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DRAFT INITIAL STUDY AND
PROPOSED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

California Highway Patrol Grass Valley Area Office

PREPARED FOR

California Highway Patrol

**California Department of General Services
Office of Project Development and Management
Office of Real Estate and Design Services**

Sacramento, California

PREPARED BY

**EIP Associates
Sacramento, California**



October 1995

**DRAFT INITIAL STUDY AND PROPOSED NEGATIVE DECLARATION
CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL GRASS VALLEY AREA OFFICE**

Prepared for:

California Highway Patrol, Facilities Section
2490 First Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95818

California Department of General Services
Office of Project Development and Management,
Office of Real Estate and Design Services
400 R Street, 5th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

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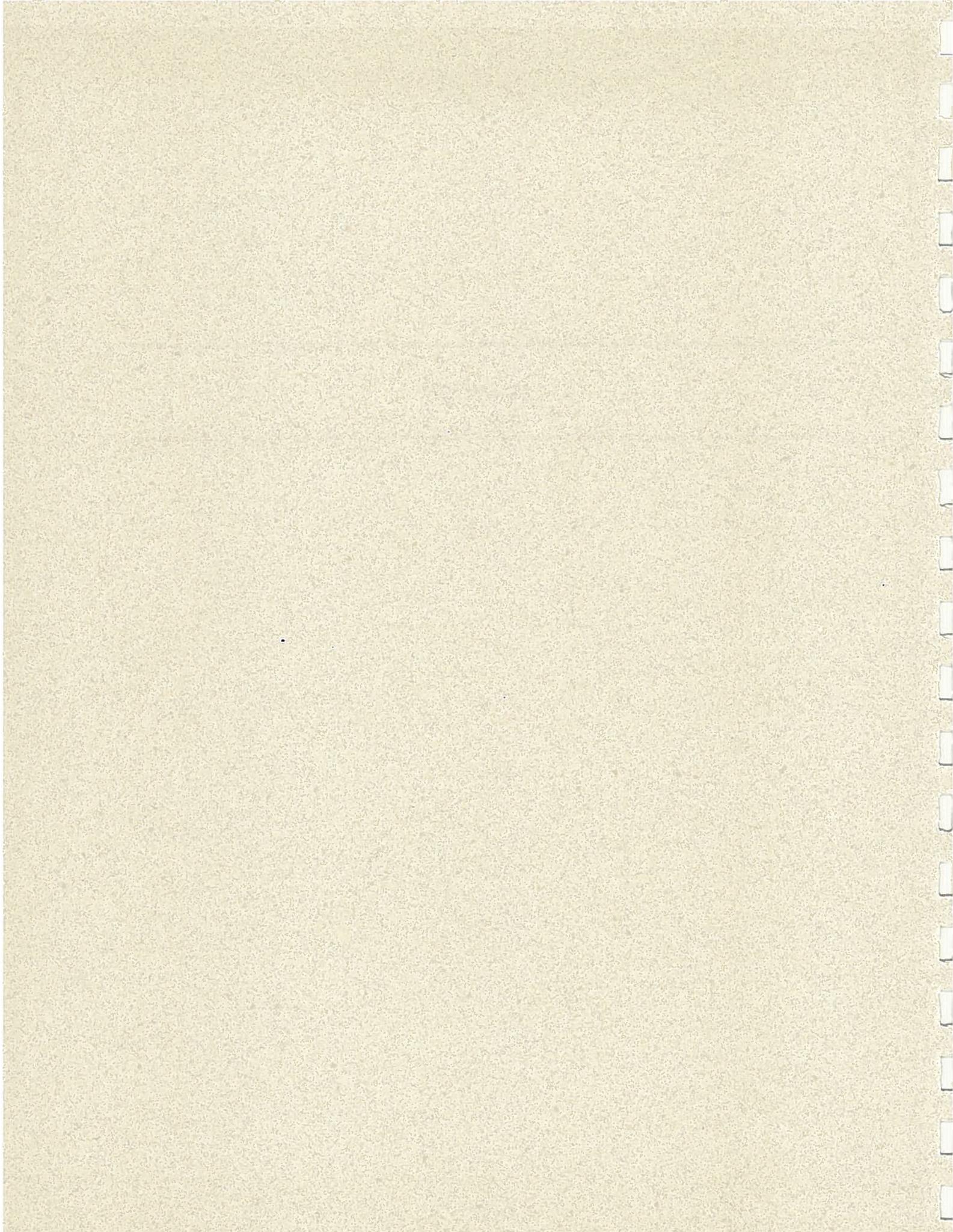
APPENDICES - Bound under separate cover and available for review at the Nevada County Public Library branches at 207 Mill Street, Grass Valley, and at 980 Helling Way, Nevada City.

- A. SUBSURFACE GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATION
- B. TRAFFIC STUDY
- C. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT
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SUMMARY



1. SUMMARY

Project Title: California Highway Patrol Grass Valley Area Office

Project Location: Grass Valley, Nevada County

Lead Agency: State of California, California Highway Patrol
2490 First Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95818

Agency Carrying Out Project: California Department of General Services
Office of Project Development and Management,
Office of Real Estate and Design Services
400 R Street, 5th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

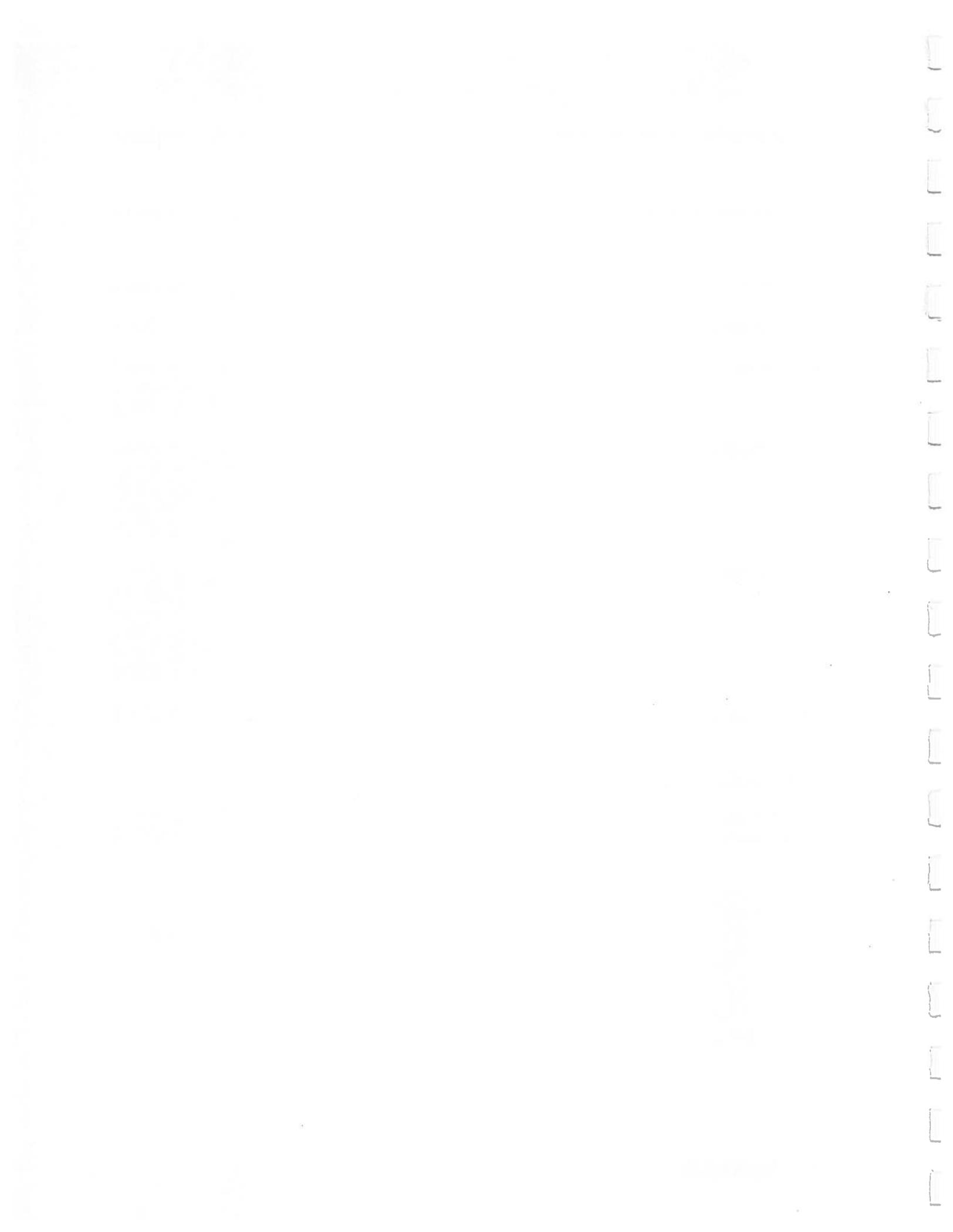
Contact Person: Christal Waters
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Office of Project Development and Management
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Date Checklist Completed: September 22, 1995

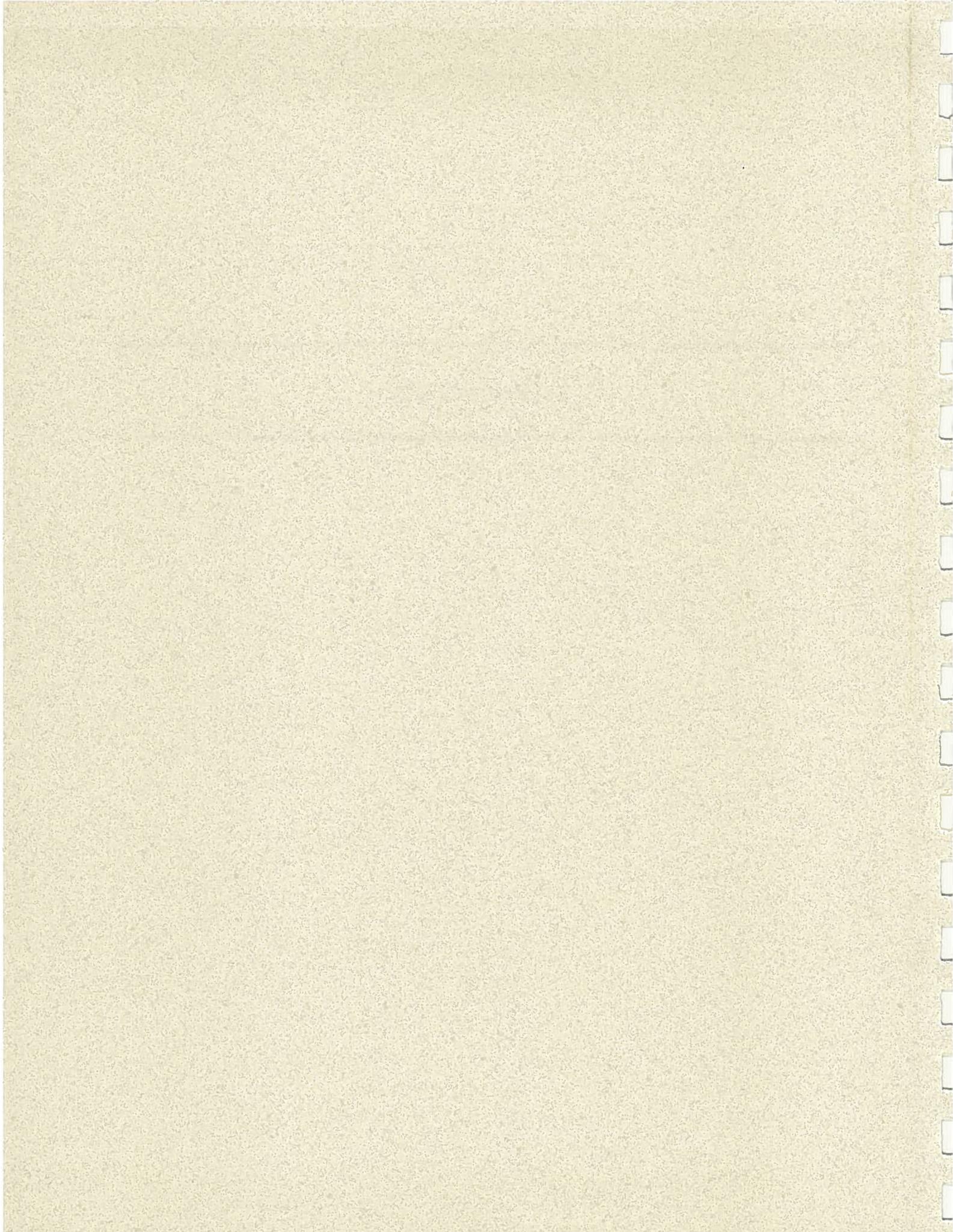
Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the Environmental Checklist.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use and Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Population and Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geological Problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities and Service Systems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Circulation | <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy and Mineral Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None Identified |



INTRODUCTION



2. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to evaluate the environmental impacts associated with developing a new California Highway Patrol (CHP) Area Office in Grass Valley, Nevada County (proposed project). The report has been prepared to address potential environmental effects from construction and operation of the proposed CHP Area Office.

The California Department of General Services (DGS), Office of Project Development and Management (OPDM) is assisting the CHP with environmental review of potential impacts associated with construction and operation of a CHP Area Office in Grass Valley, Nevada County. CHP, a public agency of the State of California, is proposing to lease with a purchase option a newly constructed office to service the Nevada County region.

The approval for the lease agreement to use the new facility is subject to the provisions of CEQA. While the leasing of existing or new buildings by public agencies for the purpose of using such properties in compatible manner is often categorically exempt from the environmental reporting provision of CEQA, the CHP directed OPDM to complete an environmental assessment, because the site is currently vacant land and the existing CEQA categorical exemptions apply to an existing or newly constructed facility. This proposed CHP facility has not been constructed.

As a public agency, CHP is subject to the provisions of CEQA for the consideration and approval of the lease-with-option-to-purchase agreement for the use of the proposed office. The agreement must be in place prior to issuance of the building permit and prior to hiring the developer. The agreement cannot be finalized by the State until the environmental review process has been completed by the State. This Initial Study (IS) and Negative Declaration (ND) were prepared to ensure State compliance with CEQA in regard to the lease-purchase agreement.

The State has obtained an assignable option to purchase the site described in Section II. Following completion of this environmental review, the State will enter into a lease-with-purchase-option agreement to develop the site and will assign the land option to the selected developer (the State's Nominee). The developer will undertake further project design and will construct a single-story building to house CHP staff and equipment. CHP will lease the facility from the developer and may exercise its option to purchase at a later date. The developer hired to construct the proposed CHP facility would be subject to the CEQA requirements of the local jurisdiction for creating a legal parcel and land use approval. When the County has to take action, they may need to use this document, as a responsible agency, or prepare a separate, specific document, based on the more detailed project design.

Organization of Initial Study

This Draft Initial Study is organized into the following sections.

Section 1 - Summary: provides information about the proposed project location, lead agency, and identification of which environmental issues were determined to be a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the Environmental Checklist.

Section 2 - Introduction: provides background information about the proposed project, including CEQA considerations and project development requirements. This section also describes the content of the Draft Initial Study.

Section 3 - Project Description: describes the proposed project location, project site and surrounding land uses, project objectives, and characteristics of the proposed project.

Section 4 - Environmental Checklist: contains the Environmental Checklist form presented in Appendix I of the CEQA Guidelines. The Checklist Form is used to describe the impacts of the Proposed Project. A discussion follows each environmental issue identified in the Checklist. Included in each discussion are project-specific mitigation measures, as appropriate, recommended for implementation as part of the Proposed Project.

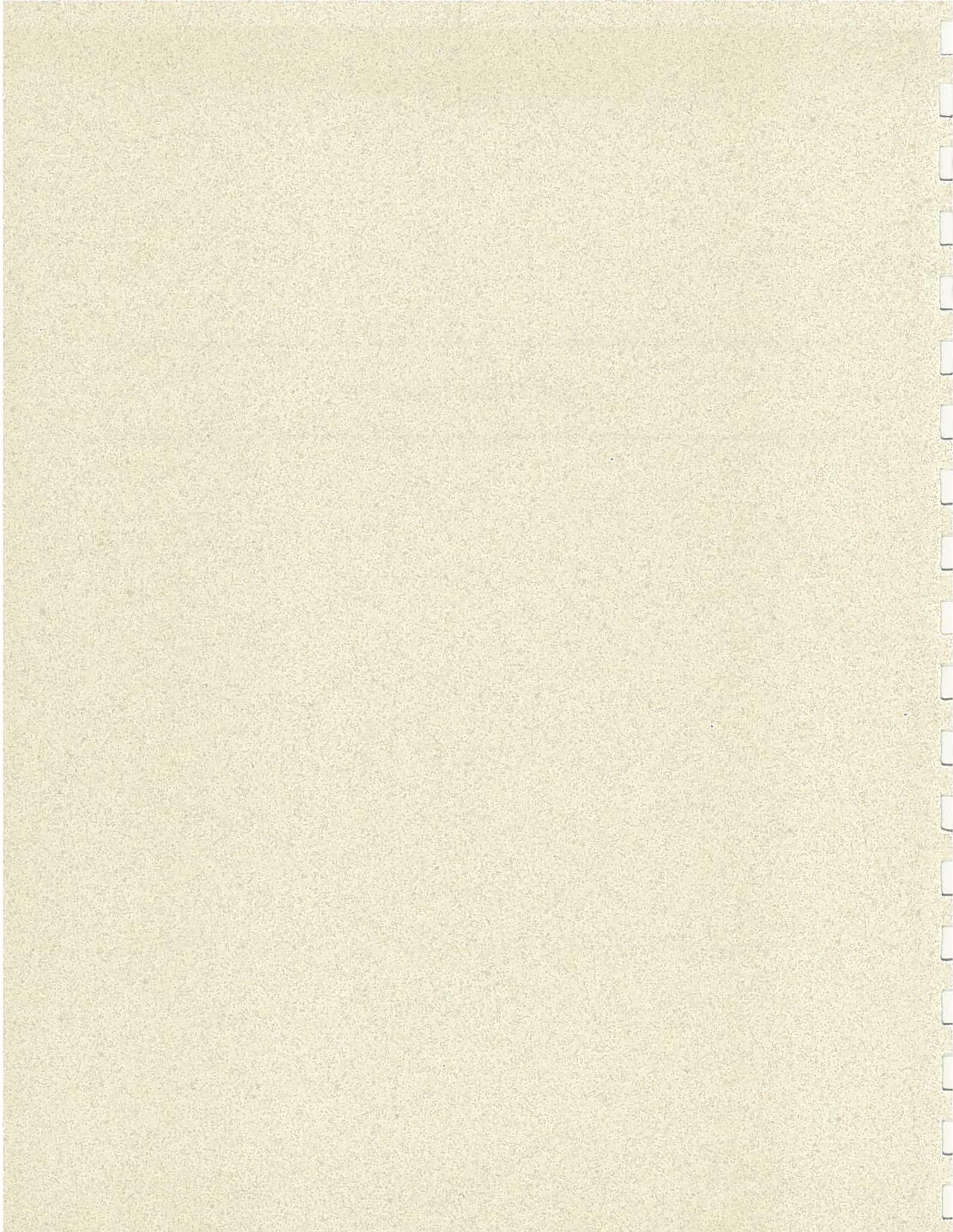
Section 5 - Mitigation Measures: summarizes project-specific mitigation measures identified in Section 4, as appropriate.

Section 6 - Determination: identifies the determination of whether impacts associated with project development are significant, and what, if any, additional environmental documentation would be required.

Section 7 - Report Preparation: lists authors and subconsultants and other individuals assisting in the preparation of this Draft Initial Study.

The Appendices include separately bound reports prepared specifically for this analysis and considered relevant to the review and understanding of the project. The Appendices are available for review at the at the Nevada County Public Library branches at 207 Mill Street, Grass Valley, 980 Helling Way, Nevada City.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION



3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Location

Grass Valley is located in the Sierra Nevada foothills, in the western part of Nevada County. Regional access to the Grass Valley area, including the proposed site, is provided by State Route 20 and State Route 49 (see Figure 1). The project site is located at 11363 McCourtney Road at the southwest corner of the intersection of McCourtney and Old Auburn Roads, across from the Nevada County Fairgrounds (see Figure 2). The proposed site would be a portion of a 4.68-acre parcel and would occupy the southwestern portion of Nevada County Assessor's Parcel No. 07-400-01.

Project Site and Surrounding Land Uses

The proposed site is currently undeveloped and is used on occasion for overflow parking for events at the Nevada County Fairgrounds. The site has gently rolling and westerly sloping topography, which generally appears to be the result of natural processes, although local irregularities suggest one- to two-foot-deep cuts and/or fills. Cut slopes up to approximately four feet high exist along portions of the western property line. Vegetation at the site is predominantly annual grassland, framed to the south and east by tall pine and cedar trees.

The existing land uses in the immediate vicinity of the proposed project include rural residential, pasture, and undeveloped forest uses. The property to the west and northwest across McCourtney Road is the Nevada County Fairgrounds; to the west and southwest across Old Auburn Road lies a pasture; a residence and outbuildings are immediately south, along Old Auburn Road; to the southeast lies forested, undeveloped land; the Watt Park Fire District Headquarters Station No.1 and a recreational vehicle repair shop border the site to the north and northeast.

Project Objectives

The proposed project is intended to provide space to relocate CHP staff currently housed in crowded facilities and will accommodate the Department's current and 30-year facility space needs.

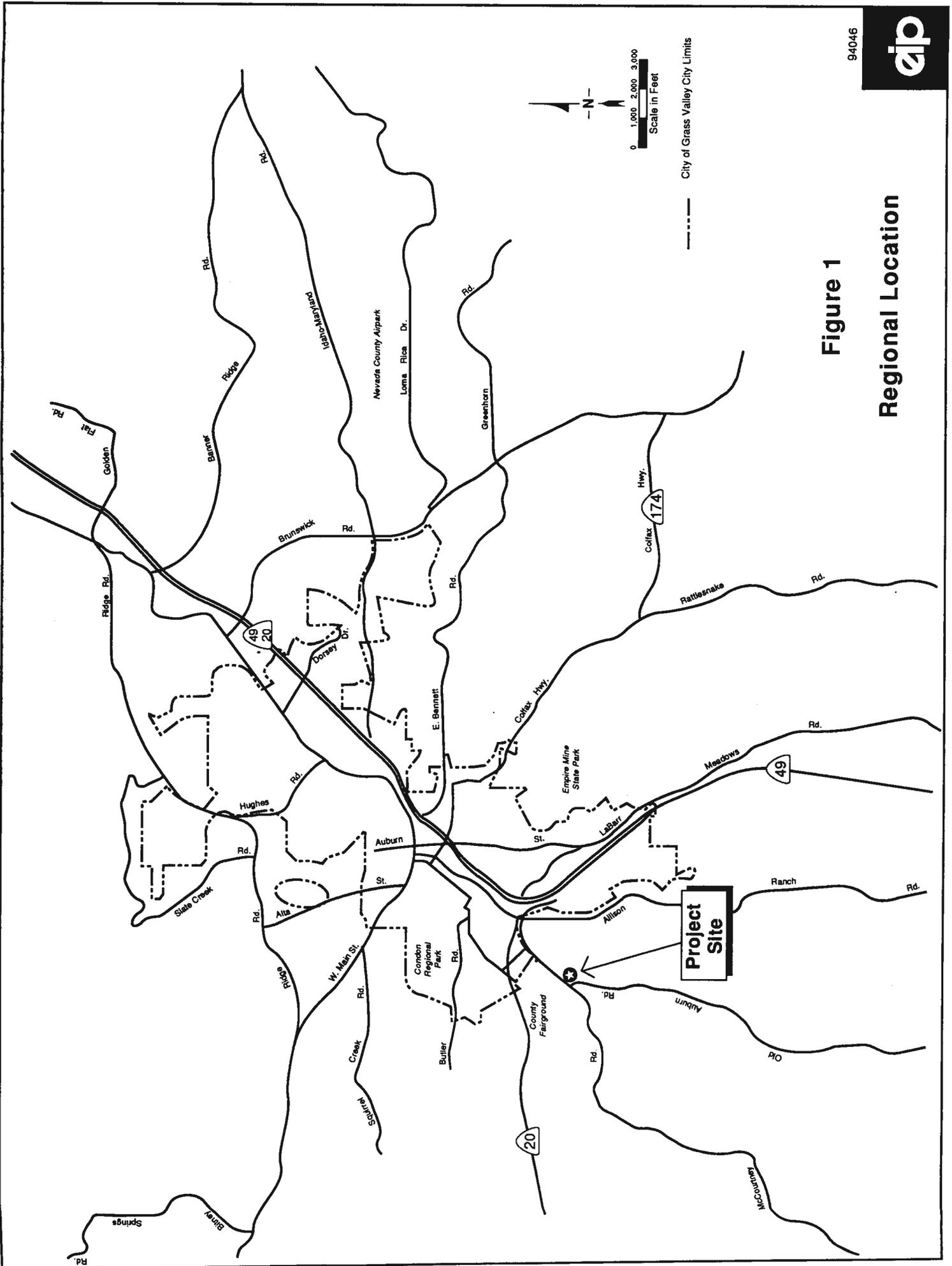


Figure 1
Regional Location

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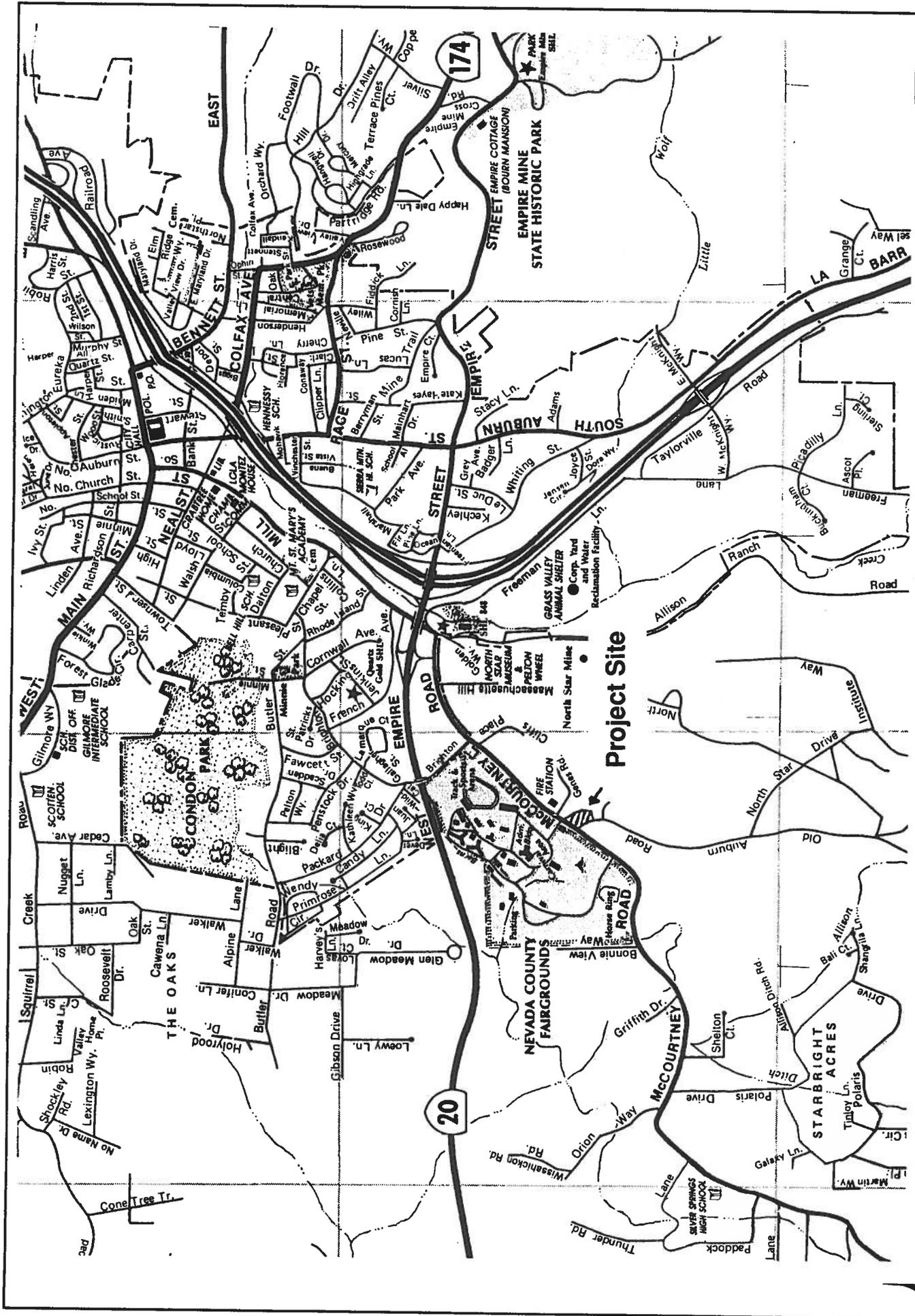
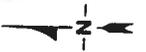


Figure 2 - Project Site Location

NO SCALE



Project Characteristics

CHP plans to relocate approximately 20 employees from its current facility at 11900 Sutton Way in Grass Valley. The proposed project involves construction of a new 11,600-square-foot office building. The building would be single-story, wood frame construction with concrete slab-on-grade floors. The new Area Office would house all of the staff, computer, and communications equipment required to manage and regulate traffic.

A schematic Site Plan that shows a prototypical CHP Area Office and site improvements is provided in Figure 3. The schematic site plan was developed by the Department of General Services, Office of Real Estate and Design Services. A more detailed plan will be prepared by the project developer once the lease-purchase agreement has been signed.

Facility features would include a covered fuel dispensing area with a 12,000-gallon underground fuel storage tank. The fueling area would consist of a 14-foot-high canopy, two dispensers, and an attendant booth. A 1,000-square-foot garage and/or carport area that could accommodate up to four vehicles would include an electric/hydraulic automotive hoist, an automotive exhaust system, overhead air and water service reels, air compressor, tire racks, and an area for washing CHP vehicles. An above-ground 240-gallon tank surrounded by a six-foot-high enclosure would be provided for waste motor oil from vehicle maintenance. An 80-foot-high self-supported communication tower would be adjacent to a 1,000-square-foot radio, storage, and generator building. The communications tower would contain UHF/VHF antennas. Two above-ground liquid propane gas tanks (499 gallons capacity each) to power an emergency generator would be located adjacent to the communications tower. An appropriate number of 20-foot-high light poles would be installed to provide the required level of lighting at night in accordance with State regulations. Security for the facility would consist of a six-foot-high chain link fence with an angle bar and three-strand barbed wire and a concrete security wall. A three-foot by five-foot street-side sign that reads "California Highway Patrol" would be constructed of materials intended to blend with the exterior wood surface of the office building and would be illuminated at night.

Domestic water needs for the site include those associated with restrooms, shower facilities, and vehicle washing. Potable water would be provided by the Nevada Irrigation District (NID). A five-eighths-inch water line is at the site. If higher capacity water delivery is required, it is anticipated that a new line can be provided within existing, previously disturbed right-of-way. Domestic wastewater would be processed through an on-site septic tank and leachfield. Stormwater runoff from the proposed site would be diverted to an existing swale that drains to Old Auburn Road. Electricity for the site would be provided by way of underground lines to a vault on site.

Two driveways, one from McCourtney Road and one from Old Auburn Road would provide access to the facility. Parking would consist of 47 spaces: 14 spaces for visitors (two handicap) on the west side of the facility, and 33 secured, covered parking spaces for CHP vehicles inside

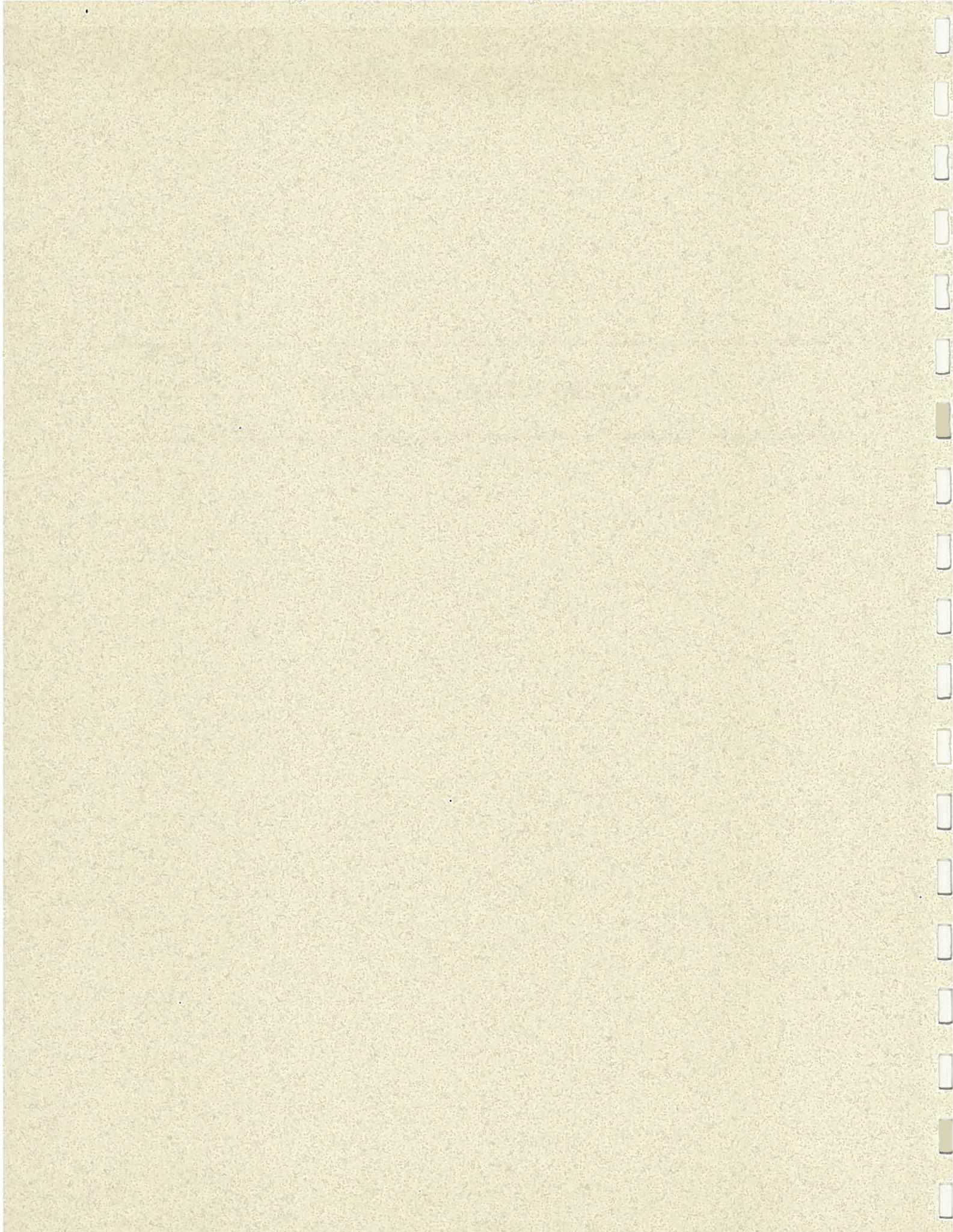
3. Project Description

a gated area within the facility. Existing landscaping, including trees, would remain where possible, and new landscaping would be added as needed. Driveways and parking areas would be asphalt, and sidewalks would be constructed of concrete.

The administration building would be open for visitors from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. CHP employees would be present during two separate shifts: from 7:00 AM to 3:30 PM, and from 3:30 PM to 12:00 AM. From 12:00 AM to 7:00 AM, CHP officers would be on "on-call" status from their residences.

The project would be designed and constructed to meet Titles 8, 19, 20, and 24 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), Uniform Building Code (UBC), and applicable Nevada County design standards and environmental protection ordinances and regulations. The project developer would consult with and submit detailed drawings to the Nevada County Planning Department in accordance with site development permitting requirements.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST



4. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

Introduction

This Checklist contains the Environmental Checklist form presented in Appendix I of the CEQA Guidelines. The Checklist Form is used to describe the impacts of the Proposed Project. A discussion follows each environmental issue identified in the Checklist. Included in each discussion are project-specific mitigation measures, as appropriate, recommended for implementation as part of the Proposed Project.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than- Significant Impact	No Impact
1. LAND USE AND PLANNING. <i>Would the proposal:</i>				
a) Conflict with general plan designation or zoning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with applicable environmental plans or policies adopted by agencies with jurisdiction over the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Be incompatible with existing land use in the vicinity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Affect agricultural resources or operations (e.g., impacts to soils or farmlands, or impacts from incompatible land uses)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of an established community (including a low-income or minority community)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a) The proposed project site is currently zoned as M-1 (Light Manufacturing and Industrial). As described in the 1980 Nevada County Zoning Regulations, allowable uses for the M-1 designation include commercial, manufacturing, processing, fabrication, wholesaling and warehousing, utilities, and other service-related businesses. Operation of a public facility, such as the proposed project, is not permitted under the M-1 designation, although the General Plan recognizes that public land use would be compatible with other land uses in the M-1 designation.¹ Therefore, the proposed project would be inconsistent with current zoning. The proposed project would be permitted, however, under the Public designation, which is intended to provide for land in public or quasi-public ownership and used to provide services to the community.

The 1980 Nevada County General Plan is in the process of being updated. Adoption of the updated General Plan is anticipated within the next few months. Under the updated General Plan, the proposed project site would be designated as Office-Professional (OP). The Office-Professional land use designation is intended to provide for office uses, including business, medical, dental and other professional, as well as supporting business services, at intensities of development that complement other commercial centers and are comparable in scale with nearby residential neighborhoods. Land use associated with the proposed CHP facility, therefore, would be generally compatible with the OP designation, and the proposed vehicle maintenance activities would be allowed.² However, a Conditional Use Permit or a site plan approval would be required from Nevada County because public uses, such as those that would occur at the proposed CHP facility, are not specifically included in the OP designation. Therefore, the proposed project would be inconsistent with proposed zoning.³

Depending on the timing of implementation of the proposed project and approval of the updated Nevada County General Plan, Nevada County could require a rezone application, Conditional Use Permit, site plan approval, or some combination thereof to ensure the proposed project would not conflict with zoning regulations. According to Nevada County Planning Department staff, such determinations are made on a case-by-case basis upon review of the proposed project.⁴

Implementation of the following project-specific mitigation measure would ensure that potential impacts associated with zoning conflicts are reduced to a less-than-significant level:

- *Prior to development of working drawings, the State's developer shall coordinate with the Nevada County Planning Department to ensure that the project as proposed will be consistent with applicable Nevada County zoning requirements, including, if necessary, rezoning of the property.*

- b) Land uses and policies contained in the proposed Nevada County General Plan update are applicable to all unincorporated lands within the County, which also includes those areas within the spheres of influence of incorporated areas such as the City of Grass Valley.⁵ Although the project site is outside the Grass Valley city limits and within the unincorporated portion of

Nevada County, it is within the City of Grass Valley sphere of influence. Proposed Nevada County General Plan Policies 1.37 through 1.39 are designed to support the County's objective of encouraging compatibility and coordination of land use designations with municipalities' spheres of influence. Proposed Policy 1.39 specifically provides that for all discretionary projects within spheres of influence, the County shall request that the City/Town determine whether it desires to annex a project site. If annexation is desired, the State's developer would be directed to apply to the City of Grass Valley. If annexation is not desired, the proposed project would remain under County jurisdiction, but the County would refer the application to the City of Grass Valley for review and comment.

Because the project site lies within an unincorporated area in Nevada County, the State's developer would adhere to the applicable County requirements such as designated land use density with respect to building setback, building height, parking, impervious surface, landscaping, and design standards, which would ensure consistency with Nevada County environmental plans and policies. However, in accordance with proposed Policy 1.39, the City may or may not annex the project site. Until the annexation decision is made, a determination whether the proposed project is consistent with the City of Grass Valley's General Plan and associated policies would be speculative, although proposed Nevada County General Plan Policy 1.38 indicates that Nevada County Land Use Maps will generally reflect the City's/Town's General Plan Land Use mapping. In addition, the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) prepared for the Nevada County General Plan determined that impacts associated with land use conflicts with the Grass Valley General Plan during buildout of the Nevada County General Plan were considered less than significant.⁶ Therefore, potential conflicts with Grass Valley General Plan plans or policies are anticipated to be less than significant.

- c) The existing land uses in the immediate vicinity of the proposed project include rural residential, pasture, and undeveloped forest uses. The property to the west and northwest across McCourtney Road is the Nevada County Fairgrounds; to the west and southwest across Old Auburn Road lies a pasture; a residence and outbuildings are to the south; to the southeast lies forested undeveloped land; to the north and northeast are the Watt Park Fire District Headquarters Station No.1 and a recreational vehicle repair shop. Further to the northeast along McCourtney Road lies a professional-office complex comprised of one- and two-story wood-frame buildings. Because of the existing fire station, fairgrounds, and other structures in the area, the development of the CHP Area Office would not be considered an incompatible land use compared to existing uses in the vicinity. In addition, as noted in Item 1a, land use associated with the proposed CHP facility, would generally be compatible with either the M-1 or Office-Professional zoning designations.

The proposed project would not interfere with nor be inconsistent with the public/quasi-public, commercial, agricultural, and residential uses of property near the site. The proposed CHP facility would be considered compatible with the surrounding land uses because it would not result in an adverse affect on existing land uses adjacent to the project site, and it would only result in a minimal increase in traffic on local roadways.

- d) Undeveloped pasture land is present west of the proposed project site. However, the land on which the facility is to be built is currently vacant and is not used for agricultural purposes. Therefore, the proposed project would not affect agricultural resources or operations.
- e) Because of the semi-developed rural setting of the proposed project site and the fact that only a single resident lives in the immediate vicinity of the proposed project site, the proposed CHP office is not expected to disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of an established community (including a low-income or minority community).

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
2. POPULATION AND HOUSING. <i>Would the proposal:</i>				
a) Cumulatively exceed official regional or local population projections?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Induce substantial growth in an area either directly or indirectly (e.g., through projects in an undeveloped area or extension of major infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Displace existing housing, especially affordable housing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

a,b) The proposed CHP office is being built as a replacement for an existing CHP office. Only minor increases in staffing are expected in the next ten years for this office. Other than the jobs generated by construction activities, the relocation from the current CHP office to the new site would not create direct employment within the region. However, if the vacated CHP office would be backfilled employees new to the area, total employment within the area would increase through the indirect effect of backleasing vacated office space. To the extent that possible vacated CHP office space would attract new workers and residents to the area, the demand for commercial, social, and municipal services would be increased.

The existing CHP office is a State-owned facility, and the future use of this space is both unspecified and uncertain at this time. For this reason, the impacts associated with potential vacated CHP office space are too speculative for evaluation in this initial environmental study. However, it is unlikely that backfill of space vacated by 20 employees and minor increases in staffing in the next ten years would substantially impact Nevada County population projections. At buildout, the projected population of the County would be 175,760, a net increase of 97,250, and the number of dwelling units would increase from 37,352 to 81,745.⁷ A substantial portion

of the CHP employees already reside in the City or neighboring communities and would not create a large demand for additional housing. The proposed project is located within a few miles of the existing CHP office, and it is anticipated that employees would retain their existing residences. Any changes associated with minor increases in CHP staffing and backfilling of vacated space would represent a very small percentage of the projected population and housing totals. Therefore, the proposed project would not exceed official regional or local population projections. Because the project site is adjacent to existing development, the proposed project would not induce substantial growth indirectly by requiring major extensions of infrastructure.

- c) The project site is currently undeveloped. Therefore, the proposed project would not displace existing housing.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
3. GEOLOGIC PROBLEMS. <i>Would the proposal result in or expose people to potential impacts involving:</i>				
a) Fault rupture?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Seismic ground failure including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Seiche, tsunami, or volcanic hazard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Landslides or mudflows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Erosion, changes in topography or unstable soil conditions from excavation, grading, or fill?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Subsidence of the land?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Expansive soils?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Unique geologic or physical features?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a-c) The proposed project site is located in the foothills of the western slope of the Sierra Nevada in the Sierra Nevada geomorphic Province. The western slope of the Sierra Nevada is underlain by igneous intrusive rocks called diabase. A geotechnical study was performed for the project site in May 1995.⁸ The study identified that no faults traverse the site and the site is not located in an Alquist-Priolo Special Study Zone. The project site is located in a low intensity earthquake

zone, designated as Seismic Zone 3 in the Uniform Building Code. Seismic Zone 3 is expected to experience a maximum earthquake of 5.0-5.9 on the Richter Scale, and VI to VII on the Modified Mercalli earthquake intensity scale. The site would likely be subject to groundshaking from earthquakes, since it is located within the potentially active Foothills Fault Systems. Active faults within the vicinity of the project site include the Cleveland Hills Fault (25 miles northwest of the site) and the North Tahoe Fault (50 miles east of the site). The Division of Mines and Geology estimates that a magnitude 6-1/2 maximum credible earthquake could occur along the Cleveland Hills Fault segment of the Foothills Fault System, with resulting peak ground acceleration of 0.5 gravity. (By comparison, the maximum ground acceleration for the Northridge California earthquake in January 1994 was 1.8g, or 1.8 times the force of gravity.)⁹ Inactive faults in the vicinity of the project include the New Melones Fault (15 miles to the east) and the Big Bend-Wolf Creek Fault Zone (immediately west of the site). The proposed project would be designed and constructed in compliance with the Uniform Building Code for structures in Seismic Zone 3, and therefore, would result in a less-than-significant impact for hazards associated with seismic groundshaking.

Ground failure and liquefaction are not considered to be hazards at this site due to the shallow depth to bedrock and the presence of fine, competent soils. Groundwater was detected 40 to 50 feet below the ground surface.¹⁰

- d,e) The site consists of flat to gently rolling topography. There are no steep slopes on, or immediately adjacent to the site, therefore there is no hazard related to mudflows or landslides. The site is not located near any large bodies of water so there would be no impact related to seiche or tsunami. The site is not located in a hazard zone related to active volcanoes in the Sierra Nevada or Cascade mountain ranges.
- f) Implementation of the project would not result in unstable ground conditions due to excavation, grading or fill. The project would be designed and constructed in conformance with the Uniform Building Code, thereby eliminating ground surface impacts resulting in structural failure. Modifications to topography would be minimal since the site is primarily topographically flat. Building construction would include minimal subsurface soil disruption, primarily for infrastructure installation and parking lot construction. Excavation activities at the site could include cuts of five to eight feet in depth. No subsurface parking or basement is proposed for the project design. Due to project design and construction compliance with Title 24 of the Code of California Regulations (CCR), the Uniform Building Code, and proposed Nevada County General Plan Policy 12.1 (Grading Ordinance), there would be no significant impacts due to disruption, displacement, compaction or overcovering of the soil.¹¹ Precise grading plans would be provided by the private developer and submitted to Nevada County for review and approval.

The project site is not located near any river, stream, or lake. Therefore, there would be no impacts associated with changes in deposition or erosion of beach sands or changes in siltation, deposition, or erosion that could modify the channel of a river, stream, inlet, or lake.

- g) The project site is not located in an area of identified subsidence and no impact is anticipated.

- h) The soils on the project site have been identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Survey as Sites loam, two to nine percent slopes (SIB).¹² This soil type is characterized by moderately slow permeability, slight erosion potential, and medium runoff. The site-specific soils borings performed as part of the geotechnical study indicated the site soils had a medium potential expansion as described per the Uniform Building Code.¹³ Since building design and project construction would be performed in conformance with the Uniform Building Code specifications for medium potential expansive soils, impacts associated with expansive soils would be less than significant.
- i) There would be no covering, destruction or modification of unique geologic or physical features since there are no such features located on the site.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
4. WATER. <i>Would the proposal result in:</i>				
a) Changes in absorption rates, drainage patterns, or the rate and amount of surface runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Exposure of people or property to water-related hazards such as flooding?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Discharge into surface waters or other alteration of surface water quality (e.g., temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Changes in currents, or the course or direction of water movements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Change in the quantity of ground waters, either through direct additions or withdrawals, or through interception of an aquifer by cuts or excavations or through substantial loss of groundwater recharge capability?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Altered direction or rate of flow of groundwater?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Impacts to groundwater quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Substantial reduction in the amount of groundwater otherwise available for public water supplies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a) The proposed CHP facility buildings, parking areas, sidewalks, and other site improvements would result in the development of impervious surface that would cover approximately 80% of the site. Proposed Nevada County General Plan Policy 1.23 allows up to 85% impervious surface for sites developed under the Public designation; a maximum 60% would be permitted under the Office-Professional designation. An increase in impervious surface results in an increase in the rate and volume of stormwater runoff. Depending on the slope of the finished paved surfaces, surface runoff from the proposed site could drain to either Old Auburn or McCourtney Roads. There is no developed stormwater collection system in the area¹⁴, although a culvert that directs runoff from properties on the east side of McCourtney Road runs underneath Old Auburn Road where it intersects McCourtney Road.

Runoff from the project site could potentially enter Allison Ranch Ditch, the nearest receiving water to the proposed site. Runoff from the proposed site, in combination with other sources, could potentially increase flows in Allison Ranch Ditch, which, under certain conditions could contribute to increased flows in Wolf Creek.

Implementation of the following project-specific mitigation measure would reduce potential impacts associated with increased runoff to a less-than-significant level:

- *The State shall ensure that facility design includes appropriate controls, such as peak flow reduction and infiltration practices (e.g., grass swales, infiltration trenches, and grass filter strips) to minimize runoff.*

- b) Flooding of lands adjacent to streams and rivers is caused by flows that exceed the capacity of the normal water course. Areas subject to overflows are referred to as the stream's or river's flood plain. Flood hazard areas in Nevada County are generally confined to the areas adjacent to the County's local rivers and streams. In general, there are no significant wide flood plains within Nevada County.¹⁵ As described above, the nearest surface water to the proposed site is Allison Ranch Ditch, which lies approximately 25 feet lower in elevation than the proposed project site. The proposed project site is not adjacent to any rivers or streams, nor is the project site located in a 100-year flood plain as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Therefore, people or property at the proposed project site would not be exposed to water-related hazards associated with being located in a 100-year flood plain.

Dam failure is another form of potential flood hazard. Failure can occur as a result of improper design or siting or natural causes, such as seismic activity. There are 16 dams located within Nevada County. Inundation zone areas include Nevada City, Bitney Springs Road and Deer Creek, and a portion of Newtown Road and the Lake Wildwood Subdivision.¹⁶ The proposed project site does not lie within inundation zone areas, and, therefore, would not be affected by flooding as a result of dam failure.

- c) Construction of the proposed project would include grading, excavation, and other earth-moving activities. These activities would expose soil to wind- and water-generated erosion, possibly at accelerated rates. Therefore, during a storm event, runoff could carry greater sediment loads into the storm drain system. Since the soil located on the project site is characterized by a slight erosion potential, sediment loads that could potentially contribute to a degradation of receiving water quality is minimal. Other potential sources for water quality degradation include the use and staging of construction equipment. Equipment leaks could include oil, grease, and fuel products, which could adversely affect receiving water quality.

The State of California requires that a General Construction Activity Storm Water Permit be obtained and complied with when five acres or more of earth are disturbed. Since the proposed project would disturb less than five acres of land, it would not be required to comply with the General Permit. Proposed Nevada County General Plan Policy 12.1 (Grading Ordinance) requires that erosion control measures are to be implemented to minimize sedimentation associated with erosion on all new development projects. Installation, maintenance, and performance of erosion and sedimentation control measures would be monitored by County staff. In addition, the following project-specific mitigation measures will be implemented to further reduce construction-related water quality impacts to a less-than-significant level:

- *The State shall ensure that construction documents include Best Management Practices (BMPs) or equally effective measures to protect receiving water quality. BMPs shall include, but would not be limited to the following:*
 - (1) *Site preparation shall not take place during inclement weather, nor until such time as the soil has dried adequately to support equipment movement. The developer shall be responsible for preparing the site to prevent erosion prior to initiating construction, and remediating soil erosion that may occur from construction.*
 - (2) *Temporary mulching, seeding, or other suitable stabilization measures consistent with the Nevada County Grading Ordinance shall be used to protect exposed areas during construction activities.*
 - (3) *Excavated materials shall not be deposited or stored where the material could be washed away by stormwater runoff.*
 - (4) *Staging areas for heavy equipment shall be established so that spills of oil, grease or other petroleum by-products cannot be discharged to potential runoff areas. All machinery shall be properly maintained and cleaned to prevent spills and leaks.*
 - (5) *Any spills or leaks from the use of machinery and other heavy equipment shall be reported (if required by local, state or federal regulations) and cleaned up in accordance with applicable local, state and federal regulations.*

Operation of the proposed project would include limited vehicle maintenance activities such as oil changes, fueling, and car washing. Parking spaces for up to 47 vehicles and a truck citation clearance lane are also planned. As stated in Item 3a, the increase in impervious surface associated with project development would increase the amount of surface runoff. Runoff from the parking areas would carry with it urban contaminants including oil, grease, heavy metals (from vehicles), and sediments. Concentrations of contaminants in runoff, particularly heavy metals, can potentially exceed receiving water quality objectives.

The State Water Resources Control Board has adopted a General Industrial Storm Water Permit, which covers specific industries, and is intended to protect receiving water quality. According to Central Valley Regional Water Quality Board staff, a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Industrial permit would not be required for the proposed facility.¹⁷ Proposed Nevada County General Plan Policy 11.4 requires that all sources of potential point- and non-point source pollution to groundwater or surface water (e.g., storm drains, sanitary waste systems, and parking lots) be reduced to acceptable levels.

Although a permit is not required, a reduction of pollutants in stormwater discharges to the maximum extent practicable through the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) is a primary objective of water quality regulations and would be consistent with Nevada County water quality protection policies. Implementation of the following project-specific mitigation measures would further reduce potential stormwater runoff water quality impacts during operation of the proposed facility to a less-than-significant level:

- *The State shall ensure that project design includes a combination of the following Best Management Practice (BMPs), or equally effective measures, to reduce urban contaminant levels in stormwater runoff from the proposed CHP facility:*

- (1) *Oil and grease separators shall be used to control driveway and parking lot contaminants.*
- (2) *Storm drain inlets shall be labeled to educate the public of the adverse impacts associated with dumping on receiving waters (i.e. "Don't dump! Drains to creek!").*
- (3) *Landscape areas, including borders shall use warm season grasses and drought tolerant vegetation wherever feasible to reduce demand for irrigation and thereby reduce irrigation runoff. Efficient irrigation systems shall be installed in landscaped areas to minimize irrigation runoff from paved areas. Such irrigation systems include drip irrigation, soil moisture sensors, and automatic irrigation systems.*

- d,e) The proposed site is not located adjacent to any surface water body, nor would any runoff from the site directly enter a surface water body. Construction and operation of the facility would not require withdrawal of water from any surface water body. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not directly result in any changes in the amount, currents, or the course or direction of water movements. In addition, no surface thermal springs have been identified near the project site.

- f,g,i) As discussed in Item 12c, the proposed project would not involve a significant increase in the amount of water use, and groundwater supplies available to the Nevada Irrigation District are adequate to serve future County needs, including the proposed project. As noted in the geotechnical report prepared for the proposed site, depth to groundwater is estimated to be 40 to 50 feet below the ground surface, and a shallow groundwater table is unlikely at the site.¹⁸ Consequently, excavation activities would not be likely to intercept any aquifers. Site development would result in approximately 80% impervious surface coverage, but this would not result in a significant decrease in groundwater recharge capacity. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in any significant changes or alterations of groundwater quantities, flow rate, or direction, or reduce the amount of groundwater otherwise available for public water supplies.
- h) Domestic sewage disposal needs for the proposed facility would be provided by an on-site septic system installed specifically for the facility. The septic system would be installed in accordance with Nevada County requirements, thus minimizing potential impacts to groundwater. Water from car washing would be processed through a prefilter prior to entering the septic tank to remove oil, grease, or other potential contaminants.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
5. AIR QUALITY. <i>Would the proposal:</i>				
a) Violate any air quality standard or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Exposure sensitive receptors to pollutants?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Alter air movement, moisture, or temperature, or cause any change in climate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Create objectionable odors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

a,b) **Construction**

Implementation of the proposed project would include clearing, excavation, grading, and hauling to prepare the site for construction. Dust would be generated as soils are moved, and construction equipment and support vehicles would generate criteria air pollutants including carbon monoxide (CO), oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), reactive organic compounds (ROCs), and ozone precursors. Nevada County lies within the Mountain Counties Air Basin. This basin is

classified as "nonattainment" for ozone and PM₁₀ (particulate matter less than 10 microns in size), and is either "attainment" or unclassified for other pollutants.¹⁹ Construction activities would result in short-term increases in concentrations of pollutants such as PM₁₀ and ozone precursors, which could reduce the County's ability to reach attainment for PM₁₀ and ozone. People in nearby residences or businesses could potentially be exposed to these pollutants as well.

Because construction would be temporary and the proposed project would comply with proposed Nevada County General Plan Policy 14.4(d), which requires control of fugitive dust emissions from construction projects, construction-related PM₁₀ air quality impacts would be less than significant. In addition, implementation of the following mitigation measures would further reduce construction-related air quality impacts to a less-than-significant level:

- *The State shall ensure that construction specifications for the proposed project include a combination of the following Best Management Practices (BMPs), or equally effective measures, to reduce construction-related air quality impacts:*
 - (1) *Watering in late morning and at the end of the day of all earth surfaces during clearing, grading, earthmoving, and other site preparation activities;*
 - (2) *Use of tarpaulins or other effective covers for stockpiled materials and for haul trucks that travel on public streets.*
 - (3) *Daily cleanup of mud and dust carried onto adjacent street surfaces.*
 - (4) *Controlling construction and site vehicle speed to 15 mph on unpaved roads.*
 - (5) *Shut off equipment when not in use to avoid unnecessary idling. As a general rule, vehicle idling should be kept below 10 minutes.*
 - (6) *Ensuring construction equipment is properly maintained and in good operating condition.*
 - (7) *If available prior to project construction and feasible, incorporating new technologies to control ozone precursor emissions.*

Operation

The new facility would include three tanks for fuel storage. As discussed in the Project Description, one tank would be underground and used to store gasoline. Two tanks would be above-ground and used for liquid propane gas. Installation and operation of the tanks would be in compliance with State and Nevada County standards.

Since the proposed facility would include fuel dispensing equipment, the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD) would require the installation of California Air Resources Board-approved Phase I and Phase II Vapor Recovery gasoline dispensing equipment. This requirement is part of NSAQMD's program to reduce air pollution generated by mobile sources and satisfies the requirements of California Health and Safety Code Section 40918. Vehicle maintenance would be limited to oil changes, fueling, and car washing. As noted in the project description, the maintenance area would include an exhaust system. Exhaust system components would be required to comply with applicable NSAQMD standards.

Up to two trucks per week could potentially enter the facility for administrative purposes and would stop at the truck citation clearance lane (see Figure 3). Gasoline deliveries would occur approximately three to four times per year during midday. Truck engines would be required to be turned off when parked at the proposed facility, and trucks would not be allowed to park at the facility overnight. Since the proposed project involves relocation of an existing CHP facility, no new vehicle trips would be added to the area, only a redistribution of existing trips.²⁰ Consequently, vehicle air emissions would be similar to existing levels. Therefore, operation of the proposed facility would not be expected to result in an increase in emissions that could contribute to exceedances of air quality criteria, or expose sensitive receptors to pollutants beyond those that already exist.

- c) Development of the proposed project involves administrative-type activities conducted in a single-story building on approximately three acres of land and, therefore, would not result in the alteration of air movement, moisture, temperature, or cause any change in climate.
- d) Implementation of the proposed project would not result in the generation of permanent or long-term objectionable odors. As described above, there would be short-term increases in criteria air pollutants. Nuisance odors resulting from diesel-powered construction equipment may be noticeable to some individuals, but these would be temporary. Operation of fuel tanks and dispensing equipment would be in compliance with applicable air-quality emissions requirements, therefore, nuisance odors resulting from these facility components would be minimal. Estimated traffic volumes for the proposed facility are minimal, and any traffic-related odors resulting from implementation of the proposed project would not be distinguishable from those encountered normally.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
6. TRANSPORTATION/CIRCULATION. <i>Would the proposal result in:</i>				
a) Increased vehicle trips or traffic congestion?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Hazards to safety from design features (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Environmental Checklist

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Inadequate emergency access or access to nearby uses?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Insufficient parking capacity on-site or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Hazards or barriers for pedestrians or bicyclists?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflicts with adopted policies supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Rail, waterborne or air traffic impacts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a) As previously described, the project site is across the street from the Nevada County Fairgrounds and immediately adjacent to the Watt Park Fire District fire station at the southeast corner of the intersection of McCourtney Road and Old Auburn Road. Regional access to the site is provided by State Route 20 (SR 20) and State Route 49 (SR 49). According to data presented in a qualitative traffic study performed for the proposed project in July 1995, average daily travel on SR 20 near the project site is approximately 14,200 vehicles per day, and average daily travel on SR 49 near the project site is 30,000 vehicles per day.²¹

McCourtney Road is a two-lane rural collector providing access to rural areas of Nevada County southwest of Grass Valley to Sugarloaf Mountain. Occasional left turn lanes are used at locations where turning traffic may affect through traffic. Adjacent to the proposed project site, McCourtney Road has unimproved frontage and gravel shoulders. Daily travel on McCourtney Road adjacent to the proposed site is approximately 6,000 to 8,000 vehicles per day and operates at Level of Service (LOS) "B." Old Auburn Road is a two-lane rural roadway providing low-capacity local access to rural residential areas of Nevada County from McCourtney Road to SR 20 south of Grass Valley. Average daily travel adjacent to the project site is approximately 1,100 vehicles per day and operates at LOS "A."²²

The proposed project involves relocation of an existing CHP facility from the northeastern area of Grass Valley. As such, no new trips will be added to the area, only a redistribution of existing trips. Currently, there are four to five patrol cars that operate during two separate shifts: from 7:00 AM to 3:30 PM, and from 3:30 PM to 12:00 AM. From 12:00 AM to 7:00 AM, CHP officers are on "on-call" status from their residences. This schedule is not expected to change when the new facility is in operation, nor are additional employees or vehicles expected to be included with the proposed relocation. Daily travel to and from the existing CHP

facility is comprised of employee arrivals and departures that occur during shift changes at 7:00 AM and 3:30 PM. Approximately 10 trips in and 10 trips out would be expected at each shift change, which would not occur during morning or evening peak periods (i.e., 7:30-8:30 AM and 4:30-5:30 PM, respectively). Visitors to the existing CHP facility have been estimated to range from 15 to 20 visitors per day. Since there does not appear to be a pattern, no peak activity can be estimated, although no traffic-related impacts due to visitor traffic are expected. The total number of trips, including potential visitors (allowing for a margin of error due to the uncertainty of peak period visitor traffic), would be 25 or less. Nevada County has identified a minimum acceptable LOS "D" for the area surrounding the project²³. The small number of redistributed trips would not result in any operational deficiencies to the existing circulation system or result in LOS violations.

During the County Fair, the number of vehicles are estimated to range between 2,400 and 6,000 per day. This approximately doubles the average daily travel on McCourtney Road. However, traffic associated with events at the Nevada County Fairgrounds would not be expected to significantly affect normal operations at the proposed CHP facility.²⁴ The small number of daily trips anticipated for the proposed CHP facility would be negligible compared to the traffic volume during the County Fair. Therefore, the proposed project would not significantly contribute to traffic conditions during the County Fair.

- b,c) The proposed project does not involve any roadway changes or alterations that would result in significant safety hazards from sharp curves, dangerous intersections, or conflicts with other types of vehicles such as agricultural equipment. However, the proposed project would have access to both McCourtney Road and Old Auburn Road via two driveways approximately 37 and 40 feet wide, respectively. Since the access to McCourtney Road for the Watt Park Fire District Station (on Genes Road) is adjacent to this parcel, there is concern for potential blocking of emergency response from the fire station due to left turn lanes from McCourtney Road into the parcel adjoining the proposed CHP facility. Driveway access to McCourtney Road is located close to the northeast lot line of the project site parcel. This driveway would have full access to all movements from McCourtney Road (i.e., left and right turns in and out of the driveway). The Nevada County Department of Transportation has expressed concern regarding the proximity of this driveway to the adjacent parcel that may require a driveway after development. However, based on the minimal level of daily travel on McCourtney Road, the limited number of trips generated from operation of the proposed CHP facility, and potential development of the parcel between the CHP facility and the fire station, it is not expected that a line of cars turning left from McCourtney Road would be long enough to impede emergency access from the fire station on Genes Road.

Prior to operation of the proposed facility, appropriate signage and striping on McCourtney Road in front of Genes Road with "Keep Clear" markings, subject to approval by the County and the Fire District, would be provided, along with an appropriate distance between stop lines to mark the access zone to the fire station. In addition, the following alternative could be implemented (depending on how the County would condition the parcel split) to ensure that traffic would not obstruct access to or from the fire station:

- Provide signing and striping plan described above, and require that the parcel between the proposed CHP facility and Genes Road construct the driveway along the required setback adjacent to the CHP property line. This alternative would result in two separate driveways near each other, and would provide approximately 100 feet of storage for left turns (four cars) into the parcel between the CHP facility and Genes Road.

Implementation of the following project-specific mitigation measure would ensure that traffic accessing the driveway for the parcel between the proposed CHP facility and Genes Road would not obstruct access to the fire station, and would therefore, reduce potential impacts to a less-than-significant level:

- *Prior to the development of working drawings, the State's developer shall coordinate with the Nevada County Department of Transportation and Nevada County Planning Department to ensure that siting and design of the proposed driveway on McCourtney Road will not conflict with County or Fire District requirements.*

- d) Implementation of the proposed project will result in the loss of overflow parking used in conjunction with events at the Nevada County Fairgrounds, but it would not result in insufficient parking capacity for the proposed project. As noted in the Project Description, 47 spaces would be available for employee and visitor parking. This amount is expected to be adequate to serve the facility for the life of the project. Issues associated with the loss of overflow parking would be resolved by the County and the 17th District Agricultural Association.
- e) As described in Item 6a, there would be a minimal increase in traffic volume in the proposed project area. As a result, implementation of the proposed project would not alter current bicycle or pedestrian access, nor would it be expected to create additional significant hazards for pedestrians or bicyclists beyond those that already exist.
- f,g) The proposed project involves relocation of existing facilities. Therefore, it would not conflict with alternative transportation policies or result in rail, waterborne, or air traffic impacts as none have been identified for the existing facility.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
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7. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES. *Would the proposal result in impacts to:*

- a) Endangered, threatened or rare species or their habitats (including, but not limited to plants, fish, insects, animals, and birds)?

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Locally designated species (e.g., heritage trees)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Locally designated natural communities (e.g., oak forest, coastal habitat, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Wetland habitat (e.g., marsh, riparian and vernal pool)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Wildlife dispersal or migration corridors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a) Special-status species that could potentially occur in the project area were determined from a search of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDD), the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Electronic Inventory, review of environmental documents from the vicinity, and consultation with biologists with local knowledge.²⁵ Two plant species designated as state endangered (Stebbins morning glory, Scadden flat checkerbloom) are known from the general project vicinity. In addition, two species designated by the California Native Plant Society as 1B (Pine Hill flannelbush, Follett's monardella) may also occur. According to the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), plants listed by CNPS as 1B meet the criteria for listing under the Native Plant Protection Act (Fish and Game Code Section 1901) or Section 2062 and 2067 of the California Endangered Species Act. The following is a brief description of the four special-status plant species that could potentially occur in the project area.

Stebbins morning-glory (*Calystegia stebbinsii*) is a perennial vine which grows from a main taproot. It is distinctive among morning glories because its leaves are divided into five to seven narrow linear lobes which radiate outward from the base of the leaf. The vines support large showy white flowers during spring. This species is generally found in openings in chaparral in gabbro soils. It was thought to be restricted to gabbro soils in western El Dorado County, but new populations were discovered on serpentinite soils approximately one to two miles southwest of the project site.

Scadden flat checkerbloom (*Sidalcea stipularis*) is a perennial herb in the mallow family only recently described (Four Seasons 1974). It occurs in montane marshes and swamps and is known only from two occurrences in Scadden Flat near Grass Valley.

Pine hill flannel bush (*Fremontodendron decumbens*) is a low-growing shrub, with many branches at its base. It is one of the three species of Cacao family that occur in the Pacific States. The flowers that bloom along the younger branches are one to two inches in diameter with five broad petal-like sepals that are a rich yellow-orange color. Pine hill flannel bush was known only from Pine Hill in El Dorado county, but one was found near Grass Valley in serpentinite soil.

Follett's monardella (*Monardella follettii*) is an erect perennial herb with purplish stems and a tiny pink flowers. Its occurs in montane forests, on open rocky slopes with serpentinite soils.

The project site is predominantly annual grassland, with open ponderosa pine and incense cedar. Open chaparral habitat does not occur on the project site. However, as described in Item 14a, serpentinite soils may be present. A site-specific botanical survey was conducted in July 1995 to determine the presence or absence of Stebbins morning glory, Pine Hill flannel bush, and Follett's monardella. None of these plants were observed on the proposed project site.²⁶ In addition, further consultation with the CDFG indicated that if project site soils and habitat did not resemble the known locality of Stebbins morning glory and Follett's monardella, the site would be considered an unsuitable habitat and unlikely to support a significant population due to the small size of the parcel.²⁷

There are no marshes or wetlands at the site, and no other species of threatened or endangered wildlife or plant species were identified that could occur on the project site. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not impact endangered, threatened, or rare species, or their habitats.

- b-d) The project site is dominated by annual grassland, scattered jeffrey pines and incense cedar and small areas of blackberry-ceanothus brush. These habitats are common in the general vicinity and support a generally low diversity of wildlife and plant species. The area has been highly disturbed through grading and vehicle parking, resulting in the predominance of annual grassland habitat. No locally designated heritage trees, locally designated natural communities, agricultural lands or wetlands occur on the project site.
- e) The project area consists of annual grassland and is frequently used as a parking area for the adjacent fairgrounds. Adjacent habitat to the east provides forest and chaparral cover which is more suited to providing habitat for wildlife dispersal and migration. The project will not affect wildlife dispersal or migration.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
8. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES.				
<i>Would the proposal:</i>				
a) Conflict with adopted energy conservation plans?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Use non-renewable resources in a wasteful and inefficient manner?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of future value to the region and the residents of the State?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a) Building materials and design for the proposed facility would comply with heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and lighting requirements as specified in Title 24, Part 2, Chapter 2-53 of the California Code of Regulations ("Energy Conservation in New Building Construction"), and would, therefore, be consistent with State energy conservation plans.
- b) Construction of the proposed facility would require the use of small amounts of non-renewable or slowly renewable resources such as lumber, sand and gravel, asphalt, petrochemicals, and metals. These materials would be used to the extent necessary to comply with Uniform Building Codes and to conform to all current local zoning laws, local building codes and ordinances, and Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations. Since activities at the proposed facility would be the same as those at the existing facility, energy needs would remain similar, or possibly less since the new facility would likely be more energy efficient. No increased use of fossil fuels for vehicle operation at the proposed facility would be expected since the number of CHP trips at the proposed facility is anticipated to remain similar to those at the existing facility.
- c) According to a cultural resources assessment performed for the proposed project site, the project site lies within one of the major early mining districts in California, the Grass Valley Mining District.²⁸ According to an 1896 map prepared by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the project area is part of the White Ledge claim. The White Ledge claim is not identified as a producing mine on the 1896 USGS map. However, there were four buildings within the claim, three within the current project area, so it is likely that there was earlier mining on the property. The claim northwest of the project area, the Jersey Blue, is already occupied by a horse racing track and will eventually become part of the County fairgrounds. The White Ledge may have been an earlier placer claim or a lode mining attempt that never produced. A 1941 USGS map shows two structures within the project area, but neither can be equated with certainty to the structures shown on the 1896 map.²⁹

Areas subject to mineral land classification are divided into various Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ) categories that reflect varying degrees of mineral potential. The proposed project site lies in an area classified by the State Geologist as MRZ-2.³⁰ Areas classified as MRZ-2 are considered to contain potentially significant mineral deposits. A property title report for the site indicates all minerals 100 feet or more below the surface are reserved by the North Star Mines Company.³¹

However, in the absence of more conclusive, site-specific information regarding possible mineral resources on the project site, combined with the maximum depth of excavation for building foundations of five to eight feet deep on disturbed soil totaling less than three acres, it is unlikely that implementation of the proposed project would result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of future value to the region and the residents of the State.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
9. HAZARDS. <i>Would the proposal involve:</i>				
a) A risk of accidental explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to: oil, pesticides, chemicals or radiation)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Possible interference with an emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) The creation of any health hazard or potential health hazard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Exposure of people to existing sources of potential health hazards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Increased fire hazard in areas with flammable brush, grass, or trees?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

a) As stated in the Project Description, proposed facility features would include a covered fuel dispensing area with a 12,000-gallon underground fuel storage tank. The fueling area would consist of a 14-foot-high canopy, two dispensers, and an attendant booth. A 1,000-square-foot garage and/or carport that could accommodate up to four vehicles would include an electric/hydraulic automotive hoist, an automotive exhaust system, overhead air and water service reels, air compressor, tire racks, and an area for washing CHP vehicles. An above-ground 240-gallon tank would be provided for waste motor oil from vehicle maintenance. Two above-ground liquid propane gas (LPG) tanks (499 gallons capacity each) to power an emergency generator would be located adjacent to the communications tower. Specific requirements intended to satisfy State and County requirements for types of storage containers for flammable petroleum products would be included in project design specification documents.

Fuel and waste oil would be stored according to Nevada County and State hazardous materials storage requirements, thus minimizing the potential for release of these materials. The underground fuel tank would be monitored regularly by CHP staff and inspected regularly by the Nevada County Department of Environmental Health to ensure that no leaks that could present a risk to the public or the environment have occurred. Similarly, the above-ground LPG tanks would be monitored to ensure no leakage and to verify integrity of the tank and gas delivery system. Collection and disposal of waste oil would be managed in accordance with applicable State Hazardous Waste Control laws and County requirements.

Design specifications would also include requirements as specified in Title 24 of the Code of California Regulations for anchoring of storage units and equipment to minimize the potential for damage or release of materials in the event of seismically-induced groundshaking.

Implementation of State and County requirements would ensure that potential risks associated with the use of hazardous substances at the proposed CHP facility would reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.

- b) During construction activities, all area roads would remain open and accessible for emergency vehicles in accordance with County and State policies and regulations. Operation of the proposed facility would result in a beneficial impact to the area since CHP services would be available. In addition, in case of an emergency requiring fire fighting or hazardous materials assistance, the Watt Park Fire Station is adjacent to the proposed project site.
- c) The operation of the 80-foot-high communications tower at the site is not expected to have a significant effect on public health. All of the radio transmitters on the proposed tower would operate at very low wattage so the electromagnetic field (EMF) around the tower would be very low.

Since the early 1970s, the public has become increasingly aware of potential health hazards associated with long-term exposure to EMFs. Although some preliminary studies have raised the possibility of hormonal and nerve system changes in living things exposed to EMFs, whether these changes pose potential health risks to humans is unclear. Some studies have found a statistical correlation between EMFs and health effects, while others have not. Furthermore, correlation is not necessarily causation, and no causal relationship between EMFs and health effects has been established.³²

In California, research to evaluate potential health effects was funded under SB 2519, Chapter 1551, Statutes of 1988. Under this bill, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and the State Department of Health Services (DHS) were to conduct a study of any risks that could be related to exposure to electric and magnetic fields produced by electric utilities facilities. The first phase of the study consisted of a review of the existing literature. As of March 1992, a report to the legislature recommended no regulation of electric and magnetic fields. A second report, dated September 15, 1989, recommended additional research to identify health effects and a statewide exposure assessment program. The California Energy Commission (CEC) published a staff report summarizing health effects studies from EMFs associated with high-voltage transmission lines in July 1992. Based on the CEC's evaluation of these studies, the research results remain inconclusive. In 1993 the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) issued its EMF policy. The PUC also concluded that studies did not show a relationship between EMFs and health effects. The CEC has not established regulatory limits on the allowable strength of electric and magnetic fields. Instead, adoption of no- and low-cost measures to avoid increasing EMF exposure are encouraged when economically feasible.³³ Based on current information and the low-wattage associated with operation of the communications tower, exposure of site workers or the general public to EMFs from the tower would be negligible.

- d) A "Level 1" Environmental Site Assessment was prepared for the proposed site in June 1995.³⁴ The assessment included a review of federal, state, and local regulatory agency databases for records of known or potential hazardous waste storage or release sites within one mile of the project site; identification of obvious past uses of the site and adjoining properties, including a review of reasonably available historical maps and aerial photographs, and interviews with persons knowledgeable about the project site; and a reconnaissance of the project site and adjacent properties to observe current land uses and potential areas of concern. Samples from subsurface test pits were collected as part of a separate geotechnical study to assess site soil characteristics for building design; however, the soil samples were not tested for the presence of hazardous contaminants.

According to information presented in the environmental assessment report, four sites within one-quarter mile of the proposed site were identified as containing underground fuel tanks. These sites included the Watt Park Fire Station (adjacent to the proposed site), the Nevada County Fairgrounds (across the street from the proposed site), Grass Valley Disposal (11229 McCourtney Road), and North Star Ranch (11898 Old Auburn Road). However, as noted in the report, these tanks or surrounding soils appear to present no risk to public health or the environment. As noted in the geotechnical report prepared for the proposed site, small piles of mixed debris exist along the southeastern property line.³⁵ The piles generally consist of tree stumps and branches; one pile appeared to contain household-type waste. This could potentially contain hazardous materials or petroleum products. Little information was available on a previously existing residence at the proposed site. As such, unidentified wells, cess pits, septic tanks, or buried wastes might exist. However, as noted in the report, it is not anticipated these piles would present a significant risk given the identified past uses of the site and existing conditions. A septic tank located near the southeastern property line was also encountered during subsurface geotechnical testing, but no evidence of a building associated with the septic tank. As described in Item 8c, the project area is part of the White Ledge mine claim. Although no evidence of mining was observed at the site, the potential for unknown or undiscovered mine shafts exists at the site.

Implementation of the following project-specific mitigation measure would reduce potential impacts associated with unknown buried hazards to a less-than-significant level:

- *The State shall ensure that construction documents for the proposed project include a provision that specifies that should excavations associated with construction of the CHP office uncover obvious or potential hazards such as buried debris, mine shafts, wells, or other unusual items, work should immediately stop until a qualified geotechnical engineer or safety specialist can inspect the area and provide appropriate recommendations.*

- e) Nevada County has a high potential for wildland fires of devastating intensity. According to the "Fire Hazard Severity Zone" map prepared by the California Department of Forestry (CDF), almost all of Nevada County has been placed in the "very high" category of severity.³⁶ The proposed site lies within the "very high" zone. The proposed project would comply with proposed Nevada County General Plan Policy 10.5, which identifies fire protection standards, including access, on-site water supply, signage, setbacks, and vegetation management. For example, development of the proposed site would remove some existing brush and grass, thus reducing potential fire hazard. Installation and operation of petroleum product storage containers

would be in accordance with State regulations and subject to County Fire Marshal approval, which would further minimize the potential for fire hazards. As noted above, the Watt Park District Fire Station is adjacent to the proposed site, which would reduce the amount of time needed to respond in the event of a fire at the proposed CHP facility.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
10. NOISE. <i>Would the proposal result in:</i>				
a) Increases in existing noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Exposure of people to severe noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

a,b) Existing noise levels at the project site are typical of a mixed-use rural area, and include noises associated with activities at the Nevada County Fairgrounds, the Watt Park Fire Station, residential areas to the northeast and southwest, and vehicular traffic on McCourtney and Old Auburn Roads.

Construction activities would temporarily increase noise levels in the vicinity of the project site. Earthmoving, materials handling, stationary, and impact equipment and vehicles generate noise during clearing, excavation, grading, and construction. Construction vehicle traffic traveling to and from the project site would also generate noise. Since the number, type, and location of equipment to be used during project construction is not known, it is not possible to accurately predict the noise level at nearby residences or businesses, although it is likely that surrounding trees would result in some lessening of noise levels experienced at adjacent properties.

Because construction would be temporary and the proposed project would comply with Nevada County exterior noise standards, construction-related noise impacts would be less than significant.

Operational noise levels at the proposed CHP facility are expected to be minimal and would not cause a significant change in existing noise levels. Activities at the facility would consist of administrative functions involving computers, telephones, and clerical-type tasks. Standards for interior noise levels are specified in Titles 8 and 24 of the Code of California Regulations. Building design would incorporate acoustical elements to ensure workplace noise levels do not exceed regulatory criteria. Vehicle maintenance would be limited to oil changes, fueling, and car washing, which would generate minimal amounts of noise. Gasoline deliveries would occur approximately three to four times per year during midday. Trucks would not be allowed to park at the proposed site overnight. Up to two trucks per week could potentially enter the facility for administrative purposes and would stop at the truck citation clearance lane (see Figure 3). Truck

engines would be required to be turned off when parked at the proposed facility. Further, the proposed project would comply with proposed Nevada County General Plan Policy 9.11, which requires the use of increased setbacks, landscaping, earthen berms, and solid fencing to minimize noise impacts.

CHP is mandated under State law to use sirens during emergencies to respond in a timely manner to traffic accidents that involve life-threatening situations. Use of sirens near the current CHP facility does not occur very often, and no increased use would be expected at the proposed facility. It should be noted that the CHP has not received complaints from local residents or businesses regarding noise from operations at its present location. In addition, the proposed CHP facility would be located adjacent to an existing fire station at which sirens are used.

As noted in the traffic study performed for the proposed project, there would be up to 25 vehicle trips per day associated with facility operation. The addition of these trips to existing traffic volumes would be negligible, and would not contribute significantly to increased noise levels in the area.

Therefore, implementation of the proposed project is not expected to result in any significant increases in existing noise levels or expose people to severe noise levels.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
11. PUBLIC SERVICES. <i>Would the proposal have an effect upon, or result in a need for new or altered government services in any of the following areas:</i>				
a) Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Maintenance of public facilities, including roads?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Other governmental services?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

a-e) Implementation of the proposed project involves relocation of existing CHP operations to another facility. Other than jobs generated by construction activities, the proposed project would not directly result in a need for new or altered fire or police protection, schools, maintenance of public facilities, including roads, or other governmental services. Only minor increases in staffing are expected in the next ten years for this office. However, if the vacated CHP office

would be backfilled by employees new to the area, population within the area would increase through the indirect effect of backleasing vacated office space. To the extent that possible vacated CHP office space would attract new workers and residents to the area, the demand for commercial, social, and municipal services would be increased. Analysis of impacts associated with increased demand for public services is beyond the scope of this analysis and would be purely speculative. However, as described in Item 2, it is unlikely that backfill of space vacated by 20 employees and minor increases in staffing would substantially impact Nevada County population projections. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not significantly affect the need for new or altered public or government services.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
12. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS. <i>Would the proposal result in a need for new systems or supplies, or substantial alternations to the following utilities:</i>				
a) Power or natural gas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Communications systems?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Local or regional water treatment or distribution facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Sewer or septic tanks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Storm water drainage?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Solid waste disposal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Local or regional water supplies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

a,b) Electrical and natural gas service are supplied to the Grass Valley area by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), an investor-owned public utility. PG&E currently maintains two electrical substations in Grass Valley located on South Auburn Street and on Sutton Way near Brunswick Road. Natural Gas is derived from sources in Canada (approximately 52 percent), California (approximately 10 percent), and the balance from sources in Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado. PG&E provides natural gas to Grass Valley through a series of subsurface gas lines installed throughout the area. Pacific Bell provides telecommunication services to Grass Valley and is a sole provider.

Implementation of the proposed project involves relocation of existing CHP functions currently served by PG&E and Pacific Bell to another facility that would be served by PG&E and Pacific Bell. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a need for new systems or supplies, or substantial alterations to power or natural gas sources or telecommunications services.

- c,g) Potable water for the proposed CHP facility would be provided by the Nevada Irrigation District. Because a developed water delivery system exists in the project area, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a need for or substantial alterations to local or regional water treatment or distribution services or local or regional water supplies.

However, operation of the proposed CHP facility would result in a new demand for NID water services, which would incrementally contribute to regional NID demand. The NID has adequate supplies to serve increased demand; however, additional water treatment plant capacities and/or treated water storage facilities will be needed in the future to serve new growth.³⁷ The proposed project would comply with proposed Nevada County General Plan Policy 11.1, which encourages installation and use of low-flow plumbing fixtures, drip irrigation systems, and drought-tolerant landscape plantings. Because water needs associated with the proposed project involve uses similar to residential uses (e.g., toilets, showers, and vehicle washing), the proposed project is not expected to contribute substantially to increased demands for water supply or treatment. Implementation of the following project-specific mitigation measure would further reduce impacts on water supply and treatment to a less-than-significant level:

- *The State shall ensure that facility design includes appropriate measures to minimize the amount of water used for vehicle washing.*

- d) Domestic sewage disposal needs for the proposed CHP facility would be provided by an on-site septic system that would be installed specifically for the facility. The septic tank and associated leachfield would be sized appropriately for planned uses and would be installed and operated in accordance with Nevada County ordinances.
- e) As discussed in Item 3a, stormwater runoff in the project area is not served by a developed system. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a need for new systems or supplies, or substantial alterations to storm drainage facilities. As described in Item 4a, the project would be required to comply with proposed Nevada County General Plan Policy 1.23 regarding storm runoff controls, and site-specific drainage plans would be provided when the private developer submits as an application for site development to the County.
- f) Solid waste generated at the proposed facility would be collected by Grass Valley Disposal, Inc. and transported to the Nevada County Landfill McCourtney Road Transfer station for disposal outside Nevada County. The amount of solid waste generated during operation of the proposed facility would be minimal and would not be expected to significantly impact transfer station or disposal capacity. Household-type hazardous wastes, such as cleaning agents, pesticides, or other items used for general facility maintenance would be managed according to Nevada County Household Hazardous Waste disposal requirements.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
13. AESTHETICS. <i>Would the proposal:</i>				
a) Affect a scenic vista or scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a demonstrable negative aesthetic effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Create light or glare?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a) As identified in the traffic study prepared for this Initial Study, both State Route 20 and State Route 49 have been designated elements of the California Scenic Byway Network. However, neither of these roadways are designated official California Scenic Highways. Roads adjacent or near the project site (i.e., McCourtney, Old Auburn, and Genes Roads) are not designated Scenic Byways or Scenic Highways. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not affect scenic vistas or scenic highways.
- b) The proposed CHP facility is not expected to result in any significant changes or impacts to the visual resources of the area. The project site is located on a parcel of land that is not visible from State Route 20, although it is visible from McCourtney Road to the north and Old Auburn Road. Intervening terrain and mature trees limit such direct views of the project site. The site has gently rolling and westerly sloping topography and is currently undeveloped. The project site is primarily annual grassland, framed to the south and east by towering pine and cedar trees.

Views to the west and northwest include the Nevada County Fairgrounds. Views to the west also include an expansive area of grazing land directly across from Old Auburn Road. Trees would screen the proposed facility from views from the residence and outbuildings that lie to the south. The Watt Park Fire District Headquarters Station No.1 and a recreational vehicle repair facility are present to the northeast.

Limited views of the site would be possible from both McCourtney Road and Old Auburn Road to the north and east. McCourtney Road is a fairly well-travelled County road, with peaks in vehicle trips occurring during fairground-sponsored activities, such as the Fourth of July fireworks display, the Nevada County Fair, Day of the Young Child, and numerous other community events.

Project development would be designed to complement the existing landscape and structures through the use of materials (such as wood siding) and colors, building alignment, and the provision of landscaping. An 80-foot-high communication tower would be situated at the southeastern edge of the site, behind the administration building, and near the cedar and pine trees of comparable height. The tower would not be visible from the south or east, and the trees would provide a backdrop for views from the Fairgrounds and McCourtney Road. The radio,

storage and generator building, liquid petroleum gas tanks, garage/carport, and fuel dispensing station would also be located behind the administration building and would, therefore, not be readily visible from McCourtney Road or the Fairgrounds. Existing trees and planned landscaping would also minimize views from adjacent properties to the north and south. Therefore, development as proposed by CHP would not adversely affect the visual, scenic, or aesthetic character of the area.

The project developer will submit architectural plans, specifications and structural design calculations to the State for compliance review and approval. The proposed project is subject to the State's review process which takes into consideration site layout, architecture, landscaping, and other local project amenities which relate to the physical appearance of the site. The State specifications provide development standards that will be incorporated into the project such as specific building setbacks, building height, and landscape requirements. The proposed project will also be required to comply with applicable Nevada County design guidelines.

- c) Glare is caused by light reflections from pavement, vehicles and building materials, such as reflective glass and polished surfaces. During daylight hours, the amount of glare depends on the intensity and direction of sunlight. At night, artificial lighting can cause glare. Radiant heat from large, unshaded structures can affect passers-by and, in some circumstances, raise the ambient temperature. The relationship of buildings to the sun and landscaping can be important to the comfort of people in the area. In winter months, maximum exposure to the sun is desirable. On the other hand, shade created by trees and/or buildings can provide relief from summer heat. These elements--glare, lighting, shade and exposure--can affect the comfort and safety of individuals working at the proposed facility or in the vicinity of the project site. The proposed facility would be oriented on the site in a manner that would take advantage of existing trees to reduce potential impacts associated with glare and radiant heat. As discussed in the Project Description, 20-foot-high light poles would be installed at various locations within the proposed facility to provide the appropriate level of nighttime lighting. The lights would be shielded and directed downward to minimize the amount of light that could potentially effect nearby properties and to reduce associated glare. Implementation of the following project-specific mitigation measure would further reduce impacts associated with light, heat, or glare to a less-than-significant level.

- *The State shall ensure that contract specifications incorporate suitable design elements to minimize the amount of light, heat, and glare associated with operation of the proposed facility that could affect workers and the general public. The guidelines could include, but would not be limited to, building surfaces, landscaping, orientation and exposure, and lighting.*

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
14. CULTURAL RESOURCES. <i>Would the proposal:</i>				
a) Disturb paleontological resources?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Disturb archaeological resources?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Affect historical resources?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Have the potential to cause a physical change which would affect unique ethnic cultural values?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Restrict existing religious or sacred uses within the potential impact area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a) As described in Item 3h, soils underlying the project site are classified as Sites loam. Sites loam soils consist primarily of materials derived from gabbrodiorite and serpentinite.³⁸ Unlike sedimentary rocks, which are formed by the accumulation of sediments in water or from air, gabbrodiorite and serpentinite are the result of igneous and metamorphic rock-forming processes. Because of the temperatures and pressures typically associated with the development of these rock types, plant or animal fossils would not be expected to be present in underlying consolidated rock.³⁹ Further, the depth of excavations would be limited to shallow soil horizons, which typically do not contain fossils. Therefore, the proposed project would not damage or destroy any paleontological resources.
- b,c) An archaeological and historical resources survey of the proposed project site was performed in July 1995.⁴⁰ The assessment included a records search of the North Central Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System, literature review, and a field inspection.

There have been a number of previous cultural resources surveys and recorded sites, mostly historic mining features, within one-half mile of the project area. There is no record of a previous survey of the project area or any property abutting it. According to the cultural resources assessment report, small arrowheads, hopper mortars, and other artifacts possibly related to the ancestral Nisenan could potentially be present in the project area. However, no prehistoric artifacts or other evidence of Native American use of the area were observed during the site inspection. The only evidence of historic use of the area, in addition to the rubble pile noted above, was a single fragment of a thick-walled ceramic cup found on the surface. Due to historic and recent disturbances of the project site, it is highly unlikely that any evidence of prehistoric occupation or use of the project area has survived.

As described in Item 8c and in the cultural resources assessment report, the project site lies within one of the major early mining districts in California, the Grass Valley Mining District. Placer mining began in this region soon after the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill. In the same year, 1848, gold was discovered on Wolf Creek near Grass Valley. Although the placer mines were soon exhausted, quartz lodes were discovered that supported a very active mining industry for the next century. A map published by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in 1896 shows the project area as part of the White Ledge claim, but the White Ledge is not indicated as a producing mine. However, there were four buildings within the claim, three within the current project area, so it is likely that there was earlier mining on the property. The claim northwest of the project area, the Jersey Blue, is already occupied by a horse racing track and will eventually become part of the Nevada County Fairgrounds. The White Ledge may have been an earlier placer claim or a lode mining attempt that never produced. A 1941 USGS map shows two structures within the project area, but neither can be equated with certainty to the structures shown on the 1896 map.

There is no evidence that the proposed project will cause any damage to a significant historic property. However, the project area is part of a mining claim and the recent extensive surface disturbance suggests that evidence of historic activities could exist below the modern ground surface.

Implementation of the following project-specific mitigation measures would reduce potential impacts associated with disturbance of archaeological or historical resources to a less-than-significant level:

- *The State shall ensure that construction documents include a provision that specifies that should excavations associated with construction of the CHP office uncover obvious or potential historic artifacts, foundations, shells, bones, exotic rock, or other unusual items, work should immediately stop in the area of the find until a qualified historical archaeologist can inspect the area and determine the significance of the find.*
- *The State shall ensure that if bones uncovered appear to be human, the Nevada County Coroner shall be contacted. If the Coroner determines that the bone is likely to be Native American in origin, then the Coroner must contact the Native American Heritage Commission.*

- d) As identified in the cultural resources assessment, the project site lies within the territory attributed to the Nisenan, a branch of the Maidu group of the Penutian language family. Tribes of this family dominated the Central Valley, San Francisco Bay area, and western Sierra Nevada Foothills. The Nisenan controlled the drainages of the Yuba, Bear, and American Rivers, along with the lower portion of the Feather River. The northern boundary has not been clearly established due to a language similarity of neighboring groups. The eastern boundary was the crest of the Sierra Nevada. Probably a few miles south of the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers on the valley floor was their southern boundary. The western boundary extended from this point upstream to the mouth of the Feather River.

4. Environmental Checklist

As noted above, no evidence of Native American use of the site was identified during the cultural resources assessment. In addition, no general ethnographic information exists that would indicate unique ethnic cultural values would be affected by the proposed project.⁴¹ As described in the "Level 1" Environmental Site Assessment for the proposed site, it appears a portion of the site was in residential use from the late 1800s until 1985. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project is unlikely to affect unique ethnic cultural values.

- e) Existing religious or sacred uses would not be affected by implementation of the proposed project as none have been identified at the site.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
15. RECREATION. <i>Would the proposal:</i>				
a) Increase the demand for neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Affect existing recreational opportunities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

a,b) Implementation of the proposed project involves relocation of existing CHP operations to another site that is currently vacant. Other than jobs generated by construction activities, which would be of limited duration, and minor increases in staffing that could occur in the next ten years for this office, the proposed project would not substantially result in increased demand for recreational facilities. However, if the vacated CHP office would be backfilled by employees new to the area, total within the area would increase through the indirect effect of backleasing vacated office space. To the extent that possible vacated CHP office space would attract new workers and residents to the area, the demand for parks or recreational opportunities would be increased. Analysis of impacts associated with increased parks and recreational needs are beyond the scope of this analysis and would be purely speculative. However, as discussed in Item 2, any changes associated with minor increases in CHP staffing and backfilling of vacated space would represent a very small percentage of the projected population growth. Therefore, associated impacts on neighborhood or regional parks, other recreational facilities, or recreational opportunities would be negligible.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
16. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE.				
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project have the potential to achieve short-term, to the disadvantage of long-term, environmental goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ENDNOTES

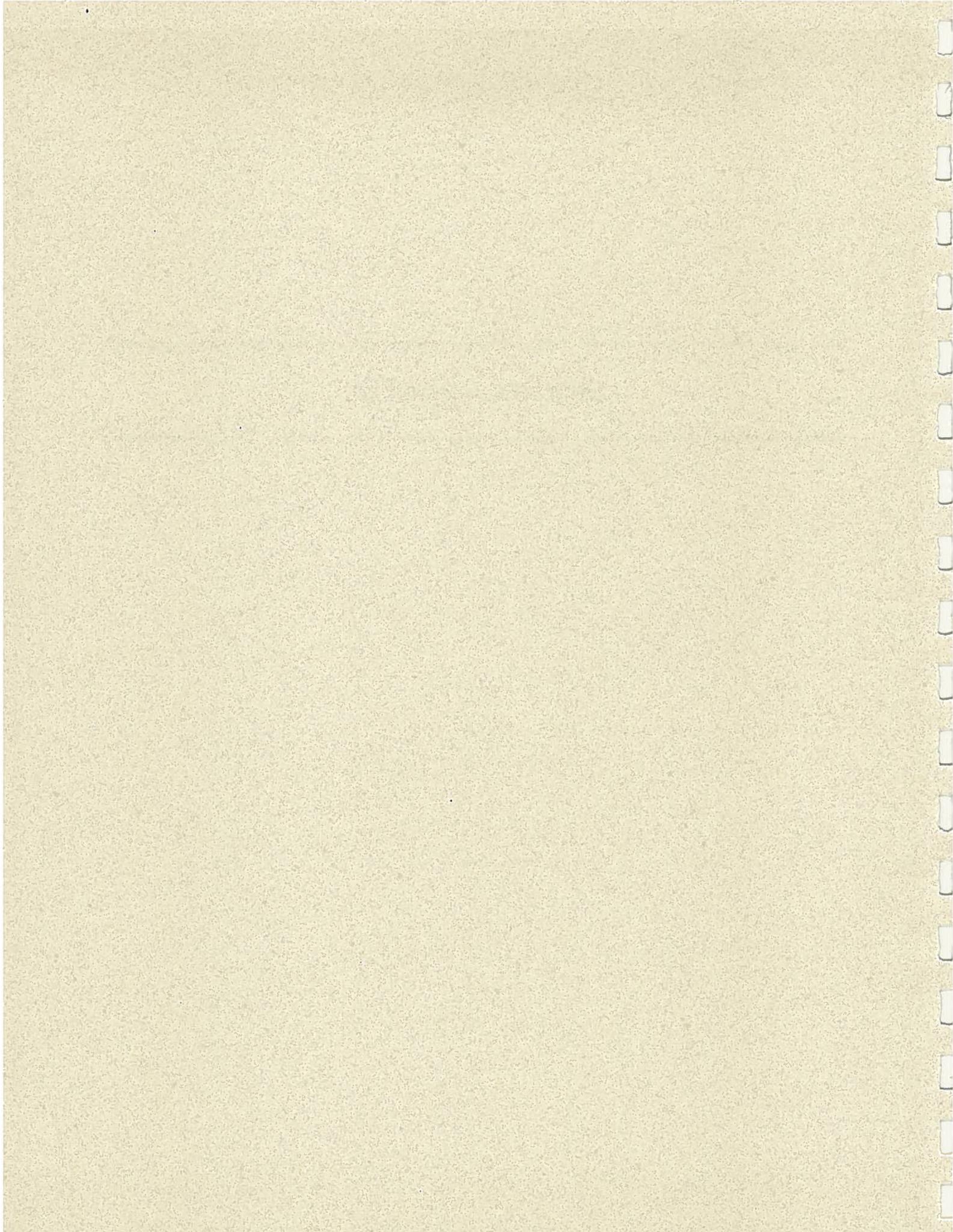
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23. The proposed Nevada County General Plan divides the County into Community Regions and Rural Regions. The project site lies within the Community Regions land area. Nevada County General Plan Policy 4.3 states that the minimum acceptable LOS for areas identified as Community Regions shall be LOS "D".
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28. Peak & Associates, *Cultural Resources Assessment of the Proposed CHP Field Office in Grass Valley, Nevada County, California*, July 10, 1995.
29. Taber Consultants, *Subsurface Investigation, Proposed California Highway Patrol Office, Grass Valley, California*, May 23, 1995.
30. *Nevada County General Plan, Volume 2: Background Data and Analysis, Final Draft*, March 1994, pp.IV/28-29.
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36. *Nevada County General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report, Volume 1*, March 1995, p.4.10-34.
37. *Nevada County General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report, Volume 1*, March 1995, p. 4.10-12.
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41. Bob Gerry, Peak & Associates, Inc., personal communication, July 25, 1995.

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MITIGATION MEASURES



5. MITIGATION MEASURES

The following is a summary of the Project-Specific Mitigation Measures that will be implemented as part of the proposed project. The mitigation measures are presented in the order they appear in the checklist.

1. Land Use and Planning

- *Prior to development of working drawings, the State's developer shall coordinate with the Nevada County Planning Department to ensure that the project as proposed will be consistent with applicable Nevada County zoning requirements, including, if necessary, rezoning of the property*

4. Water

- *The State shall ensure that facility design includes appropriate controls, such as peak flow reduction and infiltration practices (e.g., grass swales, infiltration trenches, and grass filter strips) to minimize runoff.*
- *The State shall ensure that construction documents include Best Management Practices (BMPs) or equally effective measures to protect receiving water quality. BMPs shall include, but would not be limited to the following:*
 - (1) *Site preparation shall not take place during inclement weather, nor until such time as the soil has dried adequately to support equipment movement. The developer shall be responsible for preparing the site to prevent erosion prior to initiating construction, and remediating soil erosion that may occur from construction.*
 - (2) *Temporary mulching, seeding, or other suitable stabilization measures consistent with the Nevada County Grading Ordinance shall be used to protect exposed areas during construction activities.*
 - (3) *Excavated materials shall not be deposited or stored where the material could be washed away by stormwater runoff.*
 - (4) *Staging areas for heavy equipment shall be established so that spills of oil, grease or other petroleum by-products cannot be discharged to potential runoff areas. All machinery shall be properly maintained and cleaned to prevent spills and leaks.*
 - (5) *Any spills or leaks from the use of machinery and other heavy equipment shall be reported (if required by local, state or federal regulations) and cleaned up in accordance with applicable local, state and federal regulations.*

- *The State shall ensure that project design includes a combination of the following Best Management Practice (BMPs), or equally effective measures, to reduce urban contaminant levels in stormwater runoff from the proposed CHP facility:*
 - (1) *Oil and grease separators shall be used to control driveway and parking lot contaminants.*
 - (2) *Storm drain inlets shall be labeled to educate the public of the adverse impacts associated with dumping on receiving waters (i.e., "Don't dump! Drains to creek!").*
 - (3) *Landscape areas, including borders shall use warm season grasses and drought tolerant vegetation wherever feasible to reduce demand for irrigation and thereby reduce irrigation runoff. Efficient irrigation systems shall be installed in landscaped areas to minimize irrigation runoff from paved areas. Such irrigation systems include drip irrigation, soil moisture sensors, and automatic irrigation systems.*

5. Air Quality

- *The State shall ensure that construction specifications for the proposed project include a combination of the following Best Management Practices (BMPs), or equally effective measures, to reduce construction-related air quality impacts:*
 - (1) *Watering in late morning and at the end of the day of all earth surfaces during clearing, grading, earthmoving, and other site preparation activities;*
 - (2) *Use of tarpaulins or other effective covers for stockpiled materials and for haul trucks that travel on public streets.*
 - (3) *Daily cleanup of mud and dust carried onto adjacent street surfaces.*
 - (4) *Controlling construction and site vehicle speed to 15 mph on unpaved roads.*
 - (5) *Shut off equipment when not in use to avoid unnecessary idling. As a general rule, vehicle idling should be kept below 10 minutes.*
 - (6) *Ensuring construction equipment is properly maintained and in good operating condition.*
 - (7) *If available prior to project construction and feasible, incorporating new technologies to control ozone precursor emissions.*

6. Transportation/Circulation

- *Prior to the development of working drawings, the State's developer shall coordinate with the Nevada County Department of Transportation and Nevada County Planning Department to ensure that siting and design of the proposed driveway on McCourtney Road will not conflict with County or Fire District requirements.*

9. Hazards

- *The State shall ensure that construction documents for the proposed project include a provision that specifies that should excavations associated with construction of the CHP office uncover obvious or potential hazards such as buried debris, mine shafts, wells, or other unusual items, work should immediately stop until a qualified geotechnical engineer or safety specialist can inspect the area and provide appropriate recommendations.*

12. Utilities and Service Systems

- *The State shall ensure that facility design includes appropriate measures to minimize the amount of water used for vehicle washing.*

13. Aesthetics

- *The State shall ensure that contract specifications incorporate suitable design elements to minimize the amount of light, heat, and glare associated with operation of the proposed facility that could affect workers and the general public. The guidelines could include, but would not be limited to, building surfaces, landscaping, orientation and exposure, and lighting.*

14. Cultural Resources

- *The State shall ensure that construction documents include a provision that specifies that should excavations associated with construction of the CHP office uncover obvious or potential historic artifacts, foundations, shells, bones, exotic rock, or other unusual items, work should immediately stop in the area of the find until a qualified historical archeologist can inspect the area and determine the significance of the find.*
- *The State shall ensure that if bones uncovered appear to be human, the Nevada County Coroner shall be contacted. If the Coroner determines that the bone is likely to be Native American in origin, then the Coroner must contact the Native American Heritage Commission.*

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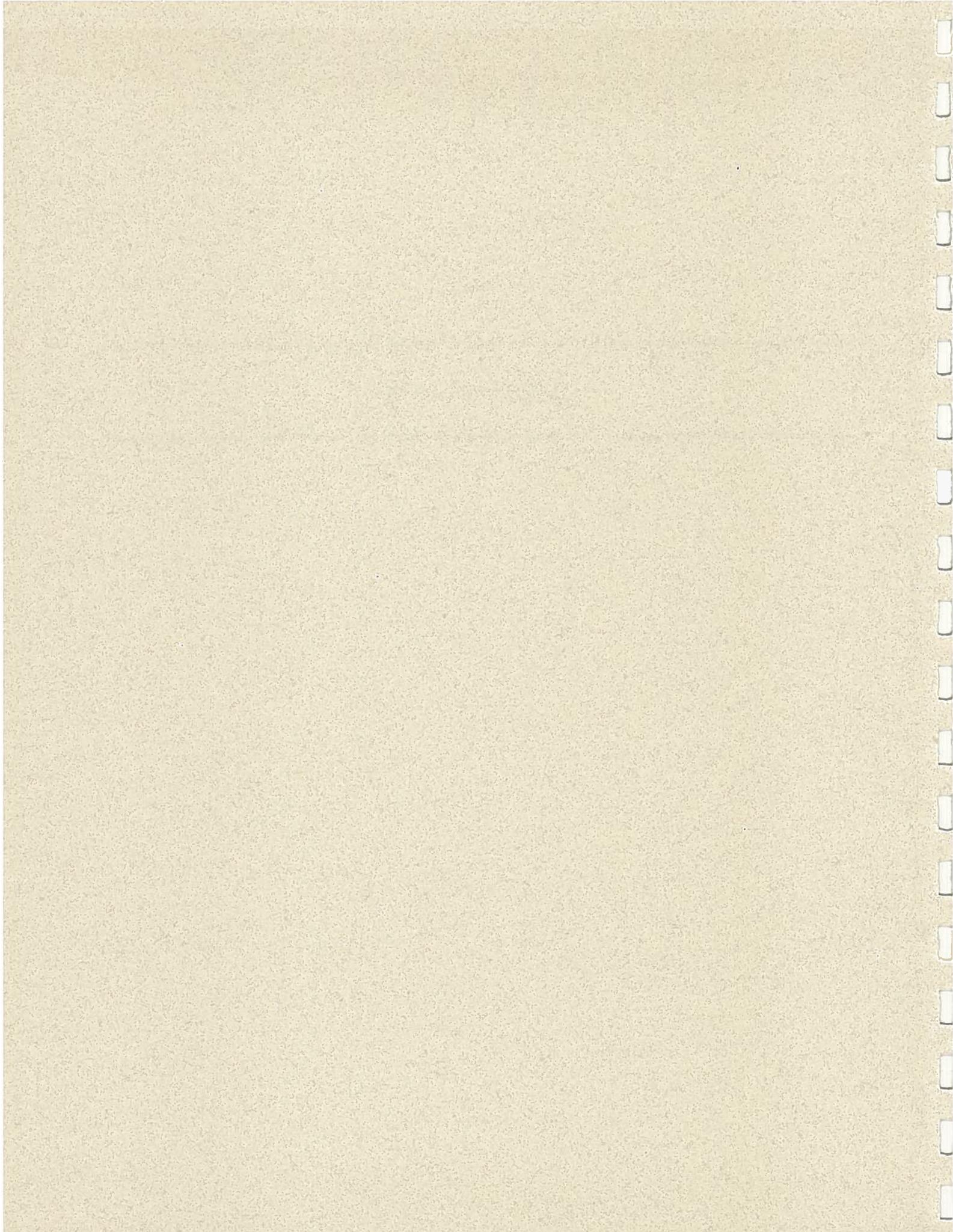
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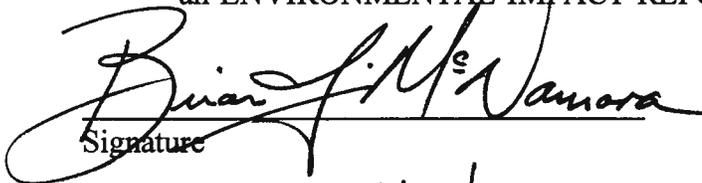
DETERMINATION



6. DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- I find that the Proposed Project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that although the Proposed Project could have significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because the project-specific mitigation measures described in Section V have been added to the project. A NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that the Proposed Project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.


Signature

BRIAN J. MENAMARA
Printed Name

10-4-95
Date

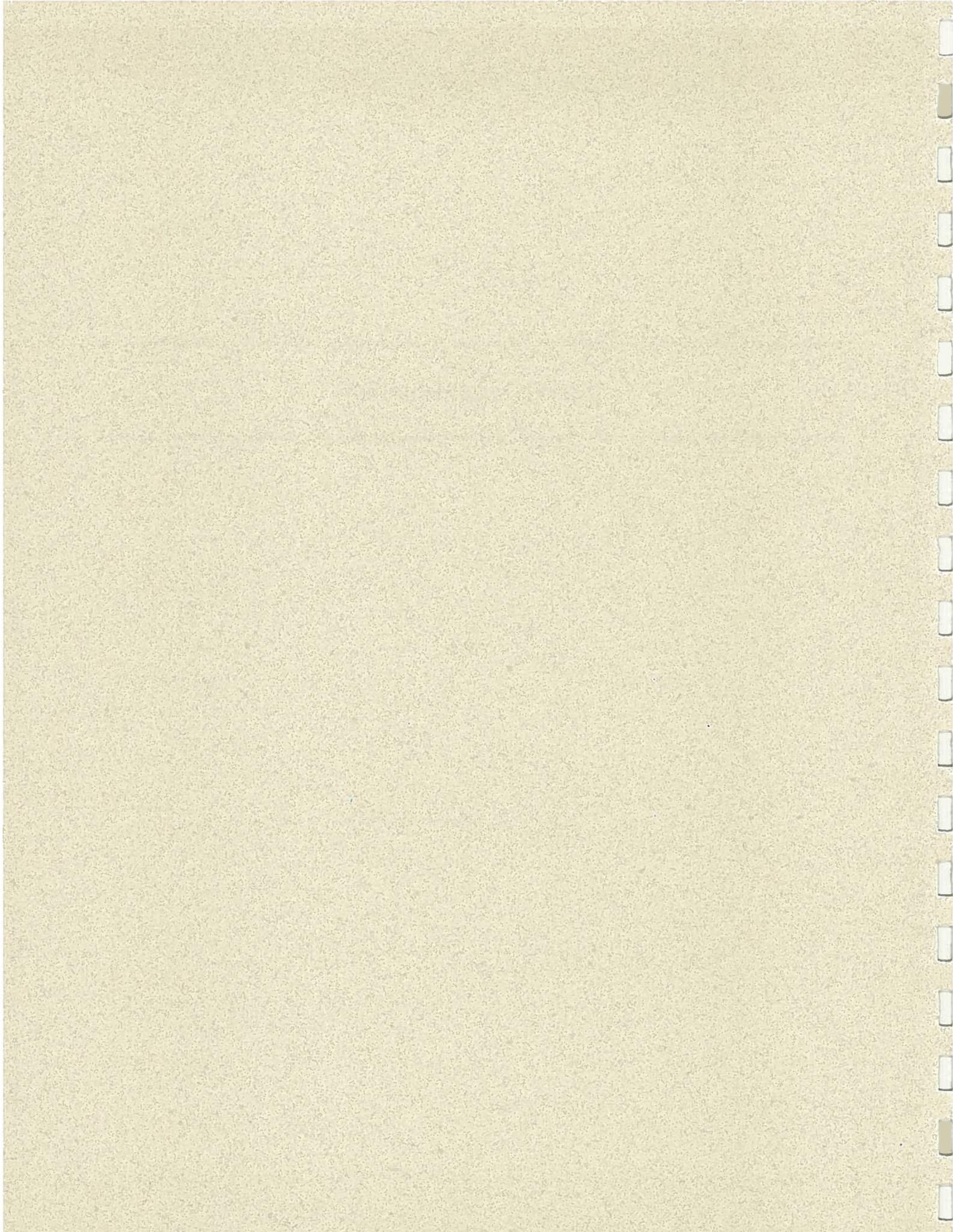
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REPORT PREPARATION



7. REPORT PREPARATION

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