



PLUMAS COUNTY
MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION NUMBER 671
for
General Plan Amendment and Zone Change
Mohawk Valley Ranch, Inc.
GPA 9-15/16-01

Whitehawk Ranch,
Plumas County, CA

FILED: April 7, 2017

REVIEW PERIOD:

FROM: April 7, 2017 through May 8, 2017

APPROVED/CERTIFIED:

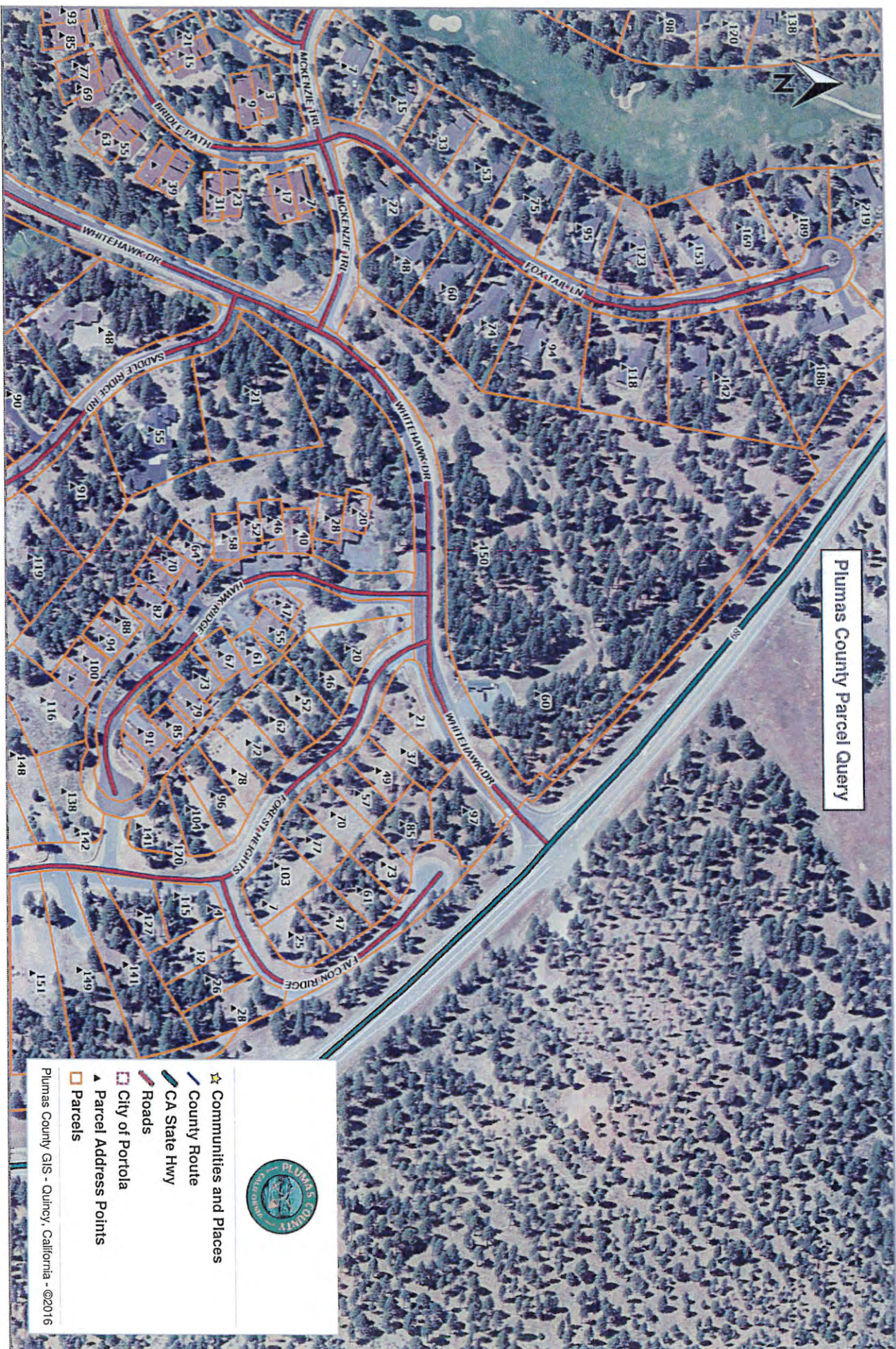
MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

It is found that based on the initial study, the county and state regulations that govern the project approval, that this project, as mitigated, will not have a significant effect on the environment.

An attached copy of the Initial Study documents reasons that support the finding.

Determination by: Rebecca K. Herrin
Title: Senior Planner
Date: March 7, 2017

Written by: Rebecca K. Herrin
Title: Senior Planner
Date: March 7, 2017



Initial Study

Date of Initial Study Preparation: March, 2017

Lead Agency Name and Address: Plumas County Planning and Building Services, 555 Main Street, Quincy, CA 95971

Prepared By: Rebecca Herrin, Senior Planner

Project location: Assessor's Parcel Number 133-130-115-000 (Parcels 1A and 1B); 150 Whitehawk Drive, Whitehawk Ranch subdivision, unincorporated Plumas County; T21/22N/R13E/Sections 32,5 MDM; Latitude: 39.7222768/Longitude: -120.542564

Applicant/Owner: Mohawk Valley Ranch, Inc., Marcia White, PO Box 170, Clio, CA 96106

General Plan designation: Suburban Residential, Secondary Suburban Residential, Scenic Road

Zoning: S-1 (Suburban), S-3 (Secondary Suburban) and SP-ScR (Special Plan Scenic Road) zoning

Project Description: General Plan Amendment and Zone Change to Commercial designation and C-3 (Convenience Commercial) zoning; retaining Scenic Road designation and SP-ScR (Special Plan Scenic Road) zoning

Environmental Setting and Surrounding Land Uses: Existing Master Planned Community of Whitehawk Ranch contains commercial, residential and recreational components

Relationship to Other Projects: The previously approved Planned Development Permit and Development Agreement for Mohawk Valley Ranch (Whitehawk Ranch) designated this site as the commercial corner. The Planned Development Permit and Development Agreement are expired and zoning has reverted.

Other public agencies whose approval is required: None

Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" and subject to mitigation as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

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

DETERMINATION:

On the basis of this initial evaluation:



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.

Ribee K. Ho

3/29/17

INITIAL STUDY AND CHECKLIST

Introduction:

This checklist is to be completed for all projects that are not exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The information, analysis and conclusions contained in the checklist are the basis for deciding whether an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or Negative Declaration is to be prepared. Additionally, if an EIR is prepared, the checklist shall be used to focus the EIR on the effects determined to be potentially significant.

1. AESTHETICS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☒	☐

2. AGRICULTURE/FOREST RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. -- Would the project:				
Would the project:				

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 1 222O(g)) or timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3. AIR QUALITY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) 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 (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☐	☒

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☐	☒

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
See discussion, below. Project-specific mitigation for building and construction setbacks from drainages as enforced by the application of the Limited Combining (LTD) zone.				
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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.	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in 15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a archaeological resource as defined in 15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☐	☐	☒

6. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:	☐	☐	☐	☒
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	☐	☐	☐	☒
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☐	☒

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	☐	☐	☐	☒

7. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

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

8. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.	☐	☐	☐	☒
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) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in	☐	☐	☐	☒

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
the project area?				
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	☐	☐	☒	☐

9. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	☐	☐	☐	☒

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
g) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☐	☒
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	☐	☐	☐	☒
i) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	☐	☐	☐	☒

10. LAND USE AND PLANNING

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

11. MINERAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

12. NOISE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project result in:				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project.	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project.	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒

13. POPULATION AND HOUSING

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

14. PUBLIC SERVICES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

15. RECREATION

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

16. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Exceed the capacity of the existing circulation system, based on an applicable measure of effectiveness (as designated in a general plan policy, ordinance, etc.), taking into account all relevant components of the circulation system, including but limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	☐	☐	☐	☒

17. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	☐	☐	☐	☒

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☐	☒

18. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

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

1. AESTHETICS

The history of the valleys and towns of Plumas County has influenced the built environment and, therefore, contributes to community character. These resources are largely visible from many local scenic roads and designated scenic highways including State Routes 49, 70, 89, and 284. Open space, forested areas, views of mountain peaks and ridgelines, water bodies such as lakes, streams, and rivers, ranch home sites, barns and associated grazing lands also contribute to local community character.

The Plumas County General Plan established scenic areas in meadows and along peaks and waterways as a method of continuing the pattern of open space and scenic vistas

State Route 89 is designated as a Scenic Road in the Plumas County General Plan. The Scenic Road policy applies standards for development, which includes a prohibition on off-premise advertising signs and a size limitation of 100 square feet for commercial signs. No amendment to the Scenic Road designation and the Special Plan Scenic Road (SP-ScR) zoning is proposed.

The development site is limited to the general area around the existing commercial building due to limitations on access points from Whitehawk Drive and a mitigation measure that proposes setbacks from drainages, as will be discussed under **Biological Resources**. The nearest residences are located at least 630 feet to the north and 321 feet to the southwest (Hawkridge). The closest undeveloped residential property is located approximately 135 feet from the existing commercial building.

Impact Discussion:

The proposed project will not have a significant impact on a scenic vista. Although the visual character of the project site would be altered due to the potential future construction of new buildings, fencing and measures to screen the property such as landscaping with trees and shrubs could be incorporated into the project design. The property owner has indicated that architectural review standards would be applied to any future construction.

The commercial area is visible from Whitehawk Road for approximately 300 feet along its length. The property is screened from the highway view by trees along the CALTRANS right-of-way. In addition, the high speed of the vehicles passing by reduces the length of time that the site is visible. **Exhibit 1** contains photos of the site and surroundings.

The standards of the Scenic Road designation apply to future development:

Protection measures and development standards:

Establish a 100 foot scenic corridor measured from the edge of the highway easement. The following development standards shall apply:

- 1. No off-premise advertising signs.**
- 2. Signs, on-premise only, shall not exceed 6 square feet maximum for residential uses and 100 square feet maximum for commercial uses. Signs will not exceed the height of any on-site building roof line. No pennants or flashing lights shall be permitted.**
- 3. Locate transmission and utility lines where they may be concealed by vegetation or topographical features.**
- 4. Establish building exclusion areas within 50 feet from perennial streams or irrigation ditches, measured from the top of the bank.**
- 5. Maintain natural topographical features within public road right-of-way, where it is not a clear and present danger to public health, safety and welfare.**

No significant impacts to scenic resources are anticipated as a result of this project. The Plumas County General Plan identifies scenic areas and roads, which are designed to maintain and preserve the rural character, representative qualities of historic lifestyles, qualities that attract tourists, and to provide standards for scenic highways. This project is located along a designated scenic highway and the Scenic Road policies would apply as discussed above.

The Plumas County General Plan contains policies that are “mitigating policies” designed to minimize potential impacts. These include:

COS

7.2.14 Natural Landscapes in Site Design

The County shall encourage the integration of natural landscapes, such as rivers streams, lakes, ponds, wetlands, and riparian areas, into new development in such a way as to enhance the aesthetic and natural character of individual sites while avoiding the destruction, disturbance, and fragmentation of these natural landscapes.

COS

7.5.10 Community Character

The County shall promote the appropriate preservation and or achievement of community character building design, exterior modifications, and public space improvements in areas where the community has expressed the need for improved community design and enhancement. Proposed building designs shall be developed to preserve the unique historic nature of each individual community. Where community plans are developed, these plans shall include scenic resources to be protected or preserved.

As the property owner has indicated that the same architectural review standards would be applied to any future construction as the rest of the development, it is likely that proposed building designs will preserve the community character.

COS

7.6.3 Scenic Roadway Protection

The County shall protect the scenic quality of roadways for the enjoyment of natural and scenic resources, landmarks, or points of historic and cultural interest.

The Scenic Road standards apply to the development of this property.

COS

7.6.4 Community Design

The County shall identify Design Review Areas where the community has expressed the need for improved community design and enhancement.

Although there is no designated Design Review area, the property owner has indicated that the same architectural review standards would be applied to any future construction as in the rest of the development.

COS

7.6.5 Scenic Impacts of Off-premise Permanent Advertising Signs and Billboards

The County shall prohibit the location of permanent off-premise advertising signs and billboards along all roadways. The County shall develop and implement policies and

ordinances that allow localized business signage in existing downtown areas and in community plan areas that serves to facilitate business district economic development without causing adverse scenic impacts.

The Scenic Road standards that impose limitations on off-premise advertising signs and on-premise signs remain in effect for the future development of this property.

Future project construction activities would temporarily disrupt views across the site from surrounding areas. Graded surfaces, construction debris, construction equipment and heavy truck traffic might be visible. Soil may be stockpiled and equipment for grading activities may be staged at locations throughout the site. Construction impacts would be less than significant as they are relatively short-term and would cease upon project completion. These are considered less than significant.

Future construction would likely include the addition of new light sources (i.e., interior and exterior building lighting) that would introduce additional nighttime lighting to the project site and vicinity. The introduction of light from the new building could be noticeable to viewers in the surrounding area, but this impact can be seen as less than significant. Buildings will incorporate the use of shielded lighting fixtures that will not be focused onto adjacent properties as per Plumas County Code. In addition, the building sites on the property are located at least 250-300 feet away from existing residential sites and approximately 135 feet from undeveloped residential properties.

The expansion of the facility and addition of parking areas is not expected to greatly increase the need for new lighting facilities. Any exterior lighting provided on the site or building exterior will be designed to meet accepted lighting standards.

Plumas County Environmental Impact Report Number 38 was prepared and filed by the County on July 17, 1981 for the Planned Development Permit and the Development Agreement for Mohawk Valley Ranch (Whitehawk Ranch). The Planned Development Permit and the Development Agreement expired in May of 2009.

Page 35 of the Environmental Impact Report identified a potential impact to State Highway 89, which was at the time a prescriptive right-of-way deeded by Plumas County to the State of California in the 1930s. Page 38, F: Mitigation Measures:

"2. Allowance for future realignment and widening of Highway 89 through the project property via a 150-ft. building setback from the existing highway centerline (300-ft. total width) observed by the developer and enforced by open space easement of deed restriction".

No recording reference for open space easement can be found. The Development Agreement included the 300-ft wide building exclusion corridor to "serve as a permanent scenic easement" (Exhibit E. B. (1).

This 300-ft wide building exclusion corridor was reduced in width to 150-ft by amendment of the Development Agreement in 2004 by the Board of Supervisors and Developer (December 14, 2004). The purpose of the mitigation was for "future realignment and widening of Highway 89", which was completed prior to 2004. The enforcement mechanism was the Development Agreement, which subsequently expired in 2009.

The Scenic Road designation and land use protection measures were adopted in the early to mid-1980s and apply to any future development of the site.

Impacts to **Aesthetics** can be seen as *less-than significant* as the Developer has agreed to provide architectural review comparable to the rest of the Whitehawk Ranch development and the standards of the Scenic Road designation will apply to future development. The property is screened from view from State Highway 89. Lighting standards will minimize the impacts of new lighting sources from adjacent properties.

2. AGRICULTURE/FOREST RESOURCES

Environmental Setting: Privately owned resource production lands that produce agricultural and timber products are located throughout Plumas County. The county also includes parts of the Plumas, Lassen, Toiyabe and Tahoe National Forests, which support some timber production.

The closest agriculturally designated land is located approximately one mile from the project site, within the Whitehawk Ranch project.

Plumas County is not entirely mapped under the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. The only area in Plumas County that is mapped is the Sierra Valley.

The site is not heavily forested. The building sites are limited by topography and drainages to the southern-central portion of the site which is adjacent to Whitehawk Drive. Some timber would have to be removed to facilitate construction, but most likely the majority of the site can remain forested.

Impact Discussion: Plumas County is not entirely mapped as part of the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. The exception is the Sierra Valley, which is the only mapped area in the County. The project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act Contract. It would not involve any other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural uses.

The project does not cause rezoning of forest land or timber land. The state laws governing tree removal fall under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE).

There is *no impact* to **Agriculture and Forest Resources**.

3. AIR QUALITY

Environmental Setting: Plumas County's topography greatly influences its climate, which results in disproportionate levels of precipitation throughout the County. More commonly known as the rain shadow effect, this condition is created by the Sierra Nevada Crest which acts as a barrier to storm systems between the western and eastern portions of the County. Consequently, while the western side of the Sierra Nevada range receives over 90 inches of rain annually, areas east of the Sierra Crest receive only 11 inches, with the majority occurring from October to April. Throughout the year, average temperatures, as measured at Portola, can range over 80 degrees Fahrenheit (F) during the summer months to 18 degrees F during the winter months.

Plumas County is located within the Mountain Counties Air Basin, which is a relatively large air basin located entirely within the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Within this basin the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD) regulates air quality conditions in Plumas County. Plumas County is in attainment or unclassified for all federal Ambient Air Quality Standards (AAQS); however, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is considering designating the Portola Valley as being in non-attainment for PM_{2.5}, which consists of dust/particulate matter 2.5 microns in diameter or smaller, based on federal standards. Plumas County is currently designated as non-attainment for PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ based on state standards administered by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). Recorded trends are likely to continue because the primary causes of PM₁₀, such as road dust and wildfires, are not expected to decrease. These designations are based on annually collected data from three air quality monitoring stations located in the County. The County's largest sources of Particulate Matter are unpaved road dust, prescribed burning and residential fuel. Primary activities contributing to these pollutant emissions include wildfires, use of woodstoves, forestry management burns, residential open burning, vehicle traffic and windblown dust. The varying topography of the air basin also contributes to localized air quality issues within valley areas.

Sensitive receptors are facilities where sensitive population groups (children, the elderly, the acutely ill and the chronically ill) are likely to be located. These land uses include residences, schools, playgrounds, child care

centers, retirement homes, convalescent homes, hospitals and medical clinics.

Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District has adopted Rules that govern emissions of air pollutants in the air basin. Those Rules applicable to the proposed project and the future construction the project would allow include:

Rule 205, Nuisance. This rule prohibits the discharge of air contaminants or other materials from any source which cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of persons, or to the public, or which endangers the comfort, repose, health, or safety of any such persons, or the public or which cause to have a natural tendency to cause injury or damage to business or property.

Rule 226, Dust Control. This rule states, “A dust control plan must be submitted to and approved by the Air Pollution Control Officer before topsoil is disturbed on any project where more than one (1) acre of natural surface area is to be altered or where the natural ground cover is removed.” The Dust Control Plan requirements are typically included by enforceable conditions included on the project grading plans.

Rule 401, Permit Required. This rule states that “Any person building, altering, or replacing any source of contaminants shall first obtain an Authority to Construct from the Air Pollution Control Officer. An Authority to Construct shall remain in effect until the Permit to Operate for that source for which the application was filed is either granted or denied or until termination pursuant to other provisions of this Regulation.”

Rule 501, Permit Required. This rule states that “Before any source may be operated, a Permit to Operate shall be obtained from the Air Pollution Control Officer. No Permit to Operate shall be granted either by the Air Pollution Control Officer or the Hearing Board for any source constructed or modified without authorization as required in Regulation IV until the information required is provided to the Air Pollution Control Officer and such source is altered, if necessary, and made to conform to the standards set forth in Regulation IV and elsewhere in these Rules and Regulations.”

According to the California Energy Commission (CEC), human activities are exerting a major and growing influence on climate by changing the composition of the atmosphere and by modifying the land surface. Particularly, the increased consumption of fossil fuels (natural gas, coal, gasoline, etc.) has substantially increased atmospheric levels of greenhouse gases. Measured atmospheric levels of certain greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide have risen substantially in recent decades. This increase in atmospheric levels of greenhouse gases unnaturally enhances the “greenhouse effect” by trapping more infrared radiation as it rebounds from the Earth’s surface and thus trapping more heat near the Earth’s surface. Eleven of the last twelve years rank among the hottest years on record (since 1850, when reliable worldwide temperature measurements began). Most of the warming in recent decades is likely the result of human activities. Other aspects of the climate are also changing such as rainfall patterns, snow and ice cover, and sea level.

Climate change is a global problem, and greenhouse gases (GHGs) are global pollutants, unlike criteria air pollutants and TACs, which are pollutants of regional and local concern. Worldwide, California is the 12th to 16th largest emitter of CO₂, and is responsible for approximately two percent of the world’s CO₂ emissions.

The Plumas County General Plan contains policies requiring the County to establish a Climate Action Plan that identifies strategies for increasing energy efficiency, carbon sequestration, GHG emissions reductions, and land use and transportation strategies that are consistent with appropriate climate change regulations (i.e. State of California’s Global Warming Solutions Act).

Impact Discussion: As this project consists of a general plan amendment and rezone to change the designation of the property to Commercial and Convenience Commercial (C-3) zoning to provide services tailored to the local area, it is not expected that vehicle traffic from the project would incrementally modify traffic volumes on the local street network, changing carbon monoxide levels and

other vehicle-related emissions along roadways used by project traffic. Some vehicles may access the site from the highway, but these are vehicles that are already contributing to the impact.

Sensitive receptors are facilities where sensitive population groups (children, the elderly, the acutely ill and the chronically ill) are likely to be located. These land uses include residences, schools, playgrounds, child care centers, retirement homes, convalescent homes, hospitals, and medical clinics. There are no sensitive receptors located close to the project site.

Additionally, because the project would not create substantial pollutant concentrations, the impact would be less than significant.

The project would not create objectionable odors which would affect a substantial number of people.

Air quality in the project site vicinity is generally good, due to the absence of substantial air emission sources. Construction may result in activities that will generate dust. The fine, silty soils that exist in the project area, combined with often strong afternoon winds, exacerbate the potential for dust, particularly in the summer months. Clearing, grading, leveling, earthmoving and excavation are activities that have the greatest potential for generating PM₁₀ emissions. Impacts will be localized and variable, but temporary and not anticipated to create a significant adverse impact to air quality.

The following policies in the General Plan are considered “mitigating policies” for Air Quality impacts:

LU

1.1.1 Future Development

The County shall require future residential, commercial and industrial development to be located adjacent to or within existing Planning Areas; areas identified on Plumas County’s General Plan Land Use Maps as Towns, Communities, Rural Areas or Master Planned Communities (insert reference to maps here) in order to maintain Plumas County’s rural character with compact and walkable communities. Future development may also be approved within areas for which Community Plans or Specific Plans have been prepared. Small, isolated housing tracts in outlying areas shall be discouraged as they disrupt surrounding rural and productive agricultural lands, forests, and ranches and are difficult and costly to provide with services. Land division may be allowed outside of Planning Areas only when the resulting development complies with all applicable General Plan Policies and County Codes.

LU

1.1.2 Infill Development

The County shall plan to concentrate new growth both within and contiguous to existing Towns and Communities and require expansion of existing infrastructure as needed to efficiently and safely serve the new growth.

The project consists of a proposal for a General Plan Amendment and zone change. This project site is located within the Master Planned Community of Whitehawk Ranch.

LU

1.1.5 Community Plans

In order to be responsive to the needs and opportunities of various areas within the County, specific Community Plans may be developed for designated commercial, residential, industrial or recreational areas within a Town, Community or Rural Place

boundary. A Community Plan will develop standards that are equal to or superior to those of the County and, at a minimum, will address the following:

- Design Standards
- Circulation and Parking
- Density
- Public Spaces
- Infrastructure
- Land Uses
- Public Health and Safety

The original Planned Development Permit and Development Agreement for Whitehawk Ranch designated various areas, including commercial areas, as part of an overall master plan.

LU

1.5.1 Use of Existing Infrastructure

The County shall require the use of existing infrastructure for new development whenever feasible.

The project site is served by existing infrastructure.

LU

1.5.2 Cost Effective Land Use Pattern

The County shall develop a land use pattern that, to the maximum extent feasible, will facilitate the delivery of community services in the most cost-effective manner for water, sewer, flood control, public safety services, and road construction and maintenance.

ECON

5.9.2 Land Use Density

The County shall encourage compact residential and commercial uses that reduce travel, infrastructure and energy use.

The proposed convenience commercial uses are those that will reduce travel, infrastructure and energy use and the location will reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and Average Daily Trips (ADT).

ECON

5.9.3 Mixed-Use Development

The County shall encourage commercial mixed-use development in town center areas and where appropriately designated to encourage energy efficiency.

The project consists of commercial mixed-use development in a Master Planned Community.

An email was received from Sam Longmire, APCS, Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District on September 15, 2016 (**Exhibit 2**):

"It appears from the planning document that the specific land use for this parcel has not been determined. If any source of air pollution is anticipated, such as a spray booth, generator, etc., the NSAQMD should be consulted regarding the potential need for an air pollution permit. Also, if any odor

or dust source (such as a composting or manure/landscaping supply sales facility) is anticipated, the NSAQMD should be contacted for possible specific operating conditions.

“For any disturbance exceeding one acre, a Dust Control Plan must be submitted to and approved by the NSAQMD in advance.”

The permitted use of the property will be limited by agreement of the Developer through a deed restriction, therefore none of the uses in the email are permitted on the site.

The District rules of the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District are applicable to the development of the site.

There is ***no impact*** to **Air Quality**. The project can be seen as in compliance with the mitigating policies of the General Plan and the District rules and does not propose uses that would ordinarily be significant emission sources.

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Environmental Setting: Plumas County is comprised of a range of habitat types, many of which influence the water quality and quantity of the Feather River watershed. These habitats, or vegetation communities, provide food, shelter, movement corridors, and breeding opportunities for a variety of wildlife species, many unique to the Feather River watershed and the larger Sierra Mountain region. Conifer, including Mixed Conifer, habitat types comprise approximately 72% of land coverage in the County and are habitats commonly found at higher elevations. Plants characteristic of this habitat include a variety of pines and firs. As one gets farther away from the high elevation mountainous regions of the County, the pines and firs give way to sagebrush, annual grasslands, and the freshwater emergent wetland habitat types more common at lower elevations.

Plumas County and the larger Feather River watershed area contain a variety of aquatic habitats. Within the watershed, two types of fisheries are found: cold water river/stream species and warm water lake/reservoir species.

Special-status species are plants or animals that are legally protected under the State and/or federal Endangered Species Acts (ESAs) or other regulations, and species that are considered by the scientific community to be sufficiently rare to qualify for such listing. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has documented habitat for over 90 different species of special concern in the County. These include several amphibians, such as the red-legged frog, bald eagles, osprey, several mammals, and plant/wildlife species associated with wetland habitats.

Impact Discussion: The proposed project is located within developed property that has been disturbed for many years.

Pivot Environmental (PE) completed a sensitive species and resources survey for the project site (**Exhibit 3**). The purpose of the survey was “to support the Negative Declaration for the protection of sensitive species and habitats as required by the Plumas County General Plan Update (ESA 2013)”.

The conclusion of this survey was as follows:

“No signs of breeding or nesting activity were observed within areas of proposed disturbance or the corresponding survey buffer. There was no observance of any special status botanical species. This report recommends to avoid the ephemeral drainage and provide the proper BMPs during any proposed construction activity as required in the Plumas County General Plan Update (ESA 2013).”

A follow-up email (**Exhibit 4**) revealed that the standard for setbacks from the ephemeral drainage(s) would be 50 feet for construction activity such as refueling, outhouse placement, chemical storage, equipment parking) and 100 feet for a building. The current office building is located approximately 200 feet from the drainage.

No Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan currently exists on or near the project site.

The following General Plan policies and implementation measures apply to the project:

COS

7.2.2 *Species and Habitat Avoidance*

The County shall require new development projects to avoid or minimize adverse impacts to threatened, rare, or endangered species and critical, sensitive habitat, as defined by appropriate local, state, and federal agencies, through proper project location and design. In the event that avoidance is not feasible, the County shall require a “no-net-loss” of these sensitive natural plant or habitat communities. Wildlife habitat will be preserved and managed in a manner that will not lead to the listing of additional species as threatened and endangered or negatively impact listed threatened or endangered species.

COS

7.2.3 *Land Use Management*

The County shall restrict the density and intensity of development in wildlife habitat areas to the extent needed to avoid significant interference with the habitat. These restrictions shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, maintenance of large parcel sizes, increasing building setback lines, limiting building and fencing, and designating open space corridors.

Buildings will be set back a distance of 100 feet from the drainage(s) to minimize disturbance and to protect the wildlife corridor. The Limited Combining Zone (LTD) can be applied to this project to identify impacts that need to be addressed at the time of issuance of building permits.

The purpose of the Limited Combining Zone (LTD) is to permit and mitigate uses which have the potential to have significant adverse social, economic or environmental effects, and to implement the General Plan Directive for Limited Industrial areas. The potential adverse effects shall be identified based on General Plan requirements and shall be specified in the ordinance which zones the property.

COS

7.2.4 *Stream Corridor Development*

The County shall only permit new development within stream corridors when there is no lesser environmentally damaging feasible alternative and where the best feasible mitigation measures have been provided to minimize adverse environmental effects. This policy is not intended to affect the cleaning of stream channels to avoid the flooding or erosion of existing developed lands, stream restoration projects or permitted mining operations consistent with CEQA and the SMARA.

There will be a building setback established 100 feet from the drainage and a construction disturbance setback of 50 feet in the zoning ordinance in compliance with the requirements of the Limited Combining (LTD) zoning.

COS

7.2.7 *Wetland and Riparian Habitat Buffers*

The County shall require new development that is subject to review under the California Environmental Quality Act to identify wetlands and riparian habitat areas and designate a buffer zone around each area sufficient to protect these habitats from degradation, encroachment, or loss. The County shall continue to identify areas as Open Space and Significant Wetlands as an ongoing process when those areas are identified.

In addition, the drainage pattern on the property that bisects from the northeast to the southwest direction and passes through a culvert under Whitehawk Drive essentially precludes adding numbers of additional driveways along the road frontage. The existing driveway could potentially provide the best access due to these constraints.

As the project approval will incorporate these land use management strategies by adoption of the Limited Combining Zone (LTD), the impacts to **Biological Resources** will be *less-than-significant*.

Mitigation Measure: The ordinance rezoning the property to Convenience Commercial (C-3) zoning, Special Plan Scenic Road (SP-ScR) zoning and Limited Combining (LTD) zone shall contain standard setback language to ensure that any future building and construction activities will meet recommended setbacks from the drainage(s) as outlined in Exhibits 3 and 4.

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Environmental Setting: As glaciers receded from the Sierra Nevada and the Cascades, humans migrated into the foothills and higher elevations' protected valleys. Humans have been utilizing the Sierra and Cascade ranges for thousands of years, and have been an integral part of its ecology for 2,000 to 5,000 years.

The Mountain Maidu is the tribal group whose people were present in Plumas County when European migrants started to settle. Depending on what source is relied upon, the Mountain Maidu people have lived in various locations in Plumas County from hundreds to thousands of years and still do today. Other tribes, such as the Washoe and the Paiute most likely utilized the area while not settling permanently. When weather permitted, the Maidu maintained permanent villages along the timbered ridges of glacial valleys. From early spring to late fall, smaller groups traveled to upper Sierra ridge tops and valleys, setting up open air brush shelters. Villages were occupied during winter months and relied mostly on stored and preserved food. The Mountain Maidu people most likely existed in small, scattered, familial groups in the valleys of Plumas County.

Their existence was suddenly disturbed in the spring of 1850 when a flood of gold-seeking miners poured into the canyons and valleys of the region in search of a fabled "Gold" Lake. Overnight, mining camps sprang to life. Rivers were turned from their beds, ditches were dug to bring water from distant sources to the diggings and the land was turned upside down.

As agricultural areas were later established in Plumas County, Mountain Maidu dispersed to live on portions of ranch properties and, in many cases, adopted the name of the ranching family associated with the ranch on which they resided. While there were no official extermination programs in the Plumas County area during the European Settlement period, the population of Maidu declined significantly due to illness.

A sizable Chinese population took up residence here and remained until the early 1900s when, with the decline in mining, most left the area.

The North, Middle and South forks of the Feather River were named in 1821 by Captain Luis Arguello as the Rio de las Plumas ("River of Feathers") after the Spanish explorer saw what looked like bird feathers

floating in the water. “Plumas”, the Spanish word for “feathers”, later became the name for the county. The river and its forks were the primary sites of early mining activity, with many smaller camps located on their tributaries. Over the next five decades gold mining remained the main industry of the county.

Ranching operations in the area also began during the Gold Rush years, with several large ranches established in the valleys of Plumas County. Dairies provided milk, butter, and cheese to the gold fields and later provided dairy products to the silver mining operations in northern Nevada. Many of the Swiss and Italian families who settled and worked in the local meadows and valleys have third and fourth generations living and ranching their agricultural lands in the county today.

Whitehawk Ranch is the site of one of these large historic ranches which was developed into the current-day Master Planned Community beginning in the early 1980s.

In 1850, the famous mountain man James P. Beckwourth discovered the lowest elevation pass across the Sierra Nevada and the following year navigated a wagon trail for California-bound emigrants from western Nevada, through Plumas County, to the Sacramento Valley.

Several years later, in March of 1854, Plumas County was formed from the eastern and largest portion of Butte County with the town of Quincy chosen as the county seat after a heated election. In 1864, a large part of northern Plumas County was carved off to form present day Lassen County. Following this, Plumas County annexed a small portion of Sierra County, which included the town of La Porte.

With the railroad for transportation, the timber industry began to emerge as the primary economic force in the county. Until that time lumber was milled strictly for local use. Finished lumber could now be shipped nationwide from Plumas forests. Realizing the importance of the area’s forests, President Theodore Roosevelt established the Plumas National Forest in March 1905, with boundaries that roughly encompassed the branches of the Feather River. The national forests produced significant timber for the nation from around World War II up to the 1980s. The private timber industry contributed enormously to the growth and prosperity of Plumas County and continues to do so to this day.

Along with the railroad’s construction up the Feather River Canyon came some of the earliest tourists to the county. Resorts and lodges popped up at intervals along the “Feather River Route” to accommodate fishermen, hikers and sightseers. The last passenger train ran in 1970, and the line is now devoted to freight traffic only. In 1937, the Feather River Highway, touted as an “all weather route”, was completed through the Feather River Canyon from Oroville to Quincy. Key component of the local transportation infrastructure, they have left a legacy of notable bridges and other railway features in the area.

Impact Discussion: It is unlikely that any significant historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources will be impacted during construction. The (possible) project construction will take place within previously disturbed areas. If any unanticipated cultural resources (historic or prehistoric) are exposed during ground excavation or ground disturbing activities, construction will be terminated immediately until a qualified cultural resources specialist evaluates the resource(s). Any discovered resources that merit long-term consideration will be collected and reported in accordance with standard archaeological management requirements.

Plumas County Environmental Impact Report 38 reported several prehistoric on-project and off-project sites that were mitigated throughout the development of the Whitehawk Ranch subdivision. The project site has various old roadway beds and evidence of other disturbance resulting in previous grading and drainage improvements that have impacted the site over the many years the project site has been utilized for various ranching and other development activities.

It is unlikely that human remains are located within the proposed project area. Per Health and Safety Code 7050.5, if human remains are encountered during construction, no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code 5097.98. The Coroner must be notified within 24 hours. If the Coroner determines that the remains

are not historic, but are pre-historic, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) must be contacted to determine the most likely descendent for this area. Once the most likely descendent is determined, treatment of the Native American human remains will proceed pursuant to Public Resources Code 5097.98. The Native American Heritage Commission may become involved with decisions concerning the disposition of the remains.

Existing state law addresses unanticipated discovery of cultural resources.

There is *no known impact* to **Cultural Resources**.

6. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Environmental Setting: The risk of seismic hazards to residents of Plumas County is based on the approximate location of earthquake faults within and outside of the County. Several potentially active faults pass through Plumas County. The Almanor Fault, Butt Creek Fault Zone, Mohawk Valley Fault and the Indian Valley Fault are known active or potentially active faults within the County. Additionally, the Honey Lake and Fort Sage Faults are two active faults located east of the County. Although several faults are within and near the County, seismic hazard mapping indicates that the County has low seismic hazard potential. Additionally, the County is not located within a delineated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. The risks associated with earthquakes, such as surface fault rupture, within the County are considered low.

Rates of erosion are contingent on a number of factors, including the type of soil material and structure, slope, water runoff and levels of human activity. Overall, the County is primarily characterized as having a moderate potential for soil erosion. Areas classified as having a low and high potential for erosion are also found in the County, with a fairly significant portion of the County unclassified or not mapped. Areas with a high potential for erosion coincide with locations located at higher elevations in the County.

The County is located in an area with varying topography and slopes, with elevations ranging from approximately 1,800 feet in the Feather River canyon to 8,300 feet near the summit of Mount Ingalls. Areas with steep slopes in the County could be prone to landslides, mud slides, and avalanches. Landslides, or ground failure, are dependent on slope, geology, rainfall, excavation or seismic activity. Mud slides are often caused by heavy rainfall. Areas that have recently been subject to wildfire are susceptible to mud slides. Avalanches consist of a rapid flow of snow down a slope. They often reoccur in the same areas and can be triggered by varying weather patterns and human activity. The volcanic soils in the eastern portion of the Plumas National Forest are prone to landslides. Areas concentrated along the North and Middle Forks of the Feather River are also susceptible to landslides.

Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous material found throughout California. Disturbance of rocks and soils containing asbestos could lead to several public health issues. The highest concentration of mapped areas containing naturally occurring asbestos is found in the western portion of the County.

Impact Discussion: The proposed project would not expose people or structures to substantial adverse effects due to impacts from earthquakes or seismic shaking. Like most of California, the site can be expected to be subjected to seismic ground shaking at some future time. Accordingly, all buildings and other improvements would be designed and installed in accordance with California Building Code requirements. As the project is located in an area where the probability of significant ground shaking is low, and because the project does not propose the addition of significant structures that would be at risk to seismic activity, potential geologic impacts would be less than significant. According to the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map, the project is not located near active faults.

The proposed project would not expose people or structures to significant risk due to seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction. Liquefaction is a phenomenon where loose, saturated, granular soils lose their inherent shear strength due to excess water pressure that builds up during repeated movement from seismic activity. Factors that contribute to the potential for liquefaction include a low relative density of

granular materials, a shallow groundwater table, and a long duration and high acceleration of seismic shaking. Liquefaction usually results in horizontal and vertical movements from lateral spreading of liquefied materials and post-earthquake settlement of liquefied materials. Liquefaction potential is greatest where the groundwater level is shallow, and submerged loose, fine sands occur within a depth of approximately 50 feet or less. Only localized amplification of ground motion would be expected during an earthquake. Liquefaction potential in the general vicinity of the project exists in the low-lying areas and meadows that are composed of loose-medium-dense sandy soils. However, the Portola area is subject to low potential for liquefaction. The potential for liquefaction is minimal since the site area is underlain by dense granular soils and bedrock at shallow depths. The likelihood of liquefaction is lessened by the enforcement of the California Building Standards Code.

The proposed project would not expose people or structures to significant risk due to landslides. There is no evidence of landslides in the project area, nor are there steep slopes located in the project area. The project is not susceptible to seismically-induced landslides or mudflows due to the granular soils and bedrock at the site. No impacts resulting from landslides are anticipated.

Typical development of this scale results in soil disturbance from roadway construction, building pad preparations, and landscaping. If project construction activities disturb more than one acre of the site, the project will be subject to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Activities Storm Water permit program. This program requires implementation of erosion control measures during and immediately after construction that are designed to avoid significant erosion during the construction period. In addition, the project operation is subject to State Water Resources Control Board requirements for the preparation and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to control pollution in stormwater runoff from the project site, including excessive erosion and sedimentation. A Construction Storm Water Permit will be required by the State Water Resources Control Board if the project results in a disturbance (including clearing, excavation, filling, and grading) of one or more acres. Construction activities that result in a land disturbance of less than one acre, but which are part of a larger common plan of development, also require a permit. The Permit must be obtained from the State Water Resources Control Board prior to construction.

The project site is currently served by the Whitehawk Ranch Mutual Water Company, which will provide sewage disposal and community water services to any future buildings constructed on the site. Some extension of infrastructure to the site may be necessary, but no impacts are anticipated.

There is *no impact* to **Geology and Soils**.

7. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Environmental Setting: Climate change may be one of the greatest challenges facing the Sierra Nevada region in the coming decades. The potential changes will pose challenges to the environment, economies and communities. These challenges have become an increasing concern in California, the nation, and the world. Climate change is presently thought to be both naturally occurring and induced by increases in the amounts of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere, attributable to the burning of fossil fuels. Evidence has been steadily growing that human activities have helped speed and magnify changes in the global climate. The burning of fossil fuels, most coal and oil, is the primary manmade cause of greenhouse gases, a fact that has led to calls for increased energy efficiency and use of renewable sources of energy. Since 2005, there have been a number of legislative changes that cover greenhouse gas impacts from land use planning decisions.

Impact Discussion: CO₂ is the main component of greenhouse gases. For the proposed project, it is anticipated that CO₂ levels would not be substantially significant because the project is not substantially increasing vehicle trips. The project would not contribute to a substantial increase in traffic during the operational phase of the project that could result in a significant increase in GHG emissions because the project would consist of limited vehicle traffic that would actually reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as discussed above under **Air Quality**.

There is *no impact* to **Greenhouse Gas Emissions**.

8. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Environmental Setting: Hazardous wastes or materials can take a variety of forms in Plumas County. Common products such as gasoline, paint solvents, household cleaning products and refrigerants are categorized as hazardous materials and are present throughout the County. Industrial operations, often employing hazardous substances, may leave behind contaminating underground storage tanks and/or residual pollutants that can infiltrate the County's natural resources. Within Plumas County, manufacturing or storage facilities (including lumber processing and bulk fuel storage facilities) within the more densely populated areas of Quincy, Portola and Chester account for the majority of hazardous materials use.

Transportation-related public health and safety issues also have the potential to occur along the major thoroughfares of the County. The highest potential for transportation-related incidents exists along the County's main east-west thoroughfare, State Route 70, and along State Routes 36 and 89. The majority of hazardous materials shipped through and within the County consists primarily of petroleum products, such as heating fuels, gasoline, diesel and propane. The County's railroad corridors, both the Union Pacific Railroad and Burlington Northern Santa Fe, are an additional public safety concern since freight trains also carry bulk containers of hazardous materials such as petroleum.

Locally, the Plumas County Environmental Health Division (EHD) manages the County's hazardous materials management program. The EHD maintains the Hazardous Materials Business Plan and Inventory Program. The program enforces the State "right-to-know" laws passed in 1984 and requires local businesses to provide public access to information about the types and amounts of chemicals being used on their property. Businesses must plan and prepare for a chemical emergency through the preparation of a Hazardous Materials Inventory that is certified annually, a Hazardous Materials Business Emergency Response Plan that is certified annually and an inventory of hazardous materials updated annually. EHD also regulates the use, storage and treatment of hazardous wastes and above-ground storage tanks.

Suppression of natural fires has allowed the forest understory to become dense, creating the potential for larger and more intense wildland fires. Wind, steepness of terrain, and naturally volatile or hot-burning vegetation contributes to wildland fire hazard potential. In reviewing fire threat mapping data provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE), it appears that a majority of the County is classified as having a "Moderate" to "High" threat of wildland fire.

Three public-use airports are located in the County: Nervino Airport in Beckwourth, Rogers Field Airport in Chester and Gansner Field Airport in Quincy. Potential safety issues associated with airports include aircraft accidents and noise impacts to surrounding land uses. Airport operation hazards include the development of incompatible land uses, power transmission lines, wildlife hazards, such as bird strikes, existing obstructions such as timbered hillsides, and tall structures in the vicinity of these airports. Airport safety zones are established to minimize the number of people subjected to noise and potential aircraft accidents through limitations on the type of development allowed around airports. Local Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan zoning regulations provide specific detail for the established airport safety zones. Emergency Operations Management and Planning

The Plumas County Office of Emergency Services (OES) is responsible for coordinating the County government's role in preparation and response to a disaster or large-scale emergency within Plumas County. The Office of Emergency Services works closely with other emergency management operations in the City of Portola and various special districts, authorities and joint-power authorities within County boundaries. In the event of an emergency, the Office of Emergency Services is charged with responding to the unincorporated areas of Plumas County, providing support to jurisdictions within Plumas County.

Emergency evacuation is an integral component of the County emergency management system. The Office of Emergency Services also conducts ongoing evaluation of potential evacuation routes, including capacity and condition of roadways and potential barriers to the use of roadways, such as flooding. There are no set evacuation routes; rather, they are established for particular events based on circumstances at the time. The main focus is on three operational concerns: 1) Local/community evacuation; 2) Area-wide evacuation; and 3) Large-scale traffic management during regional evacuations. Primary state and local arterial and secondary ground transportation routes have been identified and are included in general preparedness and response planning efforts.

Impact Discussion: The (potential) uses associated with this project do not involve transport or use of hazardous materials.

This project is not located within the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan nor in the vicinity of a private airstrip.

The project site is not included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

There is no impact to adopted emergency response plans or emergency evacuation plans resulting from this project.

The project site is located in the Graeagle Fire Protection District, which provides structural fire protection. The project site is designated as State Responsibility Area for wildland fire protection. The State's requirements for building construction and vegetation management within the SRA are applicable to the project. Wildland fire protection is provided by the United States Forest Service through contract with CALFIRE.

The (future) construction of limited commercial buildings would not large expose numbers of people to wildland fire hazards.

Therefore, the impacts to **Hazards and Hazardous Materials** is *less-than-significant*.

9. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Environmental Setting: Rates of erosion are contingent on a number of factors, including the type of soil material and structure, slope, water runoff and levels of human activity. Overall, the County is primarily characterized as having a moderate potential for soil erosion. Areas classified as having a low and high potential for erosion are also found in the County, with a fairly significant portion of the County unclassified or not mapped. Areas with a high potential for erosion coincide with locations located at higher elevations in the County.

The County contains an extensive network of rivers and other waterways that flow out of higher elevations to the valley areas. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has identified several areas of the County as being within Special Flood Hazard Areas. The City of Portola, Quincy, East Quincy and the American Valley and Greenville are mapped in more detail to show Base Flood Elevation (BFE) data which is determined to be the elevation of the Base Flood or "100-year" flood. The Delleker area drainages, the Middle Fork of the Feather River and Humbug Creek have been mapped as part of the Special Flood Hazard areas on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) maintained by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Flooding can also result from dam inundation or from the structural failure of a dam that results in a large release of water from a reservoir that flows downstream and overtops the banks of rivers and creeks. Many of the identified dam inundation areas overlap with FEMA-identified flood zones. The Middle Fork of the Feather River is identified as a potential dam inundation area.

FEMA Map 06063C1550E indicates that there are no special flood hazards associated with the site.

Impact Discussion: During implementation of the project, grading operations and other soil disturbance activities associated with development would result in the removal of on-site soil cover and the exposure of soils to the erosional forces of rainfall and runoff. Stormwater runoff and erosion from the project site could result in violation of water quality standards and waste discharge requirements. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) in compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Permit requirements regarding construction activities, including erosion control, may be required for any ground disturbance of more than one acre. The SWPPP helps to identify the sources of pollution that affect the quality of surface storm water discharges. The objectives of the monitoring program area to: 1. Demonstrate compliance with the permit; 2. Demonstrate compliance in the implementation of the SWPPP; and 3. Measure the effectiveness of proposed management practices in removing pollutants from storm water discharges.

Appropriate buffers will be established around the drainage(s). The construction buffers, as well as the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for stormwater management will serve to address possible impacts from project development.

There are no Special Flood Hazard areas associated with the project site.

With construction buffers and use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) there are *no impacts* to **Hydrology and Water Quality**.

10. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Environmental Setting: The predominant land use within Plumas County consists of open space use with a majority of land, approximately 94% of the total County area, dedicated to timberland or other managed resource uses. Consequently, many of these lands are managed for a combination of resource values, including, but not limited to recreation, mining, timber production, agriculture production and cultural and historic resources. That leaves approximately 6% of the land area for uses such as residential, commercial, industrial, and public service.

Resources, history and people have all had a significant role in defining Plumas County. Communities originally developed and evolved on the landscape based on proximity to the resources that provided a livelihood. The Mountain Maidu established villages in the valleys of the County where there was shelter from winter storms and access to good hunting and plant gathering sites. Upon arrival and settlement of Europeans in the mid-1800s, towns first grew up around mining activities, then log mills and later around transportation such as stagecoach and railroad.

The land use pattern across the County today reflects this historical approach to settlement in a time before the automobile. Today many counties and cities across California and the United States are trying to institute smart growth, transit-oriented design, form based development and to re-focus their communities into walkable places. Plumas County has, with a few exceptions, maintained its rural character with its compact and walkable communities.

The Land Use Element of the Plumas County General Plan defines the goals, policies and implementation measures that will facilitate appropriate growth and development. The California Department of Finance's prediction for Plumas County population growth is just shy of 1.0% per decade between 2010 and 2050. Although very slow growth is anticipated, Plumas County's blueprint for the future of land use in the County is an important tool that will facilitate recreation, community or business opportunities on private land in areas best served by infrastructure, in existing communities, and consistent with county residents' values in relation to open space, landscape character, and resource protection on lands adjacent to National Forest lands.

This project does not involve improvements which would physically divide an established community.

The proposed project would not conflict with any adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved conservation plan. There are no plans that would be applicable to the proposed project.

Impact Discussion: The Plumas County General Plan requires development be located adjacent to or within existing planning areas (those areas identified on Plumas County's General Plan Land Use Maps as Towns, Communities, Rural Areas or Master Planned Communities).

LU

1.1.1 Future Development

The County shall require future residential, commercial and industrial development to be located adjacent to or within existing Planning Areas; areas identified on Plumas County's General Plan Land Use Maps as Towns, Communities, Rural Areas or Master Planned Communities in order to maintain Plumas County's rural character with compact and walkable communities. Future development may also be approved within areas for which Community Plans or Specific Plans have been prepared. Small, isolated housing tracts in outlying areas shall be discouraged as they disrupt surrounding rural and productive agricultural lands, forests, and ranches and are difficult and costly to provide with services. Land division may be allowed outside of Planning Areas only when the resulting development complies with all applicable General Plan Policies and County Codes.

LU

1.1.2 Infill Development

The County shall plan to concentrate new growth both within and contiguous to existing Towns and Communities and require expansion of existing infrastructure as needed to efficiently and safely serve the new growth.

The project consists of a proposal for a General Plan Amendment and zone change. This project site is located within the designated Master Planned Community of Whitehawk Ranch. The project site was designated for commercial use by the Planned Development Permit and Development Agreement for Mohawk Valley Ranch (Whitehawk Ranch). As the Development Agreement has expired, the general plan designation and zoning have reverted to the original residential designations.

There are numerous general plan policies that relate to Commercial areas. This is a General Plan Amendment and zone change to Commercial designation and Convenience Commercial zoning, with limitation on the allowable uses as agreed to by the Developer.

The General Plan defines commercial uses as follows:

Commercial Uses: A land use classification that permits facilities for the buying and selling of commodities and services. Commercial uses include businesses or activities at a scale greater than home business involving retail or wholesale marketing of goods and services.

The purpose of the Convenience Commercial (C-3) zone is defined in Plumas County Code Section 9-2.2101.

Plumas County Code Section 9-2.2101. Purpose (C-3)

The purpose of the Convenience Commercial (C-3) zone is to provide for commercial uses serving small population centers, highway-oriented commercial uses, commercial-recreation developments,

and commercial uses as an integral part of residential developments.

The Convenience Commercial zone is the most limited of the three Commercial zoning designations as far as allowable or permitted uses, as it is designed to be tailored to the needs of residential developments. The other two commercial zoning categories (Core Commercial (C-1) and Periphery Commercial (C-2)) allow more expansive permitted uses.

Photos of designated Convenience Commercial sites in eastern Plumas County are contained in **Exhibit 5**.

The General Plan Land Use Element contains goals and policies relating to commercial development as an integral part of community development.

**LU
1.6**

To designate lands for commercial and industrial development appropriate for these uses and facilitate business and industrial opportunities. Encourage compact development contiguous to existing urban centers, active transportation corridors, or resource production areas. Discourage linear and leapfrog development patterns. Facilitate the re-use of abandoned industrial sites as appropriate.

Policies

LU

1.6.1 Land for Commercial and Industrial Uses

The County shall provide adequate amounts of land in and adjacent to identified Towns and Communities and within Rural Places to be designated and zoned to allow for and support commercial and industrial development.

LU

1.6.2 Limited Convenience Commercial Services

The County shall allow for limited convenience commercial services within Rural Places and Master Planned Communities upon approval of a Special Use Permit or administrative review. The uses are limited to those businesses which serve the needs of the surrounding area or which are part of an overall development plan or specific plan.

The limitation on commercial uses is designed to allow only those uses that serve the needs of the surrounding area.

GOAL 1.8 Land Use Pattern that Minimizes Travel



**LU
1.8**

To develop land use patterns which minimize travel to jobs and services.

Policies

LU

1.8.2 Land for Small-scale Commercial and Industrial Uses

The County shall provide for opportunities for small scale businesses and industrial uses through appropriate zoning.

Implementation measures:

12.. Amend the Zoning Code to allow limited convenience commercial services in Rural Places and Master Planned Communities or in other small residential areas upon approval of a Special Use Permit, Planned Development Permit or administrative review to ensure compliance with existing approvals.	1.6.2
16.. Incorporate within the Land Use and Zoning Map appropriate industrial and commercial uses within proximity to residential uses to minimize travel times and trip lengths.	1.8.1
17. Undertake necessary and appropriate zoning code and zoning map changes to promote and encourage small-scale business and industrial land use growth.	1.8.2

This proposal to amend the General Plan designation to Commercial and zoning to Convenience Commercial is consistent with these General Plan policies and implementation measures.

Convenience Commercial (C-3) zoning permits the following uses:

Sec. 9-2.2102. Uses (C-3).

- (a) The following uses shall be permitted in the Convenience Commercial Zone (C-3):
 - (1) Building supply, business offices, child day care homes, limited child day care homes, child day care facilities, gas stations, heavy equipment services, farm supply sales, health services, Laundromats™, lodging facilities, personal services, places of assembly, limited recycling facilities, postal services, recreation facilities, restaurants, retail stores, taverns, parking lots, and vehicle services.
 - (2) One dwelling unit where the residential use does not exceed the floor area of the commercial use or one dwelling unit on the rear fifty (50%) percent of the parcel; and
 - (3) Dwelling units on the second floor if the entire first floor is in commercial use.
- (b) The following uses shall be permitted subject to the issuance of a special use permit:
 - (1) Alcohol and drug recovery facility, animal breeding and boarding, camp grounds, community care facilities, limited electric generation, mining, public service facilities, public utility facilities, schools, storage, used goods sales, veterinary services, and transport stations.

These are the uses that would be permitted ordinarily if the general plan amendment and zone change were approved with no other imposed limitations on use.

The Developer has agreed to limit the uses to those listed in the previously-approved Development Agreement by deed restriction. However, as the Planned Development Permit also listed permitted uses, the following is a complete list of those uses permitted under the Development Agreement:

Development Agreement uses:

Retail commercial uses

Theater/Assembly uses

Real Estate/property management

Office Uses

Environmental Impact Report 38 (page 5) lists “limited commercial” as part of the original Mohawk Valley Ranch project. Page 11 of the EIR lists commercial uses to include lodge, guest ranch, sales pavilion and project management offices. “General Commercial” uses, including a General Store, possibly including a small service station, and a “community hall”.

For the purposes of this environmental review document, the following uses are proposed. This will allow the County flexibility in permitting uses that it deems necessary:

Development Agreement uses

Retail commercial uses

Theater/Assembly uses

Real Estate/property management

Office uses

Owner/applicant agrees to allow the following uses on the property. Owner/applicant agrees to restrict use of the property by deed restriction to these uses. The Development Agreement uses are comparable to the following uses in C-3 (Convenience Commercial) zoning district:

Building Supply. PCC 9-2.217.5:

“‘Building Supply’ shall mean a store engaged in the sale of materials used in the construction of buildings or other structures other than the retail sale of paint, fixtures, and hardware.”

Business Offices. PCC 9-2.218:

“‘Business office’ shall mean an office used for the provision of sales, professional, executive, management, financial or administrative services.”

Child day care facility. PCC 9-2.222:

“‘Child day care facility’ shall mean a facility which provides nonmedical day care of less than twenty-four (24) hours per day for children under eighteen (18) years of age. Such use is subject to additional requirements of the County and the State.”

Child day care home. PCC 9-2.223:

“‘Child day care home’ shall mean a child day care facility in the provider’s own home which provides day care for seven (7) to twelve (12) children, inclusive, including children who reside in the home, provided the noise level does not exceed the ambient outside noise level for the area in which the home is located as determined by the General Plan. Such use is subject to additional requirements of the County and the State.”

Dwelling unit. PCC 9-2.228:

“‘Dwelling unit’ shall mean a building, or portion of a building, which provides for sleeping, cooking, eating, and sanitation for one family and may include additional quarters and shall include household animals.”

Dwelling units shall be limited as per PCC 9-2.2102(a)(2) and (a)(3).

Limited child day care homes. PCC 9-2.223.5:

“‘Child day care home, limited’ shall mean a child day care facility in the provider’s own home which provides day care for six (6) or fewer children, including children who reside in the home. Such use is subject to additional requirements of the County and the State.”

Places of Assembly. PCC 9-2.268:

“‘Place of assembly’ shall mean a place established for a group of people to gather for a purpose.”

Postal service. PCC 9-2.271:

“‘Postal service’ shall mean a service for carrying letters or packages.”

Restaurant. PCC 9-2.281:

“‘Restaurant’ shall mean a place where food is prepared and sold primarily to be eaten on the premises.”

Retail store. PCC 9-2.282:

“‘Retail store’ shall mean a store where commodities are primarily sold directly to the consumer; or where those commodities are repaired or maintained; and may include subordinate on-site manufacturing, processing or repair of those commodities by hand or by equipment which creates no noise, vibration, fumes, dust, smoke or electrical interference detectable to the normal senses from off the premises.”

“**Dwelling unit**” is a permitted use in all Commercial zones, with limitations. As per the State of California, in any zone where a dwelling is permitted, “**Child day care home**” and “**Limited child day care home**” must also be permitted. “Child day care facility” is also permitted in this zone.

While not specifically listed, “**Postal service**” can be seen as a retail commercial use or an office use.

“**Restaurant**” is often found in conjunction with retail commercial use or theater/assembly use.

There are numerous uses precluded from the Convenience Commercial zone, as per agreement with the Developer. These uses will be **precluded**:

- Gas stations
- Heavy equipment services
- Farm supply sales
- Health services
- Laundromats
- Lodging facilities
- Personal services
- Limited recycling facilities
- Recreation facilities
- Taverns
- Parking lots
- Vehicle services
- Animal breeding and boarding
- Camp grounds
- Community care facilities

- Limited electric generation
- Mining
- Public service facilities
- Public utility facilities
- Schools
- Storage
- Used goods sales
- Veterinary services
- Transport stations

Even if the property is redesignated and rezoned, there are no plans currently for developing the property. There are several properties in eastern Plumas County that have been designated for Convenience Commercial uses as an integral component of a subdivision or master plan development. Many have never been developed (**Exhibit 5**).

Exhibit 5 also shows examples of other properties designated Convenience Commercial throughout the eastern part of the County that provide local services.

There are no identified impacts because the project is in compliance with the goals and policies of the general plan and the Developer has agreed to limit the allowable uses by deed restriction, therefore there is *no impact* to **Land Use and Planning**.

12. NOISE

Environmental Setting: The dominant sources of noise in Plumas County are mobile, related to automobile and truck traffic, aircraft and train transportation. Stationary sources in the county include power plants, lumber mills, and aggregate mining and processing facilities. To a smaller extent, construction sites are also considered a stationary source of short-term, or temporary, noise in the County.

The primary factors that determine roadway noise levels are traffic volumes, percentage of heavy trucks and buses on individual roadways, average vehicle speed, and presence of natural or human-made noise attenuation features such as sound walls and landscaping. Given the predominately rural nature of the County, roadway noise impacts are those associated with the larger regional, or Statewide, network.

Stationary or non-transportation noise sources in Plumas County are those caused by a variety of industrial or resource extraction-related activities, including manufacturing operations, power plants, lumber mills, aggregate mining and processing plants, race tracks, shooting ranges and car washes, to name a few. Additionally, noise from temporary wood and gravel processing operations varies significantly from site to site and is the result of factors including noise source location and surrounding natural conditions.

Plumas County has two active rail lines used by the Union Pacific Railroad and the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Railroad. While both lines are primarily used for freight and local shipping and receiving, a portion of the Union Pacific line through the Feather River Canyon is recognized as a scenic route, with occasional chartered passenger trains. Daily traffic on the Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe lines in the County consists of a limited number of trains per day. This volume creates minimal noise impacts in term of frequency.

Typically, noise associated with railroad operations is caused by diesel engines, switching operations and whistles. Generally, trains operate at low speeds through populated areas as a safety precaution, and noise levels are correspondingly lower at lower speeds. Switching operations usually occur at stations or

depots. Whistles are blown in advance of grade crossings. Table 3-3. Existing Railroad Noise Contours, page 66 of the *Plumas County General Plan Noise Element*, indicate a noise contour of 60 dB L_{dn} at 600 feet. This project site is not located near a railroad.

Construction-related activities can also be a source of stationary (temporary) noise. Two types of short-term noise are emitted during construction. First, construction crew commutes and the transport of construction equipment and materials to construction sites would incrementally increase noise levels on access roads leading to the sites. Second, noise would be generated during excavation, grading and erection of buildings. Construction typically occurs in discrete steps, each of which has a distinctive mix of equipment and, consequently, distinctive noise characteristics. These various sequential phases would change the character of the noise generated on each site and, therefore, the noise levels surrounding these sites as construction progresses.

Impact Discussion: Noise is usually defined as unwanted sound. It is an undesirable by-product of society's normal day-to-day activities. Sound becomes unwanted when it interferes with normal activities, when it causes actual physical harm, or when it has adverse effects on health. The definition of noise as unwanted sound implies that it has an adverse effect on people and their environment. Noise is measured on a logarithmic scale of sound pressure level known as a decibel (dB).

Noise sources occur in two forms: (1) point sources, such as stationary equipment, loudspeakers, or individual motor vehicles; and (2) line sources, such as a roadway with a large number of point sources (motor vehicles). Sound generated by a point source typically diminishes (attenuates) at a rate of 6.0 dB(A) for each doubling of distance from the source to the receptor at acoustically "hard" sites and 7.5 dB(A) at acoustically "soft" sites. For example, a 60-dB(A) noise level measured at 50 feet from a point source at an acoustically hard site would be 54 dB(A) at 100 feet from the source and 48 dB(A) at 200 feet from the source. Sound generated by a line source typically attenuates at a rate of 3.0 dB(A) and 4.5 dB(A) per doubling of distance from the source to the receptor for hard and soft sites, respectively. Sound levels can also be attenuated by man-made or natural barriers.

Most noise impacts in Plumas County are from mobile noise sources, short-term construction noise, ground-borne vibration, aviation noise sources and stationary noise sources.

State Route 89 is identified as a prominent noise source within Planning Areas in the General Plan Environmental Impact Report (4.5-17).

Sensitive receptors are facilities where sensitive receptor population groups (children, the elderly, the acutely ill and the chronically ill) are likely to be located. These land uses include residences, schools, playgrounds, child care centers, retirement homes, convalescent homes, hospitals and medical clinics.

The Commercial uses allowed by right are considered to be those with lesser impacts to the surrounding area, because they are seasonal in nature and designed to serve the local population. Since there is no specific use proposed, it is difficult to analyze exact noise levels that would be generated by the future possible commercial usage of the property.

The nearest residential properties to the most likely building sites are located a minimum of 300 feet from those sites. While there are undeveloped properties located approximately 125 feet from the building site, there are currently no plans for construction on those properties. Plumas County Code Section 9-2.413(a) requires that any new uses shall not increase off-site noise to a level which exceeds the ambient noise level for the specific land use area. A typical ambient noise level for residential is 65 db at the property line.

As shown in Figure 21, Noise Element, Plumas County General Plan, page 73, limited commercial usage creates a community noise exposure slightly higher than low density residential; an impact which is lessened with distance. As stated, the closest residential site is approximately 300 feet from the building sites. The closest undeveloped residential property is approximately 125 feet from the proposed sites.

Figure 21 shows that the commercial uses proposed for the site, constructed under normal convention construction methods would not exceed 70 db CNEL (Community Noise Equivalent) at property line. Due

to “Geometric Spreading”, sounds from a localized source propagate uniformly outward in a spherical pattern. The sound level attenuates (or decreases) at a rate of 6 db for each doubling of distance from a point/stationary source. In addition, noise attenuation from ground absorption and reflective-wave canceling adds to the attenuation associated with geometric spreading.

It is unlikely that the uses proposed for the site would increase the ambient noise levels to the point where residential noise standards at adjacent property lines would be exceeded.

Additionally, there are “mitigating policies” in the Plumas County General Plan for Noise impacts:

GOAL 3.1 Minimize the Exposure to Excessive Noise

**N
3.1**

To establish and maintain a quiet and healthy environment with land uses arranged and managed to reduce annoyance and complaints and minimize the exposure of community residents to excessive noise.

N

3.1.1 Primary Noise Sources

The County shall identify “major environmental noise generation sources” to include but not be limited to: State highways, primary arterials and major local streets, freight on-line railroad operations, County airports and local industrial plants, such as sawmills and other resource production facilities. These sources are defined as those above-noted land uses whereby the immediate CNEL meets or exceeds an exterior level of 60 dB.

N

3.1.2 Sensitive Land Uses

The County shall identify “noise sensitive areas” to include: residences, hospitals, convalescent homes, schools, and churches.

N

3.1.3 Noise / Land Use Compatibility Standards

When considering a discretionary project, the County shall refer to the Noise Land Use Compatibility Standards, as shown in Figure 21, Noise Element, Plumas County General Plan, page 73 as a guide to ensure compatibility of land uses. New development of noise sensitive land uses will not be permitted in areas exposed to existing or projected levels of noise which exceed the levels specified in Figure 21 unless the project design includes effective mitigation measures to reduce exterior noise and noise levels in interior spaces to the levels specified in Figure 21.

N

3.1.4 Construction Noise

The County shall seek to limit the potential noise impacts of construction activities on surrounding land uses. The standards outlined below shall apply to those activities associated with actual construction of a project as long as such construction occurs between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on weekends or on federally recognized holidays. Exceptions are allowed if it can be shown that construction beyond these times is necessary to alleviate traffic congestion and safety hazards.

N

3.1.10 Noise Buffering

The County shall require noise buffering or construction treatments in new development that includes noise sensitive uses located near major streets, highways, airports, railroad tracks or other significant noise sources. Setbacks shall be the preferred method of noise abatement for residential projects. Noise walls shall be discouraged in favor of less-intrusive noise mitigation measures such as landscaping and berms.

LU

1.2.2 Land Use Compatibility

The General Plan Land Use Designations shall be implemented through adoption and application of compatible zoning districts of the County Zoning Regulations consistent with the following Land Use Designation Compatibility Matrix and through the adoption of zoning district maps consistent with the land use designations.

COMMUNITY NOISE EXPOSURE Ldn OR CNEL, db

LAND USE CATEGORY	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	Maximum Interior Noise Levels*
Residential - Low Density Single Family, Duplex, Mobile Home								45
Residential - Multi-Family								45
Transient Lodging - Motel/ Hotel								45
Schools, Libraries, Churches, Hospitals, Nursing Homes								45
Auditorium, Concert Hall, Amphitheaters								35
Sports Arena, Outdoor Spectator Sports								-
Playgrounds, Neighborhood Parks								-
Golf Courses, Riding Stables, Water Recreation, Cemeteries								-
Office Buildings, Business, Commercial and Professional								50
Industrial, Manufacturing, Utilities, Agriculture								50

*Due to exterior sources

NORMALLY ACCEPTABLE

Specified land use is satisfactory, based upon the assumption that any buildings involved are of normal conventional construction, without any special noise insulation requirements.

CONDITIONALLY ACCEPTABLE

New construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements is made and needed noise insulation features are included in the design. Conventional construction, but with closed windows and fresh air supply systems or air conditioning will normally suffice.

NORMALLY UNACCEPTABLE

New construction or development should be discouraged. If new construction or development does proceed, a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirement must be made and needed noise insulation features included in the design.

CLEARLY UNACCEPTABLE

New construction or development should generally not be undertaken.

SOURCE: Bolt, Beranek, and Newman, Inc., 1974; State of California General Plan Guidelines, Office of Planning and Research, 1998; and ESA, 2008

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The impact to **Noise** is considered *less-than-significant* due to the limited uses allowed by right on the property, the distance from building sites to adjacent residential properties, the seasonal nature of the most

likely potential uses of the property, and the Plumas County Codes and General Plan Policies that pertain to noise.

13. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Environmental Setting: In 2010, Plumas County had a population of 20,007, comprising only 0.05 percent of the population of California (US Census Bureau). Growth in the County was also below that experienced in the rest of the state. Between 2000 and 2010, Plumas County's population decreased at an average annual rate of 0.4 percent, while the state of California's population increased at an average annual rate of 1.0 percent (US Census Bureau).

The California Department of Finance's prediction for Plumas County population growth is just shy of 1.0% per decade between 2010 and 2050. Although very slow growth is anticipated, Plumas County's blueprint for the future of land use in the County is an important tool that will facilitate recreation, community or business opportunities on private land in areas best served by infrastructure, in existing communities, and consistent with county residents' values in relation to open space, landscape character, and resource protection on lands adjacent to National Forest lands.

Impact Discussion: This project can be served by available service providers at a sufficient service level for the project. No housing will be displaced by the project. Therefore, there is *no impact* to **Population and Housing**.

14. PUBLIC SERVICES

Environmental Setting: Public services within the unincorporated County are provided by the County of Plumas, state and federal agencies, and numerous special districts, including fire protection districts, school districts, recreation districts, County Service Agencies (CSAs), and Community Service Districts (CSDs).

The Plumas Local Agency Formation Commission governs district boundary changes and services provided outside district boundaries.

The Plumas County General Plan establishes policies that, among other things, direct future growth and land use patterns in a manner that supports existing towns and communities and creates and maintains efficiencies for infrastructure.

Whitehawk Ranch is designated as a Master Planned Community in the Plumas County General Plan Land Use Element, Land Use Element, page 26: *"Master Planned Community boundaries have been described or prescribed through their approvals and/or environmental documentation. Planning area and master planned community boundaries are one in the same. There is no identified expansion area, as development potential has been specifically defined."*

This project site is served by the Whitehawk Ranch Mutual Water Company which provides community water and sewer services and Graeagle Fire Protection District which provides structural fire protection services. Police protection is provided by the Plumas County Sheriff. The project site is located in the Eastern Plumas Health Care District, with the nearest hospital located in Portola.

A letter was received from the Graeagle Fire Protection District on September 13, 2016 indicating that the District “*has no problems with Whitehawk’s plans*”, but has other issues with an adjoining development (**Exhibit 6**).

Impact Discussion: This project can be served by available service providers at a sufficient service level for the project. Therefore, there is *no impact* to **Public Services**.

15. RECREATION

Environmental Setting: Recreational opportunities within Plumas County are varied, ranging from public parks with intensively used recreational facilities, to vast tracts of forest lands and drainage systems, which provide a natural environment for recreation. There are four independent Recreation Districts within the County.

The project site is located within the Eastern Plumas Recreation District.

Recreational facilities are available within Whitehawk Ranch.

Impact Discussion: There are *no impacts* to **Recreation**.

16. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

Environmental Setting: The state highway system provides the key inter-community roadway links within Plumas County. East-west access across Plumas County is provided by State Route 36 in the northern portion of the county and by State Route 70 in the central/southern portions of the county, while State Route 89 provides north-south access across the county. State Route 147 serves the east side of Lake Almanor, while State Route 49 and State Route 284 provide access south towards Loyalton and north to Frenchman Reservoir in the far eastern portion of the county. County roads, and city roads in Portola, also provide important access, as do Forest Service roads. In total, there are 1,823 miles of public roadway in Plumas County, including 935 miles of US Forest Service roads, 674 miles of county roadways and 182 miles of state highways.

Due to the relatively dispersed nature of development in Plumas County, traffic congestion is not an issue, with the exception of “bell times” at some school areas and some locations around Lake Almanor during the summer months. State Route 70 in Quincy is the busiest highway in Plumas County, with a peak-month, typically August, Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volume of 12, 200. Other relatively busy locations are on State Route 36 in Chester (7,900 ADT) and State Route 70 in Portola (7,800 ADT). Overall, peak month volumes on Plumas County state highways have declined by 12 percent over the past 10 years. This decline has been seen in all regions of the County. Caltrans counts of all trucks countywide have declined by 15 percent since 1992. However, the number of the largest trucks (5 axle and above) has climbed by 45 percent over this same period, particularly along State Route 70.

Although there is no passenger rail service in Plumas County, there are two active freight rail operations. Union Pacific Railroad operates a line connecting Roseville, CA to the west with Salt Lake City, UT to the east. Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad operates track from Keddies and along Lake Almanor into Lassen County and Oregon.

While there are no commercial airports in Plumas County, there are three publicly owned airports; Gansner Field Airport in Quincy, Rogers Field Airport in Chester and Nervino Airport in Beckwourth. As a whole, these airports serve approximately 44,000 operations (takeoffs plus landings) annually. In addition to the

airports, the Plumas District Hospital in Quincy, the Indian Valley Health Care District in Greenville and the Eastern Plumas Hospital in Portola have heliports.

Impact Discussion: The commercial usage of the property was established at the time of initial development of Whitehawk Ranch and road systems are designed to adequately serve the commercial corner. The project site is served by State Route 89 and private roads maintained by the Homeowners Association. There are no county roads or facilities serving the project site. There is adequate area for parking available on the project site.

A memorandum was received from the Plumas County Public Works Department on September 7, 2016 (**Exhibit 7**). The Department requests that the Limited Combining Zone identify potential for significant adverse effects associated with traffic, circulation, and drainage impacts. However, the Department has not identified any specific impacts. Identification of specific impacts to be addressed in future project review is a requirement of the Limited Combining Zone resolution.

There are no county roads or facilities serving the project site. The subdivision roads for Whitehawk Ranch are private. A state highway provides the access to the subdivision.

Plumas County Engineering Department had no comment (**Exhibit 8**).

Drainage facilities are also private and drainage concerns have been addressed under **Hydrology and Water Quality**. Drainage facilities have been installed to serve the project site and are also private facilities, not county.

An email was received from Marcelino Gonzalez, Local Development Review and Regional Transportation Planner, California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) on September 1, 2016 (**Exhibit 9**).

“The existing highway traffic controls (turn lanes) should continue to be adequate to serve the Whitehawk development if the commercial uses are accessed from Whitehawk Drive.”

Convenience Commercial uses are, in this case, those that are tailored to serve small population centers, commercial-recreation developments, and commercial uses as an integral part of residential developments. There is no indication that traffic levels would be increased as a result of this project. Residents are already traveling outside the project to pick up mail and to visit other local businesses that are in the adjacent communities of Clio, Graeagle, and Portola. No uses are proposed for the site, but any uses built in the future would not be likely to create more demand for services. The demand would be the same just shifted to a location closer than is utilized currently in other communities. The types of allowable uses are not likely to create a draw for large numbers of people from outside the immediate Whitehawk community.

Therefore, there are *no impacts* to **Transportation/Traffic**.

17. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Environmental Setting: Public utilities serving Plumas County include Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E), Plumas Sierra Rural Electric Coop, Liberty Energy for electricity. Propane and heating oil is a common fuel source used in Plumas County by individual homes and businesses.

Wastewater treatment within the unincorporated County is provided by individual small wastewater systems with some areas served by sewage collection and treatment facilities operated by special districts, County Service Agencies (CSAs), and Community Service Districts (CSDs).

The County contracts with independent haulers for solid waste services.

This project site is served by the Whitehawk Ranch Mutual Water Company which provides community water and wastewater disposal services.

An email was received from Stephen Ursenbach on September 13, 2016 (**Exhibit 10**).

"At yesterday's MWC monthly board meeting we reviewed the matter and have concluded that we have 'no objection' of this anticipated action given it is consistent with the community's founding documents and the board's prevailing expectations.

"Hopefully, the resolution of this topic will lead to actual development of the commercial corner and ultimately services revenue for our private water company."

A memo was received from Plumas County Environmental Health on September 12, 2016 (**Exhibit 11**) which indicated that the Department approves the project.

Electric power is provided by Plumas Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative. A letter indicating that the Cooperative had no comments was received on August 22, 2016 (**Exhibit 12**).

Impact Discussion: No new utility systems will be required to be constructed to serve the proposed project. Some extension of infrastructure may be necessary but, as designed and approved by the Mutual Water Company and the Homeowners Association, will not create any adverse impacts.

Therefore, there is *no impact* to **Utilities and Service Systems**.

18. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Impact Discussion: The Initial Study prepared for the proposed project found that the proposed project would not substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, or otherwise adversely affect any rare or endangered plant or animal. The proposed project would not have a cumulatively considerable impact when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects and the effects of probable future projects.

The Whitehawk Ranch Master Planned Community is designated for the type of limited commercial development evidenced by existing project approvals. There is currently no specific commercial development proposed for the parcel.

EXHIBITS

1. Photos of project site and surroundings
2. Email from Sam Longmire, APCS, Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District, September 15, 2016
3. Sensitive Species and Resources Survey site investigation – Pivot Environmental, September 26, 2016
4. Email from Jon Silva, Lead Biologist, Pivot Environmental, November 11, 2016
5. Convenience Commercial site photos – eastern Plumas County
6. Letter from Graeagle Fire Protection District received on September 13, 2016
7. Memorandum from Plumas County Public Works Department received September 7, 2016
8. “No comment” from Plumas County Engineering Department, September 9, 2016
9. Email from Marcelino Gonzalez, Local Development Review and Regional Transportation Planner, California Department of Transportation, September 1, 2016
10. Email from Stephen Ursenbach, Board President, Whitehawk Ranch Mutual Water Company, September 13, 2016
11. Memo from Deborah Anderson, Plumas County Environmental Health, received September 12, 2016
12. “No comment” from Plumas Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative, received August 22, 2016