Draft Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration

Gold Miners Inn

Telecommunications Facility Major Use Permit

City of Grass Valley, California

To:

Interim City Manager – Alex Gammelgard	Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe
Deputy City Manager – Taylor Whittingslow	Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians
City Planner – Amy Wolfson	Colfax-Todds Valley Consolidated Tribe
Building Division – Jon May	T'si Akim Maidu Tribal Council
Deputy Public Works Director – Zac Quentmeyer	United Auburn Indian Community
Fire Chief –Mark Button	Native American Heritage Commission
Deputy Fire Marshal – Roque Barrera	Mayor/Council Member – Hilary Hodge
*City of Grass Valley Attorney – David Ruderman	Vice Mayor/Council Member – Haven Caravelli
Nevada County Assessor – Rolf Kleinhans	Council Member – Joseph Bonomolo
Nevada County Environmental Health – Amy Irani	Council Member – Tom Ivy
Nevada County Consolidated Fire District	Council Member – Jan Arbuckle
Nevada Irrigation District (NID)	Grass Valley School District
Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District	Caltrans Highways – District #3
**receives full report, others receive NOA only with report available online*	

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Prepared by: Vanessa Franken, Associate Planner
City of Grass Valley, Planning Department
125 E. Main Street
Grass Valley, CA 95945
(530) 274-4712
vfranken@grassvalleyca.gov

File Number: 25PLN-0011

Assessor Parcel Number: 008-373-018

Zoning Districts: TC (Town Core)

General Plan Designations: C (Commercial)

Project Location: 109 Bank Street, Grass Valley, CA 95945, approximately 144-feet west of State Highway 49 and 472-feet north of the Wolf Creek South Fork within the city limits of Grass Valley.

Project Site and Surrounding Land Uses:

The project parcel, 109 Bank Street, Grass Valley, (APN: 008-373-018) is located directly south of Bank Street and immediately north of the Neal Street and South Auburn Street junction point, within downtown Grass Valley. The project parcel is 2.49-acres in size. The project parcel is approximately 144-feet west of State Highway 49 and 472-feet north of the Wolf Creek South Fork, within the City of Grass Valley. The project parcel is zoned TC (Town Core) and has a General Plan designation of C (Commercial). 109 Bank Street is currently developed with a multi-story commercial hotel, currently operating as Gold Miners Inn. The primary structure consists of three stories and features a combination of traditional gabled rooflines and a prominent tower element, known as the penthouse portion of the hotel, facilitating hotel use. Existing concrete sidewalks are provided along the perimeter of the parking area and connect directly to the building entry. The property is bordered and interspersed with parking lot landscape; shrubs, low-maintenance native vegetation, and trees. Interior of landscape, existing asphalt covers the parcel and offers abundant parking spaces for hotel guest use. Two commercial driveway access points exist on site for ingress/egress off Bank Street, a city-maintained road. The project parcel is served by public water and sewer.

Directly northeast of the project area, approximately 66-feet, is a portion of Wolf Creek. Wolf Creek flows north to south, the creek then runs through existing culverts underground before navigating to the Wolf Creek South Fork. The Wolf Creek South Fork is located 250-feet southeast from the project parcel. The proposed project area is on the street level while the Wolf Creek is below the street surface, the project area will be located on the ground level above. The site slopes primarily from the north to south, with existing slopes considered gentle on site. The project parcel is located within downtown Grass Valley, amongst an urban setting. Directly north of the project parcel is an existing commercial restaurant on one parcel and an existing dentist office on one parcel, both parcels are zoned Town Core and fall within the City of Grass Valley adopted historic district/historic downtown, per “Historic District Combining Zone”. Directly east of the project parcel are nine parcels that abut against the eastern property line. Amongst the neighboring parcels exists a gas station, a restaurant, a dry cleaner facility, a commercial gym, professional service offices and an investment/banking institution. Directly south of the project parcel is the Neal Street and South Auburn Street junction point that intersects with Tinloy Street, directly below State Highway 49. Directly southwest of the project parcel, south of Neal Street, is an existing Safeway grocery facility. All of the noted neighboring parcels are also zoned Town Core. Figure 1 below shows the subject project parcel, surrounding properties, and the zoning of the area.

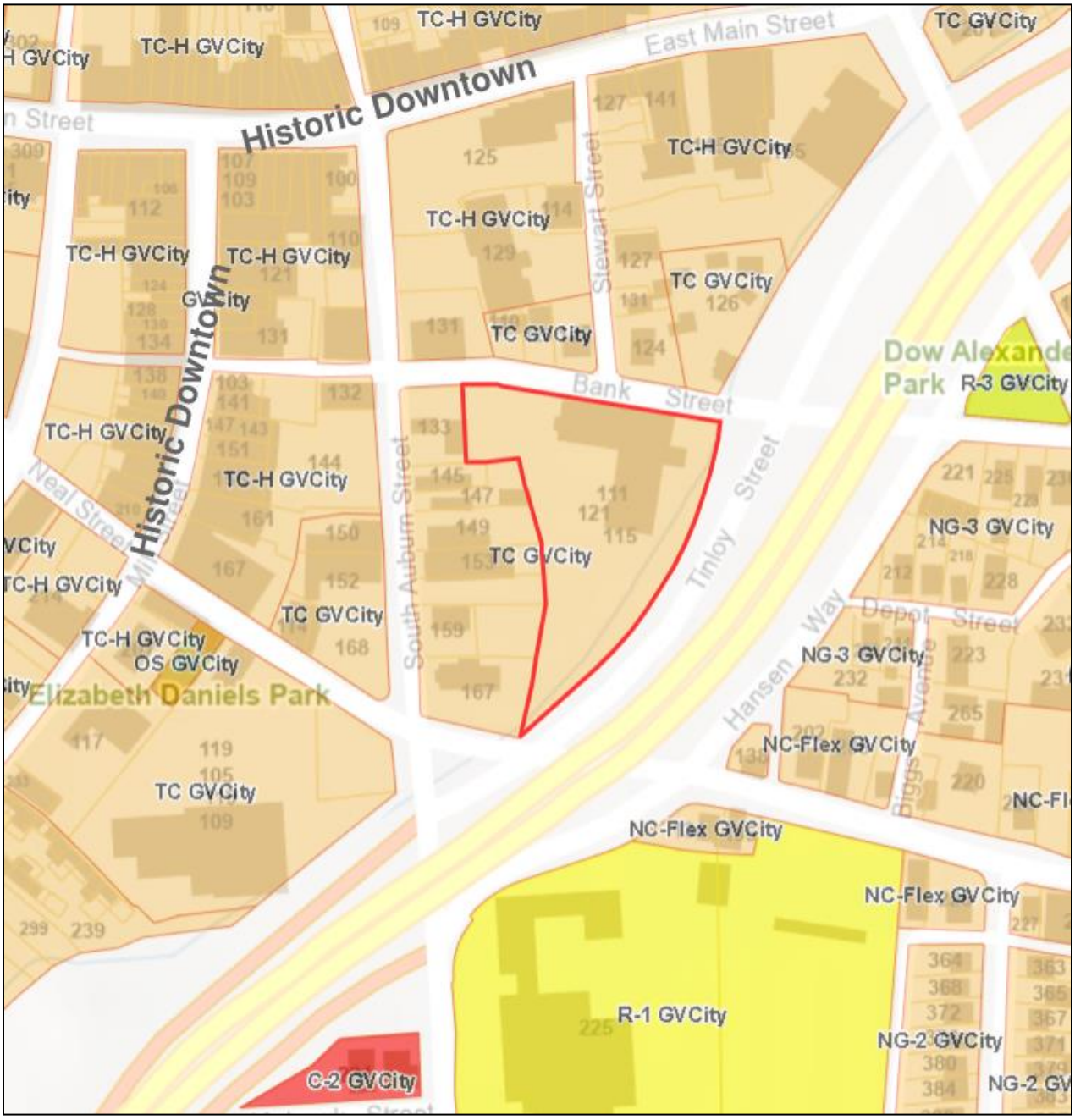


Figure 1 – Zoning, Project parcel, surrounding properties.

Project Description:

A proposed Major Use Permit (PLN25-0011) requesting to construct an 81’ and 2”-foot tall tower, camouflaged within a proposed clock tower. The clock tower is to be comprised of multiple levels; the ground level, the first level, the second level, and the third level. The ground level floor area is comprised of two parking spaces and the four footings of the tower, which will be camouflaged as brick columns. The height of the ground level is to be 12-feet. The first level is comprised of tower equipment and known as the equipment level. Equipment such as battery cabinets are stored here with fiber cables running up conduits to reach the above levels. Two access doors via exterior

caged ladder guard and interior ladder access to the second level exist here. The first level is roughly 256 (255.91) square feet with dimensions of 18’6” by 13’10”. The height of the first level is 23-feet.

The second level is accessed by interior ladder with previously mentioned fiber cables running up through conduits to the antennas on the third level. The second level is roughly 256 (255.91) square feet with dimensions of 18’6” by 13’10”. The height of the second level is 23-feet. The third level is known as the antenna level due to the housing of tower antennas on this level. The third level is effectively the top of the clock tower, with a proposed sloped roof to be set on top of the third level. The height of the third level is 16-feet, topped with a six-foot in height square hip roof. The lease area on the ground floor for the tower has dimensions of 23’-10” by 18’-6” feet, totaling roughly 441 square-feet. Adjacent to the north of the lease area is a proposed 6’ wide utility easement that leads to a new point of connection to an AT&T PPC (Power/Protection/Power Control) cabinet. The cabinet lease area is approximately 255’ and is comprised of an existing electric meter switchboard, transformer, and generator.

The project parcel has access from an existing commercial driveway from Bank Street and proposes a 15’ wide and approximate 404’ non-exclusive Access and Utility Easement for AT&T to reach the cabinet lease area and the tower lease area. New driveways are not being proposed as a part of the project proposal.

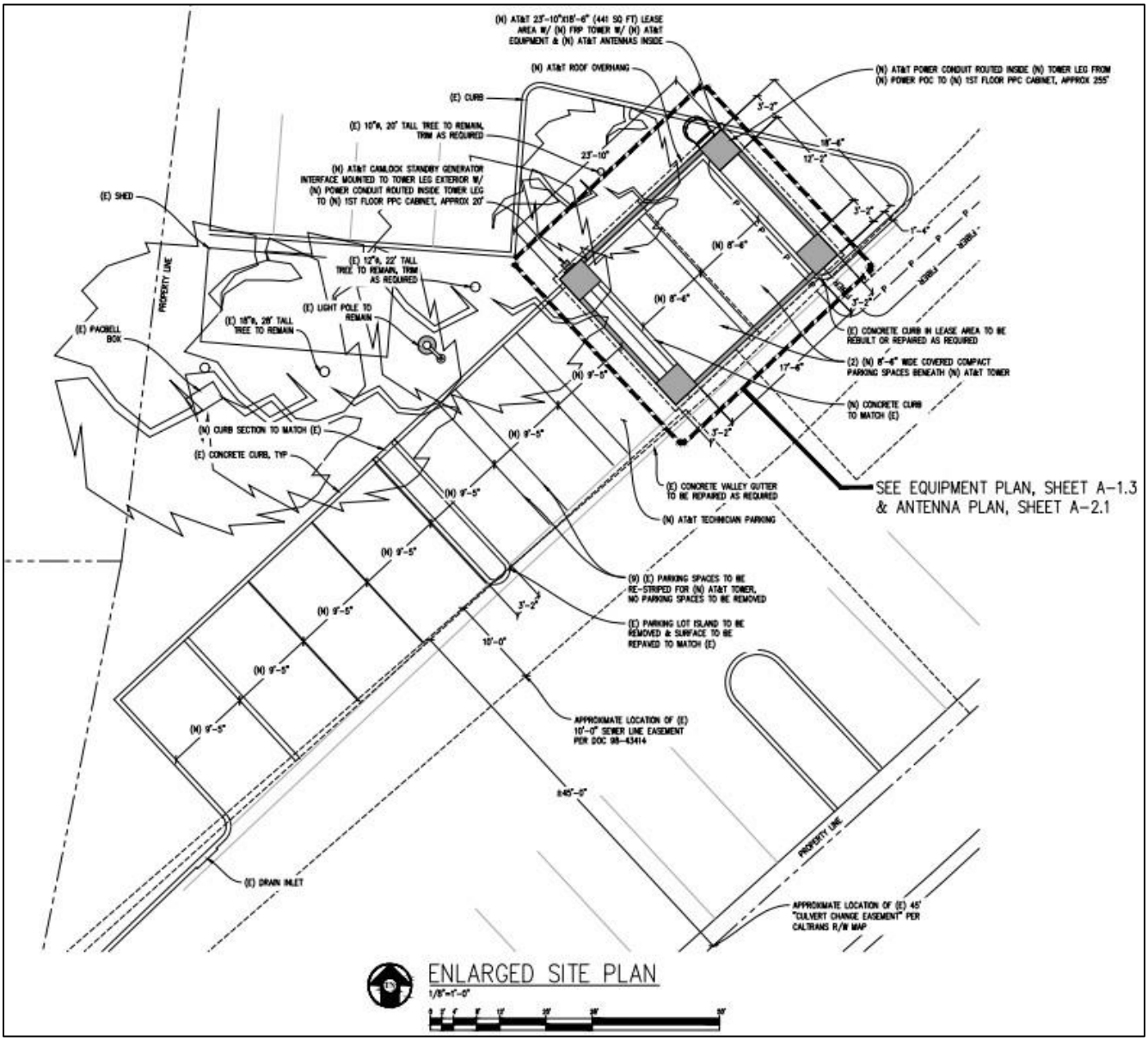


Figure 2 – Portion of Development Plans, Enlarged Site Plan

Figure 3 – Project Site Aerial Imagery

Other Permits that May be Necessary:

1. Building Permit– City of Grass Valley Building Department and Public Works Department
2. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)– Flood Plain Elevation Certificate

Relationship to Other Projects:
None.

Consultation with Native American Tribes:
Pursuant to Assembly Bill 52, tribal consultation began September 25, 2025. Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area were notified of the project and invited to consultation. No consultation was requested.

Summary of Impacts and Proposed Mitigation Measures

Environmental Factors Potentially Affected:

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

	1. Aesthetics		2. Agricultural and Forestry Resources	✓	3. Air Quality
✓	4. Biological Resources	✓	5. Cultural Resources		6. Energy
✓	7. Geology and Soils	✓	8. Green House Gas Emissions	✓	9. Hazards and Hazardous Materials
	10. Hydrology and Water Quality		11. Land Use and Planning		12. Mineral Resources
✓	13. Noise		14. Population and Housing		15. Public Services
	16. Recreation		17. Transportation	✓	18. Tribal Cultural Resources
✓	19. Utilities and Service Systems		20. Wildfire	✓	21. Mandatory Findings of Significance

Recommended Mitigation Measures:

The following measures shall be implemented, and where appropriate, included as a note on construction plans as outlined in each.

3. AIR QUALITY:

Reduce Mitigation Measure 3A: Reduce Emissions During Construction. The following are the minimum recommended mitigation measures designed to help reduce project emissions related to construction, which shall be included as a note on all plans prior to issuance of all improvement, and building permits. In addition to these measures, all statewide air pollution control regulations shall be followed, including diesel regulations (which may be accessed at https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/diesel-enforcement). This note shall be included on the Supplemental Map. measures, which shall also be included on all construction plans:

a) The mobile off-road construction equipment in use at any time on the project shall be equipped with Tier 4 engines.

b) Construction equipment idling time shall be limited to 5 minutes (as required by the California airborne toxics control measure Title 13, Section 2485 of California Code of Regulations [CCR]). All construction equipment shall also be maintained and properly tuned in accordance with manufacturer's specifications. Clear signage shall be provided for construction workers at all access points.

c) In addition to these measures, all statewide air pollution control regulations shall be followed, including diesel regulations (which may be accessed at www.arb.ca.gov/diesel/ diesel.htm).

Timing: *Prior to issuance of Improvement/Building permits*
Reporting: *Agency approval of future permit issuance*
Responsible Agency: *Planning Department / NSAQMD*

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Mitigation Measure 4A. Professionally Prepared Construction Plans. A professionally prepared construction plan (Registered Engineer Stamped) shall be provided at time of building permit application to delineate potential impact to City maintained culvert and/or Wolf Creek waterway from proposed tower footings. Applicable State permits (CDFW) will be required based on outcome of report.

Timing: *At time of building permit application*
Reporting: *Agency approval of permits or plans*
Responsible Agency: *Engineering Division/Planning Department*

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Mitigation Measure 5A. Halt work and contact the appropriate agencies if human remains or cultural materials are discovered during project construction. All equipment operators and employees involved in any form of ground disturbance at any phase of project improvements shall be advised of the remote possibility of encountering subsurface cultural resources. If such resources are encountered or suspected, work shall be halted immediately and the Nevada County Planning Department, United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria, and any other interested and affected tribe shall be contacted. A professional archaeologist shall be retained by the developer and consulted

to access any discoveries and develop appropriate management recommendations for archaeological resource treatment. If bones are encountered and appear to be human, California Law requires that the Nevada County Coroner and the Native American Heritage Commission be contacted and, if Native American resources are involved, Native American organizations and individuals recognized by the County shall be notified and consulted about any plans for treatment. A note to this effect shall be included on the construction plans for each phase of this project.

Timing: *Prior to the issuance of Building/Improvement permits and during construction*
Reporting: *Agency approval of permits or plans*
Responsible Agency*: Planning Department*

7. **GEOLOGY AND SOILS:** To offset potentially adverse geological impacts associated with the construction activities, the following mitigation measure shall be required:

   See **Mitigation Measures 5A and 18A**.

9. **HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

   Mitigation Measure 9A: Hazard Warning Signage. The following measures shall be required and shall be included as notes on all future site plans. To also include this note: "All workers and individuals accessing the Clock Tower or persons (arborists), accessing elevated structures or trees within areas exceeding the general public MPE, must be made aware of the presence and locations of antennas and their associated fields, where applicable."

Location	Proposed Signage	Proposed Barrier(s)
Access Point(s)	▪ None	None
Alpha Sector	▪ Install CAUTION 2 signs on the back of the antennas, and 6 feet below the antenna bottoms in front of the antennas.	None
Beta Sector	▪ Install CAUTION 2 signs on the back of the antennas, and 6 feet below the antenna bottoms in front of the antennas.	None
Gamma Sector	▪ Install CAUTION 2 signs on the back of the antennas, and 6 feet below the antenna bottoms in front of the antennas.	None

Timing: *At time of building permit application*
Reporting: *Agency approval of permits or plans*
Responsible Agency*: Planning Department*

10. **HYDROLOGY**

Mitigation Measure 10A. Professionally Prepared Construction Plan and Flood Elevation Certificate.

Professionally prepared construction plans (Registered Engineer Stamped) shall be provided at time of building permit application to delineate potential impact to City maintained culvert and/or Wolf Creek waterway from proposed tower footings. Applicable State permits (CDFW) will be required based on outcome of report. Applicant shall provide a Flood Elevation Certificate with building permit as location is located in a designated flood plain ("Zone X", per FEMA).

Timing: *At time of building permit application*
Reporting: *Agency approval of permits or plans*
Responsible Agency*: Engineering/Planning Division*

13. NOISE

Mitigation Measure 13A. Limit construction work hours to 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM: During trenching and construction, work hours shall be limited from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM, Monday – Saturday; no work is permitted on Sundays. Prior to issuance of building permits, improvement plans shall reflect hours of construction.

Timing: *Prior to issuance of Improvement/Building permits*
Reporting: *Agency approval of permits or plans*
Responsible Agency: *Planning Department*

18. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Mitigation Measure 18A: Unanticipated Tribal Cultural Resources. The following mitigation measures shall be required and shall be included as notes on all future site plans: If any suspected Tribal Cultural Resources (TCRs) are discovered during ground disturbing construction activities, all work shall cease within 100 feet of the find, or an agreed upon distance based on the project area and nature of the find. A Tribal Representative from a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with a geographic area shall be immediately notified and shall determine if the find is a TCR (PRC §21074). The Tribal Representative will make recommendations for further evaluation and treatment as necessary.

When avoidance is infeasible, preservation in place is the preferred option for mitigation of TCRs under CEQA and UAIC protocols, and every effort shall be made to preserve the resources in place, including through project redesign, if feasible. Culturally appropriate treatment may be, but is not limited to, processing materials for reburial, minimizing handling of cultural objects, leaving objects in place within the landscape, or returning objects to a location within the project area where they will not be subject to future impacts. Permanent curation of TCRs will not take place unless approved in writing by UAIC or by the California Native American Tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area.

The contractor shall implement any measures deemed by the CEQA lead agency to be necessary and feasible to preserve in place, avoid, or minimize impacts to the resource, including, but not limited to, facilitating the appropriate tribal treatment of the find, as necessary. Treatment that preserves or restores the cultural character and integrity of a TCR may include Tribal Monitoring, culturally appropriate recovery of cultural objects, and reburial of cultural objects or cultural soil. Work at the discovery location cannot resume until all necessary investigation and evaluation of the discovery under the requirements of the CEQA, including AB52, have been satisfied.

Timing: *Prior to issuance of Improvement/Building permits and throughout construction*
Reporting: *Planning Department Approval of Construction Permits*
Responsible Agency: *Planning Department & United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC)*

Mitigation: See **Mitigation Measure 5A.**

19. **UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS**

Mitigation Measure 19A: Appropriately Dispose of Vegetative and Toxic Waste: Industrial toxic waste (petroleum and other chemical products) is not accepted at the McCourtney Road transfer station and if encountered, shall be properly disposed of in compliance with existing regulations and facilities. This mitigation measure shall be included as a note on all improvement plans, which shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Department prior to permit issuance.

Timing: Prior to issuance of Improvement/Building permits and during construction
Reporting: Agency approval of permits or plans
Responsible Agency: Planning Department

21. **MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFIGANCE**

See all Mitigation Measures listed above.

Mitigation and Monitoring Matrix:

MEASURE #	MONITORING AUTHORITY	IMPLEMENTATION TIMING
3A	Planning Department / NSAQMD	Prior to issuance of improvement/building permits
4A	Engineering/Planning Department	At time of building permit application
5A	Planning Department	Prior to issuance of improvement/building permits
9A	Planning Department	At time of building permit application
10A	Engineer/Planning Division	At time of building permit application
13A	Planning Department	Prior to issuance of improvement/building permits

18A	Planning Department	Prior to issuance of improvement/building permits
19A	Planning Department	Prior to issuance of improvement/building permits

Initial Study and Checklist

Introduction:

This checklist is to be completed for all projects that are not exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CEQA requires a brief explanation for answers to the Appendix G: Environmental Checklist except "No Impact" responses that are adequately supported by noted information sources. Answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts. This Initial Study uses the following terms to describe the level of significance of adverse impacts. These terms are defined as follows.

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

1. Aesthetics:

Existing Setting: The project parcel and immediate adjacent parcels are zoned Town Core (TC) and has a General Plan designation of Commercial (C). Parcels immediately north fall within the City's adopted "Historic Combining District", the historic downtown of Grass Valley is within the vicinity of the project site. Figure 1 (Page 3) shows the project parcel, surrounding properties, and

the zoning of the area. Figure 2 above shows an aerial photo of the project parcel. The project parcel is located in an urban setting, located within Grass Valley.

Many of the surrounding parcels range in size from approximately 0.11 to 0.49-acres in size. Land uses on neighboring parcels include: an existing commercial restaurant, an existing dentist office, a gas station, a restaurant, a dry cleaner facility, a commercial gym, professional service offices and an investment/banking institution. The project parcel is 2.49-acres in size. The proposed lease area is to be within a currently developed parking lot of an existing commercial hotel, which has a large, paved parking lot making up a majority of the parcel, which includes downcast lighting for parking lot use; there are no other sources of lights or glare which exist on the subject parcel. There is an existing accessory building, a small tuff shed, used for hotel storage use within the parking lot. Adjacent directly east of the project parcel is Tinloy Street, directly east of Tinloy Street is State Highway 49 which runs overhead a portion of Grass Valley.

On ground level, the project parcel is located directly south of Bank Street and immediately north of the Neal Street and South Auburn Street junction point. Tinloy Street intersects Neal and South Auburn Street. The elevated section of State Highway 49 allows through-fare traffic to bypass surface streets, below, on a viaduct structure. Local City maintained roads fall below the highway and are used by local city traffic. State Department of Transportation (CalTrans) confirmed the existing height of roadway section closest to the project site as an approximate elevation of 742-meters, or 2,434-feet above mean sea level. CalTrans confirmed the project parcel lease area as an approximate elevation of 735 meters, or 2,411-feet above mean sea level. The adjacent State highway 49/20 is approximately 23-feet in vertical height, per CalTrans.

Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?			✓		A, L, T 1, 36 Appendix B.1
b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?			✓		A, L, T 1, 36 Appendix B.1
c. In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage points.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?			✓		A, L,1, 36, 37 Appendix B.1
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?				✓	A

Impact Discussion:

1a,d A scenic vista is generally defined as a view possessing visual and aesthetic qualities of value to the public, including views of natural features or notable structures, and considered a quality of life factor within the City's 2020 General Plan. Scenic vistas can provide views of natural features or significant structures and buildings. The project site is located within the City's 1872 Historic Townsite and within an area identified in the General Plan as part of a "scenic corridor" associated with State Highway 49/20 (General Plan, PDF page 87). While the City has historically/*locally* identified this adjacent highway corridor for scenic consideration, this segment of State Route 49 is *not designated as a scenic highway by the State of California (CalTrans).*

The 2020 General Plan further reinforce historic scenic highway efforts through policies to enhance City "entryways". The 2020 General Plan defines a "Scenic Highway Corridor" as "The visible area outside of the highway's right-of-way", generally described as view from the road" (General Plan, PDF page 178). The current 2020 General Plan "renews the [historic] mandate to identify specific corridors and views and to identify aesthetic considerations important to their protection".

The purpose of scenic route/corridor designation is to protect views from impacts which could impair aesthetics along identified stretches of a highway corridor. The 1972 General Plan proposed scenic highway policies prohibiting billboards and off-premise outdoor advertising structures along scenic highways and encouraged landscaping and tree planting along public rights-of-way within the scenic corridor. Although the location of the project parcel is located within an area of scenic protection, the telecommunications facility has been camouflaged as a town clock tower to mask the industrial appearance of the facility. Additionally, the clock tower has been designed with additional architectural features to further blend with the hotel and exude town character details around the proposed facility. Added architectural details on the clock tower include roof design details such as under brackets supporting the hip square roof, the presence of horizontal X-pattern lattice detailing resembling a balcony and delivering texture, two styled types of faux windows for interest (arched and rectangular), and an operable/non-illuminated clock face centered at the upper portion of the tower. The camouflaged design is subjective and may be seen as compatible/non-compatible with existing historic downtown architecture, to include reference to the historic nature of town and the placement of an 81-foot tall clock tower at the time of the town in 1872.

Goals of the 1872 Historic Townsite Design Guidelines include traditional building massing, historic designs and appropriate height to the scale of the building of focus. The project proposal will be presented before the Development Review Committee (DRC) for design review by a consultant architect and for further review from City staff. The clock tower height may be considered appropriate due to the hotel building not being a historic building (due to year of construction), as well as the hotel having a penthouse portion of the building with similar proportions and articulation designed for hotel guest use. The property site itself is not within the City's adopted Historic Combining District; however, the site is immediately adjacent to the City's Historic Combining District

The existing hotel building penthouse roofline is notated as 2,452-feet above mean sea level, or roughly 40-45-feet in height. Max height of a building in the "TC" zone, per Municipal

Code, is 45-feet in height. The proposed camouflage facility will result in a relatively sizeable addition to the city scape from both overhead highway view and ground level City view. See Appendix B, B.1, for the initial project related photo simulations. At the time this report was drafted, the applicant team was re-drafting photo simulations based on a revision of a clock face to be added to the tower. The revised photo simulations were not available prior to the publishing of this report. Project plans that depict the clock tower and the inclusions of the clock face may be viewed in Appendix B B.2 (page 75). The project parcel does not fall adjacent to a State scenic highway, per State Department scenic highway inventory list. The State Department of Transportation (CalTrans) was routed the project for review, the CalTrans Department stated no further comments for the project. The final design for the clock face on the tower will be a functional clock and will be designed to meet all exterior/outdoor lighting requirements of Section 17.30.060, Outdoor Lighting; no illumination is proposed. With the project designed to meet General Plan policies, as well as 1872 Historic Townsite design criteria which will be presented before the Development Review Committee for review, and Planning Commission for community input and comment on aesthetics.

Although visual compatibility is inherently subjective, the project has been designed by the applicant and team to reduce visual contrast and blend with the existing built environment. The project is not located along a State-designated scenic highway, and no illumination is proposed that would contribute to light or glare impacts. Therefore, the project would not result in a substantial adverse effect on scenic vistas or visual character, and impacts would be ***less than significant***.

1b The proposed project is not anticipated to result in any significant damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway. The project parcel does not fall adjacent to a State scenic highway, per State Department scenic highway inventory list. The State Department of Transportation (CalTrans) was routed the project for review, the CalTrans department stated no further comments for the project. The project parcel does fall within a locally designated scenic highway, per City of Grass Valley General Plan.

The project parcel setting is urban and developed, no damage to scenic trees or rock outcroppings is anticipated due to the entire project parcel being developed, see Project Site and Surrounding Land Uses (page 2 of this report) description. There is no presence of immediate historic buildings that may be blocked, shadowed, or impacted by construction as a result of this project. State Highway 49 is considered an eligible state scenic highway by the California Department of Transportation (2011). State Highway 49 is approximately 144-feet east from the project area; there is no visibility of the ground level portion of the property from the highway due to the height of the overhead highway that measures 23-feet in height. The facility application has been routed to CalTrans for comments, CalTrans stated no concern for the clock tower. Therefore, the proposed project would have ***less than significant*** on scenic resources within a state scenic highway.

1c The proposed project is anticipated to result in visual impact to the project site and its surroundings. The proposal, an 81’ and 2”-foot tall telecommunications tower with a ground level lease area of 441 square-feet with dimensions of 23’-10” by 18’-6”, equivalent

to roughly two parking stalls, is to be camouflaged within a clock tower and will create a presence of a structure that has never been existing prior in the immediate area.

The question of substantial degradation of existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and project parcel surroundings may be subjective. The addition of the tower can serve as a strong visual landmark, can enhance the ground level pedestrian experience of view, and enliven the skyline in contrast with the existing hotel building on site. Oppositely, the clock tower presence has the potential to be incongruent with the existing setting (adjacent to a historic downtown) or pedestrian view from ground level. However, the potential of the clock tower to be incongruent with the setting will be minimized due to the project parcel falling within the 1872 Historic Townsite within the City of Grass Valley. The minimization of impact due to location in townsite requires design review of the project, design review standards stem from the 1872 Historic Townsite Design Guidelines and are reviewed by City Planning staff for conformance, as well as the City's Development Review Committee (DRC) whom will produce the recommendation on the project. The DRC retains an architect for professional perspective on building design. Goals of the 1872 Historic Townsite Design Guidelines include traditional building massing, historic designs and appropriate height to the scale of the building of focus. Which will further ensure the clock tower is designed to appropriately blend in with the existing urban setting and contribute positively to the visual character of the area. Furthermore, the project applicant (AT&T and 51 Wireless) has also consulted with the local City of Grass Valley museum and cultural center (Julie V. Brooks) to finalize a design that is historically accurate for design, scale, and feel with the City, Townsite area, and project parcel in mind. The camouflaged design is compatible with existing historic downtown architecture.

As mentioned, the project parcel is located in an urban setting. The project parcel is a completely developed parcel, facilitating a commercial hotel with a majority of the project parcel existing as an asphalt parking lot. Directly south of the site is a three-way street junction point, with direct on ramp access to State Highway 49 and an existing large Safeway grocers facility. Surrounding the project parcel are other commercially zoned parcels with a variety of existing commercial uses; see Project Site and Surrounding Land Uses (Page 2) description. Conflict with governing scenic quality does not exist due to the project abiding by local design standards, however, public comment at time of hearing from the community is still in the future. The project has been routed to CalTrans for review with a result of "no comment" provided by CalTrans. The project may seem to conflict with applicable zoning regulations for height, however, why the project does not is explained below.

Town Core zoning designation standards have a requirement of a 45-foot maximum in height development standard, measured to eaves or base of parapet for structures. However, City of Grass Valley Municipal Code Section 17.46.060(B)(2), Height Limitations, allows for tower height to be no taller than necessary to meet the technical requirements of the proposed wireless communication system. The project parcel elevation decreases towards the southern portion of the property, where the project lease area is located within. The ground elevation lowers from 2,420 feet ASML to 2,415 feet ASML, a 5-foot decrease in elevation from the ground-based elevation of the hotel (2420 ASML). The roof of the hotel stands at 2,470 feet ASML. When you add the 5-feet ASML elevation change to the

overall height of the hotel you get an elevation change of 55-feet.The additional 15' of overall tower height requested is to overcome the 55-feet change in elevation. The proposed height of the telecommunication facility/clock tower from ground level to top, is proposed at 74'-2" feet. A square hip roof has been added to the second design submittal of the clock tower to meet Townsite design standards, the roof equates to an additional 7-feet. In total the clock tower is 81'-2" feet tall. Due to the aforementioned reasonings, the project would result in ***less than significant impact*** to applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

1d. The final design for the clock face on the tower will be a functional clock, no illumination is proposed. With no illumination or lighting components associated with the project, the project will have ***no impact***.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

2. Agricultural and Forestry Resources:

Existing Setting: The farmland designation of the project site is mapped as Urban and Built-Up Land by the California Department of Conservation (2020). The site nor any neighboring sites have been determined to contain any Important Farmlands. The parcel and the surrounding area is zoned as Town Core (TC), parcels are developed with varying commercial building types and a variety of commercial uses. See Project Site and Surrounding Land Uses (page 2 of this report).

The project site does not contain any land within a Williamson Act contract, nor is the parcel within a Timberland Production Zone.

Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?				✓	A, 2-7, 38
b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?				✓	A, 2-7
c. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resource Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?				✓	A, 2-7
d. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				✓	A, 2-7

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
e. Involve other changes in the existing environment, which due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				✓	A, 2-7, 37

Impact Discussion:

2a,e The project site is mapped as Urban and Built-Up Land by the California Department of Conservation (2020). The site nor any neighboring sites have been determined to contain any Important Farmlands. Therefore, ***no impact*** to protected farmlands is anticipated.

2b The proposed project will not propose a change in zoning or conflict with or convert existing zoning for agricultural use. The California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Williamson Act) enables counties and cities to designate agricultural preserves and offer preferential taxation based on a property's agricultural use value rather than on its market value. Neither the subject parcels nor adjacent properties are under a Williamson Act contract, per Nevada County mapped documentation (Nevada County, 2023). The subject property and surrounding properties do not qualify for Williamson Act contracts based by zoning and location. With no Williamson Act contracts on or near the property and building envelopes to contain rural residential development within the three proposed parcels, the proposed project is anticipated to have a ***no impact*** on a Williamson Act contract(s).

2c,d The land division does not result in the loss or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. The property is not zoned Forest/Timberland or Timber Production Zone, nor are any surrounding parcels. Due to this, potential impacts to forest uses are anticipated to have ***no impact.***

Mitigation Measures: None required.

3. Air Quality:

Existing Setting: The City of Grass Valley is located in the Mountain Counties Air Basin (MCAB). The MCAB includes the central and northern Sierra Nevada Mountain range with elevations ranging from several hundred feet in the foothills to over 6,000 feet above mean sea level along the Sierra Crest. The MCAB generally experiences warm, dry summers and wet winters. Ambient air quality in the air basin is generally determined by climatological conditions, the topography of the air basin, and the type and amount of pollutants emitted.

The Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD) has responsibility for controlling air pollution emissions including "criteria air pollutants" and "toxic air pollutants" from direct sources (such as factories) and indirect sources (such as land-use projects) to improve air quality within Nevada County. To do so, the District adopts rules, regulations, policies, and programs to

manage the air pollutant emissions from various sources, and also must enforce certain statewide and federal rules, regulations and laws.

The Federal Clean Air Act of 1971 established national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS). These standards are divided into primary and secondary standards. Primary standards are designed to protect public health and secondary standards are designed to protect plants, forests, crops, and materials. Because of the health-based criteria identified in setting the NAAQS, the air pollutants are termed "criteria" pollutants. California has adopted its own ambient air quality standards (CAAQS). Criteria air pollutants include ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, lead, and particulate matter. CAAQS include the NAAQS pollutants, in addition to visibility reducing particles, sulfates, hydrogen sulfide, and vinyl chloride. A nonattainment area is an area where a criteria air pollutant's concentration is above either the federal and/or state ambient air quality standards. Depending on the level of severity, a classification will be designated to a nonattainment area. Failure of a state to reach attainment of the NAAQS by the target date can trigger penalties, including withholding of federal highway funds. Table 1 shows the current attainment/nonattainment status for the federal and state air quality standards in Nevada County.

Per California Air Resources Board (CARB), the City of Grass Valley has two federally recognized air monitoring sites: The Litton Building in Grass Valley (fine particulate matter, also called PM2.5, and ozone) and the fire station in downtown Truckee (PM2.5 only). For eight-hour average ozone concentrations, The City of Grass Valley is serious nonattainment for both the 2008 and 2015 state and federal ozone standards of 75 and 70 parts per billion, respectively (Table 1). Unlike other pollutants, ozone is not typically released directly into the atmosphere from any sources. Ozone is created by the interaction of Nitrogen Oxides and Reactive Organic Gases (also known as Volatile Organic Compounds) in the presence of sunlight, especially when the temperature is high. The major sources of Nitrogen Oxides and Reactive Organic Gases, known as ozone precursors, are combustion sources such as factories, automobiles and evaporation of solvents and fuels. Ozone is mainly a summertime problem, with the highest concentrations generally observed in July and August, when the days are longest, especially in the late afternoon and evening hours. Ozone is considered by the California Air Resources Board to be overwhelmingly transported to the City of Grass Valley from the Sacramento Metropolitan area and, to a lesser extent, the San Francisco Bay Area. This recognition of overwhelming transport relieves the City of Grass Valley of CAAQS-related requirements, including the development of CAAQS attainment plan with a "no-net-increase" permitting program or an "all feasible measures" demonstration.

For particulate matter, ambient air quality standards have been established for both PM10 and PM2.5. California has standards for average PM10 concentrations over 24-hour periods and over the course of an entire year, which are 50 and 20 $\mu g/m^3$, respectively. (The notation "$\mu g/m^3$" means micrograms of pollutant per cubic meter of ambient air.) For PM2.5, California only has a standard for average PM2.5 concentrations over a year, set at 12 $\mu g/m^3$, with no 24-hour-average standard. the City of Grass Valley is in compliance with all of the federal particulate matter standards, but like most California counties it is out of compliance with the state PM10 standards. Particulate-matter is identified by the maximum particle size in microns as either PM2.5 or PM10. PM2.5, is mostly smoke and aerosol particles resulting from woodstoves and fireplaces, vehicle engines, wildfires, and open burning. PM-10 is a mixture of dust, combustion particles (smoke) and aerosols from sources such as surface disturbances, road sand, vehicle tires, and leaf blowers.

Table 1: Attainment Status by Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District of State and Federal Air Quality Standards. In addition, the entire district is either Attainment or Unclassified for all State and Federal NO_2, SO_2, Pb, H_2S, visibility reducing particles, sulfates, and vinyl chloride standards.		
Pollutant	State Designation	Federal Designation
Ozone (O_3)	Nevada County: Non-attainment (due to overwhelming transport)	2008 O_3 Standard (75 ppb) Western Nevada County: Serious Non-attainment;
		2015 O_3 Standard (70 ppb) Western Nevada County: Serious Non-attainment;
PM_{10}	Nevada County: Non-attainment	Unclassified
PM2.5	Nevada County: Unclassified	2012 Annual Standard (12µg/m^3) Nevada County: Unclassifiable/Attainment
		2012 24-hour Standard (35µg/m^3) Unclassifiable/Attainment
CO	Nevada: Unclassified	Unclassifiable/Attainment

Ultramafic rock and its altered form, serpentine rock (or serpentinite), both typically contain asbestos, a cancer-causing agent. Ultramafic rock and serpentine are likely to exist in several areas of the City of Grass Valley. The area of the project site is not mapped as an area that is likely to contain ultramafic rock (California Department of Conservation, Geological Map). Natural occurrences of asbestos are more likely to be encountered in, and immediately adjacent to areas of ultramafic rock.

An evaluation and further discussion of related project impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions is provided in Section 8 of this Initial Study.

Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?				✓	A, G, S
b. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?		✓			A, G, 8-11, 46
c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?			✓		A, G, L, 8-11
d. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?		✓			A, G 54

Impact Discussion:

3a Nevada County's General Plan, Chapter 14 Air Quality Element, contains numerous policies to protect air quality in Nevada County. With the exception of General Plan Air Quality Element Policy 14.7A, which requires compliance with Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District Rule 226, the Nevada County General Plan Air Quality Element policies are intended to apply to development that generates new residents or new employees. By assessing air pollution and emissions associated with the proposed project and recommending mitigation measures based on Thresholds of Significance established by the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD), the project as proposed would comply with Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District regulations. The proposed land division would not conflict with or obstruct the implementation of an applicable air quality plan; therefore, ***no impact*** is anticipated on the potential adoption or implementation of an air quality plan.

3b Past, present, and future development of land use projects contribute to the region's air quality impacts on a cumulative basis. Air pollution impact is cumulative by its nature. Often time, a singular project is not sufficient in size to result in nonattainment of State ambient air quality standards (AAQS). The project is not anticipated to result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria pollutants. Western Nevada County is in non-attainment for the Federal 8-hour ozone standard, and the entirety of Nevada County is in non-attainment for the State 1- and 8-hour ozone standards and PM10 standards. While most of the ozone in the City, which is within Nevada County, is transported from urban areas to the southwest; PM10 sources primarily come from within the County. PM10 violations in winter are largely due to wood smoke from the use of woodstoves and fireplaces, while summer and fall violations often occur during forest fires or periods of open burning. Additionally, mapping sources do not indicate that the site is likely to contain serpentine, ultramafic rock or naturally occurring asbestos.

The Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD) Guidelines for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts of Land Use Projects provides the basis for threshold cumulative pollutants for both Project Construction Impacts and Operational Air Quality Impacts. These standards are provided below as reference to NSAQMD standards that exist at the time of this report. The NSAQMD Guidelines also indicate for what type of projects an estimate of emissions should be required for potential emissions of criteria pollutants. The subject project based on size and forecasted operations did not fall on this list. The project does not result in long-term mobile emissions. NSAQMD Guidelines (2024) established thresholds of significance for assessing and mitigating air quality impacts of land use projects, as shown in the tables provided below. Level A requires the most basic mitigations, projects falling within the Level B range require more extensive mitigation and Level C requires the most extensive mitigations. Standard mitigation, **Mitigation Measure 3A**, which is used to mitigate construction phases for all significance levels, has been added; **Mitigation Measure 3A** has been added to aid in reducing particulate matter and emissions by stopping construction equipment engine idling time.

Construction Emissions

Construction activities are temporary activities and are anticipated to fall below NSAQMD thresholds for construction emissions. Construction activities will involve minor grading,

trenching (404 feet) to facilitate fiber lines, tower foundation installation, utility tie-ins, all within the 441 square-foot tower lease area and associated easement. An estimate of total disturbed area is 6,516 square feet (to include easement disturbance for fiber line trenching and the tower foundation) fall below the one-acre threshold requiring a Dust Control Plan under NSAQMD Rule 226. While temporary construction emissions (operating diesel equipment/dust) will occur, they will be mitigated through standard best management practices (BMPs) on construction plans and **Mitigation Measure 3A;** which has been added to the project, reducing particulate matter and emissions by stopping construction equipment idling time.

The project falls within Level A thresholds due to the construction scope being relatively small; estimating 6,516 square feet of ground disturbance, short-term construction with minimal diesel equipment, and no substantial increase in vehicular traffic as a result of the project at the operational phase. No traffic study has been required due to this. The NSAQMD 2024 guidelines provide thresholds for when emission screening is required, a project of this size/intensity does not trigger modeling per screening tables. Additionally, NSAQMD was routed the project for review and provided no comment. Table 1, below, shows project construction related pollution levels within NSAQMD Level A thresholds.

Table 1. Project Construction Air Quality Impacts (Unmitigated)	
Pollutant	**NSAQMD Threshold***
NOx	< 24 lbs/day
ROG	< 24 lbs/day
PM10	< 79 lbs/day
CO	N/A
*These thresholds are “Level A” in NSAQMD’s Guidelines (2024).	

Operational Emissions

Ongoing emissions are associated with 1–5 annual maintenance trips and potential occasional testing of the standby generator via a camlock connection. There will be no new generator installed; AT&T will utilize the existing hotel generator, with the camlock system used only during emergencies. No long-term vehicular emissions or substantial stationary sources are posed as a result of project operation post construction. A traffic study is not required for this project due to this. Operational emissions remain well within Level A thresholds, indicated below in Table 2.

Table 2. Project Operational Air Quality Impacts (Unmitigated)	
Pollutant	**NSAQMD Threshold***
NOx	< 24 lbs/day
ROG	< 24 lbs/day
PM10	< 79 lbs/day
CO	N/A
*These thresholds are “Level A” in NSAQMD’s Guidelines (2024).	

Based on the limited and temporary scope of construction, infrequent operational activity of 1–5 annual maintenance trips, conformance with NSAQMD thresholds, and implementation of **Mitigation Measure 3A**, the project would not result in a cumulatively

considerable net increase in criteria pollutants. Therefore, the impact would be ***less than significant with mitigation***.

3c According to the California Air Resources Board (CARB), sensitive receptors include residences, schools, hospitals, daycare centers, long-term care facilities, and some recreational facilities. The proposed wireless communication facility does not include a new stationary generator but instead incorporates a camlock connection to allow for temporary generator use, if needed. AT&T will primarily rely on the existing backup generator for the Gold Miners Inn hotel. The camlock connection will be used only if the hotel generator fails, allowing a portable generator to be temporarily connected. Generator use would be infrequent, limited to testing, maintenance, or emergency events, and would comply with Federal Environmental Protection Act (EPA) and CARB emission standards for diesel/gasoline engines. These modern generators are designed to minimize emissions of particulate matter (PM10/PM2.5) and diesel exhaust, which are the primary pollutants of concern for sensitive receptor exposure. The project site is located within downtown Grass Valley, in a developed commercial corridor. The closest sensitive receptors include:

1. Grass Valley Charter School – approx. 439 feet from southern corner border of the project parcel.
2. Residential uses (Bank Street) – approx. 374 feet east from northeast corner of project parcel.
3. Dow Alexander Park – approx. 441 feet northwest of the project parcel.
4. Elizabeth Daniels Park – approx. 589 feet southwest of the project parcel.

Given the distance to sensitive receptors, the limited and temporary nature of generator operation, and compliance with air quality regulations, the project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. Therefore, this impact would be considered ***less than significant*** under CEQA.

3d The project as proposed is not anticipated to emit odorous emissions during operation. The wireless telecommunication facility project does not incorporate installation of a new generator. Instead, project plans (Site Plan, Sheet A-1.2) indicate a camlock style standby generator hookup mounted to the exterior of the tower leg. This camlock generator serves as a plug, this hookup would allow for the temporary connection of a portable generator, only in the event of a malfunction of the existing on-site generator currently used by the Gold Miners Inn hotel. AT&T has an agreement in place to utilize the existing hotel generator for backup power. If the hotel generator were to fail, AT&T would bring in a portable unit and connect it to the camlock plug. This portable generator would be used only temporarily for maintenance, testing, or emergency backup in rare circumstances. Although diesel or gasoline generators can produce some exhaust odors, their use in this case would be infrequent, short-term, and subject to modern emissions standards established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the California Air Resources Board (CARB). As such, odor emissions from the generator are not expected to adversely affect a substantial number of people and would be considered less than significant under CEQA.

During the construction phase, the project will include minor ground disturbance, primarily within the 441-square-foot lease area and approximately 404 linear feet of trenching for utility connections. Assuming a conservative trench width of 15 feet, total disturbance is estimated at approximately 6,516 square feet, which is well below the one-acre threshold that would require a Dust Control Plan under NSAQMD Rule 226. Nevertheless, the project will implement standard best management practices (BMPs) to reduce fugitive dust during construction. In addition, **Mitigation Measure 3A** has been incorporated to reduce temporary construction-related emissions from fuel-powered equipment. Given the lack of operational odor emissions, the temporary and limited use of generators, the small construction footprint, and incorporation of BMPs and **Mitigation Measure 3A**, impacts related to emissions (including odors) would be ***less than significant with mitigation***.

Mitigation Measures: To offset potentially adverse air quality impacts associated with the project activities, the following mitigation measures shall be required and shall be included in the improvement plans for the project:

Mitigation Measure 3A: Reduce Emissions During Construction. The following are the minimum recommended mitigation measures designed to help reduce project emissions related to construction, which shall be included as a note on all plans prior to issuance of all improvement and building permits. In addition to these measures, all statewide air pollution control regulations shall be followed, including diesel regulations (which may be accessed at https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/diesel-enforcement). This note shall be included on the Supplemental Map. measures, which shall also be included on all construction plans:

a) The mobile off-road construction equipment in use at any time on the project shall be equipped with Tier 4 engines.

b) Construction equipment idling time shall be limited to 5 minutes (as required by the California airborne toxics control measure Title 13, Section 2485 of California Code of Regulations [CCR]). All construction equipment shall also be maintained and properly tuned in accordance with manufacturer's specifications. Clear signage shall be provided for construction workers at all access points.

c) In addition to these measures, all statewide air pollution control regulations shall be followed, including diesel regulations (which may be accessed at www.arb.ca.gov/diesel/ diesel.htm).

Timing: Prior to issuance of Improvement/Building permits
Reporting: Agency approval of future permit issuance
Responsible Agency: Planning Department / NSAQMD

4. Biological Resources:

Existing Setting: The project area lies near the downtown area of the City of Grass Valley and is situated in an urban setting, amidst a well-developed commercial area. Many of the surrounding

parcels range in size from approximately 0.11 to 0.49-acres in size. Land uses on neighboring parcels include: an existing commercial restaurant, an existing dentist office, a gas station, a restaurant, a dry cleaner facility, a commercial gym, professional service offices and an investment/banking institution. The project parcel is 2.49-acres in size. The proposed lease area is to be within a currently developed parking lot of an existing commercial hotel and additional ground level commercial tenants (UPS and card room), which has a large, paved parking lot making up a majority of the parcel, towards the southern portion of the property. The project parcel is approximately 144-feet west of State Highway 49 and 472-feet north of the Wolf Creek South Fork, within the City of Grass Valley. The general topography of the property is characterized as gently sloped from north to south within the Project area. The ground elevation lowers from 2,420 feet MSL to 2,415 feet MSL at the project area; a 5-foot decrease in elevation from the ground-based elevation of the hotel (2,420 MSL). The roof of the hotel stands at 2,470 feet MSL. Wolf Creek runs through the site, beginning at the northern portion of the property (south side of Bank Street) above ground and continues underground through a box culvert through the project property and project area.

According to the project development plans, no landmark trees (Diameter at Breast Height greater than 36 inches) or landmark groves (continuous forest with canopy coverage of >33%) exist in or near the project area. No Waters of the United States/Wetlands exist at ground surface on the project property. Wolf Creek flows through the subject parcel, underground and below the parking lot, through a box culvert, after beginning at the northern part of the property above ground the creek flows north to south.

No state or federally-listed or other special-status plants or animals were observed or are expected to occur in the project area within the parking lot, and no suitable habitat for other special-status species are present on the developed parcel.

Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
a. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?		✓			A, K, 12-16
b. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?		✓			A, K, L,S 12-16
c. Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal,		✓			A, K, L, 12-16

Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?					
d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?		✓			A, L, 12-16
e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?			✓		A, S 47
f. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?				✓	A, S 47

Impact Discussion:

4a,d The proposed telecommunications facility is to be located within a 441 square-foot lease area within a currently developed parcel that is located in a heavily developed urban setting. The project, as proposed with current plans available, is not anticipated to result in any adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This is due to the entire project parcel being currently developed, with a hotel asphalt parking lot. No species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species exist on site. Protected migratory/nesting birds are not present on the property nor is there sufficient habitat to host. The project area is not located in any known protected wildlife corridor in Grass Valley, per the City's 2020 General Plan. Similarly, the project is not anticipated to substantially interfere with the movement of any native resident or migratory wildlife corridors or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites, since none exist on ground-level or nearby, and if associated tower footings will not impact the underground creek. **Mitigation Measure 4A** requires professionally prepared (registered Engineer Stamped) construction plans at time of building permit review to verify proposed tower footings and potential impact to the culvert and creek. If the creek is to be impacted, the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife would be routed for applicable permits for the development. Due to this, project impacts to riparian habitat and sensitive natural communities are anticipated to have ***less than significant impact with mitigation***.

4b The project parcel exists as a heavily developed site within an urban setting. The location is void of riparian habitat and other sensitive natural communities. Furthermore, aquatic special-status species, including special-status plants, fish, and wildlife species would also be avoided, due to the absence of any existing habitat. The City of Grass Valley Engineering Department review of plans see potential for footings of the tower to potentially impact an under-ground City culvert, Wolf Creek runs underground adjacent to this culvert. **Mitigation**

Measure 4A requires professionally prepared (registered Engineer Stamped) construction plans at time of building permit review to verify proposed tower footings and potential impact to the culvert and creek. If the creek is to be impacted, the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife would be routed for applicable permits for the development. Due to this, project impacts to riparian habitat and sensitive natural communities are anticipated to have ***less than significant impact with mitigation***.

4c The project parcel exists as a heavily developed site within an urban setting. There is no proposed work within wetlands, marshlands, or vernal pools; as they do not exist on site (CDFW BIOS). On the project parcel, Wolf Creek flows from north to south, see Figure 4 below. It is exposed at ground level before running through an underground culvert beneath the project parcel's existing parking lot, then re-emerges at ground level before continuing to the Wolf Creek South Fork. The project will include footings for the tower to be installed in the ground, above the creek. With existing culverts below the project tower lease area, erosion/siltation into the creek will not occur. The Department of Public Works will require that the applicant dig/bore test pits at the location of the footings for the tower to ensure groundwater will not negatively impact constructability and that tower footings will not penetrate the culverts. Given the absence of riparian habitat/sensitive communities and lack of conflict local/regional plans, to include proposed construction on top of the creek with required engineering review to ensure the culverts are not penetrated by tower footings, the project would have ***less than significant impact*** **with mitigation**, on riparian habitat/sensitive communities through direct removal, filling, or hydrological interruption of these resources, with the application of **Mitigation Measure 4A.**

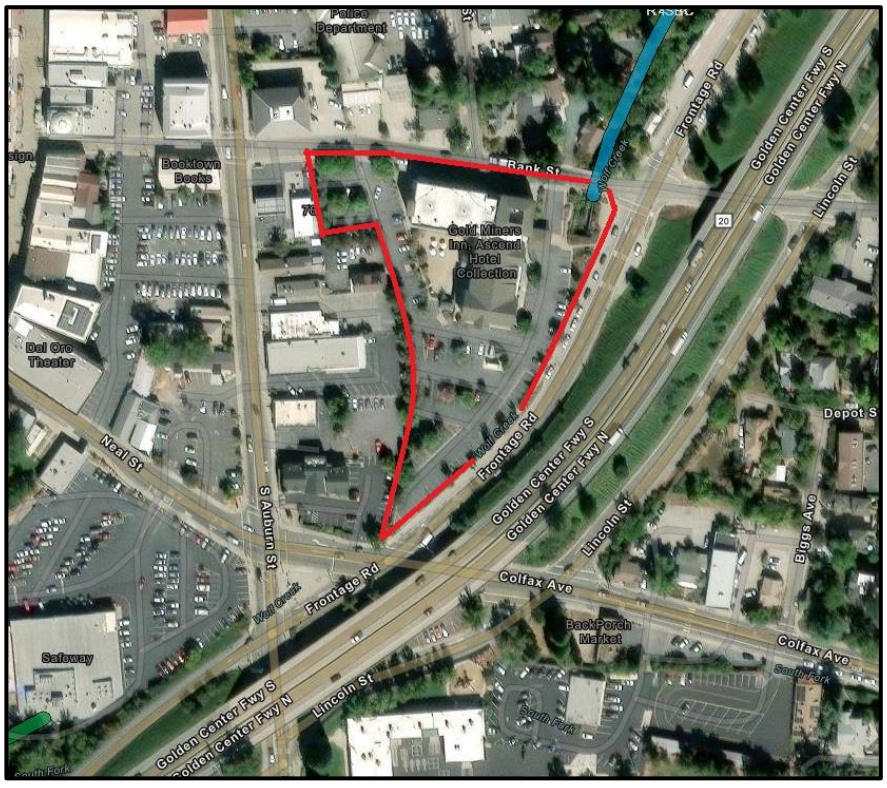


Figure 4 – National Wetlands Inventory Map

4e The proposed telecommunications facility will not conflict with any local policies, ordinances protecting biological resources, or tree preservation policy/ordinance. Per the City's General Plan, Trees and Forested Areas, within the Conservation/Open Space element (page 5-7), the City of Grass Valley has several planning/ordinance provisions addressing trees. The provisions include: A Heritage Tree Ordinance for protection of outstanding heritage trees, Environmental Review of development projects, and applicable General Plan provisions. The project parcel exists as a heavily developed site within an urban setting. The project parcel facilitates a hotel and the site is completely developed as an asphalt parking lot. Due to the setting, the site is void of any native trees, however, mandated parking lot shade trees exist as a development standard requirement based upon the initial construction of the commercial hotel. There are four trees near the project area, which are required to be removed per Fire Marshal review. A review of the project plans at time of building permit review will warrant removal of trees for fire safety reasons. However, these trees do not meet the standards of 12.36.040 (C), Tree Removal Permit, which outlines when tree removal permits are required. This Municipal Code section stems from the City's Tree Preservation and Protection ordinance. Due to the site being void of protected trees and considering that existing trees may/may not be removed, and are not in conflict with local ordinances, conflicts with local policies and ordinances are expected to have a ***less than significant impact.***

4f The City of Grass Valley does have an ordinance that outlines protections for Creek and Riparian Resource Protection, Municipal Code Chapter 17.50. The ordinance outlines standards for the protection of these natural resources that can serve as natural habitat for wildlife. Stream/creek corridors areas are high priorities, as riparian zones and habitat values of river and stream corridors are sensitive to alteration. The City's Creek and Riparian Resource Protection ordinance affords these protections. The project proposal does not trigger any ordinance standards that in turn would require additional mitigation. The subject property is not part of a Habitat Conservation Plan or any other official adopted conservation plans, per City 2020 General Plan. Therefore, the project would have ***no impacts*** or conflicts with adopted conservation plans.

Mitigation Measures: To offset potentially adverse biological resource impacts associated with the project activities, the following mitigation measures shall be required:

Mitigation Measure 4A. Professionally Prepared Construction Plans. A professionally prepared construction plan (Registered Engineer Stamped) shall be provided at time of building permit application to delineate potential impact to City maintained culvert and/or Wolf Creek waterway from proposed tower footings. Applicable State permits (CDFW) will be required based on outcome of report.

Timing: At time of building permit application
Reporting: Agency approval of permits or plans
Responsible Agency: Engineering Division/Planning Department

5. Cultural Resources:

Existing Setting: The subject parcel is located in the downtown of the City of Grass Valley, with the proposed lease area being located at an elevation of approximately 2,411-feet above mean sea level. This region is known as the ethnographic-period territory of the Nisenan, also called the Southern Maidu (Digital Atlas of CA Native Americans). The Nisenan maintained permanent settlements along major rivers in the Sacramento Valley and foothills; they also periodically traveled to higher elevations.

Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?				✓	A, J, 39
b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?		✓			A, J
c. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?		✓			A, J

Impact Discussion:

5a To determine whether a property is listed on a local register of historical resources under California Public Resources Code § 5020.1(k) involves checking local and state resources. Planning Department City staff researched into the local register of historical resources as defined by PRC § 5020.1(k), to include the National Register of Historic Places property search. The property did not fall on the National Register. The project parcel does not contain a historic resource nor would cause a substantial adverse change to a historic resource. Therefore, ***no impact*** to a historical resource is anticipated.

5b,c The California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) maps for cultural resource site records and survey reports, CHRIS is managed by the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). The applicant did not submit a CHRIS report due to the fact that the entire property is developed as a commercial hotel and parking lot. The project was routed to local tribes for AB-52 consultation, for guidance on whether the site may carry potential to hosting an archaeological resource. No comments were made by the tribes. While cultural resource discovery has been determined to be unlikely, **Mitigation Measure 5A** has been included, which requires that work be halted and proper notification and consultation shall be required if any artifacts, cultural resources, or human remains are discovered during construction. With the implementation of **Mitigation Measure 5A**, impacts to cultural resources are expected to be ***less than significant with mitigation***.

Mitigation Measures: To offset potentially adverse cultural or historical resources impacts associated with the construction activities, the following mitigation measure shall be required:

Mitigation Measure 5A. Halt work and contact the appropriate agencies if human remains or cultural materials are discovered during project construction. All grading and construction plans shall include a Note outlining the requirements provided below to ensure that any cultural resources discovered during project construction are properly managed. These requirements

including the following: All equipment operators and employees involved in any form of ground disturbance shall be trained to recognize potential archeological resources and advised of the remote possibility of encountering subsurface cultural resources during grading/trenching activities. If such resources are encountered or suspected, work within 100 feet shall be halted immediately and the Nevada County Planning Department shall be contacted. A professional archaeologist shall be retained by the developer and consulted to access any discoveries and develop appropriate management recommendations for archaeological resource treatment. If bones are encountered and appear to be human, California Law requires that the Nevada County Coroner be contacted. Should the discovery include Native American human remains, in addition to the required procedures of Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, Public Resources Code 5097.98 and California Code of Regulations Section 15064.5(e), all work must stop in the immediate vicinity of the find and the Nevada County Coroner must be notified. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission, and the procedures outlined in California Environmental Quality Act Sections 15064.5(d) and (e) shall be followed. If Native American resources are involved, Native American Organizations and individuals recognized by the County shall be notified and consulted about any plans for treatment.

Timing: Prior to the issuance of Building/Improvement permits and during construction
Reporting: Agency approval of permits or plans
Responsible Agency: Planning Department

6. Energy

Existing Setting: In November of 2018, the City of Grass Valley City Council approved the Energy Action Plan (EAP) as the City's roadmap for expanding energy-efficiency, water-efficiency, and renewable-energy, and the cost-savings that accompany these efforts. The EAP is focused on operations of structures, infrastructure that generates energy, and efficient use of water. The subject project parcel is currently served by PG&E power through underground connection.

Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
a. Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during construction or operation?			✓		A, 55
b. Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?				✓	A, D, 40

Impact Discussion:

6a The proposed telecommunication tower and equipment facility would be unmanned. Technicians would only be on-site for testing and maintenance of equipment, estimated at 1–5 times a year; or more/less as equipment and testing demands. The project as proposed would not incorporate a new generator. The tower plans (Project Plans – Submittal 4, Site Plan [Sheet A-1.1]) indicate a camlock standby generator mounted to the

exterior of the tower leg. The camlock generator serves as a plug for a backup generator. At this time, AT&T has a contract with the property owner to utilize the existing generator on site utilized for the Gold Miners Inn hotel. The camlock generator "plug in" will be utilized only if the existing hotel generator malfunctions. If this should occur, AT&T will bring in a generator to plug into the camlock. The project does not require energy resources beyond what is required to operate the telecommunications tower and facility. The camlock generator is to be used with extreme rarity. The existing generator that will be utilized for the project is not applicable for review under CEQA, due to the hotel generator being existing on site. The site would be powered by electric service that is already established in the area. Due to the scale of the project, the use of energy resources would not be excessive and therefore, the project would have a ***less than significant impact***.

6b The proposed project would not conflict with any state or local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency. As part of the building permit review, all equipment would be required to meet energy standards identified in the California Building Code. Likewise, the project would not obstruct or prevent plans for renewable energy or efficiency. No incongruencies have been noted contrasting the project with the City's approved Energy Action Plan (EAP) (Sierra Business Council, 2018). Therefore, the project would have ***no impact*** to state or local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

Mitigation: None required.

7. Geology and Soils:

Existing Setting: The general topography of the property is characterized as gently sloped from north to south within the project parcel. The ground elevation lowers from 2,420 feet MSL to 2,415 feet MSL at the project area; a 5-foot decrease in elevation from the ground-based elevation of the hotel (2,420 MSL). The roof of the hotel stands at 2,470 feet MSL. The project lease area is in a relatively flat area in an asphalt paved parking lot of a developed commercial hotel property. Wolf Creek is within proximity and flows underground through culverts on the project parcel. The location of Wolf Creek cuts from the very northeast corner of the project parcel and travels south through the central part of the project area underground through a box culvert. The City of Grass Valley is depicted as Josephine Sites Mariposa soils, undulating to very steep well drained loams formed over metasedimentary and metabasic rock (1993 Nevada County Area Soil Survey). The soils type within this area is Sites Very Stony Loam, 15%-50% slopes (Soils Map of Nevada County).

The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act was adopted in 1972 to prevent the construction of buildings in areas where active faults have surface expression. Ground or fault rupture is generally defined as the displacement that occurs along the surface of a fault during an earthquake. The project site is not within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone as defined in Special Report #42 and there are no known faults that cross through the project site the project site (Grass Valley General Plan). The site is not located within any Pre-Quaternary faults (Department of Conservation). The closest active fault is the Cleveland Hill fault near Oroville. Generally, the western half of the Nevada County, in which the City of Grass Valley is located, is in the low intensity zone for earthquake severity (Grass Valley General Plan).

Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
a. Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including risk of loss, injury or death involving: i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42. ii. Strong seismic ground shaking? iii. Seismic-related ground failure including liquefaction? iv. Landslides?			✓		A, L, R, 17-25
b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?				✓	A, D,
c. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?			✓		A, D, R, 17-25
d. Be located on expansive soil creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?			✓		A, D,
e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?				✓	A,
f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?		✓			A, L

Impact Discussion:

7a,c The project site is not within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone as defined in Special Report #42 and there are no known faults that cross through the project site (Grass Valley General Plan). The site is not located within any Pre-Quaternary faults (Department of Conservation). The closest active fault is the Cleveland Hill fault near Oroville. Generally, the western half of Nevada County, which the City of Grass Valley is located, is in the low intensity zone for earthquake severity (Grass Valley General Plan). There may be some minor ground vibrations caused by the construction activities at the project site, but ground shaking is not expected to be substantial. Due to the lease area being generally flat, the erosion hazard is anticipated to be less than significant; no expansive soils are noted in the soil descriptions of the 1993 Nevada County Area Soil Survey. Expansive soils will further be analyzed through a Geotech report that will be associated with the required structural engineered plans at time of building permit submittal. The City of Grass Valley is depicted

as Josephine Sites Mariposa soils, undulating to very steep well drained loams formed over metasedimentary and metabasic rock. The soils type within this area is Sites Very Stony Loam, 15%-50% slopes (Soils Map of Nevada County). Furthermore, the project area is not in an area that is mapped with liquefaction zones (Department of Conservation), seismic-related ground failure/liquefaction is not anticipated to occur; at time of building permit application, structural engineered plans will be provided for review by the Building Department. Within the structural engineered plans will be a tower footing analysis, using geotechnical reporting information on liquefaction susceptibility testing, slope stability, and seismic design criteria. As proposed, it is anticipated that the telecommunications facility and camouflage clock tower covering would meet all structural design requirements of the California Building Code and City of Grass Valley Municipal Code. Project development plans and specialty reports will be reviewed for such. Landslides will not be a possibility due to the project parcel being flat with a 1% slope or less. No specific potential hazards have been identified for the project site. Due to the proposal being reviewed by standard building permit requirements and specialized reports, impacts associated with unstable earth conditions are expected to be ***less than significant***.

7b The project parcel is completely developed. No top soil loss is anticipated due to nature of earthwork proposed for the project. Therefore, impacts relative to soils erosion are anticipated to be ***no impact***.

7d At time of building permit application, structural engineered plans will be provided for review by the Building Department. Within the structural engineered plans will be a tower footing analysis, using geotechnical reporting information on expansive soils, liquefaction susceptibility testing, slope stability, and seismic design criteria. As proposed, it is anticipated that the telecommunications facility and camouflage clock tower covering would meet all structural design requirements of the California Building Code and City of Grass Valley Municipal Code. Due to the proposal being reviewed by standard building permit requirements and specialized reports, impacts associated with unstable earth conditions are expected to be ***less than significant***.

7e The project site will not utilize septic systems for water/wastewater use. The property is hooked up to public water and sewer. The project is not proposing to install a septic system as part of the facility. Nor is the project proposing to hook up to any water service. Due to septic systems not being proposed as part of the project ***no impact*** is anticipated for soil inadequacy for sewage disposal.

7f Ground disturbance is anticipated for utility trenching and associated tower footings within the proposed lease area. The potential to encounter underground paleontological resources or unique geological features have a possibility to occur due to ground disturbance. Due to this, **Mitigation Measures 5A** and **18A** would require work to halt in the event that there is an unanticipated discovery of paleontological resources. Direct or indirect damage to paleontological resources is anticipated to be ***less than significant with mitigation.***

Mitigation Measures: To mitigate unexpected soils presence and impacts from project grading/trenching and construction, both on-and off-site, please see **Mitigation Measures 5A and 18A**.

8. Greenhouse Gas Emissions:

Existing Setting: Global climate change refers to changes in average climatic conditions on the earth, including temperature, wind patterns, precipitation, and storms. Global warming, a related concept, is the observed increase in the average temperature of the earth's surface and atmosphere. One identified cause of global warming is an increase of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere. Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are those gases that trap heat in the atmosphere. GHGs are emitted by natural and industrial processes, and the accumulation of GHGs in the atmosphere regulates the earth's temperature. Events and activities, such as the industrial revolution and the increased combustion of fossil fuels (e.g. gasoline, diesel, coal, etc.), are believed to have contributed to the increase in atmospheric levels of GHGs. GHGs that are regulated by the State and/or EPA are carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), sulfur hexafluoride (SF_6) and nitrous oxide (NO_2). Emission inventories typically focus on GHG emissions due to human activities only, and compile data to estimate emissions from industrial, commercial, transportation, domestic, forestry, and agriculture activities. CO_2 emissions are largely from fossil fuel combustion and electricity generation. Agriculture is a major source of both methane and NO_2, with additional methane coming primarily from landfills. Most HFC emissions come from refrigerants, solvents, propellant agents, and industrial processes, and persist in the atmosphere for longer periods of time and have greater effects at lower concentrations compared to CO_2. Global warming adversely impacts air quality, water supply, ecosystem balance, sea level rise (flooding), fire hazards, and causes an increase in health-related problems.

To reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, the California Legislature enacted AB 32 (Núñez and Pavley), which is referred to as the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (September 27, 2006). AB 32 provided initial direction on creating a comprehensive, multiyear program to limit California's GHG emissions at 1990 levels by 2020, and initiate the transformations required to achieve the state's long-range climate objectives. In April 2015, the California Air Resources Board issued Executive Order B-30-15 to set an interim target goal of reducing GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 to keep California on its trajectory toward meeting or exceeding the long-term goal of reducing GHG emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050 as set forth in EO S-3-05. SB 32, enacted in 2016, codified the 2030 the emissions reduction goal of CARB Executive Order B-30-15.

In addition, the Governor signed Senate Bill 97 in 2007 directing the California Office of Planning and Research to develop guidelines for the analysis and mitigation of the effects of greenhouse gas emissions and mandating that GHG impacts be evaluated in CEQA documents. CEQA Guidelines Amendments for GHG Emissions were adopted by OPR on December 30, 2009. The Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD) has prepared a guidance document, Guidelines for Assessing Air Quality Impacts of Land Use Projects, which includes mitigations for general air quality impacts that can be used to mitigate GHG emissions when necessary. Continuing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is critical for the protection of all areas of the

state, but especially for the state's most disadvantaged communities, as those communities are affected first, and, most frequently, by the adverse impacts of climate change, including an increased frequency of extreme weather events, such as drought, heat, and flooding.

Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?		✓			A, G, 40,41
b. Conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?			✓		A, G,40,41

Impact Discussion:

8a The proposed project is not expected to generate greenhouse gases that would result in significant environmental impacts or that would be in conflict with plans for greenhouse gas reductions. Carbon dioxide (CO_2) is the main component of greenhouse gases (GHG), and vehicles are a primary generator of CO_2. Operational phase GHG outputs are expected to be minimal. Construction-phase emissions would be temporary and minimal, primarily resulting from vehicle trips and equipment operation during installation. **Mitigation Measure 3A** has been included to reduce construction-related emissions by requiring use of newer Tier 1 or better engines and limiting equipment idling to five minutes or less. In addition to periodic maintenance trips, occurring 1–5 times annual for testing or repairs. The project does not include any energy-intensive equipment that would operate continuously, nor does it result in long-term generation of vehicular traffic that results in excess emissions.

California is divided geographically into air basins for the purpose of managing the air resources of the State on a regional basis. An air basin generally has similar meteorological and geographic conditions throughout. Nevada County and Placer County are both within the Mountain Counties Air Basin. Nevada County, and therefore the City of Grass Valley, is within the jurisdiction of the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD). Although the NSAQMD has not adopted thresholds for GHG emissions, the thresholds used by the neighboring Placer County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) are considered appropriate for evaluation. The thresholds adopted by Placer County APCD include a bright-line threshold of 10,000 metric tons of Carbon dioxide equivalent per year and a De Minimis level of 1,100 metric tons of carbon dioxide per year (MT CO_2e/yr). A De Minimis Level for the operational phases of 1,100 MT CO_2e/yr represents an emissions level which can be considered as less than cumulatively considerable and be excluded from the further GHG impact analysis. Given the nature of associated low-emissions of the project, and with implementation of standard construction mitigation, the project's GHG emissions are expected to remain well below significance thresholds, and impacts to generating GHGs would be ***less than significant with mitigation***.

8b The project would not conflict with any applicable plan or policy adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. It does not involve land use changes, substantial energy

consumption, or major traffic generation. It supports infill development in an existing urban area and would not interfere with implementation of the City of Grass Valley's Energy Action Plan or statewide GHG reduction goals set forth in AB 32 or SB 32. Therefore, the project is consistent with applicable GHG reduction policies, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures: Please see **Mitigation Measures 3A.**

9. Hazards and Hazardous Materials:

Existing Setting: The project site is not within or adjacent to any hazardous materials sites (California Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor Database) compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 (California Department of Toxic Substances Control, 2019). The project parcel is majorly not within a fire severity zone, only a portion of the northeast corner falls within a moderate fire hazard severity area, as designated by Cal-Fire. The Grass Valley Charter School appears to be the closest sensitive receptor, located approximately 439-feet; measured from southern corner border of the project parcel to the driveway entrance of the school on Colfax Avenue. The closest residence is approximately 374-feet east of the project parcel, measured from the northeast corner of the project parcel; the residence is located on Bank Street. There are existing hotel styled cabins directly north of the project parcel, approximately 504-feet from the project lease area. The existing Gold Miner's Inn hotel is approximately 175-feet from the project lease area. The project is located approximately 2.47 driving miles west from the nearest airport, the Nevada County Airport.

Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?			✓		C, 26-29, 52
b. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?			✓		C, 52
c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?		✓			A, L, 52
d. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?				✓	C, 27, 52

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?		✓			A, L
f. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				✓	H, M, S
g. Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?			✓		H, M

Impact Discussion:

9a The project would involve the use of hazardous materials. Hazardous material storage must comply with the California Health and Safety Code Chapter 6.95, and the applicant would have to file a chemical business plan and inventory with the Nevada County Environmental Health Department within 30 days of triggering threshold quantities.

Generators

The project proposes no standby generator at this time. Currently, AT&T has a contract with the property owner to use the existing generator on site that is utilized for the Gold Miners Inn hotel. Under CEQA, the existing generator may not be evaluated. The camlock generator "plug in" will only be used if the existing generator malfunctions. If this should occur, AT&T will bring in a portable generator to plug into the camlock. Portable generators use diesel fuel, portable generators will require the transport of diesel to the site. Diesel fuel quantities are relatively small, will be securely contained, and subject to compliance with Fire Code and environmental regulations. The project will not include the transport of hazardous materials as part of normal operation functions.

Lithium Batteries

The project will involve 2,500 pounds of solid Lithium-ion batteries. There will be five strings of batteries contained within two racks which shall be located on a steel platform inside of the proposed new clock tower. Each string of batteries equals four batteries for a total of twenty batteries. Each battery weighs 125lbs. 4 batteries x 125 lbs. = 500 lbs. (per string)

- 500 lbs. x 5 strings = 2,500 lbs. total

Consistent with Nevada County Department of Environmental Health (EH) requirements, the applicant would have to apply for and obtain a permit for the storage of hazardous materials from the Nevada County Department of Environmental Health, Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA). At this time, EH has determined the project to not require any CUPA permits, based on hazardous materials not triggering threshold standards. The applicant would be required to adhere to all applicable codes and regulations regarding the storage of hazardous materials and the generation of hazardous wastes set forth in California Health and Safety Code Section 25500 – 25519 and 25100 – 25258.2 including the electronic reporting requirement to the California Environmental Reporting System.

Construction

Small quantities of hazardous materials would be stored, used, and handled during construction. The hazardous materials anticipated for use are small volumes of petroleum hydrocarbons and their derivatives (e.g., gasoline, oils, lubricants, and solvents) required to operate the construction equipment. These relatively small quantities would be below reporting requirements for hazardous materials business plans and would not pose substantial public health and safety hazards through release of emissions or risk of upset. Safety risks to construction workers for the proposed project would be reduced by compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards.

The project does not involve any processes or uses that would generate, store, or dispose of hazardous materials at levels that would pose a risk to the public or the environment. Therefore, impacts related to the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials would be ***less than significant impact***.

9b The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is the government agency responsible for the authorization and licensing of facilities such as cellular towers that generate RF radiation. Radiofrequency (RF) radiation emanates from antenna on cellular towers and is generated by the movement of electrical charges in the antenna. The energy levels it generates are not great enough to ionize, or break down, atoms and molecules, so it is known as “non-ionizing” radiation. The inclusion of discussing RF in the Hazards section may implicate that RF is a hazard, which, by legal terms, it is *not*. It should be noted that Section 704 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 states that, “No State or local government or instrument of may regulate the placement, construction, and modification of personal wireless service facilities on the basis of the environmental effects of radio frequency emissions to the extent that such facilities comply with the Commission's regulations concerning such emissions”.

RF Compliance and FCC Regulation

For guidance in health and safety issues related to RF radiation, the FCC relies on other agencies and organizations for guidance, including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), which have all been involved in monitoring and investigating issues related to RF exposure. The FCC has developed and adopted guidelines for human exposure to RF radiation using the recommendations of the National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements (NCRP) and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), with the support of the EPA, FDA, OSHA and NIOSH. According to the FCC, both the NCRP exposure criteria and the IEEE standard were developed by expert scientists and engineers after extensive reviews of the scientific literature related to RF biological effects. The exposure guidelines are based on thresholds for known adverse effects, and they incorporate wide safety margins. Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) the FCC is required to evaluate transmitters and facilities for significant impacts on the environment, including human exposure to RF radiation. When an application is submitted to the FCC for construction or modification of a transmitting facility or renewal of a license, the FCC evaluates it for compliance with the RF exposure guidelines, which were previously evaluated under NEPA. Failure to show compliance with the FCC’s RF exposure guidelines

in the application process could lead to additional environmental review and eventual rejection of an application.

- Maximum Permissible Exposure (MPE) is the maximum exposure of Radio Frequency (RF) radiation allowed by the FCC for people; 100% is the limit and anything below 100% is compliant. From ground level, exposure is 11.96% of the limit (MPE); 88% below the maximum allowed. Pursuant to federal law, the City's review of RF emissions is limited to compliance with FCC standards.
- Additional vertical heights were assessed and also fell below MPE levels.

Given the minimal use of hazardous materials with associated safety regulations, compliance with federal RF exposure standards, and regulatory oversight, the project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous materials in a manner that would pose a risk to nearby sensitive receptors, including the nearby schools or persons. Because the proposed facility would operate under local, State, and federally mandated standards, the proposed facility complies with all applicable safety standards and would have a ***less than significant impact*** on releasing hazardous material into the environment.

9c The Grass Valley Charter School at Hennessy appears to be the closest sensitive receptor, located approximately 439-feet southeast from the southern corner of the project parcel, where the project lease area falls adjacent to. The school does fall within one-quarter mile of the project parcel. The closest residence is approximately 374-feet east of the project parcel, measured from the northeast corner of the project parcel; the residence is located on Bank Street. There are existing hotel styled cabins directly north of the project parcel, approximately 504-feet from the project lease area. The existing Gold Miner's Inn hotel is approximately 175-feet from the project lease area.

The proposed project does not involve the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Any hazardous emissions or substances associated with the normal operation of the wireless communications facility would be subject to review and permitting by the Nevada County Environmental Health Department, ensuring compliance with applicable safety standards. Limited use of hazardous materials, such as batteries or equipment lubricants, would be minimal in quantity and similarly regulated. Any materials not subject to regulation would be present in quantities too small to pose a risk or trigger regulatory oversight.

With respect to radio frequency (RF) emissions, the project would operate in compliance with federal safety standards established by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). According to the RF-EME Exposure Report (EBI Consulting), maximum predicted public exposure at ground level is approximately 11.96 percent of the FCC's Maximum Permissible Exposure (MPE) limit, which is substantially below the federal safety threshold. The FCC's public exposure limits are twenty-times more stringent than those for trained workers, offering additional safety margins for anyone walking around the facility that may be unaware of what the facility contains. In addition, warning signage would be installed near access points to restricted areas, consistent with the recommended mitigation measures identified in the RF-EME Report (Table 3)/**Mitigation Measure 9A**. Given the low level of RF emissions, the absence of hazardous emissions or materials, compliance with federal standards, and implementation of recommended **Mitigation Measure 9A**, the

project would result in a ***less than significant impact with mitigation*** with respect to hazardous emissions in proximity to a school.

9d The proposed project area is not on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5; therefore, there would be ***no impact.***

9e The project site is not located within an airport land use plan and is approximately 2.47-driving miles from the nearest airport, the Nevada County Airport, located northeast of the project parcel. The Nevada County Airport is a private airstrip that requires permission prior to landing. In addition, the project site is located approximately 7.2-driving miles north of the Alta Sierra Airport. Due to the mentioned distances away from local airports, the project parcel does not fall within any existing compatibility zone(s) of the nearest airport. While it is not anticipated that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) would consider the proposed telecommunication facility an obstruction, the requirement of the submission of the FAA's findings will ensure that the proposed project would not result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area or for operating aircraft and would result in the project impacts being ***less than significant with mitigation*** which is proposed herein as **Mitigation Measure 9A**.

9f There is currently no adopted emergency response plan for the project area. For Alert Systems, the City utilizes CodeRED for immediate public notifications. Also existing is the Grass Valley Emergency Command Center (GVECC), a critical piece of the regional emergency response infrastructure in Grass Valley and greater Nevada County. The GVECC is an all-hazard 911 dispatch and emergency command center, located in the City of Grass Valley. GVECC is operated by CAL FIRE Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit, Grass Valley Fire Department and the Nevada County Consolidated Fire District. Formally adopted plans for the City of Grass valley includes the 2024 Nevada County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. This plan covers Grass Valley and neighboring jurisdictions; addressing preparedness and mitigation for various natural hazards such as: wildfire, floods, drought, earthquakes, severe weather, and more. It is not anticipated that these plans would be adversely impacted by the communication tower. It is likely that increased cellular coverage would help with the issuance of emergency alerts. Due to the project being an unstaffed telecommunications facility that would not have full-time occupants and the lack of an adopted emergency response plan in the area, the project would not impair implementation of, or physically interfere with, adopted emergency response plans, and ***no impact*** on any emergency response plan would occur as a result of the project.

9g The City of Grass Valley Fire Marshal reviewed the project and provided Conditions of Approval (COA) about the construction and operation of the telecommunication tower that have been incorporated into this project. Fire COA #1 requires all roadways accessing the project area to be deemed adequate to support fire apparatus use. Fire COA #2 requires a key box in an accessible location for any gates and barriers on site. Fire COA #3 requires non-combustible 2-hour rated exterior walls, fire resistive enclosed eaves, class "A" roofs with edge protection, and fire-rated protected openings. As a pre-cautionary measure, Fire COA #4 requires any non-enclosed cabinets and equipment to be surrounded by a 6-inch thick masonry block wall around sides facing combustible vegetation. There is no combustible surrounding vegetation proposed post construction. Fire COA #5 requires a

minimum 30-foot fuel modification/defensible space around the project lease area. Fire COA #6 regulates any emergency/uninterrupted power supplies to be in accordance with the National Fire Protection Association standards. Fire COA #7 requires local approval of and Fire Protection Systems and Equipment. Fire COA #8 mandates no interference with fire department radio communication. Due to the tower having been reviewed by the local Fire Marshal, the proposed project would not expose people or structures to wildland fires and therefore would have a ***less than significant impact***.

Mitigation Measures:
To mitigate potentially adverse impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials, the following mitigation measures shall be required:

Mitigation Measure 9A: Hazard Warning Signage. The following measures shall be required and shall be included as notes on all future site plans. To also include this note: "All workers and individuals accessing the Clock Tower or persons (arborists), accessing elevated structures or trees within areas exceeding the general public MPE, must be made aware of the presence and locations of antennas and their associated fields, where applicable."

Location	Proposed Signage	Proposed Barrier(s)
Access Point(s)	▪ None	None
Alpha Sector	▪ Install CAUTION 2 signs on the back of the antennas, and 6 feet below the antenna bottoms in front of the antennas.	None
Beta Sector	▪ Install CAUTION 2 signs on the back of the antennas, and 6 feet below the antenna bottoms in front of the antennas.	None
Gamma Sector	▪ Install CAUTION 2 signs on the back of the antennas, and 6 feet below the antenna bottoms in front of the antennas.	None

Timing: *At time of building permit application*
Reporting: *Agency approval of permits or plans*
Responsible Agency*: Planning Department*

10. Hydrology and Water Quality:

Existing Setting: The general topography of the property is characterized as gently sloped from north to south within the project parcel. The project area is relatively flat and consists primarily of developed land, including the existing commercial hotel buildings, majorly paved parking lot areas, driveways, and landscaping. The ground elevation lowers from 2,420 feet MSL to 2,415 feet MSL at the project area; a 5-foot decrease in elevation from the ground-based elevation of the hotel (2,420 MSL). The roof of the hotel stands at 2,470 feet MSL. The property is currently developed, with almost all of the property covered in impervious surface due to the parking lot that covers a majority of the property. No detention basins or drainage swales exist on site. The property was developed with a storm drainage system with drain inlet(s), manholes, and four sand oil separators. Drainage/surface runoff is caught directly into the stormwater system by grated

openings on the ground level within the parking lot. The property is slightly sloped, decreasing in elevation to the south of the property.

Approximately 66-feet northeast of the project parcel is a portion of Wolf Creek. The United States Geological Survey Map identifies a portion of Wolf Creek along the eastern corner of the project parcel, traveling south along the eastern edge of the property. Wolf Creek flows from north to south. It is exposed at ground level before running through underground local box culverts beneath the project parcel's existing parking lot, then re-emerges at ground level before continuing to the Wolf Creek South Fork. No Waters of the United Sates or Wetlands, as they are defined by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers exist within/on ground-level of the project area, per National Wetlands Inventory (surface waters and wetlands), see Figure 4. A portion of the project parcel falls within Zone X; "0.2 Annual Flood Chance Hazard, Areas of 1% annual chance flood with average depth less than one foot or with drainage areas of less than one square mile, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Information. The project is not in a tsunami or seiche zones.

The California State Water Resources Control Board regulates stormwater discharges from construction sites because of its potential to mobilize pollutants and discharge into waterbodies or watersheds. By regulating these discharges, the State Water Board is preserving, enhancing, and restoring California's waterbodies and its resources. Sustainable management of groundwater basins is overseen by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) via the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The project parcel is not located within a designated groundwater basin, as identified using the California Department of Water Resources SGMA Data Viewer and confirmed via DWR's Bulletin 118 groundwater basin listing. The nearest DWR Bulletin 118 basins are the North and South Yuba Subbasins of the Sacramento Valley Basin (5-21.60 and 5-021.61, respectively) which are 15+ miles in distance from the project site. Ground water does exist underground. Groundwater beneath the site is not currently used for supply, and no wells are known to exist on or near the parcel. Water and sewer service is provided by the City of Grass Valley. No Groundwater Sustainability Agency, no Groundwater Sustainability Plan, and no sustainability criteria or goals have been established for the underlying aquifer of this project.

Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?			✓		A, C, D, I, S, 50, 51
b. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?				✓	A, B 50, 51

Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would: i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site; ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on-or off-site; iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or iv) impede or redirect flood flows?			✓		A, B, S, 28
d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?		✓			A, L, 29,42
e. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?		✓			A, B 50, 51
f. Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?				✓	A, B, L, 29
g. Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures that would impede or redirect flood flows?				✓	A, B, L, 29

Impact Discussion:

10a The proposed project is not anticipated to violate any water quality standards, waste discharge requirements, or substantially degrade surface/ground water quality. Approximately 66-feet northeast of the project parcel is a portion of Wolf Creek. The United States Geological Survey Map identifies a portion of Wolf Creek along the eastern corner of the project parcel, traveling south along the eastern edge of the property. Wolf Creek flows from north to south. It is exposed at ground level before running through an underground box culvert beneath the project parcel's existing parking lot, then re-emerges at ground level before continuing to the Wolf Creek South Fork. No known pollutants/impairments affect the creek (Central Valley Regional Waterboard). Groundwater beneath the site is not currently used for supply, and no wells are known to exist on the parcel. Water and sewer service is provided by the City of Grass Valley; there is existing City stormwater infrastructure in place. Formal hydrology reports prepared and stamped by a licensed engineer will be submitted with a building permit application. The Department of Public Works will require that the applicant dig/bore test pits at the location

of the footings for the tower to ensure groundwater will not negatively impact constructability prior to issuance of a building permit. Based on the above discussion, with the project area being void of surface water, the project parcel being required to submit engineer produced boring samples, and water quality standards being upheld with the proposed project, impacts to water quality standards or waste discharge requirements would have a ***less than significant impact***.

10b The proposed communication tower facility is unstaffed and does not have any water service need. The proposed project will therefore have ***no impact*** on the existing wells on this or any of the adjacent parcels, due to no wells existing in proximity and due to water service being provided directly from the City.

10c The project will not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site/area, including alteration of a stream/creek, to include through the addition of impervious surface.

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

Anticipated project construction will not result in substantial erosion/siltation on or off site. The project is proposing hardscape to hardscape. The project area, two parking stalls and roughly 404± feet of trenching to the tower lease area will occur. The project Conditions of Approval from the Public Works Department require that all utilities be posted on the plans to be submitted for review at time of building permit submittal. With existing culverts below the project tower lease area, erosion/siltation into the creek will not occur. Furthermore, the project area is not in an area that is mapped with high landslide activity (California Geological Survey Map, Sheet 58, 2011). Therefore, given the above condition of approval requirement it is anticipated that project impacts to geologic and seismic hazards would be ***less than significant***.

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

All/any additional drainage caused by the project will be required to be addressed on site through direction to existing drainage facilities that are tied into the City's stormwater infrastructure, without causing additional net stormwater runoff or concentrated flows that that would impact off-site properties. The project will not increase impervious surface area. Properties downstream from the project parcel are partially within FEMA flood zone AE (0.2% annual chance flood hazard) due to Wolf Creek meandering through the properties. There is existing City stormwater infrastructure in place that will facilitate run off.

Figure 5 – FEMA Flood Zone Map (Nevada County GIS)

iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or

Per City of Grass Valley General Plan, Chapter 7 Safety, all new development within the City must be designed to limit storm water runoff to pre-development conditions for the 10, 25, and 100-year storm events. The project parcel is fully developed with an existing stormwater system that is connected to the public storm drain network. The existing onsite system is sized to handle the flow of all current storm drainage. As this structure will be installed in an area that is already an impervious surface, there will be little to no additional drainage added to the parcel. The system has four sand-oil separators to filtrate pollutants and debris.

iv) impede or redirect flood flows?

A portion of the project parcel and a portion of properties located south of the project parcel fall within FEMA flood "Zone X", see Figure 5, due to Wolf Creek meandering throughout the property. Wolf Creek flows underground at the proposed project site. The creek flow is to remain unmodified.

Project construction is not anticipated to significantly modify topography nor significantly affect existing drainage patterns. Project construction is not anticipated to significantly modify topography nor significantly affect existing drainage patterns. The project lease area is to be located on top of two existing parking stalls within the existing parking lot.

Construction will keep the topography of the parking lot the same. Standard erosion control best management practices will be required to ensure that construction trenching work will not result in deposition of sediment into the storm drain system.

Based on the above discussion, project related impacts to water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, including contributing amounts that could exceed drainage system capacity or alter existing drainage patterns would be ***less than significant***, due to professional prepared reports being required and reviewed at time of building permit submittal for standards relating to drainage, storm water management, and erosion control.

10d There is a FEMA designated Flood Zone on the project parcel, “Zone X”; "0.2 Annual Flood Chance Hazard, Areas of 1% annual chance flood with average depth less than one foot or with drainage areas of less than one square mile. For development to occur, a flood elevation certificate stating the lowest finished floor elevation is over the 1-foot flood hazard level. Wolf Creek is present in the vicinity, Wolf Creek flows underground below the surface of the developed project property through a box culvert.

Furthermore, the proposed project is not within a tsunami or seiche zone, and it does not conflict with or obstruct the implementation of a water quality control plan. The proposed project does not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss or injury, or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam, as none are in within the facility or upstream. Given the developed nature of the site, the absence of substantial hazardous materials, and the presence of an engineered drainage system, the project would not result in the release of pollutants due to inundation from flood, tsunami, or seiche hazards. **Mitigation Measure 10A** has been added for additional oversight on construction near the creek and to ensure development within a flood zone is in conformance with FEMA. With the addition of **Mitigation Measure 10A**, impacts would ***be less than significant with mitigation.***

10e-g The proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. There is no known adopted water quality control plan or groundwater management plan applicable to the project site, the project does not involve activities that would interfere with regional water quality or groundwater management efforts.

The proposed project does not include the development of housing and therefore would not place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map. The project involves installation of a telecommunications facility within a paved parking area of a completely developed site. The project would not alter existing drainage patterns, obstruct flood flows, or redirect floodwaters. As such, the project would not impede or redirect flood flows. Impacts related to water quality plans, flood hazards, and flood flow would be of ***no impact***.

Mitigation Measures:
To mitigate potentially adverse impacts associated with hydrology and water quality, the following mitigation measures shall be required:

Mitigation Measure 10A. Professionally Prepared Construction Plan and Flood Elevation Certificate.
Professionally prepared construction plans (Registered Engineer Stamped) shall be provided at time of building permit application to delineate potential impact to City maintained culvert and/or Wolf Creek waterway from proposed tower footings. Applicable State permits (CDFW) will be required based on outcome of report. Applicant shall provide a Flood Elevation Certificate with building permit as location is located in a designated flood plain ("Zone X", per FEMA).

Timing: *At time of building permit application*
Reporting: *Agency approval of permits or plans*
Responsible Agency*: Engineer/Planning Division*

11. Land Use and Planning:

Existing Setting: The project parcel falls within the City's designated 1872 Townsite and is outside of the City's designated Historic District ("Historic Combining District" zone). A majority of the surrounding parcels fall within the City's designated Historic District, all immediate and surrounding parcels are located within the designated 1872 Townsite. The project location is within and central/downtown Grass Valley. The two City designated districts reflect a historically significant area that are additionally regulated through design review when properties/structures within the districts are classified appropriately. The districts are intended to preserve community character and guide infill development while ensuring historic compatibility. Additionally, the City of Grass Valley Community Design Guidelines provides additional guidance to development proposals, which are subject to development review by the city via Development Review Committee hearing body. The proposed wireless telecommunication facility is proposed in downtown Grass Valley, a viable commercial node of the city, as well as a cultural/historical focal point. The project parcel is developed with a hotel lodging facility and parking lot. Surrounding the project parcel are other commercial businesses such as a UPS mailing storefront, dry cleaners, commercial gym, and restaurants. The project parcel is a 2.49-acre parcel that has a zoning designation of Town Core (TC) and a General Plan designation of Commercial (C).

The nearest residence is located on the south side of Bank Street, approximately 374-feet east of the project parcel, measured from the northeast corner of the project parcel. The Grass Valley Charter School is, located approximately 439-feet; measured from southern corner border of the project parcel to the driveway entrance of the school on Colfax Avenue. All immediate and adjacent parcels to the west of the project parcel share a property line, all of the parcels are zoned as Town Core (TC) with a General Plan designation of Commercial (C). Directly north of the parcel are more parcels, on the north side of Bank Street, also with the same zoning designation and General Plan designation. Immediately south of the project parcel is a junction point for local access roads and an exit ramp for local traffic to enter onto State Highway 49. Local roads that intersect this junction include Neal Street, South Auburn Street and Tinloy Avenue. Immediately east of the project parcel is roughly 255-feet of a combination of State Highway 49, local access roads, and associated landscaped medians and shoulder areas. The mentioned portion of State Highway 49 runs overhead a portion of Grass Valley, the elevated section of State Highway 49 allows through-fare

traffic to bypass surface streets below on a viaduct structure that is 23-feet in height (Cal-Trans). Local City maintained roads fall below the highway and are used by local city traffic. Where the described combination area ends is the beginning of a Neighborhood General (NG-3) zoned district, which has a General Plan designation of Urban Medium Density. This area is a mix of commercial uses and single/medium density residential use. Many of the parcels surrounding the project parcel range in sizes from approximately 0.11 to 0.49-acres in size.

Directly northeast of the project parcel, approximately 66-feet, is a portion of Wolf Creek. Wolf Creek flows north to south, the creek exists at ground level before running through underground box culverts and re-emerges to ground level, navigating to the Wolf Creek South Fork. The Wolf Creek South Fork is located 250-feet southeast from the project parcel. The project parcel is located within a FEMA-designated flood zone ("Zone X"); "0.2 Annual Flood Chance Hazard, Areas of 1% annual chance flood with average depth less than one foot or with drainage areas of less than one square mile.

Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
a. Physically divide an established community?				✓	A, L, S
b. Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?			✓		A, B, S 37,36

Impact Discussion:

11a The project is located in a downtown area would not physically divide an established community. The project is proposed within a 2.49-acre parcel. The facility would not introduce new roadways, barriers, or infrastructure that would restrict access or circulation within the community. No changes to existing roads, pedestrian connections, or community layout would occur. Therefore, there would be ***no impact*** on the physical division of a community from this project.

11b The telecommunication tower is proposed within the Town Core (TC) zoning district, an allowable use with an approved Use Permit. The project is also consistent with the parcel's General Plan land use designation of Commercial (C), which supports retail and service-related uses. The project also complies with Chapter 17.46, Telecommunications Facilities, of the Grass Valley Municipal Code, including standards for height, setbacks, screening, and maintenance. The proposed lease area maintains setbacks of 43'-2" from the west and 45'-5" from the east property lines, consistent with applicable development standards. Although maximum height in the TC zoning district is 45-feet, Section 17.30.050.D, Height Limits and Exceptions, lists telecommunication facilities as an exception to zoning height standards. The height of the tower may be no taller than necessary to meet technical requirements of the proposed telecommunication system, per Section 17.46.040.E.1, Required Findings of Approval. The proposed tower is consistent with standards of the TC zoning district and Chapter 17.46 of the Grass Valley Municipal Code. The project would

not conflict with applicable land use plans or regulations adopted to avoid/mitigate environmental impacts.

To address potential aesthetic impacts, the facility is designed as a camouflaged clock tower. The camouflage is also required due to the project parcel falling within the 1872 Historic Townsite. The design of the camouflage is consistent with the 1872 Historic Townsite and Historic District Design Guidelines. The project responds to Section 3.4, Downtown Commercial Design Goals & Policies, of the guidelines, which emphasize traditional building massing, scale, form, and the use of historically appropriate architectural features such as verandas and awnings. These design elements contribute to visual compatibility and reduced aesthetic impacts, supporting adopted policies intended to mitigate environmental effects related to aesthetics and compatibility with existing nearby historic buildings.

The project site lies within a FEMA-designated flood zone ("Zone X") for development to occur, a flood elevation certificate stating the lowest finished floor elevation is over the 1-foot flood hazard level, per **Mitigation Measure 10A,** construction and design will be reviewed for conformance with the City's floodplain management ordinance at the time of building permit issuance. Relevant review processes and Conditions of Approval are also included in the Hydrology and Water Quality section of this Initial Study to address potential environmental impacts associated with floodplain development.

Lastly, the project supports General Plan Policy 17-CDO, which encourages infill development that contributes to a safe and visually interesting urban environment. As such, no inconsistencies with adopted land use plans or policies intended to mitigate environmental impacts have been identified. Therefore, impacts related to land use plan or policy conflicts would be ***less than significant***.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

12. Mineral Resources:

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

Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?				✓	A, L,19
b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?				✓	A,L,19

Impact Discussion:

12a-b The proposed project is not mapped within a known mineral resource area or MRZ and would not change existing land uses on the project site. None of the project parcels contain known or designated mineral resources. Therefore, the proposed project would have ***no impact*** on mineral resources.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

13. Noise:

Existing Setting: The project site is located within a Town Core (TC) zoning designation with a General Plan land use designation of Commercial (C). Adjacent land uses are primarily developed with an array of commercial establishments and services. Examples of noise sensitive land uses include residential development, schools, hospitals, churches, and hotels (Grass Valley 2020 General Plan).

The nearest residence is located on the south side of Bank Street, approximately 374-feet east of the project parcel, measured from the northeast corner of the project parcel. The Grass Valley Charter School is approximately 439-feet away, measured from southern corner border of the project parcel to the driveway entrance of the school on Colfax Avenue.

The closest residence would be located to the east, approximately 528-feet from the proposed lease area. Immediately in between the project parcel and the nearest residence, roughly 255-feet of a combination of State Highway 49, local access roads, and associated landscaped medians and shoulder areas exist. The mentioned portion of State Highway 49 runs overhead a portion of Grass Valley, local City maintained roads fall below the highway and are used by local city traffic.

City of Grass Valley Development Code, Chapter 8.28 Noise, establishes noise standards for the City. City of Grass Valley MuniCode Section 8.28.060, Ambient Noise Level, establishes noise standards for the Town Core land use designation as the following average levels below indicate. Residential noise standards are indicated for comparison.

Decibels	Time	Zone
65 dbA	Anytime	Town Core (Commercial)
55 dbA	7am to 8pm	Residential
45 dbA	8pm to 7am	Residential

Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
a. Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess standards established in the local General Plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?			✓		A, S 3 1,54 Appendix B
b. Generation of excessive ground borne vibration or ground borne noise levels?		✓			A, 31
c. For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				✓	A, L

Impact Discussion:

13a The project would not result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels. Operational noise would be minimal, as the wireless facility is unmanned and requires only occasional maintenance visits. In regard to operational noise, the project does not include a new permanent generator. Tower plans show a camlock connection for an emergency backup generator (Site Plan, Sheet A-1.2), which would only be used temporarily if the hotel's existing generator fails. The generator's manufacturer noise specifications will be reviewed at time of building permit submittal to ensure for compliance with local standards (noise/Environmental Health Department).

Temporary noise would occur during construction, including trenching, foundation installation, and equipment setup. Construction equipment, such as graders or pavers, can generate an average of 86 dBA at 50 feet, according to Table 6-3 of the 2020 Grass Valley General Plan Noise Element. However, the immediate 50-foot radius around the tower lease area consists of existing parking lot, and the nearest sensitive receptors are:

1. Grass Valley Charter School – approx. 439 feet from southern corner border of the project parcel.
2. Residential uses (Bank Street) – approx. 374 feet east from northeast corner of project parcel.
3. Commercial/hotel temporary Stays – approx. approximately 504-feet from the project lease area (cabins). The existing Gold Miner's Inn hotel is approx.. 175-feet from the project lease area.

Given this substantial distance and the intervening roadway infrastructure (parking lots, busy local streets, and vegetative medians), construction noise is expected to dissipate significantly before reaching sensitive receptors. Construction activities are exempt from local noise standards, provided they occur during allowable hours, per Municipal Code. Construction-related noise is temporary and not considered a significant impact under CEQA.

With construction noise being temporary in nature, sensitive receptors being a significant distance away, and proposed generators being in compliance with local noise regulations, noise impacts for this project would be ***less than significant***.

13b Construction noise and any potential ground vibration during the construction activities could impact pedestrians using sidewalks nearby or hotel guests. This impact would be less than significant with mitigation as recommended in **Mitigation Measure 13A**, below, which limits construction activity hours to between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. After the completion of the tower construction project, the ongoing operation of the facility would be less than significant as noted above. With **Mitigation Measure 13A**, any construction noise impacts would be reduced to a level that is ***less than significant with mitigation.***

13c The project site is not located within an airport land use plan and is approximately 2.47-driving miles from the nearest airport, the Nevada County Airport, located northeast of the project parcel. In addition, the project site is located approximately 7.2-driving miles north of the Alta Sierra Airport. The site is unmanned and not within the vicinity of an airport. Therefore, the project would not expose any future occupants to excessive airport noise levels. There would be ***no impacts*** related to airport noise.

Mitigation Measures: To offset potential construction-related noises, the following mitigation measures shall be required and shall be included as notes on the construction plans.

Mitigation Measure 13A: Limit construction activities to reduce noise impacts. Hours of operation for construction activities shall be limited to the hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday. These limited hours of operation shall be noted on project plans, which shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Department prior to permit issuance.

Timing: Prior to building permit issuance and during construction
Reporting: Agency approval of permits or plans
Responsible Agency: Planning Department

14. Population and Housing:

Existing Setting: The subject property is currently developed with a hotel, an associated parking lot with landscape areas, and small storage shed. The project site is zoned Town Core (TC). Residential uses are not allowed outright, residential density is determined through subdivision or Planning Department entitlement approval.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?				✓	A,S,37
b. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				✓	A,S,37

Impact Discussion:

14a,b The proposed project would continue the same general type of land use currently developed and designated for this site and would not result in population growth or displacement of housing or people. Therefore, the proposed project would have ***no impact*** related to these issues.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

15. Public Services:

Existing Setting: The following services are provided within the project corridor:

Fire: The City of Grass Valley Fire Protection District provides fire protection services to the project parcel.

Police: The City of Grass Valley Police Department provides law enforcement services.

Schools: The project site is within the Grass Valley Elementary School District.

Parks: The project is within the City of Grass Valley Parks and Recreation District.

Water: The project site receives public water services from Nevada Irrigation District.

Sewer: The project site receives sewer services from the City of Grass Valley.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of or need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the following the public services:					
1) Fire protection?			✓		H, M
2) Police protection?			✓		A
3) Schools?			✓		A, L, P

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
4) Parks?			✓		A, L
5) Other public services or facilities?			✓		A, B, L

Impact Discussion:

15a.1 The project is not anticipated to have significant impacts on fire protection services. It would include the installation of electrical services to the project site, equipment, and batteries. The project has been routed to the local fire authority, standard comments have been received and incorporated into the Conditions of Approval associated with the project. As discussed in Section 9 Hazards/Hazardous Materials, the project parcel is majorly not within a fire severity zone, only a portion of the northeast corner falls within a moderate fire hazard severity zone as designated by Cal-Fire. There would not be any alterations required for fire protection facilities and no new facilities are proposed. It is likely that the additional cellular coverage provided by the tower would increase capacity to issue emergency alerts to citizens. Given that there could be a possible need for fire protection services, but no need for alteration or addition of fire facilities, the impact is considered to be ***less than significant***.

15a.2-5 The project facility is unstaffed and not anticipated to impact law enforcement services, schools, public recreational facilities, or public services. As noted in Section 14 Population/Housing above, the project would not result in a permanent or substantial temporary increase in population that could impact on these services. The project would not impact sewer services or water services because the project will not have restrooms and will not require water/sewer services. The telecommunications facility would utilize PG&E electrical service. Utility lines would be trenched and connected to an existing AT&T point of connection and existing electrical box, located at the northeast corner of the project parcel on the south side of Bank Street. No comments have been received from PG&E regarding this project. ***Less than significant impacts*** are anticipated for police protection, schools, parks, and public utility services.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

16. Recreation:

Existing Setting: The project parcel is located within City of Grass Valley Parks and Recreation District. The project parcel falls within downtown Grass Valley, an urban setting and commercial corridor. Elizabeth Daniels Park is located 589-feet southwest of the project parcel. Dow Alexander Park is located 441-feetnorthwest of the project parcel. No recreational facilities exist on the project parcel.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?				✓	A, L, 43
b. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?				✓	A, 43
c. Conflict with established recreation uses of the area, including biking, equestrian and/or hiking trails?				✓	A, L, 43

Impact Discussion:

16a-c The project would not adversely affect recreation facilities because the facility would be unstaffed and would therefore not create demand for recreational services or increase the use of existing recreational facilities. Therefore, the proposed project would have ***no impact related*** to these issues.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

17. Transportation:

Existing Setting: The project parcel is located off of Bank Street, which is maintained by the City of Grass Valley and classified as a local road and is not an arterial or collector road. The proposed communication tower would be accessed by a 405-foot in length paved access within a 15-foot in width non-exclusive access easement, within the parking lot area of an existing hotel. The project lease area is located at the very rear of the project parcel, the southern corner.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Conflict with a program plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle or pedestrian facilities?			✓		A, B, N, S
b. Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?			✓		A, B, N, 34, 44
c. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., a sharp curve or dangerous intersection) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?			✓		A, B, H, M
d. Result in inadequate emergency access?				✓	B, H

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
e. Result in an increase in traffic hazards to motor vehicles, bicyclists, or pedestrians, including short-term construction and long-term operational traffic?			✓		A, B, H, M

Impact Discussion

17a,b The proposed project would not conflict with any program plan, ordinance, or policies regarding transit, roadway, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities. The project parcel is currently accessed directly off of Bank Street, a City maintained local road, from an existing paved commercial driveway. The project lease area falls within the existing hotel parking lot of the project parcel. The facility will be unmanned and have no staff. Although no employees are proposed, yearly maintenance on the facility may occur 1-5 times a year or as needed. Anticipated maintenance trips are expected to have a less than significant impact on increasing traffic/vehicle miles travelled:

The Office of Planning and Research (OPR) Technical Advisory recommends that all land use projects (and land use plans) be evaluated for consistency with the relevant Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Community Strategy (RTP/SCS). As part of the regional transportation planning process, Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC), in coordination with the County of Nevada, City of Grass Valley, City of Nevada City, and Town of Truckee, contracted with the firm Fehr & Peers to develop a planning study to provide recommendations for methodology, thresholds, and procedures for analysis of land use and transportation projects and plans in each of the jurisdictions within Nevada County in relation to implementation and compliance with SB 743. At this time, no thresholds have been established in the local RTP. The 2015-2035 Nevada County Regional Transportation Plan (NCTC) states that NCTC is pursuing a planning study to develop VMT thresholds and other guidance for City jurisdictions and Nevada County. NCTC VMT Implementation Final Report, Section 3.6, Screening, states: "Projects in western Nevada County consistent with a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) or General Plan that generate less than 630 vehicle miles travelled (VMT) per day. This value is based on the CEQA exemptions allowed for projects up to 10,000 square feet as described in CEQA Guidelines Sections 15303. The specific VMT estimate relies on the vehicle trip generation rate contained in the OPR Technical Advisory for small project screening and average vehicle trip lengths for western Nevada County using the travel forecasting model."

Furthermore, the City of Grass Valley Public Works Department reviewed the project and did not require a traffic study because it determined the project is unlikely to create substantial draw and thus, would only have minimal impacts related to VMT's. Due to this, resultant project traffic impact is deemed to be consistent with that of existing conditions, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b). Due to the facility having no employees and maintenance trips being deemed to have no significant impact on vehicle miles travelled, the project is expected to have a ***less than significant impact*** on the existing circulation system, transit services, roadways and pedestrian facilities.

17c,d The proposed project would not result in an increase in hazards due to incompatible uses, or due to a geometric design feature either during construction or during future occupation of the properties. As mentioned above, the project lease area falls within the existing hotel parking lot of the project parcel, the lease area will be the size of approximately two parking spaces (441SF), recessed 405-feet from the existing commercial driveway entrance of the project parcel. Construction will include trenching, however, the property will be returned to existing conditions. The project was routed to the Public Works Department and local Fire Marshal, roads/access were reviewed and no requests for access or road improvements were made. Furthermore, the project is consistent with the General Plan and Zoning intensities for the project site and surrounding area. Since no alterations are proposed or are creating hazardous design features or incompatible uses, impacts to traffic hazards and emergency access are anticipated to be ***less than significant impact***.

17d The project was routed to the Public Works Department and local Fire Marshal, roads/access were reviewed and no requests for access, road improvements, or improvements to or the request for the provisions of emergency access were made. The proposed communication tower would be accessed by a 405-foot in length paved access within a 15-foot in width non-exclusive access easement, within the parking lot area of an existing hotel. The project lease area is located at the very rear of the project parcel, the southern corner. The project lease area is recessed 405-feet into the property and recessed away from the existing property paved commercial driveway. The project area will not obstruct or be within any path of access or exit. Due to this ***no impact*** is anticipated to emergency access.

17e The proposed land division would not create a significant increase in traffic hazards to motor vehicles, bicyclists, or pedestrians. As mentioned above, the project lease area falls within the existing hotel parking lot of the project parcel, the lease area will be the size of approximately two parking spaces (441SF), recessed 405-feet from the existing commercial driveway entrance of the project parcel and located at the very rear of the property, near the southern corner of the project parcel. The parking lot is fenced from public access and is typically only used by hotel guests. Temporary construction of the site may pose as a hazard, typically construction work will often require a traffic plan at time of building permit review to ensure proper safety protocols for traffic is implemented. The Department of Public Works enforce the requirement of a traffic plan when applicable work triggers the requirement. In the case of the subject project, with the project area being located within the property and recessed 405-feet from the main entrance, a traffic plan is not required. Construction related vehicles would utilize existing roads and implement standard construction related safety fencing/cones as necessary while being located within and to the very rear of the project parcel, away from pedestrians. With anticipated construction activities implementing standard safety measures, the project is anticipated to have a ***less than significant impact*** to motor vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians; to include short and long-term operational traffic.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

18. Tribal Cultural Resources:

Existing Setting: Assembly Bill 52 (Chapter 532, Statutes 2014) required an update to Appendix G (Initial Study Checklist) of the CEQA Guidelines to include questions related to impacts to tribal cultural resources. Changes to Appendix G were approved by the Office of Administrative Law on September 27, 2016. Tribal Cultural Resources include sites, features, and places with cultural or sacred value to California Native American Tribes. See Section 5 for additional information regarding tribal resources.

Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is: i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or ii. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.		✓			J

Impact Discussion:

18a City of Grass Valley Planning Department Staff sent a consultation invitation to the United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC), the Shingle Springs Bank of Miwok Indians, T'si Akim Maidu, and the Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe to begin AB-52 consultation for the project. No correspondence has been received from the tribes and no requests for a Cultural Study of the site have been requested at this time. The existing site is completely developed and in an urban downtown setting.

While cultural resource discovery has been determined to be unlikely, **Mitigation Measure 5A** is proposed that would require construction to be halted and local tribes to be notified in the unlikely event that there is a discovery of cultural resources, including historic, prehistoric, tribal, and paleontological resources. Additionally, **Mitigation Measure 18A** is proposed which would require that a Tribal Representative from a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area be immediately notified if any suspected Tribal Cultural Resources (TCRs) are discovered

during ground disturbing construction activities. All work shall cease within 100 feet of the find, or an agreed upon distance based on the project area and nature of the find. With these protections in place, impacts to Tribal Cultural Resources would be ***less than significant with mitigation***.

Mitigation Measures: To offset potentially adverse cultural or historical resources impacts associated with the construction activities, the following mitigation measures shall be required and shall be included as notes on all future site plans.

Mitigation Measure 18A: Unanticipated Tribal Cultural Resources. The following mitigation measures shall be required and shall be included as notes on all future site plans: If any suspected Tribal Cultural Resources (TCRs) are discovered during ground disturbing construction activities, all work shall cease within 100 feet of the find, or an agreed upon distance based on the project area and nature of the find. A Tribal Representative from a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with a geographic area shall be immediately notified and shall determine if the find is a TCR (PRC §21074). The Tribal Representative will make recommendations for further evaluation and treatment as necessary.

When avoidance is infeasible, preservation in place is the preferred option for mitigation of TCRs under CEQA and UAIC protocols, and every effort shall be made to preserve the resources in place, including through project redesign, if feasible. Culturally appropriate treatment may be, but is not limited to, processing materials for reburial, minimizing handling of cultural objects, leaving objects in place within the landscape, or returning objects to a location within the project area where they will not be subject to future impacts. Permanent curation of TCRs will not take place unless approved in writing by UAIC or by the California Native American Tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area.

The contractor shall implement any measures deemed by the CEQA lead agency to be necessary and feasible to preserve in place, avoid, or minimize impacts to the resource, including, but not limited to, facilitating the appropriate tribal treatment of the find, as necessary. Treatment that preserves or restores the cultural character and integrity of a TCR may include Tribal Monitoring, culturally appropriate recovery of cultural objects, and reburial of cultural objects or cultural soil. Work at the discovery location cannot resume until all necessary investigation and evaluation of the discovery under the requirements of the CEQA, including AB52, have been satisfied.

Timing: *Prior to issuance of Improvement/Building permits and throughout construction*
Reporting: *Planning Department Approval of Improvement/Building permits*
Responsible Agency: *Planning Department*

Mitigation: See **Mitigation Measures 5A.**

19. Utilities and Service Systems:

Existing Setting: The project parcel and proposed lease area is currently developed. Current conditions of the proposed lease area is existing as two parking spaces within a large parking lot associated with a hotel. The project parcel is served by utilities. The site is served by existing public

water/sewer. Existing power is provided by Pacific Gas and Electric. The telecommunications facility would also utilize PG&E electrical service. Utility lines would be trenched and connected to an existing AT&T point of connection and existing electrical box, located at the northeast corner of the project parcel on the southside of Bank Street.

Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
a. Require or result in the relocation or the construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas or telecommunication facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?			✓		A, D
b. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?			✓		A, B
c. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?				✓	B
d. Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste goals?		✓			A, C
e. Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?			✓		B, C

Impact Discussion:

19a The proposed project is anticipated to have relative impact to existing private utilities to serve the project. Private utilities to be impacted, through new points of connection and service, will be PG&E boxes for and existing AT&T equipment for proposed fiber lines to be connected to. Impact to City water/wastewater and gas is not anticipated due to the project proposing no components that require the services. The project parcel is fully developed with an existing stormwater system that is connected to the public storm drain network. The existing onsite system is sized to handle the flow of all current storm drainage. As this structure will be installed in an area that is already an impervious surface, there will be little to no additional drainage added to the parcel. The system has four sand-oil separators to filtrate pollutants and debris. The project lease area is 441 square-feet and is anticipated to have a less than significant impact to the existing storm water infrastructure that exists on site. The Public Works Department will review required engineered stamped drainage calculations for conformance with City requirements, at time of building permit submittal. Due to the size of the project and the output of drainage calculations being reviewed for conformance of City standards at time of building permit review, impacts to utility infrastructure is considered to be ***less than significant***.

19b The project is anticipated to have sufficient and adequate water supplies available to serve the project and serve the project during normal, dry and multiple dry years. City water service is conducted through the City Public Works Department. The Public Works Department received and reviewed the project for all relevant criteria pertinent to their purview, no comments were made in regard to project water use. With the reviewer responsible of City water management having evaluated the project with no requests or comments made, the project is anticipated to have a ***less than significant impact*** related to utility/service extension.

19c City wastewater service is conducted through the City Public Works Department. The Public Works Department received and reviewed the project for all relevant criteria pertinent to their purview, including wastewater service, no comments were made in regard to project wastewater use. The project has no bathrooms proposed and will not be connecting to existing wastewater infrastructure nor require the service. With the reviewer responsible for City wastewater management having evaluated the project with no requests or comments made, the project is anticipated to have ***no impact*** related to wastewater capacity.

19d Anticipated project construction can result in resultant debris. Construction activities could result in solid waste in the form of construction materials or vegetative debris. The City of Grass Valley provides solid waste collection through a franchise for collection and disposal of waste and recyclables for both residential and non-residential areas. Waste Management is the current holder of this contract; refuse and recyclables in this area of the City are typically hauled to the McCourtney Road Transfer Station, located at 14741 Wolf Mountain Road. All solid waste refuse is later hauled to out-of-County landfills, most of which are in the State of Nevada under contract with Waste Management Systems, Inc. There are no known capacity issues with any Waste Management facilities. Any waste generated would be required to comply with federal, state, and local statutes, and regulations related to solid waste. **Mitigation Measure 19A** requires solid waste debris generated during construction activities including vegetation and industrial waste such as glues, paint, and petroleum products to be appropriately disposed of to avoid potentially adverse landfill and solid waste disposal impacts. Therefore, impacts related to disposal of construction debris would be ***less than significant with mitigation***.

19e The development and operation of the proposed cellular telecommunication facility is not anticipated to result in significant amounts of solid waste; however, any waste generated would be required to comply with federal, state and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. Standard required practices will be the responsibility of the construction team. With the project utilizing local waste management facilities to dispose of debris, federal, State, and local solid waste management/reduction related impacts to these regulations are anticipated to have ***less than significant impact***.

Mitigation Measures: To offset potentially adverse impacts related to utilities and service systems, the following mitigation measure is recommended:

Mitigation Measure 19A: Appropriately Dispose of Vegetative and Toxic Waste: Industrial toxic waste (petroleum and other chemical products) is not accepted at the McCourtney Road transfer station and if encountered, shall be properly disposed of in compliance with existing regulations and facilities. This mitigation measure shall be included as a note on all improvement plans, which shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Department prior to permit issuance.

Timing: *Prior to issuance of Building/Improvement permits and during construction*
Reporting: *Agency approval of permits or plans*
Responsible Agency: *Nevada County Planning Department*

20. Wildfire:

Existing Setting: The project parcel is located in the downtown area of the City of Grass Valley. The property majorly does not fall within a fire hazard zone/State responsibility area, with the exception of the northeastern property corner; which falls within the Moderate fire hazard zone. The project area does not fall within a fire hazard zone. The City of Grass Valley Fire Protection District provides fire protection services to the project parcel. The project area is also located approximately 0.89-miles northeast of an existing Grass Valley Fire Station #1, located at 472 Brighton St, Grass Valley, CA. The Safety Element of the City of Grass Valley 2020 General Plan addresses wildfire hazards within Grass Valley and has several goals and objectives related to improving fire safety. The City has also adopted a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) that was updated in 2017. An updated 2024 version is approved, although not yet available to the public at this time. Additionally, there is a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) for Nevada County that was updated in 2025. The General Plan and CWPP includes, strategies and actions for fuel management/hazardous fuels reduction, defensible space/structure hardening, evacuation improvements, community education and preparedness.

The Nevada County Office of Emergency Services published a multi-jurisdictional Wildfire Evacuation Preparedness Action Plan in 2020. The plan highlights five initiatives to reduce wildfire risk in Nevada County:

1. Create safer evacuation routes countywide to save lives.
2. Improve early warning systems and emergency communications to reach everyone.
3. Establish defensible space around our homes and neighborhoods by reducing hazardous vegetation and encouraging voluntary compliance with defensible space standards.
4. Provide a coordinated approach to wildfire response preparedness through planning, community engagement, and project implementation.
5. Enhance critical infrastructure needed to respond to wildfires such as evacuation route improvements, water storage, fire hydrants, communication systems, and green waste facilities.

Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
a. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?			✓		A, H, M, 26
b. Due to slope, prevailing winds, or other factor, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrollable spread of wildfire?				✓	A, B, H, M, S
c. Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?			✓		A, B, H, M
d. Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?			✓		A, B, M, 19-25, 29

Impact Discussion

20a The proposed project is not anticipated to conflict with emergency plans or result in negative environmental impacts due to infrastructure installation. The Safety Element of the Nevada County General Plan addresses wildfire hazards in Nevada County and has several policies to improve fire safety. The Safety Element safety policy (8-SP) discusses the importance of public awareness of fire-safety measures, to include property maintenance. Strategy (5-SI) discusses the maintenance of high standards of fire preparedness, capacity, and response.

The City of Grass Valley is covered under the multi-jurisdictional adopted Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) produced by the Nevada County Office of Emergency Services. Objective 3.6 of the LHMP is to improve communities' capabilities to prevent/mitigate hazards by increasing the use of technologies. Goal 4 of the LHMP is to reduce fire severity and intensity, with Objective 4.4 to promote the implementation of fuel management on private and public lands. A condition of approval from the City's Fire Marshal will require vegetation clearance around structures that meets the minimum requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291. The "lean, clean, and green zone" allows up to 30-feet of defensible space from the structure, 30-feet has been required by the Fire Marshal. With the above polices/strategies in place and the project being conditioned by the local fire Marshal in conformance with the State's Public Resource code, project impacts relative to compliance with emergency plans, impacts relative to increased fire risk, and impacts to the environment through the minimal work along these existing routes would be a ***less than significant impact***.

20b The installation of the telecommunications tower and facility would not expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations or wildfire due to the project being unmanned during typical operation. Therefore, the project would have ***no impact*** on exposing project occupants to pollutant concentrations from wildfire or the uncontrollable spread of wildfire.

20c The project has an existing commercial driveway that was permitted with the construction of the hotel on site. Due to the project facility being unmanned and with no employees, the installation or maintenance of road infrastructure will not occur. Water utility lines will not be tapped into due to the structure having no restroom or water using components. The electric service and telecommunication lines would be brought to the project area from the existing PG&E utility box and would be installed underground, instead of by overhead power lines.

Generators

The project proposes no standby generator at this time. Currently, AT&T has a contract with the property owner to use the existing generator on site that is utilized for the Gold Miners Inn hotel. Under CEQA, the existing generator may not be evaluated. The proposed camlock generator "plug in" will only be used if the existing generator malfunctions (Site Plan, Sheet A-1.2). If this should occur, AT&T will bring in a portable generator to plug into the camlock. Portable generators use diesel fuel, portable generators will require the transport of diesel to the site. Diesel fuel quantities are relatively small, will be securely contained, and subject to compliance with Fire Code and environmental regulations; see Section 9 – Hazards and Hazardous Materials. The project will not include the transport of hazardous materials as part of normal operation functions.

Additionally, all future improvements would require building permits and conformance with requirements including but not limited to the prohibition of increasing stormflow onto offsite parcels and appropriate FCC standards. With the project proposing improvements to existing utilities and appropriate local fire reviewers providing applicable conditions, and standard building permit review procedures require necessary design components and related inspections, the project is anticipated to have ***a less than significant*** relative to the spread of wildfire and fire risks.

20d Plans of the project parcel exhibits a gentle slope, with elevations ranging from approximately 2405 feet to 2399 feet (AMSL) across the developed parking area. The project area is within an existing paved parking lot in an urban downtown setting. The project is not proposed on sloped lands, there is no drainage swale or an area where runoff could be directed to downhill neighbors. There is no removal of topsoil and the Department of Public Works will require that the applicant dig/bore test pits at the location of the footings for the tower to ensure groundwater will not negatively impact constructability prior to issuance of a building permit. Furthermore, the project area is not in an area that is mapped in an area with appropriate soils type to expect high landslide activity (Soils Map of Nevada County), as discussed in Section 7 of this report. As previously mentioned, the project area is completely paved and existing. The project parcel has been developed with a local stormwater system containing a sand/oil separator that is contained underground. There are no detention basins or swales that exist on site. All/any additional drainage

caused by the project will be required to be addressed on site, through direction to existing drainage facilities that are tied into the City's stormwater infrastructure, without causing additional net stormwater runoff or concentrated flows that that would impact off-site properties. Standard erosion control best management practices will be required to ensure that construction trenching work will not result in deposition of sediment into the storm drain system. Due to potential project resultant risks being addressed through typical review measures at time of building permit submittal, the project not being located on especially sloped terrain and not containing unstable soils, the project is anticipated to have ***a less than significant impact*** relative to the spread of wildfire and fire risks.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

21. Mandatory Findings of Significance:

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

Impact Discussion:

21a The project site is located in a highly developed, urbanized setting with no sensitive habitat, wetlands, or riparian areas. There are no known occurrences of rare, endangered, or special-status species or habitat on the site (as confirmed by CDFW BIOS and field review). Additionally, no resources of historical or prehistoric significance were identified on the site. Potential impacts to cultural or tribal cultural resources will be mitigated through standard procedures in the event of inadvertent discoveries (**Mitigation Measures 5A and 18A**). **Mitigation Measure 4A** has been added to further assess construction footings of

the tower in its proposed location with the nearby underground creek. With implementation of these measures, the project would not substantially degrade the environment or eliminate sensitive biological or cultural resources. Each of the potential adverse impacts are mitigated to levels that are ***less than significant levels with mitigation,*** as outlined in each respective section.

21b A project's cumulative impacts are considered significant when the incremental effects of the project are "cumulatively considerable," meaning that the project's incremental effects are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past, current, and probable future projects. and compliance with existing federal, state, and local regulations. Therefore, the proposed project would have a ***less than significant impact with mitigation*** impact on environmental effects that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable with the addition of **Mitigation Measures 3A, 4A, 5A, 9A, 10A, 13A, 18A and 19A**.

21c The project will not result in substantial adverse effects on human beings. Construction activities could result in short-term air emissions and noise, but these are subject to mitigation (**Mitigation Measure 3A** for air quality, BMPs for dust, and conditions for generator noise). Operation of the facility would not generate substantial noise, emissions, or hazards. Sensitive receptors are located a significant distance away from the project parcel. The facility will comply with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations related to radio frequency emissions, which are set at levels well below those considered harmful to human health. **Mitigation Measure 9A** has been added to provide warning signage to unknowing pedestrians. With compliance and the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in this Initial Study, the project will not cause substantial direct or indirect adverse impacts to human beings. Therefore, direct/indirect impacts to human beings would be ***less than significant with mitigation***.

Mitigation Measures: To offset potentially adverse impacts to air quality, biological and cultural resources, geological resources, noise, tribal cultural resources, and possible impacts utilities/services systems, see **Mitigation Measures 3A, 4A, 5A, 9A, 10A, 13A, 18A and 19A**.

Recommendation of the Project Planner

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

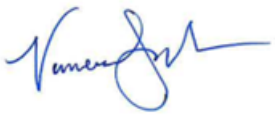
_____ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

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

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

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

_____ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.



_____ 04/08/2026

Vanessa Franken, Associate Planner Date

Appendix A – Reference Sources

A. Planning Department
B. Department of Public Works
C. Environmental Health Department
D. Building Department
E. Nevada Irrigation District
F. Natural Resource Conservation Service/Resource Conservation District
G. Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District
H. City of Grass Valley Fire District
I. Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Region)
J. North Central Information Service, Anthropology Department, CSU Sacramento
K. California Department of Fish & Wildlife
L. Nevada County Geographic Information Systems
M. California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire)
N. Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC)
O. Nevada County Agricultural Advisory Commission
P. Grass Valley School District/Nevada Joint Union School District (D-4)
Q. Nevada County Connects
R. 1993 Nevada County Area Soil Survey
S. City of Grass Valley 2020 General Plan
T. California Department of Transportation (CalTrans)

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15. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Information for Planning and Consultation https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/location/W2MLFZVNRBGCRE45TUY7KHUQ5Y/resources#endangered-species.
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Appendix B – Project Plans

B.1 – Proposed Tower Photo Simulations (Project Submittal #2).

Shot Point Map


Existing
Proposed
Proposed AT&T Installation
AdvanceSim
Photo Simulation Solutions
Contact (925) 202-8507
view from Neal Street looking northeast at site
AT&T Wireless
CVL01084 Gold Miners Inn
121 Bank Street, Grass Valley, CA
Photosims Produced on 6-13-2025

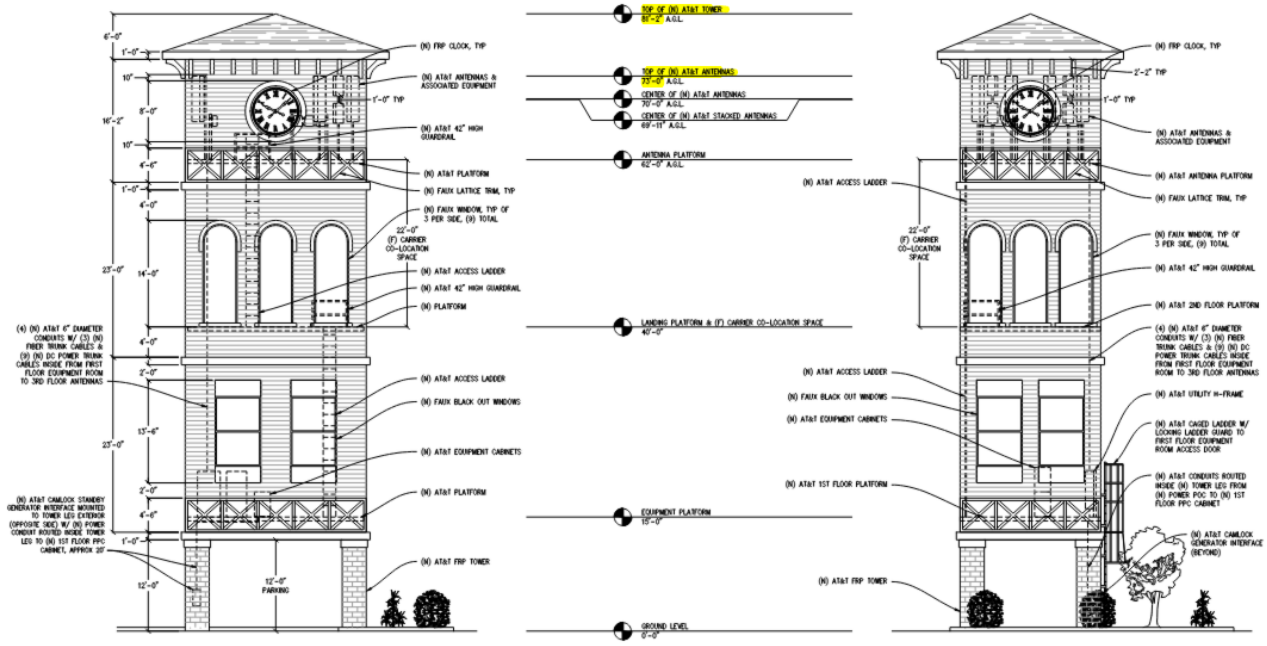
AdvanceSim
Photo Simulation Solutions
Contact (925) 202-8507

view from Highway 20 looking north at site

AT&T Wireless

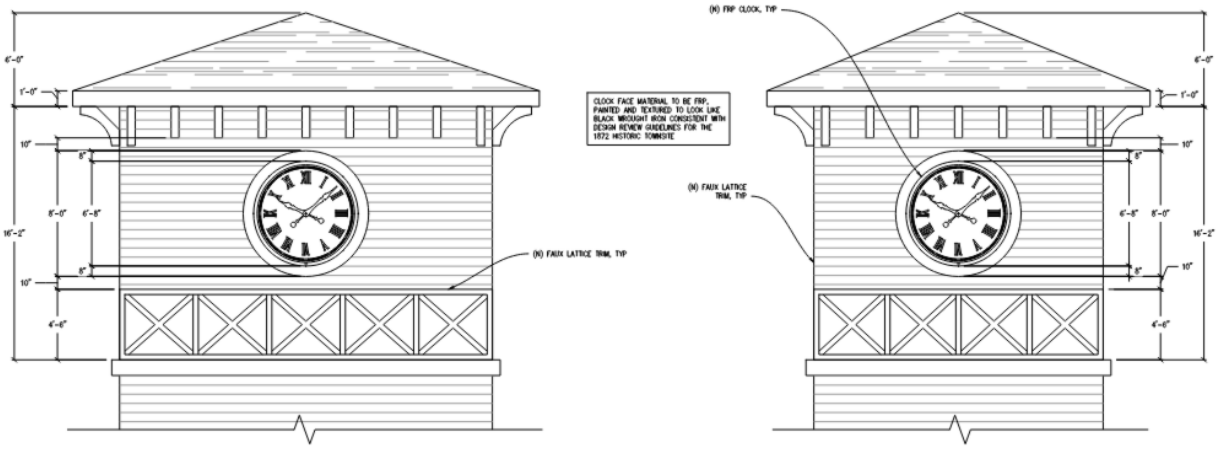
CVL01084 Gold Miners Inn
121 Bank Street, Grass Valley, CA
Photosims Produced on 6-13-2025

B.2 – Proposed Tower Plans (Project Submittal #4).



SOUTHEAST ELEVATION
1/8"=1'-0"

NORTHEAST ELEVATION
1/8"=1'-0"



SOUTHEAST CLOCK ELEVATION
3/32"=1'-0"

NORTHEAST CLOCK ELEVATION
3/32"=1'-0"