3.4-2q require applicants to identify and avoid impact to the species and associated habitats listed above. These mitigation measures are consistent with the requirements of Attachment A (Section 1, General Requirements and Prohibitions) of SWRCB Order WQ 2023-0102-DWQ, and guidance provided in General Plan policies, and were determined to mitigate these potential impacts to less-than-significant levels.

The project footprint is located on previously disturbed quarry lands and does not include riparian habitat, wetlands, woodland, or intact native grassland.

### **Special Status Amphibian and other Aquatic Species**

The site is not within designated critical habitat for any known special status amphibian or aquatic species. The project site does not support suitable habitat capable of supporting listed special status amphibian species such as California tiger salamander (CTS) or California red legged frog (CRLF), or other special status aquatic species such as Coho salmon. There is no known occurrence of CTS within a two-mile radius of the project site. No small mammal burrows were found to indicate potential over-summering habitat for frogs or salamanders at the time of the survey, and no work is proposed within a riparian zone or other water sources required to support this species or Coho salmon.

The biologist was able to conclude there is low potential for CTS, CRLF, or Coho salmon to occur within the Study Area and project site, and no significant impacts to special status amphibian or other aquatic species is likely to occur.

Standard construction best management practices as required by Chapter 11 and Chapter 11A of the Sonoma County Code would be implemented to avoid secondary indirect impacts to any nearby water sources..

### **Special-Status Avian Species**

Birds and raptors are protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (50 CFR 10.13), and their nest, eggs, and young are also protected under the California Fish and Wildlife Code (§3503, §3503.5, and §3800). In addition, raptors such as the white-tailed kite are "fully protected" under the Fish and Wildlife Code (§3511). Fully protected raptors cannot be taken or possessed at any time. No special status birds or burrows appropriate for burrowing owl were observed during the field survey. Eucalyptus trees approximately 300-feet to the west of the project site may provide suitable nesting habitat for birds; other trees on the property provide only marginally suitable nesting habitat. No trees are proposed for removal. However, if nesting birds were present in trees at the project site, construction noise would have the potential to impact these species. Mitigation Measure 3.4-2d and 3.4-2g would reduce the impact to nesting birds to a less than significant level.

### **Special-Status Bat Species**

Bats may roost in tree cavities or old structures, such as barns. There is one occurrence of the western red bat, a special-status bat species, within two miles of the project site. No tree removal or use of existing structures are proposed. There are no structures with suitable bat habitat, but the eucalyptus stand (300-feet away) could be used as suitable habitat. Mitigation Measure 3.4-2n would reduce any potential impact to special status bats to a less than significant level.

### **American Badger**

As the 113-acre parcel contains undeveloped land and grazing land, this could provide habitat for American badger. However, suitable habitat for the badger is not present within or immediately adjacent to the project site as the entire project site was the location of a former rock quarry which has since been graveled and graded and adjacent areas consist of steep slopes or are developed. Additionally, a Geotechnical Memo prepared for this project (Geotechnical Memo) notes that the grading work within the project site (quarry site) either exposed firm, generally impervious bedrock, or left less than 6 inches of soil over the bedrock and that weak soils were removed and recompacted and imported fill placed which was also compacted.

The project would not result in a loss of potential badger habitat as none exists within the project site. In addition, the project site is separated from the rest of the parcel by development and the steep slope created during operation of the quarry and most project activities would occur within structures. Therefore, it is unlikely that badgers which may be present elsewhere on the 113-acre parcel outside of the boundaries of the project site would be disturbed by indirect project impacts, such as noise. Therefore, no impacts to American badger or potential habitat would occur as a result of the project, and no mitigation is warranted.

### **Special Status Insects:**

The approximately 2.5-acre project site borders Bloomfield Road and is currently composed of compacted gravel. It is primarily surrounded by other developed areas on the parcel, including barns and horse arenas to the northeast and southeast. To the west, the site transitions to nonnative grassland with sparse shrubs and a small stand of trees. The project site does not contain suitable habitat for special-status species, such as the Crotch bumble bee or certain special-status butterflies.

### **Light Pollution**

The proposed greenhouse would include large, opaque, electronically controlled curtains designed to fully contain the interior lights such that no light would escape between sunset and sunrise. Proposed security lighting would be fully shielded, downward casting, and motion-sensor controlled to remain off unless needed. Therefore, the proposed project would not create a new source of substantial artificial light affecting wildlife and associated ecosystems.

The project footprint is previously disturbed and lacks sensitive habitat. With implementation of mitigation measures 3.4-2d, 3.4-2d g, and 3.4-2dn impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated and consistent with the FEIR.

### *Special-Status Fisheries*

#### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.4, "Biological Resources," new structures could be developed and operated for cultivation, wholesale nursery, centralized processing, and events within agricultural and resources districts. Cannabis cultivation uses would be required to comply with SWRCB Order WQ 2023-0102-DWQ, which includes requirements related to water supply, diversion, and storage, which includes prohibition of surface water diversions unless diverted in accordance with an existing water right as well as numeric and narrative instream flow requirements when water is allowed to be diverted, best management practices for cannabis cultivation, and CCR, Title 4, Section 15011(a)(11) which requires applicants for licensure to provide evidence that their proposed cannabis cultivation site is not located in whole or in part in a watershed or other geographic area that SWRCB or CDFW has determined to be significantly adversely affected by cannabis cultivation pursuant to Section 26060(a)(2) of the Business and Professions Code. Thus, this impact was identified to be less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

#### **Conclusion**

Due to the reasons discussed directly above, the Cannabis Program Update likely would not result in impacts on special-status fisheries. This impact was identified to be less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

No surface water diversion is proposed. The project would utilize groundwater and rainwater capture in compliance with SWRCB Order WQ 2023-0102-DWQ.

The site is not located within a watershed identified by SWRCB or CDFW as significantly adversely affected by cannabis cultivation.

No in-stream work, riparian alteration, or surface water withdrawal is proposed.

The project does not introduce impacts beyond those evaluated in the FEIR. Impacts remain less than significant and within scope.

### *Sensitive Habitats*

#### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.4, "Biological Resources," sensitive natural communities and other sensitive habitats occurs or potentially could occur throughout the agriculture and resource districts. Proposed allowable uses in agriculture and resource districts could include construction, grading, other ground disturbance, and vegetation removal, which have the potential to have significant impacts on sensitive natural communities and other sensitive habitats either by direct loss including type conversion of sensitive natural communities and other sensitive habitats. Impacts include impacts on riparian habitat that occurs outside of the RC Riparian Corridor Combining Zone for supply chain activities. Thus, this impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

#### **Conclusion**

Due to the reasons discussed directly above, the Cannabis Program Update could result in impacts on sensitive natural communities and other sensitive habitats. This impact was identified to be significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Implementation of Final EIR adopted Mitigation Measures 3.4-1a, 3.4-1c, and 3.4-4 would reduce significant impacts related to sensitive natural communities, riparian habitat, and other sensitive habitats because it would require applicants to identify and avoid sensitive resources or provide compensation for the loss of riparian habitat through mitigation banks and a Compensatory Stream and Riparian Mitigation and Monitoring Plan which can include enhancement of existing populations, creation and management of off-site populations, conservation easements, or other appropriate measures. Thus, this impact was identified to be less than significant with mitigation incorporated in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The project site does not contain wetlands, riparian habitat, or sensitive natural communities. An unnamed tributary to Americano Creek is located across Bloomfield Road and outside the project footprint. The project is located beyond the County's designated Streamside Conservation Area and outside riparian buffers.

No grading or disturbance is proposed within sensitive habitat areas.

With implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.4-2d, 3.4-2g, 3.4-2n potential impacts to birds and bats with the potential to occur in the project vicinity would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures 3.4-2d, 3.4-2d g, and 3.4-2dn would apply.

Because the development footprint is previously disturbed and does not include sensitive habitat, the project would not create impacts beyond those evaluated in the FEIR. Impacts remain less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

### *Waters of the US and State*

#### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.4, "Biological Resources," wetlands and other waters occur or potentially could occur throughout the agriculture and resource districts. Proposed allowable uses in agriculture and resource districts could include construction, installation of event facilities such as tents or other activities that could involve trampling, grading, other ground disturbance, and vegetation removal, which have the potential to have significant impacts on wetlands either by impacting hydrology of wetland and other waters, potentially removing water from wetlands and other waters, as well as by being type converted or degraded due to the introduction of invasive species. Thus, this impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

#### **Conclusion**

Due to the reasons discussed directly above, the Cannabis Program Update could result in impacts on wetlands and other waters. This impact was identified to be significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Implementation of Final EIR adopted Mitigation Measures 3.4-1a, 3.4-1c, and 3.4-5 would determine whether there is potential for state or federally protected wetlands to be present as part of compliance with SWRCB Order WQ 2023-0102-DWQ. Therefore, this impact was determined to be mitigated to a less-than-significant level in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The project will be set back at least 50 feet from any seasonal wetland and is located beyond the 50-foot designated streamside conservation area established by the county. This conservation area applies to the designated riparian corridor across the street from the project site. The project site is located down gradient from any seasonal wetland and over 150-feet from the designated Riparian Corridor, and no work is proposed in a riparian zone. Therefore, the project would not affect riparian habitat or any other sensitive natural community.

The project does not affect wetlands or other waters and does not exceed the program-level analysis.

## *Resident or Migratory Movement Corridors and Native Wildlife Nursery Sites*

### **Aquatic Corridors**

#### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.4, "Biological Resources," aquatic movement corridors occur throughout the agriculture and resource districts. Proposed allowable uses in agriculture and resource districts could include construction, grading, other ground disturbance, and vegetation removal, which could include disturbance of surface water diversion infrastructure or stream crossing could adversely affect resident or migratory wildlife corridors through habitat fragmentation, degradation of aquatic habitat (e.g., streams, rivers), or disruption of important wildlife migration paths. Thus, this impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

#### **Conclusion**

Due to the reasons discussed directly above, the Cannabis Program Update could result in impacts on aquatic movement corridors. This impact was identified to be significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Implementation of adopted Mitigation Measure 3.4-1a and 3.4-5 would require a qualified biologist to develop a biotic resource assessment report and identify waters and require avoidance buffers and approval from CDFW and the RWQCB of avoidance buffers. Thus, this impact was identified to be less than significant with mitigation incorporated in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

### **Terrestrial Corridors**

#### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.4, "Biological Resources," terrestrial wildlife movement corridors and black-tailed deer habitat (and therefore mountain lion habitat) occur throughout the agriculture and resource districts. Proposed allowable uses in agriculture and resource districts could include construction, grading, other ground disturbance, and vegetation removal, which could include conversion of natural habitat and entrapment of wildlife in fences and plastic. In addition, as noted above, since the Program Area likely contains native wildlife nursery sites that have not been identified and mapped, and resources that have not been identified cannot be effectively avoided, impacts could still remain. Thus, this impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

#### **Conclusion**

Due to the reasons discussed directly above, the Cannabis Program Update could result in impacts on terrestrial wildlife movement corridors and wildlife nursery sites. This impact was identified to be significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Implementation of Final EIR adopted Mitigation Measures 3.4-1a, 3.4-4, 3.4-5, 3.4-6b, 3.4-6c, and 3.4-6d would reduce impacts on terrestrial wildlife corridors as part of compliance with SWRCB Order WQ 2023-0102-DWQ. Therefore, this impact was determined to be mitigated to a less-than-significant level in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The project footprint is confined to an existing disturbed quarry site surrounded by agricultural uses. The limited 2.5-acre development area within a 113-acre parcel does not create a barrier to regional terrestrial movement. No fencing that would impede wildlife movement beyond what was evaluated in the FEIR is proposed.

No aquatic crossings or stream alterations are proposed.

In accordance with Mitigation Measures 3.4-1a a Biological Resources Assessment was prepared for the project and found that the project site has a low probability of containing suitable habitat for special status species and species of special interest based on the background literature review conducted as part of the assessment process and concluded

that the project is not expected to result in significant impacts to sensitive biological communities, special-status plant species, special-status wildlife species, or to non-special status species protected by the MBTA or Fish and Game Codes. The project does not result in habitat fragmentation or corridor obstruction beyond what was analyzed programmatically. Impacts remain less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

### *Consistency with Local Policies and Ordinances Protecting Biological Resources*

Final EIR Impact 3.4-7 concluded that mitigation measures identified for Impacts 3.4-1, 3.4-2, 3.4-3, 3.4-4, 3.4-5, and 3.4-6 would be consistent and would assist in implementing Sonoma County policies and requirements that protect biological resources, including riparian corridors, wetlands, special-status species, and wildlife movement. Therefore, this impact was determined to be less than significant.

The proposed project is subject to the same General Plan policies, zoning standards, streamside conservation area requirements, and adopted mitigation measures as analyzed in the FEIR. The project:

- Is located on previously disturbed quarry lands;
- Does not encroach into designated riparian corridors or wetlands;
- Does not remove native trees or sensitive habitat;
- Is required to implement all applicable mitigation measures adopted in the FEIR, including pre-construction surveys, avoidance buffers, and habitat protection measures.

Because the project complies with applicable County biological resource protection policies and does not introduce new or more severe impacts beyond those analyzed at the program level, it would not conflict with local policies or ordinances adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental effects.

The project is consistent with local policies and ordinances protecting biological resources and remains within the scope of the certified Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

### *Consistency with an Adopted Habitat Conservation Plan*

#### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.4, "Biological Resources," habitat potentially suitable for California tiger salamander, which has designated critical habitat, and special-status plants covered under the Conservation Strategy occurs throughout the agriculture and resource districts. Proposed allowable uses in agriculture and resource districts could include construction, grading, other ground disturbance, and vegetation removal. All of these allowable uses have the potential to have significant impacts on California tiger salamander and special-status plants. This impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

#### **Conclusion**

Due to the reasons discussed directly above, the Cannabis Program Update would have potentially significant impacts on California tiger salamander and Santa Rosa Plain Conservation Strategy special-status plants. This impact was identified to have no impact in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Implementation of adopted Mitigation Measures 3.4-1a, 3.4-1b, and 3.4-8 would result in identification and avoidance of additional occurrences of Conservation Strategy special-status plants and California tiger salamander. Therefore, this impact was determined to be less than significant with mitigation incorporated in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The site is not within designated critical habitat for California tiger salamander. No Conservation Strategy species habitat is present within the disturbed project footprint and the site is not located within the Santa Rosa Plain Conservation Strategy plan area.

The project would not conflict with an adopted habitat conservation plan and does not exceed the scope of impacts evaluated in the FEIR.

## **4.5 Cultural Resources**

### *Historic Resources*

#### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.5, "Cultural Resources," cannabis operations could result in the reuse of existing buildings or construction of new buildings and the use of smaller sheds for storage of materials. These activities could occur in areas with known historical sites or in areas where structures have not yet been evaluated for historical significance. New permitted cannabis cultivation operations within the County would be required to comply with SWRCB General Order Attachment A. However, SWRCB General Order Attachment A does not require the recordation or evaluation of buildings or structures that have not been previously evaluated and does not apply to noncultivation cannabis uses. Thus, implementation of the proposed Cannabis Program Update could result in damage to or destruction of a historic building or structure, thereby resulting in a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064.5. This impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

#### **Conclusion**

Implementation of the Cannabis Program Update would require compliance with County and state standards related to protection of historical resources, which include performing records searches and further evaluating any positive results. However, SWRCB General Order Attachment A does not require the recordation or evaluation of buildings or structures that have not been previously evaluated. Therefore, this impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Implementation of adopted Mitigation Measure 3.5-1 would reduce potentially significant impacts by requiring protection of historic resources within the County's historic districts. Further, this mitigation requires that actions will be taken to record, evaluate, avoid, or otherwise treat the resource appropriately, in accordance with pertinent laws and regulations. However, State CEQA Guidelines, section 15126.4(b)(2) notes that in some circumstances, documentation of a historical resource shall not mitigate the effects of demolition of that resource to a less-than-significant level because the historic resources would no longer exist. Thus, this impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The project site is graded and flat within an existing graveled area. The project site was previously utilized a rock quarry, formerly known as Bloomfield Quarry, according to the 1980 Aggregated Resources Management plan. The quarry was decommissioned sometime prior to 1980, and the site been used for agricultural equipment staging and parking since at least 2001 when the parcel came under current ownership. There are no permanent structures within the proposed project site. The project site was graded to manage water flow, storm water run-off and sediment and erosion control in 2019.

As no structures exist within the proposed project site, no impacts to a historic building or structure would occur as a result of this project.

### *Archaeological Resources and Human Remains*

#### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.5, "Cultural Resources," development of new structures and operation of cannabis uses within agricultural and resource districts would result in limited levels of soil

disturbance. County Code Section 11.14.050 contains procedures to protect human remains and archaeological resources that would apply to cannabis supply chain uses and County Code Section 36.20.040 contains similar procedures that would apply to agricultural grading and drainage associated with cultivation activities. In addition, Attachment A (General Requirements and Prohibitions) of SWRCB Order WQ 2017-0023-DWQ, Terms 21 and 22 of the General Requirements and Prohibitions require CHRIS records searches, NAHC record searches, and archaeological surveys or evaluations (if necessary). Additionally, cannabis cultivation uses would be required to comply with Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, and PRC Section 5097.98, which require all work to be halted in the vicinity where human remains are discovered during construction grading and drainage. However, the SWRCB General Order is specific to cultivation and while the County's standards address protection in the event of accidental discovery, they do not avoid impacts to known resources in the first instance. Thus, this impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

### **Conclusion**

As described above, implementation of the proposed Cannabis Program Update would require compliance with County and state standards related to protection of archaeological resources. However, for all other activities, while County standards address protection in the event of accidental discover, they do not avoid impacts to known resources in the first instance. This impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Implementation of adopted Mitigation Measures 3.5-2a, 3.5-2b, 3.5-2c, 3.5-3a, and 3.5-3b would reduce further impacts through avoidance and monitoring, if requested by a local tribe, to identify any previously unknown tribal cultural resources that may be uncovered during earth moving activities and employment of canine forensics teams to identify the location of human remains, if deemed appropriate by the County and Tribe. Therefore, this impact was identified to be less than significant with mitigation incorporated in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The project was referred to the Northwest Information Center (NWIC) on February 2, 2021. A response was received on February 25, 2021, stating the proposed project area has a low possibility of containing unrecorded archaeological sites, and therefore did not recommend a study.

On February 2, 2021, Permit Resource Management Department (PRMD) staff referred the project application to Native American Tribes within Sonoma County to request consultation under AB52 (the request for consultation period ended 30 days later March 4, 2021). No requests for consultation were received.

Although NWIC did not recommend a study and no request for consultation were received from Native American Tribes within Sonoma County, in accordance with the Mitigation Measure 3.15-1a, the applicant retained ALTA Archaeological Consulting who prepared an Archaeological Survey Report (Survey Report)<sup>4</sup>.

The Survey Report included a cultural resources records search from the Northwest Information Center (CHRIS-NWIC), an archaeological field survey, and a Native American Sacred Lands File Search through the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). No cultural resources were identified within the Project Area as a result of the records search, literature review, Native American outreach, or archaeological field survey. As a result, the study concluded that, as designed the project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a Tribal cultural resource (TCR) or historical resource.

The County also has a standard "accidental discovery" condition of approval that work be halted if unanticipated buried cultural resources are encountered during construction. The condition is applied to all use permits that involve ground disturbance, and requires that the following notes be printed on all grading and building permit plans involving ground disturbing activities:

"If prehistoric or historic archaeological resources, paleontological resources, or tribal cultural resources are encountered during ground-disturbing work, all work in the immediate vicinity shall be halted and the operator must

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<sup>4</sup> ALTA Archaeological, "Archaeological Survey Report," April 7, 2026.

immediately notify the Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD) – Project Review staff of the find. The applicant shall be responsible for the cost to have a qualified paleontologist, archaeologist or tribal cultural resource specialist under contract to evaluate the find and make recommendations to protect the resource in a report to PRMD. Paleontological resources include fossils of animals, plants or other organisms. Prehistoric resources include humanly modified stone, shell, or bones, hearths, firepits, obsidian and chert flaked-stone tools (e.g., projectile points, knives, choppers), midden (culturally darkened soil containing heat-affected rock, artifacts, animal bone, or shellfish remains), stone milling equipment, such as mortars and pestles, and certain sites features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe. Historic resources include all by-products of human use greater than fifty (50) years of age including, backfilled privies, wells, and refuse pits; concrete, stone, or wood structural elements or foundations; and concentrations of metal, glass, and ceramic refuse.

If human remains are encountered, work in the immediate vicinity shall be halted and the operator shall notify PRMD and the Sonoma County Coroner immediately. At the same time, the operator shall be responsible for the cost to have a qualified archaeologist under contract to evaluate the discovery. If the human remains are determined to be of Native American origin, the Coroner must notify the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours of this identification so that a Most Likely Descendant can be designated and the appropriate measures implemented in compliance with the California Government Code and Public Resources Code.”

Therefore, the proposed project would not result in substantial adverse change in the significance of archaeological resource or human remains.

## 4.6 Energy

Final EIR Impact 3.6-1 and 3.3-2 evaluated energy usage associated with new cannabis cultivation operations and supply chain uses. Future cannabis cultivation sites would be built to the California Energy Code in effect at the time of construction, subject to CCR, title 4, section 16305 regarding energy sources that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, the Cannabis Program Update does not include provisions that address renewable energy or energy efficiency, which could conflict with the Sonoma County Climate Change Action Resolution. Implementation of adopted Mitigation Measure 3.6-2 would require provisions that address renewable energy or energy efficiency to be incorporated to improve the energy efficiency and renewable energy potential of new cannabis cultivation and supply chain uses. Therefore, these impacts were determined to be less than significant with mitigation incorporated in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Project construction would include temporary use of equipment such as bulldozers, excavators, skid steers, compactors, and boom lifts for limited periods. Long-term energy use would be associated with indoor and mixed-light cultivation and processing, which require electricity for lighting, ventilation, odor control, irrigation, and security systems.

The Final EIR for the Cannabis Program Update evaluated the energy consumption of indoor and mixed-light cultivation countywide. It found that, while electricity demand is higher than for most other agricultural activities, compliance with the County’s renewable energy mandate ensures that long-term operation would not result in inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary energy use. The Draft EIR also concluded that cultivation facilities using high-efficiency equipment (such as LED lighting, efficient HVAC and dehumidification systems, and insulation) further reduce energy intensity per unit of production. The proposed Project incorporates these efficiency features, including:

- Use of high-efficiency LED lighting for cultivation and building lighting;
- High-efficiency insulation for indoor structures;
- HVAC equipment free of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) or halons;
- Motion-sensor activated security lighting to minimize unnecessary energy use;
- A rainwater capture system and timer/ sensor-driven drip irrigation to reduce energy required for pumping groundwater; and

- Encouragement of local hiring and provision of bicycle parking to reduce transportation-related energy use.
- Enrollment in the Sonoma Clean Power EverGreen program, to supply 100 percent renewable energy for project operations.

Because construction energy use would be temporary, operational energy demand would be supplied entirely by renewable sources, and the Project incorporates efficiency measures consistent with industry best practices and County standards, the Project would not result in potentially significant impacts related to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. Mitigation Measure 3-6.2 will ensure that impacts are less than significant.

## 4.7 Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources

### *Seismic, Geologic, and Soil Stability Hazards*

#### Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.7, "Geology, Soils, and Minerals Resources," the Alquist-Priolo Act requires that no buildings intended for human occupancy would be allowed on or within 50 feet of an active fault trace. Requirements associated with the SWRCB Order WQ 2023-0102- DWQ, CBC, Alquist-Priolo Fault Act, and Sonoma County Code ordinances contain building specification, siting requirements, and BMPs that avoid the risks of loss, injury, or death resulting from seismic and geologic hazards, such as fault rupture, seismic ground shaking, or soil erosion. This impact would be less than significant.

#### Conclusion

Development and operation of new buildings would be subject to the building code requirements established by the County and State. For these reasons, construction and operation of new or expanded facilities associated with cannabis activities would not create new seismic events or exacerbate existing seismic or geologic hazards. Because existing County and State regulations limit the risk of geologic hazard and the program would not exacerbate existing geologic hazards, this impact was identified to be less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The project site is not within a fault hazard zone as defined by the Alquist-Priolo fault maps.<sup>5</sup> The nearest fault line is the San Andreas Fault approximately 8.5 miles west of the project site.

. The project proposes construction of all new facilities and is located on an existing graded graveled area. The project site was graded to manage water flow, storm water run-off and sediment and erosion control in 2019. Furthermore, erosion and sediment control provisions of the Drainage and Storm Water Management Ordinance (Chapter 11 Construction Grading and Drainage and Chapter 11A Stormwater Quality, Sonoma County Code) and Building Ordinance (Chapter 7, Sonoma County Code) requires implementation of flow control best management practices to reduce runoff.

The project site is not located within a High or Very High Liquefaction Hazard Area, or a designated Landslide Hazard Area. The project site is graded and flat within an existing graveled area. No project construction or operation is proposed on any non-graded area of the parcel. Additionally, the design and construction of new structures are subject to engineering standards of the California Building Code (CBC), which consider soil properties, seismic shaking and foundation type. The project would therefore not expose people to substantial risk of injury from seismic shaking. Therefore, the potential impact from landslides or liquefaction would be less than significant.

Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code is an index of the relative expansive characteristics of soil as determined through laboratory testing. The project site is located within the boundary of a former rock quarry and consists of

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<sup>5</sup> California Department of Conservation, Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation, [Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation \(ca.gov\)](https://www.caloes.ca.gov/Portals/0/Earthquake_Zones_of_Required_Investigation.pdf), accessed January 15, 2023.

imported, non-native soil made of up of crushed rock and compacted gravel. According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), soils near the project site consist of Los Osos Clay Loam (15-30% slopes) which has a moderate to high shrink swell potential and Steinbeck Loam (2-9% slopes) which has a low shrink swell potential<sup>6</sup>. Additional compliance with standard Building Code requirements would ensure that potential soil expansion at the project site would be mediated through professional engineering design and practice. Therefore, risks from expansive soils would be less than significant.

The project site is not in an area served by public sewer. Soils on-site are capable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks. The project site will include the construction of three new structures which will be served by a single new septic system. This septic system and leach field will be located west of the proposed structures and would comply with County regulations related to the disposal of wastewater.

### *Unique Paleontological and Geologic Resources*

#### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.7, "Geology, Soils, and Minerals Resources," cannabis uses within agricultural and resource districts would be required to comply with specific setback requirements. However, cultivation and development could require grading and other earth-moving activities that could disturb unique paleontological resources. Thus, this impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

#### **Conclusion**

As discussed above, earth moving activities to support cannabis cultivation and supply chain uses would occur. There are no procedures in place to address the potential discovery of a unique paleontological resource. If work is not stopped upon discovery of a paleontological resource, it may become damaged. Thus, this impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Implementation of Final EIR adopted Mitigation Measure 3.7-1 would protect accidentally discovered paleontological resources by requiring retention of a Qualified Professional Paleontologist to prepare a project-specific PRMMP, which will include a pre-construction paleontological site assessment and develop procedures and protocol for paleontological monitoring and recordation, construction worker awareness training, and procedures for discovery of paleontological resources. Therefore, this impact was determined to be less than significant with mitigation incorporated in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The proposed project area has a low possibility of containing unrecorded paleontological resources or unique geologic feature. All native soils have already been removed and disturbed due to the former quarry use. No significant impacts are anticipated.

However, to further reduce impacts Mitigation Measure 3.7-1 would protect accidentally discovered paleontological resources encountered during work at the project location.

## **4.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Final EIR Impact 3.8-1 concluded that operation of cannabis cultivation sites and supply chain operations would result in GHG emissions that would conflict with state GHG reduction targets and decarbonization efforts. CCR, title 4, section

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<sup>6</sup> Natural Resources Conservation Services Web Soil Survey.

<https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/WebSoilSurvey.aspx>, accessed January 15, 2023.

16305 requires that indoor, Tier 2 mixed-light, and nurseries using Tier 2 lighting commercial cannabis cultivation license holders ensure that electrical power used for cannabis activity meets the average electricity GHG emissions intensity required by their local utility provider pursuant to the California Renewables Portfolio Standard Program in division 1, part 1, chapter 2.3, article 16 (commencing with section 399.11) of the Public Utilities Code. CCR, title 4, section 16305 also requires that licensed cultivator's average weighted GHG emission intensity, as calculated and reported upon license renewal pursuant to CCR, title 4, section 15020, is greater than the local utility provider's GHG emission intensity, the licensee shall obtain carbon offsets to cover the excess in carbon emissions from the previous annual licensed period. Implementation of Final EIR adopted Mitigation Measure 3.8-1 would require provisions that address renewable energy or energy efficiency to be incorporated to improve the energy efficiency and renewable energy potential of new cannabis cultivation and supply chain uses, as well as identify measures to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and associated GHG emissions. Although it is foreseeable that application of Mitigation Measure 3.8-1 would be sufficient to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level, the specific project design features recommended above may be deemed infeasible in the future due to economic constraints or the rural nature of future licensed cannabis cultivation sites. Because of these uncertainties, this impact was determined to be significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The proposed project consists of commercial cannabis cultivation and centralized processing consistent with the land uses and operational characteristics evaluated in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR. The scale and intensity of development fall within the range of activities contemplated in the program-level analysis.

### **Building Energy**

The project includes construction of one greenhouse, one indoor cultivation structure, and one indoor propagation and centralized processing structure. These facilities are consistent with the indoor and mixed-light cultivation operations analyzed in the Final EIR.

The project does not proposed natural gas appliances or natural gas plumbing. Electrical power would be provided through the local utility provider, and the project would be required to comply with CCR, Title 4, Section 16305, which mandates that licensed cultivators meet or offset electricity-related GHG emission intensity standards established pursuant to the California Renewables Portfolio Standard. If the project's average weighted GHG emission intensity exceeds that of the local utility provider, carbon offsets would be required in accordance with State regulations.

A 2,000-gallon propane tank is proposed solely for emergency backup generator use during power shutoffs or other grid outages. The generator would not be used for routine operations.

Consistent with Mitigation Measure 3.8-1 and the regulatory framework described in the Final EIR, the project incorporates energy efficiency measures including high-efficiency LED lighting, high-efficiency insulation, and HVAC systems that do not utilize chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) or halons. All buildings would be constructed in compliance with the California Energy Code in effect at the time of construction.

The energy demands associated with indoor and mixed-light cultivation were contemplated in the program-level analysis. The proposed project does not introduce new operational characteristics or energy sources that would exceed or differ materially from those analyzed in Impact 3.8-1.

### **Transportation and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)**

The project does not include residential, commercial office, or retail development, nor are events or other visitor serving uses proposed as part of the project. It consists of agricultural cultivation and ancillary processing uses consistent with those evaluated in the Final EIR.

A project-specific VMT analysis is not required since the project does not include events and is located within a VMT efficient area as shown in Figure 3.14-1 of the EIR, which indicates transportation analysis zones (TAZs) where the VMT per employee is at least 15 percent below the county-wide average. Individual cannabis projects proposed for sites in TAZs that have a VMT per employee at least 15 percent below the regional average are presumed to have a less-than-significant VMT impact.

The operational characteristics of the project are consistent with the cultivation and processing activities evaluated in the program EIR. The project does not introduce new land use types, transportation patterns, or trip intensities beyond those contemplated in the program-level analysis.

The project would comply with the most recently adopted California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen), including applicable requirements for electric vehicle (EV) capable parking spaces for nonresidential development. The project proposes 21 all-weather parking spaces, including EV-capable spaces consistent with current CALGreen standards.

### **Construction Emissions**

The Bay Area Air District's 2022 CEQA guidance does not establish separate construction-related GHG thresholds, recognizing that construction emissions represent a small fraction of a project's lifetime GHG emissions. Construction activities associated with the project would be temporary and consistent with the types of construction activities evaluated in the Final EIR.

### **Conclusion**

The proposed project is consistent with the type, scale, and operational characteristics of cannabis cultivation and processing uses analyzed in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR. The project would comply with applicable State energy regulations, including CCR, Title 4, Section 16305, and would incorporate energy efficiency measures consistent with Mitigation Measure 3.8-1.

The project does not introduce new sources of greenhouse gas emissions, new land use types, or substantially greater operational intensity than those evaluated at the program level. Therefore, the project's GHG impacts are within the scope of Impact 3.8-1 of the certified Cannabis Program Update Final EIR and would not result in new or substantially more severe significant impacts. No additional GHG analysis is required.

## **4.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

### *Accidental Release of Hazardous Materials*

#### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.9, "Hazards and Hazardous Materials," cannabis uses may involve typical hazardous materials associated more generally with commercial uses, such as cleaning compounds, sanitizing agents, and pesticide chemicals. The new or expanded cannabis operations would be required to comply with state and local cannabis-related requirements regarding the storage and use of hazardous materials, which would minimize the potential for accident conditions involving the transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials. State programs such as Title 6 of the CCR, as well as USDOT, CHP, and Caltrans Regulations would protect public health and the environment from hazardous material usage through storage requirements and measures. Under CCR, title 4, Division 9, hazard and safety requirements for state licensing would be required to be implemented. Implementation of these regulations and required setbacks, along with compliance with manufacturers' instructions, would minimize significant impacts related to the use and handling of hazardous materials. This impact was identified to be less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

### **Conclusion**

All cannabis uses allowed under the Cannabis Program Update would be required to comply with all the applicable regulations and policies described above regarding the safe handling, transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials. Compliance with these regulations would reduce the exposure of hazards to the public and environment. Therefore, this impact was identified to be less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The proposed project consists of commercial cannabis cultivation and centralized processing consistent with the land uses and operational characteristics evaluated in the program-level EIR. The project does not include chemical extraction

or volatile manufacturing processes, and would not introduce hazardous materials beyond those typical of cultivation and agricultural processing uses.

### **Construction Activities**

Construction may involve the temporary use and transport of fuels, lubricants, paints, solvents, and other materials commonly associated with building activities. These activities are consistent with the types of construction impacts evaluated in the Final EIR.

All hazardous materials used during construction would be required to comply with applicable federal and State regulations, including oversight by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), California Department of Toxic Substances Control, and Sonoma County authorities. Standard construction best management practices would be implemented to prevent spills and ensure proper storage and handling. Construction-related hazardous materials use would be temporary and would not introduce new or substantially more severe impacts than those analyzed in the program EIR.

### **Operational Activities**

During operation, the project may involve the use of plant nutrients, fertilizers, fungicides, approved pesticides, cleaning agents, and similar materials typical of commercial agricultural operations. These materials were contemplated in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Plant nutrients and fertilizers would be stored in secure, enclosed areas protected from weather exposure. Liquid products would be stored with secondary containment where required. Materials would be stored on pallets and/or shelving to allow for spill detection and containment. After dilution, agricultural chemicals would be administered through a controlled irrigation system monitored for leaks.

The project would be required to comply with Sonoma County Code including all applicable hazardous waste generator, underground storage tank, aboveground storage tank, and AB 185 requirements. Any required permits from the Fire Prevention Division, the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) of Sonoma County Fire and Emergency Services, or the Agricultural Commissioner would be obtained and maintained.

In addition, the project must comply with applicable California Department of Food and Agriculture cannabis regulations governing hazardous materials handling and storage. These regulatory requirements are consistent with those relied upon in the Final EIR to reduce hazards impacts.

The project does not propose unusual quantities of hazardous materials, chemical extraction processes, or other high-risk operations beyond those evaluated in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

### **Schools and Sensitive Receptors**

No existing or proposed schools are located within one-quarter mile of the project site. The nearest school, Twin Hills Middle School, is located more than three miles from the site. The project therefore would not result in hazardous materials exposure risks to nearby schools beyond those considered in the Final EIR.

The proposed project is consistent with the type, scale, and operational characteristics of cannabis cultivation and processing uses analyzed in Section 3.9 of the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR. The project would comply with all applicable federal, State, and local regulations governing the storage, transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials.

The project does not introduce new hazardous materials, new operational processes, or increased quantities of hazardous substances beyond those evaluated at the program level. Accordingly, the project's hazards and hazardous materials impacts are within the scope of the certified Cannabis Program Update Final EIR and would not result in new or substantially more severe significant impacts. No additional hazards analysis is required.

## *Hazardous Materials Sites*

### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.9, "Hazards and Hazardous Materials," cannabis sites located on a hazardous materials site would be required to comply with the Government Code Section 65962.5, the Unified Program, Sonoma County CUPA's hazardous materials programs, and Sonoma County General Plan Policy PS-4b. General Plan Policy PS-4b requires the County to prepare and maintain an inventory of sites with storage or use of hazardous materials in threshold planning quantities as determined by Federal and State laws. However, there may be contamination from previous or historical practices from certain land uses which could expose construction workers, the public, or the environment to adverse effects, depending on the volume of hazardous materials involved and their concentrations. Thus, this impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

### **Conclusion**

While sites that have been listed pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 would be subject to remediation requirements per DTSC, SCWRCB, or another agency with jurisdiction, there may be contamination from previous or historical practices from certain land uses (e.g., agricultural use of pesticides and herbicides), placement of undocumented fill, presence of naturally occurring asbestos, or even authorized disposal of hazardous wastes from prior land uses. These materials could expose construction workers, the public, or the environment to adverse effects, depending on the volume, hazardous materials involved, and their concentrations. Thus, this impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Implementation of Final EIR adopted Mitigation Measure 3.9-3 would identify and address hazardous site conditions prior to development or expansion of cannabis uses. Compliance with existing laws and regulations would reduce the risk related to hazardous materials. Therefore, this impact was identified as less than significant with mitigation incorporated in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

There are no known hazardous materials sites on the project site or within 5,000 feet, based on a review of the following databases (commonly known as the Cortese List) on March 23, 2023.

1. The State Water Resources Control Board Geotracker database,<sup>7</sup>
2. The California Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor database (formerly known as Calsites),<sup>8</sup> and
3. The CalRecycle Solid Waste Information System (SWIS)<sup>9</sup>.

## *Airport Hazards*

### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.9, "Hazards and Hazardous Materials," cannabis uses would be required to comply with CALUP restrictions on the intensity of land uses and standards for maximum height of structures. The Cannabis Program Update itself would be required to be referred to the ALUC, prior to its approval by the County, to determine the Cannabis Program Update's proposed zoning code changes are consistent with the

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<sup>7</sup> State Water Resources Control Board. "Geotracker Database," <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>, accessed March 23, 2023.

<sup>8</sup> Department of toxic Substances Control. "Envirostor Database", <https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>, accessed March 23, 2023.

<sup>9</sup> Cal Recycle. "Waste Information System (SWIS) Facility/Site Search," , accessed March 23, 2023.

CALUP's land use compatibility criteria and restrictions. In addition, cannabis uses would be required to comply with, as applicable, CFR Title CFR Part 77.9, regarding FAA notification. Thus, this impact was identified as less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

### **Conclusion**

Adherence to existing regulatory compliance regarding airport safety and land use compatibility requirements mandated by applicable federal and state laws and County regulations would minimize the risk of new and existing cannabis cultivation under the Cannabis Program Update resulting in a safety hazard or noise hazard for people residing or working within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport. For these reasons, this impact was identified as less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The site is not within the Airport Referral Area as designated by the Sonoma County Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan, or within two miles of the Petaluma Municipal Airport, or other Public Use Airport.

## **4.10 Hydrology and Water Quality**

### *Water Quality and Drainage*

#### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.10, "Hydrology and Water Quality," compliance with relevant water quality regulations such as the SWRCB Order WQ 2023-0102-DWQ, BMPs, and policies would reduce the risk of water degradation from soil erosion and other pollutants related to project construction and operational activities. These requirements would ensure that the project does not contribute or exacerbate identified water quality contamination in the applicable WQCP or impact surface drainage. Thus, this impact was identified as less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

#### **Conclusion**

Construction and operation of cannabis facilities approved under the Cannabis Program Update would not violate any water quality standards, waste discharge requirements, or otherwise substantially degrade water quality through compliance with State and local water quality regulations, BMPs, and policies. Consequently, the Cannabis Program Update would not result in violation of water quality standards or existing drainage patterns. This impact was identified as less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The proposed project would be constructed within a previously disturbed and graded former quarry site. No development is proposed within a riparian corridor or watercourse, and the project footprint exceeds required setbacks from the nearby designated riparian corridor.

Project construction would require a grading permit and compliance with the County's Construction Grading and Drainage Ordinance (Chapter 11) and Storm Water Quality Ordinance (Chapter 11A). Erosion and sediment control measures and post-construction stormwater treatment would be required as conditions of approval. The project must also enroll under and comply with the current SWRCB Cannabis General Order, which requires preparation of a Site Management Plan and implementation of best management practices.

The project does not introduce new disturbance types, expanded grading beyond previously disturbed areas, or new discharge mechanisms beyond those evaluated in the Final EIR. Therefore, water quality and drainage impacts would not be new or more severe than those analyzed in Impact 3.10-1 of the certified Final EIR.

Water Quality and Drainage impacts are within the scope of the certified EIR.

## Groundwater Resources

Final EIR Impact 3.10-2 identified cannabis uses may rely upon groundwater resources which could reduce groundwater levels. Existing and future permitted cannabis facilities could generate a total water demand of approximately 500 acre-feet per year. Projects within the County must comply with County requirements that aim to limit adverse effects related to groundwater use through requirements of hydrogeologic reports and groundwater monitoring. However, these requirements are related to discretionary permits. Without a performance standard, new cannabis facilities that are on groundwater could deplete aquifers. Implementation of Final EIR adopted Mitigation Measures 3.10-2a and 3.10-2b would require proof of adequate water supply to be incorporated into the County's Standards for cannabis projects and would require metering and monitoring at sites subject to zoning permit. Therefore, this impact was determined to be less than significant with mitigation in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The project site is located within Class 2 - Major natural recharge groundwater availability area and is not within a high- or medium-priority groundwater basin subject to a Sustainable Groundwater Management Plan. The project would rely on an onsite well for a portion of its water supply. A site specific hydrogeologic report was prepared in compliance with Policy and Procedure 8-1-14 to evaluate groundwater availability and cumulative conditions<sup>10</sup>. With rainwater capture and recycled water systems, net groundwater demand would be approximately 1.27 acre-feet per year. Conditions of approval further limit groundwater extraction to 1.0 acre-foot per year.

The hydrogeologic analysis concluded that pumping at the proposed rate would not result in aquifer overdraft, would not significantly impact neighboring wells, and would be sustainable under cumulative conditions in the study area.

Mitigation Measure 3.10-2a also requires County groundwater monitoring and reporting requirements consistent with mitigation adopted in the Final EIR.

The hydrogeologic report identified the cumulative amount of development and uses allowed in the area and assessed the impact of the proposed project's groundwater use on overdraft conditions, land subsidence, surface water resources, and neighboring wells.

**Table 3. Onsite Water Use:**

<b>Cultivation Water Use</b>	
Mixed Light Cultivation:	344,560 gallons/year
Indoor Cultivation:	143,374 gallons/year
Propagation:	24,517 gallons/year
Employees:	<u>27,375 gallons/year</u>
<b>Total Cultivation Water Use</b>	<b>539,826 gallons/year or ~1.66 acre-feet/year</b>
Rainwater Capture:	275,101 gallons/year
Recycled Water (captured from onsite uses):	<u>65,700 gallons/year</u>

<sup>10</sup> Hurvitz Environmental Services, Inc., "Hydrogeologic Assessment Report, 4707 Bloomfield Rd, Petaluma, CA", dated January 26, 2022.

<b>Total Offsets</b>	<b>340,801 gallons/year or ~1.05 acre-feet/year</b>
<b>Total NET Cultivation Groundwater Use</b>	<b>199,025 gallons/year or ~0.61 acre-feet/year</b>
<b>Other Groundwater Use</b>	
Horses:	8,541 acre-feet/year
Landscaping:	<u>205,286 gallons/year</u>
<b>Total Other Groundwater Use</b>	<b>213,827 gallons/year or ~0.66 acre-feet</b>
So, total groundwater use onsite can now be calculated as follows:	
199,025 gallons/year (groundwater used for cannabis) + 213,827 gallons/year	
(groundwater used for horses, landscaping) =	
<b><u>412,852 gallons/year or 1.27 acre-feet/year = Total Groundwater Use Onsite</u></b>	

### Water Use Impact Analysis

The hydrogeologic assessment evaluated potential cumulative impacts based on the known geologic, hydrologic, and groundwater characteristics in the area. Given the generally large parcel size in the area the cumulative impact area (CIA) for the study was a 925-acre polygon with the project site in the approximate center. The CIA encompassed 37 separate properties, ranging in size from 1.57-acres to 480-acres. Most are engaged in commercial agriculture (grazing); thirty-two (32) are developed with at least one primary residence, five (5) are pasture only with no residence.

The total aquifer storage value in the area was calculated at 11,933 acre-feet with an annual recharge rate of 247 acre-feet, and 123.5 acre-feet during drought years. The total CIA annual onsite water demand, excluding the project, was estimated to be 54.25 acre-feet (21.9% of non-drought year recharge, and 43.9% of drought year recharge), and estimated potential future demand to be 72.68 acre-feet (29.4% of non-drought year recharge, and 58.8% of drought year recharge), which are both less than 1 percent of the total calculated aquifer storage capacity in the cumulative impact area. The estimated annual water demand for the cannabis project is 1.66 acre-feet (including employees), however almost two-thirds (1.05 acre-feet/year) of the annual cannabis irrigation water demand will come from the applicants proposed onsite rainwater capture and recycled water systems, leaving the total groundwater demand at 0.61 acre-feet. Recycled water will come from a series of dehumidifiers placed in the indoor and mixed light cultivation structures that will capture water from the air to be re-used for irrigation purposes. The study concluded that total annual water demand proposed for the site including cannabis, landscaping, gardens, and livestock use (approximately 2.3 acre-feet per year without estimated offsets; 1.27 acre-feet/year with water re-use and rainwater capture offsets) is sustainable based on current and future development within the CIA.

In addition, the study found that ground water demand proposed for the Site is not significant with respect to the potential future conditions (approx. 0.8%) in the Cumulative Impact Area. Therefore, the report concluded that pumping and groundwater extraction from the Site for the proposed cannabis project is not likely to create an overdraft condition at this time and would be sustainable for the foreseeable future. The study determined that pumping and groundwater extraction at the proposed Project Irrigation Well will not significantly impact neighboring wells or stream flow conditions in nearby creeks.

Conditions of approval and mitigation measure 3.10-2a will require well monitoring and limit groundwater use in accordance with the proposal to employ rainwater capture and water reuse. Although the hydrogeologic study determined that no significant impact to groundwater resources would result from on-site water use of 2.3 acre-feet per

year, to further reduce potential groundwater impacts, total well water use for the project, inclusive of employee uses and irrigation of cannabis, will be limited to 1.0 acre-feet per year by condition of approval.

The scale of groundwater use is consistent with the cultivation water demands analyzed programmatically in Impact 3.10-2 of the certified Final EIR. The project does not increase groundwater extraction beyond the range anticipated in the program-level analysis and does not introduce new impact mechanisms.

Groundwater impacts are within the scope of the certified EIR and remain less than significant with mitigation.

### *Surface Water Resources*

#### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.10, "Hydrology and Water Quality," new cannabis cultivation sites, including accessory uses, would be subject to site-specific review of surface water use and potential impacts during the discretionary use permit process. Cannabis cultivation uses would be required to comply with SWRCB Order WQ 2023-0102-DWQ standards for water diversions. With implementation of requirements of the SWRCB Order WQ 2023-0102-DWQ, the Cannabis Program Update would not result in degraded water quality due to surface water diversions. This impact was identified as less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

#### **Conclusion**

Projects using surface water are required to follow SWRCB's standards and diversion requirements or an established appropriative water right. With implementation of the requirements discussed above, the Cannabis Program Update would not result in degraded water quality due to surface water diversions. Where no diversion occurs, no impact was identified. This impact was identified as less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The proposed project does not propose to use or divert surface water for irrigation or domestic supply. No modifications to watercourses are proposed, and no development would occur within a stream channel or riparian corridor.

Because the project does not involve surface water diversion or alteration of surface water features, it does not create impacts beyond those analyzed in Impact 3.10-3 of the certified Final EIR.

## **4.11 Land Use/Planning**

#### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.11, "Land Use and Planning," cannabis facilities would be required to conform to the General Plan, any applicable specific plans and area plans, master plans, and design requirements, as well as comply with all applicable zoning and regulatory standards and state regulations. The proposed Cannabis Program Update includes performance standards that incorporate environmental protection measures that are based on General Plan policies and Sonoma County Code requirements. Potential conflicts with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations would be minimized through implementation of County policy provisions for environmental issues. This impact was identified as less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

#### **Conclusion**

Implementation of the proposed Cannabis Program Update would allow proposed cannabis cultivation and supply chain uses beyond what the current County regulations allow as well as applications currently in process, which could result in an expansion of cultivation and supply chain uses. The proposed Cannabis Program Update would be consistent with General Plan policies related to land use as well as the Sonoma County Code requirements that provide environmental protections. This impact was identified as less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

While the proposed project is subject to the current General Plan and Sonoma County Code, the requirements that provide environmental protection were not significantly changed by the Cannabis Program Update and thus this project is within the scope of the Final EIR. The project is not inconsistent with any of the policies that provide environmental

protection under the General Plan and Sonoma County Code, currently or under the Cannabis Program Update. Those environmental protection measures have been incorporated into mitigation measures that apply to the project.

The 113-acre parcel is designated Land Extensive Agriculture (LEA) under the General Plan and Petaluma Dairy Belt Area Plan and zoned LEA. Commercial cannabis cultivation and centralized processing are permitted uses in LEA with a use permit, subject to Development Criteria and Operating Standards (Sections 26-88-250 through 26-88-254). The proposed project includes 15,000 square feet of combined indoor and mixed-light cultivation and enclosed centralized processing. This is substantially below the program-level cultivation intensity analyzed in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR, which evaluated the potential for larger scale indoor, mixed-light, and outdoor cultivation and supply chain uses.

The project maintains ongoing agricultural activities on the parcel (horse training, organic vegetable production, beekeeping, livestock grazing), limits cannabis operations to a small portion of the site, does not increase residential density or subdivide land, and preserves agriculture as the primary use. A condition of approval requires continuation of agricultural operations while the cannabis permit remains active.

The Final EIR analyzed program-level environmental impacts of indoor and mixed-light cultivation and centralized processing, including energy and water demand, wastewater generation, noise, lighting, traffic (VMT), biological resources, and aesthetics. The project's scale, cultivation methods, and enclosed processing activities are within the development envelope and operational characteristics evaluated in the certified EIR. All proposed activities would comply with applicable Development Criteria and Operating Standards, including setbacks, odor control, lighting, noise, water resource protections, wastewater management, and renewable energy requirements. No variances, waivers, or reductions are requested.

The project site lies within the Petaluma Dairy Belt Area Plan, which emphasizes agricultural preservation, scenic character protection, and maintenance of rural land use patterns. The project confines development to a limited footprint using agricultural-type structures, preserves the majority of the parcel for ongoing agricultural production, and does not affect community separators or scenic corridors. The rural character and long-term agricultural viability of the parcel would remain intact.

The proposed 15,000 square feet of indoor and mixed-light cultivation and centralized processing:

- Is a use expressly analyzed in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR;
- Is within the scale and intensity assumed in the program-level environmental analysis;
- Complies with General Plan land use designations, zoning regulations, and applicable Development Criteria and Operating Standards;
- Maintains agriculture as the primary use of the parcel;
- Requires no new mitigation measures or deviations from adopted standards.

Accordingly, the project would not result in impacts more severe than those identified in the certified Final EIR, would not create new significant impacts, and is within the scope of the certified Cannabis Program Update Final EIR. Land use and planning impacts would remain less than significant.

## **4.12 Noise**

### *Construction Noise*

#### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.12, "Noise," cannabis cultivation facilities and centralized processing facilities within agricultural zones LIA, LEA, DA, and zoning district RRD would include a minimum

setback of 100 feet from each property line, 1,000 feet from incorporated city boundaries and parcels zoned residential (i.e., zones R1, R2, R3, RR, AR, and PC); 500 feet from off-site residences and non-grazing agricultural activities on adjacent parcels, and 1,000 feet from sensitive uses. At 100 feet, daytime construction noise levels would attenuate to 77.8 dBA  $L_{eq}$ . Daytime construction noise levels would be even lower with increased distance from construction activity. Nighttime construction activity would exceed the County nighttime construction noise threshold for residential uses (i.e., 45 dBA  $L_{eq}$ ) within 3,931 feet of activity. At 600 feet, nighttime construction noise levels would attenuate to 61.3 dBA  $L_{eq}$  and at 1,000 feet would attenuate to 56.9 dBA  $L_{eq}$ . The specific details of construction activities associated with the Cannabis Program Update—such as the location of future cannabis sites and their distances to sensitive receptors—are currently unknown. Depending on the existing ambient noise levels of the proposed cannabis site and duration of construction, construction noise within agricultural and resource districts could result in a substantial temporary noise increase (i.e., +10 dBA) in the vicinity of the proposed cannabis facility. This impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

### **Construction of Event Facilities and Event Operations**

As discussed above, construction noise could result in a substantial temporary noise increase (i.e., +10 dBA) in the vicinity of the proposed cannabis facility. This impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

### **Allowable Uses in Industrial and Commercial Districts**

As discussed above, because the specific details of construction activities associated with the Cannabis Program Update are currently unknown and because the Cannabis Program Update does not propose special setback requirements for cannabis facilities within industrial and commercial zoning districts, construction could take place within 3,931 feet of sensitive receptors; and thus, could exceed the County nighttime construction noise thresholds. In addition, depending on the existing ambient noise levels of the proposed cannabis site and duration of construction activity, construction noise within industrial and commercial districts could result in a substantial temporary noise increase (i.e., +10 dBA) in the vicinity of the proposed cannabis facility. This impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

### **Periodic Event Operations for Cannabis**

The proposed changes to the Sonoma County Code would eliminate the prohibition on cannabis use and sales at periodic events allowed under Section 26-22-120 of the Code, but would not affect the frequency of any periodic events currently allowed. Because there would be no new construction or changes in operation at facilities that could support periodic events, there would be no substantial construction-related noise effects. This impact was identified to have no impact in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

### **Conclusion**

At the programmatic level, it could not be guaranteed that construction would not take place within 25 feet (for daytime construction noise) or 3,931 feet (for nighttime construction noise) of sensitive receptors. In addition, depending on the existing ambient noise levels of the proposed cannabis site and duration of construction activity, construction noise could result in a substantial temporary noise increase in the vicinity of the proposed cannabis facility. This impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Implementation of Final EIR adopted Mitigation Measure 3.12-1a and 3.12-1b would regulate the overall construction noise associated with cannabis facilities, including establishing permissible construction noise hours (i.e. no nighttime construction); ensuring proper equipment use; notifying nearby land uses of upcoming construction; locating equipment away from sensitive land uses; and requiring the use of temporary acoustic barriers. Additionally, approval of a noise analysis for construction projects anticipated to last longer than one year would be required to be approved and reviewed by Sonoma County. However, as discussed above, because the exact construction activity required, location of future cannabis sites, and their distances to sensitive receptors were not known at a programmatic level and because acoustic barriers may not be feasible in all locations, daytime construction activity could exceed the applicable noise

standards, specifically daytime total noise thresholds for industrial and commercial and increases over ambient noise levels in all zoning districts. Therefore, because it could not be assured that the applicable noise standards can be met, this impact was identified as significant and unavoidable in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Project construction is anticipated to be completed in less than one year. Even though Mitigation Measure 3.12-1b is inapplicable to the project, A project specific noise analysis was conducted prior to the adoption of the FEIR and found the project meets General Plan Noise Standards.

Construction of the proposed indoor and mixed-light cultivation and enclosed processing facilities would occur during daytime hours and would be temporary in duration. Construction is anticipated to occur over a period of less than one year.

A project-specific noise study prepared by Bollard Acoustical Consultants (July 29, 2025) evaluated existing ambient noise conditions through a 96-hour monitoring survey conducted between April 9 and April 12, 2025 at three monitoring locations surrounding the project site. The monitoring results indicate that ambient noise conditions in the project vicinity reflect a quiet rural environment influenced primarily by traffic along Bloomfield Road and intermittent agricultural activities. Measured day-night average sound levels (DNL) ranged from approximately 43 to 52 dBA, and typical daytime median noise levels (L50) ranged from approximately 33 to 38 dBA.

The noise study predicts that typical construction equipment operating at the project site would generate maximum noise levels of approximately 65 to 74 dBA Lmax at the nearest sensitive receptor located approximately 185 feet from the construction activity area. These predicted levels fall within the range of maximum noise events measured in the existing ambient environment.

Construction activities would occur only during daytime hours and would be temporary in nature. No pile driving, jackhammering, or other unusually loud construction techniques are proposed.

At the program level, the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR determined that construction noise associated with cannabis development could result in temporary increases in noise levels depending on site-specific conditions and therefore identified construction noise as significant and unavoidable, even with mitigation. The FEIR adopted Mitigation Measure 3.12-1a to reduce construction noise through standard measures including restricting construction hours, maintaining equipment, locating stationary equipment away from receptors, and implementing temporary noise reduction practices.

The proposed project would comply with these mitigation measures and would not involve construction activities or equipment beyond those evaluated in the FEIR. While daytime construction noise may exceed 10 dba over existing ambient noise conditions, there are no additional feasible mitigation measures beyond those identified in the FEIR and incorporated into this project and short-term construction impacts remain significant and unavoidable. The Board of Supervisors adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations for temporary construction noise associated with cannabis development.

Therefore, construction noise associated with the proposed project would not represent a new or more severe impact than those previously analyzed in the FEIR, and the project is within the scope of the certified Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Construction Vibration

#### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.12, "Noise," with adherence to setbacks required under the Cannabis Program Update, construction activity within agricultural and resource districts would not result in

the exceedance of applicable thresholds for structural damage or human response. This impact was identified as less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

### **Conclusion**

Cannabis projects would not require the use of ground vibration-intensive activities, such as pile driving or blasting. However, there may be circumstances where a large or small bulldozer is used for earthmoving for new development. With compliance of setback requirements, this impact was identified as less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The noise study found that conventional construction equipment would not generate excessive groundborne vibration or noise. No pile-driving or jackhammering is proposed. Construction will occur during daytime hours and is temporary in duration. There are no other activities or uses associated with the project that would expose persons to or generate excessive ground borne vibration or ground borne noise levels.

### *Traffic Noise*

#### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.12, "Noise," cannabis uses in agricultural and resource districts (e.g., cultivation, nursery, processing) would likely generate a peak a.m. trip rate of 0.69 per 1,000 square feet (sf) gross floor area (GFA) and a peak p.m. trip rate of 0.64 per 1,000 sf GFA. However, these trips within agricultural and resource districts would be widely spread across the county-wide roadway network such that they are not anticipated to result in a doubling of traffic volumes on any single roadway that would create a significant traffic noise increase or impact. This impact was identified as less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

### **Conclusion**

The areas in which cannabis facilities would be permitted is extensive; thus, the daily trips generated by operation of such facilities are anticipated to be widely spread across the County roadway network such that they are not anticipated to result in a doubling of traffic volumes that would create a significant traffic noise increase or impact. This impact was identified as less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Operational trips associated with the project include daily employee commutes and periodic deliveries. Modeled traffic noise at the nearest residences is 26–33 dBA, which is below existing ambient conditions (day–night average 43–53 dBA) and below Sonoma County General Plan Table NE-2 thresholds (daytime L50: 50 dBA; nighttime L50: 45 dBA). Traffic noise levels are minor relative to existing ambient conditions assessed in the project specific noise study.

The Cannabis Program Update Final EIR determined that operational traffic associated with cannabis facilities in agricultural and resource districts would be dispersed across the county roadway network and would not result in traffic volumes sufficient to cause substantial increases in roadway noise levels.

Consistent with this program-level analysis, the project would generate a relatively small number of vehicle trips that would be dispersed throughout the roadway network and would not result in a doubling of traffic volumes or a substantial increase in ambient noise levels. Therefore, project-related traffic noise impacts are within the scope of the FEIR analysis and are less than significant.

### *Stationary and Operational Noise*

#### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.12, "Noise," the primary stationary noise sources from allowable cannabis uses within agricultural and resources districts would consist of the maintenance and harvest of cannabis at outdoor cultivation sites. Mixed-light and indoor cultivation and supply chain uses are generally operated

within buildings that substantially attenuate noise levels. The potential impacts of major stationary noise sources are discussed below.

**Mechanical Equipment**

Proposed amendments to the County Code would require that cannabis cultivation sites, including nursery and processing cannabis uses, within agricultural zones LIA, LEA, and DA be subject to a 100-foot property line setback, 600-foot residential zoning setback, and 1,000-foot setback for sensitive uses. Therefore, with the minimum required setback (i.e., 100-foot setback), noise from HVAC equipment, dehumidifiers, and refrigerated storage in agricultural and resource zoning districts would not exceed applicable County noise standards at nearby noise-sensitive land uses. This impact was identified as less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

**Conclusion**

As discussed above, implementation of the Cannabis Program Update could result in the development of cannabis facilities, which could include new noise-generating stationary equipment (e.g., HVAC units) and activities (e.g., special events). Depending on building footprints, layouts, and the locations of stationary equipment, it is possible that noise associated with mechanical equipment, cannabis events, and cannabis lounges could be located within distances that expose existing sensitive receptors to noise levels that exceed County noise standards and result in public health effects. Therefore, this impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Implementation of Final EIR adopted Mitigation Measures 3.12-4a, 3.12-4b, and 3.12-4c would require a use permit for outdoor amplified music at lounges, require applicants who chose to provide live amplified music as entertainment for events or other uses that require a use permit to limit noise levels to be in compliance with General Plan Policy NE-1c and Table NE-2, and require preparation of a noise analysis prior to operation of a cannabis facility in industrial or commercial districts. Compliance with these mitigation measures and General Plan policies NE-1c and Table NE-2 would reduce operational noise impacts from cannabis facilities. Therefore, this impact was determined to be less than significant with mitigation incorporated in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

A project specific noise study was completed by Bollard Acoustical Consultants, Inc. (BAC study) on July 29, 2025<sup>11</sup>. A technical memo was prepared and provided clarifying how data used to demonstrate compliance with County noise standards<sup>12</sup>. The noise study evaluated existing ambient noise conditions in addition to operational, emergency generator, and construction noise. The monitoring results documented typical rural noise conditions with daytime L50 levels generally in the mid-30 to low-40 dBA range and nighttime L50 levels generally in the upper-20s to low-30 dBA range as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Long-Term Noise Survey Measurement Results at Project Site<sup>1</sup>

Site Description <sup>1</sup>	Date	Average Measured Hourly Noise Levels (dB)	
		Daytime L <sub>50</sub> <sup>2</sup>	Nighttime L <sub>50</sub> <sup>3</sup>
LT-1	Wednesday, April 9, 2025	38	29
	Thursday, April 10, 2025	41	32
	Friday, April 11, 2026	40	32
	Saturday, April 12, 2026	38	31
LT-2	Wednesday, April 9, 2025	36	31
	Thursday, April 10, 2025	38	30

<sup>11</sup> Bollard Acoustical Consultants "Environmental Noise Assessment, 4707 Bloomfield Road, Petaluma, Sonoma County, California (APN: 027-050-022)" July 29, 2025.

<sup>12</sup> Bollard Acoustical Consultants Memorandum April 7, 2026.

	Friday, April 11, 2026	37	30
	Saturday, April 12, 2026	34	29
LT-3	Wednesday, April 9, 2025	38	34
	Thursday, April 10, 2025	41	35
	Friday, April 11, 2026	39	34
	Saturday, April 12, 2026	35	32

1. Long-term noise survey locations are identified in Figure 1 in the Noise Study
2. Daytime hours: 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
3. Nighttime hours: 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.

Monitoring location LT-3 is representative of ambient noise conditions for receptors R-1 (APN 027-040-019) and R-2 (APN 027-040-004), while monitoring location LT-2 represents ambient conditions for receptors R-3 (027-050-044) and R-4 (027-050-043) in the BAC study.

Most of the mechanical equipment serving the cultivation and processing buildings would be located within structures themselves. External equipment includes air conditioning components, which will be located behind proposed structures, over 100 feet from property lines and over 500 feet from nearby residences as detailed in Table 2

Table 2: Distance from AC Unit 1-3 from nearest Residential Receptor Property Line and Residence.

APN	Distance to Property Line (ft)			Distance to Residences (ft)		
	AC-1	AC-2	AC-3	AC-1	AC-2	AC-3
<u>027-040-019 (R-1)</u>	<u>615</u>	<u>465</u>	<u>645</u>	<u>1,350</u>	<u>1,200</u>	<u>1,420</u>
<u>027-040-004 (R-2)</u>	<u>270</u>	<u>240</u>	<u>185</u>	<u>540</u>	<u>410</u>	<u>550</u>
<u>027-050-044 (R-3)</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>310</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>1,390</u>	<u>1,440</u>	<u>1,260</u>
<u>027-050-043 (R-4)</u>	<u>660</u>	<u>790</u>	<u>565</u>	<u>1,400</u>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>1,300</u>

Operational noise modeling in the BAC study predicts combined noise levels from HVAC systems, ventilation equipment, and on-site vehicle movements of approximately 26–39 dBA L50 at nearby residential receptors R-1 through R-4 as summarized in Table 3, which is within the range of measured ambient noise levels included in Table 1 above.

Table 3. Combined Noise Level Exposure at Residential Receptors

APN <sup>1</sup>	Calculated Combined L <sub>50</sub> (dBA)	
	Daytime <sup>2</sup>	Nighttime <sup>3</sup>
<u>027-040-019 (R-1)</u>	31	30
<u>027-040-004 (R-2)</u>	39	39
<u>027-050-044 (R-3)</u>	31	30
<u>027-050-043 (R-4)</u>	31	30

1. Long-term noise survey locations are identified in Figure 1 in the Noise Study
2. Daytime hours: 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
3. Nighttime hours: 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.

The measured daytime ambient noise level at site LT-3 was 38 dB L50. The calculated combined daytime noise exposure from project operations at receptor R-2 is 39 dB L50. The existing (baseline) plus project noise level is predicted to be approximately 42 dB L50, which represents a four (4) dB net increase in daytime ambient noise levels at the nearest residence. The measured nighttime ambient noise level at site LT-3 was 34 dB L50. The calculated combined nighttime noise exposure from project operations at receptor R-2 is 39 dB L50. The existing plus project noise level is predicted to be approximately 40 dB L50, which represents a six (6) dB net increase over the existing nighttime ambient noise levels. Therefore BAC concluded that based on the information contained within the memorandum and original report they prepared, noise generated by the project operations would not increase existing baseline ambient noise levels by 10 or more dBA at the nearest sensitive receptor, which also demonstrates compliance at the further sensitive receptors.

An increase by 10-dBA above ambient noise levels, is the level referenced in the Sonoma County General Plan Noise Element for adjusting applicable stationary noise standards and applied in the Cannabis Program Update EIR analysis. Because predicted operational noise would not exceed ambient noise levels by 10 dBA or more, the provisions that reduce applicable noise standards by 5 dBA would not be triggered.

The project also includes an emergency backup generator that would be used only during power outages or periodic maintenance testing and is not considered part of routine project operations. The BAC study modeled generator noise assuming installation with a Level I acoustical enclosure. Based on the distance between the generator and nearby residences (approximately 555 to 1,440 feet), predicted generator noise levels at residential receptors would range from approximately 25–33 dBA L50, which is below both the measured ambient noise levels and applicable County stationary noise standards.

Table 3. Distance from Emergency Backup Generator to nearest Residential Receptor Protriptyline and Residence

APN	Distance to Property Line (ft)	Distance to Residence (ft)
027-040-019	270	1,440
027-040-004	195	555
027-050-044	220	1,250
027-050-043	550	1,290

Based on the project-specific noise analysis and the comparison of predicted operational noise levels with measured ambient noise conditions shown in Table 2, project operations would not increase ambient noise levels by 10 dBA or more at nearby residential receptors. In addition, predicted operational and generator noise levels remain below the County’s stationary noise standards of 50 dBA L50 during daytime hours and 45 dBA L50 during nighttime hours.

Because the project incorporates setbacks consistent with those evaluated in the Final EIR and predicted operational noise levels do not exceed the thresholds evaluated at the program level, the project would not result in new or more severe noise impacts than those analyzed in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR. Accordingly, the project’s operational noise impacts are within the scope of the certified Final EIR and would be less than significant with implementation of applicable mitigation measures and County noise standards.

## 4.13 Public Services

### Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.13, “Public Services and Recreation,” continued and future operation of cannabis cultivation sites and supply chain operations would be subject to compliance with PRC Sections 4290 and 4291, and CCR, Title 24, Section 701A.3, local fire protection agency requirements, and the California Fire Code to minimize fire hazards. Roadway standards for new development are required to be in compliance with

Article V, Sections 13-21 to 13-63 of the Sonoma County Fire Ordinance within the LRA, and the Fire Safe Regulations inside the SRA and LRA VHFSZ. Cannabis cultivation sites would be required to comply with CCR Title 4, Division 19, Section 15011 regarding the notification of the cannabis use to the local fire department. Proposed County Code Section 26-18-115(C)(4)(g)(1) restricts accessory manufacturing uses to nonvolatile chemical extraction to avoid fire hazards from volatile chemical use. Compliance with these regulations would provide access, ignition protection measures, fuel management, and water sources that would address onsite fire protection needs. Additionally, compliance with CCR Title 4, Division 19, Section 15042.1, 15043, 15045, 15046, and 15047 would require multiple security measures to reduce impacts on law enforcement services. With compliance of the PRC, CCR, Sonoma County Fire Ordinance, and additional regulations, this impact was identified as less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

### **Conclusion**

Compliance with the above requirements would ensure that on-site security measures are implemented and site access is restricted. The program does not involve proposed annexations, redevelopment agreements, or revenue sharing agreement that could affect the existing provisions of fire services to the County. Because cannabis uses would be required to adhere to applicable state and local fire and security regulations, standards, and codes, implementation of the proposed Cannabis Program Update would not necessitate the construction of new or expanded facilities. This impact was identified as less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The proposed project consists of 15,000 square feet of combined indoor and mixed-light cannabis cultivation and enclosed processing, with a maximum of 19 employees. The parcel is located within the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District in the State Responsibility Area (SRA), under CalFire jurisdiction. The nearest fire station, the Bloomfield Volunteer Fire Department, is approximately 1.9 miles (3 minutes) from the site.

Sonoma County Fire Prevention reviewed the project and required standard fire protection measures, including:

- Fire alarm and suppression systems
- Fire extinguishers
- Vegetation management
- Hazardous materials management
- Management of flammable or combustible liquids

Law enforcement services will continue to be provided by the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office. No new policing infrastructure is needed.

The project does not propose new housing or other population-generating uses. With a maximum of 19 employees, there is no indirect population growth that would increase demand for schools, parks, or other public facilities. No new public sewer, water, or other public infrastructure is required.

Fire protection and emergency medical services needs are addressed through compliance with:

- California Public Resources Code (PRC) Sections 4290 and 4291
- California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Section 701A.3
- Sonoma County Fire Ordinance (Article V, Sections 13-21 through 13-63)
- Cannabis-specific fire and security requirements (CCR Title 4, Division 19, Section 15011, 15042.1, 15043, 15045–15047)

Operational compliance with these standards ensures that access, ignition protection, water availability, and on-site security measures meet program-level assumptions analyzed in the Cannabis Program Update FEIR.

Project construction and operations would not result in the need for new or expanded public services, fire protection, emergency medical services, law enforcement, schools, parks, or other facilities. The project is consistent with the program-level analysis in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR and is therefore within the scope of the certified EIR, with impacts on public services less than significant.

## **4.14 Transportation**

### *Circulation System*

#### Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.14, "Transportation," construction associated with cannabis facilities in agricultural and resources districts would be required to meet all applicable County requirements related to construction, including the County Construction Standards adopted as County Ordinance 38-2020-0446. The Construction Standards detail design standards for roadways including for sight distance, driveways, and minimum curb radii. In addition, an encroachment permit would be required for cannabis facilities to maintain safety during construction of subsequent facilities and associated roadway infrastructure. Compliance with the Circulation and Transit Element of the Sonoma County General Plan policies would be required so as to not conflict with policies, plans, or programs regarding the circulation system. This impact was identified as less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

#### Conclusion

New cannabis facilities developed under the Cannabis Program Update would be required to comply with County General Plan policies and safety and design standards (e.g., Construction Standards) and would be subject to project-level review. Consistency with County General Plan policies, safety and design standards, and project-level review would ensure that subsequent projects would not conflict with policies, plans, or programs regarding the circulation system. This impact was identified as less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The project consists of 15,000 square feet of indoor and mixed-light cultivation and enclosed processing with a maximum of 19 employees. The project does not include events or retail operations.

Daily trips would consist primarily of employee commute trips and limited vendor/delivery trips. The maximum daily employee trips would be 57 (round trips) if all 19 employees commuted to the site in one day, and vendor/delivery trips average fewer than one per day. Total average daily trips would conservatively be approximately 58 trips per day. Although, according to the trip generation form submitted by the applicant, the variation in average daily trips is 23 average daily trips per day, and all 19 employees are not expected to commute to the project site every day of the week.

Access is provided from Bloomfield Road, a County-maintained Minor Collector. Based on existing traffic volumes and the limited trip generation, the project would not substantially increase traffic volumes, degrade roadway operations, or conflict with adopted circulation policies.

Driveway improvements are required by condition of approval to comply with County standards and Board of Forestry Minimum Fire Safe Regulations to ensure safe ingress and egress.

The project's traffic generation is modest and consistent with the scale of cannabis uses evaluated in the FEIR. No new roadway construction or off-site circulation improvements are required beyond standard compliance. Impacts remain less than significant and within the scope of the certified EIR.

## *Vehicle Miles Traveled*

### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.14, "Transportation," large portions of the unincorporated County are located in areas that experience at least 15 percent below the countywide average for VMT per employee, which is a typical metric applied to employment projects to establish a less-than-significant impact determination. However, as noted above, the proposed Cannabis Program Update does not place upper limits on the size of individual cannabis facilities, and due to the programmatic nature of the project it cannot be guaranteed at this time that all individual cannabis projects implemented under the proposed Cannabis Program Update would meet one of the screening criteria. Thus, this impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

### **Conclusion**

With consideration of typical facility sizes and potential facility locations, it is likely that many cannabis facilities would meet applicable VMT screening criteria. Because the size of individual cannabis facilities was unknown at the programmatic level, the impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Implementation of Final EIR adopted Mitigation Measure 3.14-2 would reduce VMT impacts by requiring the development of a TDM Program that would incentivize employees to choose alternative modes of transportation. In addition, when the Sonoma County VMT Reduction Program is adopted, projects unable to reduce VMT through traditional measures would be required to comply with the measures developed for the County. However, given the variable characteristics and location of individual projects to be implemented under the proposed Cannabis Program Update, as well as the uncertainty regarding when a County VMT Reduction Program would be adopted, it could not be ensured that VMT per employee would be reduced to a level below the significance threshold of 15 percent below existing countywide VMT per employee. Therefore, this impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The FEIR identified VMT impacts as significant at the program level due to uncertainty regarding facility size and location.

This project:

- Is located within a VMT-efficient area identified in Figure 3.14-1 of the FEIR (SCTA screening map).
- Does not include event operations.
- Generates fewer than 110 daily trips (OPR screening threshold).
- Involves a small employment base (maximum 19 employees).

Because the project is located within a screened VMT-efficient area and is small in scale, it would not exceed the County's VMT significance threshold of 15 percent above existing countywide VMT per employee. Mitigation Measure 3.14-2 (TDM program requirement) applies, but the project is screened out of any additional VMT measures or related mitigation.

The project falls within the VMT screening criteria and is consistent with the assumptions evaluated in the FEIR. The project would not create a new or more severe VMT impact and remains within the scope of the certified EIR.

## *Transportation Hazards*

### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.14, "Transportation," an encroachment permit would be required for construction activities associated with cannabis facilities making frontage or access improvements to roadways to minimize potential transportation hazards during construction. All subsequent cannabis projects within

agricultural and resources districts would be subject to County review to ensure compliance with state and County policies and design standards described above, thus ensuring that operation of such projects would not result in or substantially increase transportation hazards. This impact was identified to be less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Compliance with federal, state, and local regulations would prevent substantial increases in transportation hazards within the County. County Construction Standards provides guidance for roadway and transportation facility development to ensure a safe roadway system throughout the County. Additionally, Section Chapter 15, Article III, Section 15-8 of the County Municipal Code requires an encroachment permit for construction activities proposing frontage or access improvements to roadways. Subsequent projects under the Cannabis Program Update would be subject to County review to ensure compliance with all applicable local and state standards and regulations. Thus, this impact was identified to have no impact in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

### **Conclusion**

The project does not include events, retail traffic, or unusual design features. Access improvements will comply with County Construction Standards and Fire Safe Regulations. No hazardous roadway design or incompatible use is proposed.

The project would not create or substantially increase transportation hazards beyond those evaluated programmatically. Impacts remain less than significant and within the scope of the FEIR.

## **4.15 Tribal Cultural Resources**

### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.15, "Tribal Cultural Resources," new cannabis uses under the proposed Cannabis Program Update could result in soil disturbance activities, that have the potential to discover indigenous materials when soils are disturbed. Compliance with state law requirements, including Health and Safety Code and PRC, proper disposition of discovered human remains or suspected human remains would be ensured. Additionally, SWRCB General Order requires notification to tribes of any new permitted cannabis cultivation and operation activities on tribal lands or tribal cultural resources or within 600 feet of these lands. However, the SWRCB Order is specific to cultivation and while the County's standards address protection in the event of accidental discovery, they do not avoid impacts to known resources in the first instance. This impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Implementation of Final EIR adopted Mitigation Measures 3.15-2b through 3.15-1e would reduce impacts on tribal cultural resources through preparation of a cultural resources survey report, which would be developed by an archaeologist who meets the Secretary of Interior's professional standards in archaeology; requiring a tribal cultural resource treatment plan would be developed and reviewed by the County and tribe to ensure that it includes appropriate treatment of tribal cultural resources; and requiring reports prepared in compliance with Mitigation Measure 3.15-1b or consultation under Mitigation Measure 3.15-1c to indicate the potential presence of human remains, and if deemed appropriate by the County and Tribe, canine forensics teams would be employed to identify the location of human remains. Therefore, this impact was determined to be less than significant with mitigation incorporated in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

In accordance with Mitigation Measure 3.15-1c, on February 2, 2021, a project referral and invitation to consult were sent to California Native American tribes. The request for consultation period ended on March 4, 2021, with no Native American tribes requesting consultation for the project. No Tribe requested further information and no Tribe requested formal consultation.

The project was also referred to the Northwest Information Center (NWIC) on February 2, 2021. A response was received on February 25, 2021, stating the proposed project area has a low possibility of containing unrecorded archaeological sites, and therefore did not recommend a cultural resources study. However, in accordance with Mitigation Measure 3.5-2a and 3.15-1b the applicant did hire ALTA Archaeological Consulting to perform an archaeological survey report.

A cultural resources records search from the Northwest Information Center (CHRIS-NWIC), an archaeological field survey, and a Native American Sacred Lands File Search through the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) indicates there are no known tribal cultural resources or unique archaeological resources associated with TCR's located within the project boundaries<sup>13</sup>.

Archival research indicates that the project site had not been previously subjected to a cultural resources study. The NWIC Record Search showed no prehistoric Native American Sites. There are no ethnographically described resources located within the project area. There are no known archaeological resources on the site, but the project could uncover such materials during grading and construction. Although no impacts are anticipated the County standard "Accidental Discovery" Condition of Approval applies to previously undiscovered TCR's or unique archaeological resources that may be accidentally encountered during project implementation. The Sonoma County grading ordinance also includes provisions related to previously unknown archaeological resources and buried human remains that may be accidentally encountered during project implementation that require work to be immediately halted within the vicinity and Permit Sonoma notified.

The project does not introduce new potential impacts beyond those analyzed in the FEIR .

## **4.16 Utilities and Service Systems**

### *Water Supply*

#### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.16, "Utilities and Service Systems," cannabis cultivation must comply with water use and storage requirements established in the County's best management practices (BMPs) for cannabis cultivation. Consistent with these requirements, cannabis cultivation facilities must obtain all necessary permits from Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department for any water tanks or storage facilities and are subject to leak inspection and repairs, as necessary, prior to planting each year and continuously during the growth cycle. New cannabis cultivation facilities would be subject to the water supply documentation, verification of adequate source of supply, and use restrictions requirements provided under CCR, Title 4, Section 16311; SWRCB Order WQ 2023-0102-DWQ Attachment A, Section 3, Numeric and Narrative Instream Flow Requirements; and MCCR Sections 10A.17.070(H), 10A.17.080(B), and 10A.17.090(E). However, according to UWMPs within the County some water suppliers are not projected to have sufficient water supplies. In addition, information on supply and demand for the majority of water retailers within the County is not available. Therefore, it could not be stated with certainty that adequate water supply would be available to all new or expanded cannabis facilities seeking municipal or retail water supplies. Thus, this impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Implementation of Final EIR adopted Mitigation Measure 3.16-1 would reduce potentially significant impacts associated with water supply because an applicant would be required to either not increase water demand above levels of an existing building or obtain verification from a water supplier that water is available for the project in normal, dry, and multiple-dry years. If these conditions cannot be met, a project will not be approved. Therefore, this impact was determined to be less than significant with mitigation incorporated in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

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<sup>13</sup> ALTA Archaeological, "Archaeological Survey Report," April 7, 2026.

This impact is not relevant to this project application because the project is not served by municipal water.

### *Wastewater Treatment*

#### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.16, "Utilities and Service Systems," while many of the cannabis uses within agricultural and resources districts, would be provided on-site through septic or other alternative wastewater treatment systems for domestic wastewater only, municipal wastewater treatment facilities are available in some areas of the county. As available, cannabis uses allowed within agricultural and resource districts would rely on existing connections to public wastewater conveyance systems, which would be required to comply with the standards set forth in Sonoma Water's Sanitation Code and facilities requirements. This impact was identified to be less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

#### **Conclusion**

Compliance with the regulations would ensure that new cannabis uses allowed under the proposed Cannabis Program Update would not result in exceedance of wastewater treatment capacity in addition to the provider's existing commitments. Therefore, this impact was identified to be less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

This impact is not relevant to this project because the project would utilize on-site wastewater treatment systems consistent with County standards and would not be served by municipal wastewater treatment services.

### *Solid Waste*

#### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.16, "Utilities and Service Systems," new cannabis activities, including retail, cultivation, manufacturing, distribution, testing, processing, and cannabis events would generate solid waste. As required by CCR, Title 4, Division 19, Section 17223, licensees must establish and implement a waste management plan. There are three licensed cannabis waste disposal companies that offer pickup service and eight licensed cannabis waste disposal companies that offer drop off service in Sonoma County, all of which may be relied upon to provide adequate cannabis waste management services. Non-cannabis waste would be disposed of through the County's existing transfer stations that would divert recyclable materials and dispose of remaining materials to available landfills. Therefore, this impact was identified to be less than significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The project would generate green waste and operational waste typical of cultivation and processing. State regulations require a cannabis waste management plan and track-and-trace compliance.

Solid waste disposal services are available in the County and no new disposal facilities are required.

The project's waste generation is consistent with the program-level analysis. Impacts remain less than significant and within the scope of the FEIR.

## **4.17 Wildfire**

### *Exacerbate Wildfire Hazards and Fire Risk*

#### **Allowable Uses in Agricultural and Resources Districts**

As addressed in the Cannabis Program Update Draft EIR Section 3.17, "Wildfire," existing regulations related to new buildings and vegetation management would decrease fuel availability in the County, while roadway standards would improve access and the potential to successfully extinguish an established wildfire. However, arson and other human-cause ignitions are common causes of wildfire in the County. Thus, bringing more people into areas of high fire risk would increase the chance of fires because there would be increased access to different areas of the county (i.e., wildfires are often ignition by anthropogenic means). Additionally, because U occupancy buildings and existing buildings are exempted from some State and local standards, allowable uses under the Cannabis Program Update may contribute to new fuel sources (e.g., buildings not required to be hardened or maintained with defensible space). Therefore, based on the existing wildfire risk in the county and the introduction of additional people into more areas of the unincorporated county, it stands to reason that ignition from arson, electrical power incidents, and equipment use may increase with implementation of the Cannabis Program Update. Because there may be increased fuels and potential for ignition, operation of cannabis projects could increase the risk of wildfires. This impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

The specific locations of where cannabis facilities may be developed and the access conditions associated with those location is unknown and cannot be know at a program-level. If wildland fires are ignited within undeveloped areas of the County, there is substantial potential risk of loss, injury, or death if fires are not extinguished before becoming catastrophic. While there is no way to know exactly where or when a potential fire may occur, the wildfire history in Sonoma County and the known conditions within the County indicates a strong likelihood that more large fires can be expected. State and local regulations that address building standards, roadway improvements, and vegetation management have been developed by agencies charged within reducing catastrophic fires (e.g., Board of Forestry); however, these certain regulations do not extend to all projects that could be approved under the Cannabis Program Update. Development of cannabis uses under the proposed Cannabis Program Update would be required to comply with the County Fire Code and CBC to minimize fire risks; still, this impact was identified as significant in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Implementation of Final EIR adopted Mitigation Measures 3.17-1a through 3.17-1e (Appendix A) would reduce impacts by limiting allowable use types to outdoor cannabis and storage, drying, and curing of cannabis, in areas of the county designated as Very High FHSZ in SRA and LRA; requiring defensible space and structural hardening on structures associated with these uses; require structures to be constructed with noncombustible materials; require development and implementation of a Fire Protection and Prevention Plan that includes site-specific and detailed plans to address increased wildfire risk at the cannabis site; and create standards to limit and/or prevent fire ignition during events by requiring designated smoking areas and adequate fire suppression capabilities in the case of an accidental ignition. Therefore, these impacts were determined to be less than significant with mitigation incorporated in the Cannabis Program Update Final EIR.

Final EIR Impact 3.17-2, 3.17-4, and 3.17-5 determined that new cannabis uses would be allowed in areas where existing risk of wildland fire and SRAs and LRA VHFHSZ have been established. New cannabis uses would be required to comply with regulations and standards outlined in the State Fire Safe Regulations and the County's Fire Safe Standards, PRC sections 4290 and 4291, local fire protection agency requirements, and the California Fire Code to minimize hazards of fire. However, these regulations do not extend to all projects that could be approved under the Cannabis Program Update. Implementation of Final EIR adopted Mitigation Measures 3.17-1a through 3.17-1e (Appendix A) would reduce impacts by limiting allowable use types to outdoor cannabis and storage, drying, and curing of cannabis, in areas of the county designated as Very High FHSZ in SRA and VHFHSZ; requiring defensible space and structural hardening on structures associated with these uses; require structures to be constructed with noncombustible materials; require development and implementation of a Fire Protection and Prevention Plan that includes site-specific and detailed plans to address increased wildfire risk at the cannabis site; and create standards to limit and/or prevent fire ignition during events by requiring designated smoking areas and adequate fire suppression capabilities in the case of an accidental ignition. Therefore, these impacts were determined to be less than significant with mitigation incorporated in the Cannabis Program Update.

The FEIR identified wildfire risk impacts as significant at the program level due to increased human presence in fire-prone areas.

The project site is located within the State Responsibility Area (SRA) and within a Fire Hazard Severity Zone designated as Moderate. The project would comply with:

- State Fire Safe Regulations
- PRC §§ 4290 and 4291
- County Fire Code
- Defensible space and vegetation management requirements

Mitigation Measures 3.17-1a through 3.17-1d apply, including preparation of a Fire Protection and Prevention Plan, structural hardening, defensible space, and ignition control measures which the applicant has prepared.

The project does not include events or public gatherings.

No aspect of this project or its surrounding make it fall outside the types of projects and potential impacts analyzed by the FEIR. With implementation of adopted mitigation measures, wildfire risk impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated, consistent with the FEIR. The project does not create a new wildfire impact pathway.

### *Expose Project Occupants to Pollutant Concentrations*

Final EIR Impact 3.17-3 identified that The Cannabis Program Update would allow the continued development of cannabis uses, and for the construction and operation of associated infrastructure necessary to support future cannabis operations. During a wildfire, most locations within Sonoma County could experience air pollutant concentration levels that exceed safe levels of exposure (i.e., AQI of 151 or greater). CCR, Title 8, Section 5141.1 requires employers to take steps to limit workers' exposure to wildfire smoke through feasible methods such as air filtration systems and respiratory protective equipment. Because individual sites would be subject to these standards, which require employers to limit employee exposure of hazard air pollutants during a wildfire, this impact would be less than significant.

During wildfire events, air quality impacts are region-wide and not unique to the project. Compliance with CCR Title 8, Section 5141.1 requires employers to protect workers from wildfire smoke exposure.

The project does not increase regional wildfire smoke exposure beyond that analyzed in the FEIR.

Impacts remain less than significant and within the scope of the FEIR.

## **Conclusion**

Sonoma County has concluded the proposed project is within the scope of the previously adopted Final EIR. The analysis above supports this conclusion. In summary, this analysis concludes that the implementation of the proposed project would not result in new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant impacts beyond those analyzed in the previously adopted Final EIR. None of the conditions described in Section 15162 of the CEQA Guidelines calling for preparation of a subsequent environmental document have occurred.

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