

PROPOSAL FOR
**Preparation of an
EIR Nevada County
Cannabis Ordinance**

May 24, 2018



SUBMITTED TO:
Brian Foss, AICP
Planning Director
Nevada County Planning Department
950 Maidu Avenue
Nevada City, CA 95959



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Subject: Proposal for Preparation of an EIR on the Nevada County Cannabis Ordinance

Dear Mr. Foss:

The regulation of cannabis cultivation in Nevada County has been evolving since the adoption of Ordinance 2349. The proposed draft Cannabis Cultivation Ordinance would provide new opportunities for larger cannabis cultivation operations than previous local land use regulations. It is clear that the new regulations were developed to provide the cannabis cultivator community new opportunities to legally grow and transport cannabis without adversely affecting traffic, odor, noise, water resources, crime, and other issues related to the community's quality of life. With our applicable experience and focus on preparing California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation, Ascent Environmental (Ascent) is uniquely positioned to help the County with its new regulations.

Ascent specializes in ensuring compliance with CEQA. We were established in 2010 to provide CEQA and natural resources services to our clients, with a focus on tackling the most sensitive and complex projects. Our philosophy is to have strongly engaged principals and senior staff deeply involved in all aspects of our projects so that we can provide you, our client, with high-level strategic guidance and excellent client service, always with a focus on CEQA adequacy.

We have developed expertise in the unique practice of conducting **CEQA analysis of regulations, including those associated with cannabis**. Our work includes CEQA analysis of both statewide regulations, such as those associated with the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 and endangered species incidental take regulations, and local regulations, such as citywide zoning ordinance changes, climate action plans, and general plans. We recently completed environmental impact reports (EIRs) on cannabis ordinances for Calaveras and Humboldt Counties and have just commenced work on EIRs for Yolo County, City of Stockton, and San Joaquin County cannabis ordinances. We have also prepared vegetation management plans, including an integrated pest management plan EIR for a 60,000-acre open space district that required a thorough examination of the use of pesticides, hand and mechanized weed management, and the implications on soils and water quality, among other issues, in the mountains of Santa Cruz and San Mateo Counties. We understand that evaluating the impacts of ordinances requires both a broad and specialized approach and that mitigation must be developed in the form of regulatory language.

We also do not shy away from controversial projects and have an exceptional record with respect to legal challenges of CEQA documents. The principal for this project, Gary Jakobs, AICP, has prepared hundreds of EIRs and other CEQA documents over his 35-year career. Of these, 20 have been litigated by project opponents—none successfully. Pat Angell, a senior director with 25 years of experience, will serve as project manager. Pat and Gary will be supported by Ascent's in-house technical team, which has deep experience preparing program EIRs. This experience preparing CEQA documents on regulations, including cannabis land use ordinances, as well as our overall understanding of CEQA and legal-defensibility record, ensure that Ascent is the firm best equipped to assist Nevada County with the project.

Regarding the contract terms, Ascent would request the opportunity to discuss these terms if selected. Note that we did not identify any issues that we feel would be difficult to address.

We look forward to the opportunity to work with Nevada County and appreciate your consideration of our submittal. Please contact us if you have any questions or require further information. You can be assured that Ascent has both the ability and the strong desire to support Nevada County on this project.

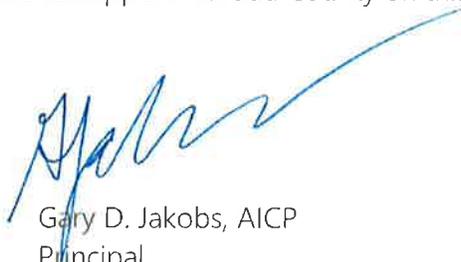
Sincerely,



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A – PROJECT UNDERSTANDING AND WORK PROGRAM

Project Understanding

Nevada County (County) currently regulates the cultivation of medical marijuana (cannabis) under Title 2, Chapter IV, Article 5 (Marijuana Cultivation) of the Nevada County Code (Code). The Code includes restrictions on the location and extent of cannabis cultivation, standards for setbacks, lighting restrictions, and implementation and enforcement provisions. It is estimated that the County may contain 3,000 to 3,500 cannabis cultivation sites.

The regulation of cannabis cultivation has evolving since County Ordinance 2349 first addressed the issue in 2012. In 2017 the County conducted a community and stakeholder input process referred to as the Community Advisory Group (CAG). Ten public meetings were held by the CAG and was the basis of the CAG recommendation report that was provided to the Board of Supervisors in January 2018. Subsequently the Board of Supervisors directed staff to develop the proposed Cannabis Cultivation Ordinance (proposed ordinance).

The proposed ordinance would replace existing County cannabis cultivation regulations and would expand the maximum size of cannabis cultivation area for commercial operations. The proposed ordinance would require existing and new cannabis cultivation operations to obtain a land use permit (Administrative Development Permit or a Conditional Use Permit) and an Annual Cannabis Permit that must, as implied, be renewed annually. The proposed ordinance would regulate indoor, mixed-light, and outdoor cultivation. The ordinance would also provide a transition period of up to two years for existing operations that are in violation of the ordinance requirements to come into compliance.

A program level Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared for the proposed ordinance, and it will be designated for use for subsequent review of individual license applications.

Our Approach

As further described in the enclosed qualifications, Ascent has unparalleled experience conducting California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis of regulatory proposals. From commercial cannabis ordinances for counties to the establishment of new statewide regulations, Ascent has evaluated the environmental implications of a variety of state and local regulations.

The approach to analysis for the proposed ordinance will utilize similar considerations, explained in detail below, that Ascent used in the Calaveras County Medical Cannabis Cultivation Ordinance EIR, the Amendments to Humboldt County Code Regulating Commercial Cannabis Activities EIR, and the Yolo County Cannabis Land Use Ordinance EIR (in process), which is directly analogous to evaluating how changes in cannabis cultivation regulations could impact the County. For example, Ascent used inspection data from existing cannabis operations in the Calaveras and Humboldt counties as well as information provided in application submittals.

Ascent is committed to providing Nevada County with a team of technical experts on both the implications of regulatory changes and the technical issues pertinent to cannabis cultivation and

distribution. Regulatory CEQA documents require special consideration and wording with enough flexibility to allow agencies to govern while maintaining the technical rigor that CEQA requires. In that regard, Ascent's experience and expertise is unparalleled on both a local level and with respect to statewide regulations.

Led by Pat Angell (project manager) and Gary Jakobs, AICP [principal-in-charge (PIC)/project director], our project team is designed to exceed your expectations by providing high quality, thoughtful, creative, and appropriate documentation that serves the best interests of the County. We are proactive in our project execution, and we look for opportunities to streamline the planning and environmental process. Gary led the Cannabis-related EIRs for Calaveras and Humboldt Counties; and Pat managed the Cannabis-related EIR for Humboldt County. Both Gary and Pat are currently working with Yolo County to prepare their EIR for the Cannabis Land Use Ordinance.

Our team also includes in-house technical staff resources (biological, cultural, air quality, odor, greenhouse gas (GHG)/climate change, noise, water quality, general CEQA analysis expertise). We have also added KD Anderson & Associates (KD Anderson) for support on technical transportation and circulation issues.

The approach to the successful completion of this EIR is based on the following keys items, which incorporates principles and strategies that will lead to project success:

▶ **Identification of Typical Impacts and Concerns Regarding Cannabis Cultivation**

There are several concerns that are often identified with cannabis cultivation operations; these concerns are largely associated with historic illegal cannabis cultivation impacts. These impacts include: nighttime lighting from mixed-light cultivation, loss of habitat, objectionable odors from outdoor cultivation, energy efficiency, noise, hazards associated with pesticide usage, traffic, water resources (water quality and water supply), and code enforcement. Criminal activities are also an issue, which raises controversy in the environmental review process. We have assembled extensive information on these impact areas and experiences that we will provide to assist in the development of the proposed ordinance as well as the EIR.

▶ **Clear Project Description**

It will be important to clearly describe to the public, stakeholders, and regulatory agencies how the proposed ordinance changes would regulate cannabis cultivation operations, and what regulatory and performance standards will be provided to address public health and safety (e.g., odor and noise) and the environment. A critical item will be a clear description of how the project regulations would be implemented, and how this may contrast with existing approved operations as well as illegal operations.

▶ **Focused Analysis of the New Regulatory Program**

Our scope focuses the environmental analysis and mitigation on the anticipated impacts of the implementation of the project county-wide, based on existing conditions and regulations. The EIR will evaluate the extent to which the project could promote new and altered cannabis cultivation operations in the County and the effectiveness of its performance standards and associated state natural resource regulations (e.g., State Water Resources Control Board Cannabis Cultivation Policy – Guidelines for Cannabis Cultivation) to mitigate environmental impacts. We have helped agencies develop an "existing

compliance scenario” as the baseline and a “reasonable future compliance scenario” for proposed regulatory actions. The environmental consequences of the regulatory action can be determined by comparing the existing compliance approaches with those resulting from the changed regulations. For example, if existing cannabis operations would not meet new buffering requirements of the proposed ordinance, the EIR would need to consider relocation of the operation and to what extent the existing site would be restored/remediated.

If mitigation is required, we will develop this mitigation in the form of modifications to the proposed regulations that can be easily incorporated into the proposed ordinance changes.

► **Defensible Assumptions for Projecting New Cannabis Cultivation**

California Department of Food and Agriculture estimates that cannabis production in the state in 2016 was 13.5 million pounds. Estimates for forecasted state cannabis consumption in 2018 under the Medical Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act and the Adult Use of Marijuana Act range from 1.4 million pounds (2016 Economic Impact Study of the Cannabis Sector in the Greater Sacramento area) to 2.5 million pounds (Standard Regulatory Impact Assessment). Given this data we will work with County staff on cannabis industry growth assumptions based on their current experiences with the cannabis cultivation licenses, our recent experience in Calaveras, Yolo, and Humboldt counties, as well as published studies.

► **Technical Support at Public Meetings and Ordinance Hearings**

The end goal is that public and stakeholders are completely informed, have access to needed information, and are assured of the County's commitment to transparency and careful review of this project. Our approach will be to make maximum use of the NOP scoping process to obtain input on key issues and alternatives, provide technical information on the environmental effects of cannabis cultivation, and to present and participate in public meetings on the EIR at Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors hearings. Our scope of work includes an additional scope meeting to focus on public input. We also recommend that the County provide additional information on its website to disclose process milestones, alert the public to the next opportunities to participate in meetings/hearings, and provide links to CEQA documents and notices.

Work Plan

The following discussion defines activities to be conducted by Ascent for the County in preparation of an EIR for the project. Pat Angell will manage the project, with Gary Jakobs, AICP serving as PIC/project director. Both individuals will be actively engaged (as appropriate) in all aspects of the project, from meetings and strategy development to preparation and review of all material prior to delivery to the County.

Task 1 Project Initiation and Kick-Off Meeting

Ascent will participate in a project kick-off meeting with the County to discuss on-going activities and challenges with current cannabis cultivation in the county, understand any existing public and cultivator input, provide input on the content of the proposed ordinance, identify/confirm project objectives,

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discuss areas of controversy and potential strategies, and refine the scope of work if determined necessary. The project schedule will also be discussed and refined. Ascent will work with the County to set up the meeting and establish the agenda.

Ascent will prepare a memo for the County documenting the results of the meeting and any information needed to prepare the EIR.

Deliverables:

- ▶ Kick-off meeting (includes agenda and notes in electronic form)
- ▶ Information needs list in electronic form

Task 2 Project Description

CEQA requires that the EIR address the “whole of the action.” The manner in which the proposed ordinance is presented in the project description will set the stage for successful evaluation of impacts, mitigation measures, and alternatives. The project description will also need to include project objectives, which will be used, in part, to help define alternatives to the project.

As discussed above, environmental effects concerning the project are related to the reasonably foreseeable actions that individual applicants may take associated with a commercial cannabis cultivation. Development of these reasonably foreseeable compliance responses is essential to determining the type of environmental impact that may occur. This will include a County forecast of potential permittees (general numbers and locations), as further described in the next paragraph.

Development of the project description will generally describe the State permitting process and associated regulations that have been established by the California Department of Food and Agriculture, State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), the Bureau of Cannabis Control, and California Department of Public Health’s Manufactured Cannabis Safety Branch. Ascent will work with County staff to develop assumptions on the potential extent of new commercial cannabis cultivation that may be permitted by the proposed ordinance. The project description will also provide details on the content of the ordinance and its regulations/performance standards.

Based on County comments, Ascent will revise the project description for inclusion in the EIR. Preparation of the administrative draft EIR will not commence until we receive approval on the project description from County staff. Based on our experience with similar regulatory CEQA documents, up to three conference calls between County and Ascent staff are anticipated during this task and would be attended by Ascent’s PIC/project director and project manager.

Deliverables:

- ▶ Electronic copy of draft project description in Word and PDF
- ▶ Electronic copy of final project description in Word and PDF

Task 3 Notice of Preparation and Scoping Meetings

Ascent will prepare and submit to the County a draft Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the project. Ascent will use the County’s preferred NOP format. No initial study would be provided given that the EIR will be generally full scope. Ascent will incorporate any comments from the County on the NOP and

will prepare a final version for public distribution. It is assumed that the County will be responsible for distributing the NOP for public review and for printing and newspaper publication costs. Ascent will submit the NOP with the Notice of Completion (NOC) to the State Clearinghouse on behalf of the County.

This scope of work assumes that all Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52) consultation with California Tribes will be undertaken by the County and that consultant assistance will not be required. We can amend our scope and budget to provide assistance on AB 52 consultation if requested by the County.

Ascent will assist in facilitation of the scoping meetings (assumed to be two), including provision of a PowerPoint presentation, information on the draft ordinance, and copies of the NOP. This scope of work assumes the following scoping meetings will be held at the County offices at 950 Maidu Avenue:

- ▶ Public scoping meeting for County residents on cannabis cultivators; and
- ▶ Public agency scoping meeting with particular interest in California Department Fish and Wildlife, Caltrans, and CAL FIRE input.

Ascent will provide a summary of NOP comments received as they pertain to the scope of the EIR at the end of the comment period.

Deliverables:

- ▶ Electronic copy of the draft NOP in Word and PDF
- ▶ Fifteen (15) paper copies of the public version of NOP and an electronic copy in Word and PDF
- ▶ Submittal of the NOP with the NOC to the State Clearinghouse
- ▶ Electronic copy of the summary of comments received in Word and PDF

Task 4 Preparation of the Administrative Draft EIR

Following County staff review and approval of the EIR project description, Ascent will prepare an administrative draft program EIR. This document will consist of a full-scope EIR that will be consistent with the content and process requirements of CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines in effect at the time the EIR is initiated (proposed updates and new State CEQA Guidelines are being considered by the California Natural Resources Agency; most of the proposed new guidelines address updates based on statute and would not affect the analysis in this EIR. Other changes, such as how to address greenhouse gases and energy, have been prescribed in case law and Ascent's approach complies with these directives. However, new transportation guidelines are also included in the State CEQA Guidelines update and could have an effect on transportation analyses methods in the future. Until adopted, these proposed updates and new guidelines are not in effect and even under the proposed guidelines, would not need to take effect until January 2020. Regardless, we do not expect the adoption of new guidelines to generate in any concerns with respect to methods and contents of this EIR.).

A key issue will be the environmental baseline. The ordinance could affect existing cannabis operations (permitted and illegal) and have the potential, in some instances, to improve environmental conditions. Definition of the environmental baseline will be addressed with the County in the early phases of the project.

The project is expected to include a variety of measures aimed at environmental protection and public safety. It will be crucial that the environmental analysis not just evaluate the potential to cultivate and transport cannabis; rather, it must consider the context of how it would occur when compliant with the proposed ordinance when determining if environmental impacts may occur. Ascent will work with the County to determine how best to present and evaluate these actions throughout the EIR. With respect to mitigation measures, all such measures will be drafted in the form of modifications to the proposed ordinance, to the degree it is feasible to do so, and if ordinance language has not been drafted, mitigation will be drafted as performance standards.

Ascent will also work with County staff on the development of an "Introduction to the Analysis and Assumptions" section to the EIR that will describe the extent of programmatic environmental review of project and how this EIR would be utilized for subsequent environmental review for the consideration of the implementation of the new ordinance standards.

A brief description of the approach and analysis for each section that will be included in the administrative draft EIR's environmental analysis is presented below:

Aesthetics. This EIR section will qualitatively describe the County's current visual resources, consistent with the County General Plan and the County's Land Use and Development Code. The EIR analysis will describe how project implementation could generally change aesthetics within the County, especially from important viewpoints. Changes may include fences and other visual screens that block views of grow operations, additional facilities related to processing and transportation, as well as additional outdoor cultivation activities. Siting requirements (i.e., required distances between project-related uses and "sensitive uses," setback specifications from public or private use types, and lighting standards) that are established within the project will be reflected in the EIR's analysis. The analysis will also include a discussion of light- and glare-related impacts and a discussion of potential impacts to the existing viewshed associated with mixed-light cultivation. Photographs that depict typical cannabis growing operations in the County will be included (for security, locations will not be disclosed), if desired by the County. Simulations are not included.

Agriculture Resources. While Health and Safety Code Section 11362.777(a) and Business and Profession Code Section 26067(a) define medical and adult-use cannabis as agricultural products, Section 1.2C of the proposed ordinance does not define the growing of cannabis an agricultural activity. The EIR will describe the project's consistency with County General Plan and Land Use and Development Code agricultural provisions and will identify whether implementation of the proposed ordinance could result in the loss agricultural land or conflicts with agricultural operations.

Air Quality and Odors. The project is located within the jurisdiction of the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD). A brief description of applicable federal, state, and local regulations, and regional and local conditions within the County will be presented, including current federal and state attainment designations. Using the land use change/cannabis cultivation assumptions developed as part of the EIR project description, Ascent will evaluate the potential criteria pollutant operational emissions of the project, using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) and land-use-specific traffic data (i.e., trip generation and vehicle miles traveled [VMT]). The estimated emissions will be evaluated using the NSAQMD recommendations for thresholds for reactive organic gases, nitrogen oxides, and particulate matter.

Ascent will also perform a qualitative evaluation of project-generated toxic air contaminants. Any such impacts would be related primarily to generator use and pesticide application. Ascent will utilize

existing siting and buffer-distance recommendations made by the California ARB and in other appropriate documents to determine significance.

Ascent will also quantitatively and qualitatively evaluate potential odor impacts associated with the project. Cannabis cultivation produces odors, especially during the final parts of the cultivation cycle (typically beginning in August and continuing until harvest). Odor impacts are typically determined based on proximity of source and receptor and the number of complaints received. Ascent will similarly analyze potential impacts of the project, using County data on existing cannabis cultivation operations, available complaint data, published reports on odors and cannabis operations, and potential modeling. Ascent will provide technical assistance on the potential extent of odor issues and the development of protocols for mitigating odor impacts and ensuring odor issues for subsequent commercial cannabis cultivation are addressed.

Biological Resources. Ascent will conduct an electronic search of the CDFW's California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), which identifies listed species that may occur in the project area. An electronic search of the California Native Plant Society's (CNPS) Electronic Inventory will also be conducted to obtain current information regarding sensitive plant species. Due to the size of the County, no site reconnaissance surveys will be conducted. Based on information obtained through document review, the environmental setting section will be prepared. A brief overview of relevant federal, state, and local laws and regulations pertaining to the protection of biological resources will also be included.

The effects of biological resources will be considered in light of the existing conditions compared to the reasonably foreseeable compliance responses associated with the project as well as protection measures within the County Land Use and Development Code and provisions of the State Water Board Cannabis Cultivation Policy – Guidelines for Cannabis Cultivation. Mitigation measures, with enforceable performance standards, will be provided as needed to reduce potentially significant impacts.

Cultural Resources and California Tribal Cultural Resources. The analysis of cultural resources will be developed based on existing information (Archaeological Information Center data, local plans, and other relevant documents) and information provided from the County from the AB 52 consultation process to make environmental conclusions. Given the size of the County, analysis will be limited to a literature review. This section will include a discussion of the applicable federal, state, and local policies and regulations; a brief summary of the prehistory and history of the area; a summary of the methods used to evaluate cultural resources; a listing of the criteria for determining significance; a description of historic properties or historical resources; and identification of impacts and related mitigation measures. This scope of work assumes that County staff will initiate consultation with applicable tribes, per AB 52, although Ascent can assist with this effort subject to a scope adjustment. Any information pertaining to Native American Resources gleaned from consultation will be incorporated into the EIR's analysis, as well as any performance standards needed to mitigate potential impacts.

Energy. Ascent will evaluate whether cannabis operations allowed under the proposed ordinance would result in a wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary use of energy (stationary and mobile). This will factor Title 24 building efficiency requirements and State licensing provisions that require indoor cultivation electric power to include 42 percent renewable energy or purchase of carbon offsets. The analysis will use vehicle miles traveled (VMT) to estimate gasoline use. Construction energy use will also be addressed.

Geology and Soils. Ascent will use existing information from soil surveys, the General Plan EIR, and other readily available documents to describe the geologic setting of the County including topography and soil characteristics. This information will be used to evaluate impacts related to the potential to

create unstable soil, slopes, and soil erosion. Impacts will be identified and assessed, and mitigation measures will be recommended for any significant or potentially significant impacts that are not adequately addressed through compliance with County Code or the State Water Board Cannabis Cultivation Policy – Guidelines for Cannabis Cultivation. The project would not be expected to affect risks associated with seismic ground shaking, so seismic-related issues will be scoped out in the EIR. Potential conflicts with mineral extraction will also be addressed in the EIR.

Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change. The analysis of GHG will include a brief discussion on the current state of the science (e.g., Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's [IPCC] Fourth Assessment Report), along with applicable regulatory framework and relevant guidance (e.g., Assembly Bill [AB] 32 and Senate Bill [SB] 32). The analysis will determine whether subsequent commercial cannabis activities under the proposed ordinance would generate significant GHG emissions and result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to the global impact of climate change. The analysis will factor in the degree to which cannabis cultivation replaces other agricultural production versus conversion of non-farmed land. Changes in carbon sequestration associated with changes in vegetation from establishment of cultivation areas and plant growing cycles will be considered.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials. Cannabis operations typical involve the use of pesticides and other potential hazardous materials that can result in potential public health and environmental impacts, although this is highly regulated now. Using available information, including the California Department of Pesticide Regulation's standards and guidance on pest management practices for cannabis cultivation (including in the State Water Board Cannabis Policy), the EIR will identify typical hazardous materials used in cannabis operations and will evaluate the effectiveness of the project and existing regulations to mitigate potential impacts. The EIR will also address whether cannabis operations could result in an increase in wild fires.

Hydrology and Water Quality. The EIR will describe the existing hydrologic setting of the County and surrounding area based on available documentation (i.e., water quality information, flood and topographic mapping, and information from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board). Ascent will also summarize appropriate federal, state, and County regulations and policies related to these issues, including the State Water Board Cannabis Cultivation Policy – Guidelines for Cannabis Cultivation. Using this information, Ascent will qualitatively evaluate the effects of the proposed ordinance on run-off and drainage patterns, pollutant discharges to surface and ground waters, and potential flooding hazards. The analysis will also address surface water and groundwater resource impacts associated with cannabis operations water supply needs. This will include consideration of County well design standards. No formal engineering evaluations are proposed or considered necessary at this time.

Land Use and Planning. Ascent will evaluate the project relative to the County General Plan land use policies and applicable provisions of the County's Land Use and Development Code. Ascent will also qualitatively describe existing land use within the County and describe any potential for division of existing communities.

Noise. The noise setting will generally describe the existing noise environment within the County based on existing environmental documentation and available noise data. This will include identification of existing areas with concentrations of noise-sensitive receptors and major noise sources, ambient levels, and natural factors that relate to the attenuation thereof, including topographic features. Noise levels of specific equipment used for construction, cultivation (generator noise, fans, well pumps, and mechanical trimmers) will be briefly discussed and the distance at which such effects can substantially affect sensitive receptors will be determined. The degree of impact may differ between locations where

grows would replace other agriculture, versus conversion of non-farmland where introduction of noise sources may be more disturbing. Ascent staff have noted the use of grading equipment and mechanical trimmers at previous visits to cannabis cultivation sites related to other contracts. No noise measurements will be taken as part of this analysis. The EIR will assess the exposure of sensitive receptors to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or noise levels from these types of construction and operational equipment that may result from uses allowed under the ordinance. This analysis will be based on documented source-specific vibration levels and standard modeling procedures. The significance of short-term and long-term noise impacts will be determined based on comparisons with applicable federal, state, and County noise standards.

Population and Housing. The proposed ordinance would regulate cannabis operations in the County and would not result in any General Plan land use changes or rezoning that would impact housing. The project would also not involve the development of housing or otherwise induce population growth. Thus, this issue will be scoped out in the EIR.

Public Services. The project would likely allow for expanded or new commercial cannabis cultivation in rural areas of the County that could generate additional need for law enforcement and fire protection services. The EIR will evaluate how new commercial cannabis operations under the proposed ordinance may affect service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives related to these public services. It is assumed that there would be no substantial changes to schools, parks, and other governmental facilities, and thus these topics will be scoped out in the EIR.

Transportation and Circulation. Depending on the location of future cannabis cultivation operations, the project may result in the increase in traffic on local roadways, although substantial traffic generation is not expected. Ascent will work with KD Anderson will conduct the following tasks associated with the transportation and circulation analysis:

- ▶ The travel associated existing cannabis cultivation operations already on County roads and their operation is assumed to be part of the current baseline.
- ▶ The **Existing Setting** will be described in terms of County roadway and state highway segment traffic volume and level of service data available from the County and Caltrans. Collection of traffic counts and analysis of peak hour traffic conditions is not included in this scope of work.
- ▶ The general condition and status of local roadways (public and private) will be discussed in aggregate based on typical widths and volumes based on available data. However, quantitative assessment of specific roadways is not included in this scope of work.
- ▶ To assess **Impacts** the traffic generated from cannabis growing operations will be estimated in terms of travel during the fall harvest and will be based on data available from other publicly available cannabis land use ordinance EIRs. Traffic generated will be qualitatively compared to available traffic volume data on key County roadways and state highways (based on consultation with the County and Caltrans) to determine if future cannabis cultivation operations could result in substantial increases in traffic volumes that impact roadway segment operations. However, no traffic modeling is included in this scope of work.
- ▶ County requirements / standards for rural roadway design and safety providing cannabis cultivation access will be noted, and requirements for subsequent analysis will be presented.

- ▶ Project impacts to alternative transportation modes will be described broadly in general terms.
- ▶ **Cumulative** background traffic conditions will be based on the forecasts provided by the County and Caltrans.
- ▶ The analysis will estimate vehicle miles traveled (VMT) from cultivation operations based on published information on commercial cannabis cultivation and potential use of traffic modeling data from CalEEMOD. This VMT will be compared with the VMT from current agricultural operations in the County. Ascent, KD Anderson, and the County will coordinate on the development of VMT significance thresholds.
- ▶ **Optional Task – Quantified Traffic Impact Analysis:** While not included in this scope of work or budget, KD Anderson would prepare a traffic operations impact analysis that would model the changes in traffic volumes on key roadway and state highway segments in the County from cannabis cultivation.

Utilities and Service System. Cannabis cultivation can require substantial irrigation, septic system improvements to accommodate workers during the harvests, and solid waste generation. The EIR will evaluate if implementation of the proposed ordinance may affect the provision of these utilities and related service systems. This evaluation will be based on assumptions established under Task 2, and studies related to water, wastewater, and solid waste service demands associated with cannabis operations.

Cumulative Impacts. This section will evaluate whether the ordinance’s incremental contribution to an existing significant cumulative impact is considerable and will consider the potential effects of the ordinance as a whole, based in part on the number of expected.

In order to evaluate the project’s contribution to cumulative effects, it is necessary to identify the cumulative context. While the specific actions are not yet known, illustrative examples include an increase in the number of accepted applications, and expansions of areas where cannabis may be cultivated. The EIR will then go through each environmental issue area analyzed in detail as part of the EIR and evaluate whether the project’s contribution would be significant. The cumulative context will consist of the current cannabis cultivation activities (permitted and illegal) in the County, existing and future county-wide land use activities (e.g., agriculture, timber harvest, mining, and development), and implementation of the proposed ordinance. Ascent and County staff will work together to determine what may be reasonably foreseeable for future cannabis operations and other land uses that would be part of the cumulative setting.

Impacts from Growth Inducement. This section will qualitatively evaluate the project’s potential to induce growth (economic) and any related environmental impacts that would occur (pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126[d]).

Significant and Unavoidable Impacts. This section provides a summary of any significant and unavoidable impacts identified in the previous sections.

Significant Irreversible Changes. As part of the approval of a new ordinance, the EIR will need to describe significant irreversible changes to the environment with the implementation of the project.

Alternatives. In coordination with County staff, Ascent will develop up to four project alternatives for evaluation as part of the EIR. Consistent with CEQA requirements, one of the alternatives will include a “No Project” alternative, defined as no change to the existing County Code regulating cannabis, while

the other alternatives will examine variations of the project, to be developed based on coordination with and direction from the County.

The Alternatives Chapter will compare the impacts of each alternative to the project impacts. Using this comparison, the Environmentally Superior Alternative will be identified. It is assumed that a brief qualitative discussion of the potential environmental impacts of the initiative will be carried through each alternative's analysis.

Administrative Record. As part of preparation of the administrative draft EIR, Ascent will compile an electronic copy of all cited literature, studies, personal communications, and reference materials used in the preparation of the EIR. These materials will be provided with the Public Draft EIR deliverable and updated as needed at the Final EIR stage.

Quality Assurance. Ascent's PIC and Technical Editor will conduct a thorough review of the document prior to submittal to the County to ensure it meets the requirements of CEQA, is consistent from section to section, and reflects a high quality of readability. This will include verification that references to project details are consistent throughout the EIR chapters, technical sections use the same layout and organization, and the EIR has a consistent "voice" throughout the document.

Deliverables:

- ▶ Seven (7) paper copies of the administrative draft EIR
- ▶ Electronic copy of administrative draft EIR in Word and PDF

Task 5 Preparation of the Screencheck Draft EIR

Upon receipt of one consolidated and reconciled set of comments from County staff on the administrative draft EIR, Ascent will revise the administrative draft EIR and prepare a screencheck draft EIR for review prior to circulation of the Draft EIR. The screencheck draft EIR will be provided in a "revision mark" version and a "clean" version for the County to verify that requested edits were made.

Deliverables:

- ▶ Seven (7) paper copies of the screencheck draft EIR
- ▶ Electronic copy of screencheck draft EIR in Word and PDF

Task 6 Preparation of the Public Draft EIR

Upon completion of County review of the screencheck draft EIR, Ascent will revise the EIR and prepare the Draft EIR for public release. This scope and budget assume that the County does not raise significant new issues (editorial or substantive) as a part of the screencheck review.

Ascent will provide twenty-five (25) paper copies of the Draft EIR, twenty-five (25) CD copies containing the Draft EIR, and an electronic copy of the Draft EIR in Word and PDF for County publishing and distribution. Ascent will submit the Draft EIR to the State Clearinghouse, along with the NOC, as required by the State CEQA Guidelines Section 15085(d). Ascent will prepare a draft notice of availability (NOA) for County staff use. It is assumed that the County will post the NOA at the Clerk-Recorder's Office and will otherwise notice the public in accordance with County and State CEQA Guidelines Section 15087 requirements (i.e., NOA mailing, newspaper ad, etc.). It is assumed that Ascent's PIC and

project manager will attend the public hearing conducted during the review period for the Draft EIR to present the conclusions of the document.

Deliverables:

- ▶ Twenty-five (25) paper copies, twenty-five (25) CD copies, and an electronic copy of Draft EIR for public release by the County
- ▶ NOA
- ▶ NOC with Draft EIR submittal to State Clearinghouse

Task 7 Administrative Final EIR/Response to Comments

The County will be responsible for receiving all public comments on the Draft EIR and providing the comment letters to Ascent. Ascent will closely review comments; Ascent and County staff will conduct a conference call or meeting to discuss comments received, response strategy, and to confirm whether a change in scope is necessary in order to provide thorough, well-substantiated responses for any comment that raises issues with the Draft EIR's environmental analysis.

Ascent will provide thorough, well-substantiated responses for any comment that raises issues with the Draft EIR's environmental analysis. The volume and type of comments cannot be determined at this juncture. A total of 118 hours of technical time has been set aside in this scope. Additional time for word processing and graphics is also included. If additional time is required due to the number or complexity of comments, Ascent will seek a contract amendment.

The document will consist of four major sections: 1) an "introduction," which will include a matrix of comment letters received and a summary of the environmental issues raised by each letter; 2) the "response to comments," which will include individually bracketed and numbered comments with the corresponding responses, as well as any master responses; and 3) the "changes to the Draft EIR," which will include the specific text changes for those instances in which the Draft EIR requires revision. The mitigation monitoring and reporting program (MMRP) will be provided as a separate bound document.

Deliverables:

- ▶ Five (5) paper copies of the administrative final EIR and MMRP
- ▶ Electronic copy of administrative final EIR and MMRP in Word and PDF

Task 8 Screencheck Final EIR/Response to Comments

Upon receipt of one set of consolidated and reconciled County comments, Ascent will conduct a conference call or meeting with County staff to discuss comments on the administrative final EIR. Following the meeting, Ascent will revise the document in accordance with review comments from the County and prepare the screencheck final EIR. The screencheck final EIR will be provided in a "revision mark" version and a "clean" version for the County to verify that requested edits were made.

Deliverables:

- ▶ Ten (10) paper copies of the screencheck final EIR and MMRP
- ▶ Electronic copy of screencheck final EIR and MMRP in Word and PDF

Task 9 Final EIR

Upon receipt of one set of consolidated and reconciled County comments, Ascent will revise the document and prepare the public Final EIR. A certified version of the Final EIR with the hearing minutes of the Final EIR certification will be provided electronically.

Deliverables:

- ▶ Fifteen (15) paper copies and an electronic copy of Final EIR and MMRP for public release by the County
- ▶ Electronic copy of the certified version of the Final EIR and MMRP

Task 10 Preparation of CEQA Findings

Ascent will prepare CEQA Findings of Fact and, if there are significant and unavoidable impacts, a Statement of Overriding Considerations (SOC). The Findings/SOC will specify which mitigation measures have been incorporated into the project and those measures that have not and will explain why certain measures have been found to be infeasible. If applicable, the Findings/SOC will also identify which of the feasible project alternatives could reduce adverse environmental effects but are not being implemented, with an explanation as to why they are considered to be infeasible. Ascent will prepare an administrative draft of the Findings/SOC and will submit it (electronically) to the County. Upon receiving comments on the Findings/SOC from the County, we will finalize them and provide an electronic copy.

Deliverables:

- ▶ Electronic copy of administrative draft and final Findings/SOC

Task 11 Management, Meetings, and Hearings

Ascent will manage the EIR to maintain the schedule. Ascent will stay in close communication with County staff via phone calls and emails to ensure the County's objectives are met, the schedule is kept, and the project is implemented within established budget parameters. Beyond those meetings identified above, it is assumed that the Ascent's PIC and/or project manager (as well as key technical staff as needed) will attend the following meetings and hearings. A total of two Ascent staff is assumed at each:

- ▶ Twelve (12) conference calls
- ▶ Three (3) project meetings with County staff
- ▶ Two (2) hearings (Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors)

B – SCHEDULE

The following presents our proposed schedule for preparation of the EIR that is based on the County's current processing schedule for the ordinance.

WORK PRODUCT/MILESTONE	DATE
Task 1 – Project Initiation and Kick-Off Meeting	
Receive notice to proceed	July 9, 2018
Conduct project kick-off meeting	Week of July 9th
Task 2 – Project Description	
Ascent submits draft project description	July 30, 2018
County provides comments on draft project description and EIR Outline to Ascent	August 13, 2018
Ascent submits final project description to County	August 17, 2018
Task 3 – Notice of Preparation and Scoping Meetings	
Ascent prepares draft of NOP	July 30, 2018
County provides comments on draft NOP to Ascent	August 13, 2018
Public release of the NOP	August 24, 2018
NOP comment period ends	September 24, 2018
County provides complete set of NOP comments to Ascent at meeting	September 25, 2018
Ascent provides NOP comment summary	October 1, 2018
Task 4 – Administrative Draft EIR	
Ascent submits administrative draft EIR to County	November 1, 2018
Task 5 – Screencheck Draft EIR	
County provides comments on administrative draft EIR to Ascent	November 20, 2018
Ascent submits screencheck draft EIR to County	December 7, 2018
Task 6 – Public Draft EIR	
County provides comments on screencheck draft EIR to Ascent	December 14, 2018
Public Draft EIR Release	December 21, 2018

WORK PRODUCT/MILESTONE	DATE
End of 45 Day Review Period	February 5, 2019
Task 7 –Administrative Final EIR	
Ascent submits administrative final EIR to County	March 8, 2019
Task 8 –Screencheck Final EIR	
County provides comments on administrative final EIR to Ascent	March 29, 2019
Ascent submits screencheck final EIR to County	April 5, 2019
Task 9 – Final EIR	
County provides comments on screencheck final EIR to Ascent	April 12, 2019
Ascent submits Final EIR to County	April 17, 2019
Task 10 – Preparation of CEQA Findings	
Ascent submits CEQA Findings	April 12, 2019
Task 11 – Management, Meetings, and Hearings	
Conference calls, meeting attendance, and hearings	On-going

C – BUDGET

The proposed price for the EIR is presented as attached. As requested the spreadsheet includes a complete list of staff, hourly billing rates, direct costs, and a breakdown of work to be performed, segregated into a time-and-materials schedule with a not-to-exceed maximum amount. With the objective of promoting clarity about the proposed price, the assumptions identified in the attachment explain the basis of the price to implement the proposed scope of work.

Please note that the price is estimated based on a good faith effort and current understanding of the project needs of the County. Variations in approach, issues, and deliverables can result in an adjustment to the contract price. If selected, Ascent is very interested in working with the County to better understand its needs and is willing to revise the scope of work and price to meet the County's expectations.

With the objective of promoting clarity about the proposed price, the following assumptions explain the basis of the price to implement the proposed scope of work.

1. **Proposal Validity:** The proposed scope of work and price are valid for 120 days from the date of submittal, after which it may be subject to revision.
2. **Lump Sum:** The price proposal is a not-to-exceed maximum to perform the proposed scope of work. We would propose, for ease of management, that the contract is developed as a lump sum (percent complete billing). Monthly invoices will be submitted based on labor hours and direct costs completed during each billing period or, if a lump sum is acceptable, percent complete will be reflected.
3. **Schedule:** The price is based on the proposed schedule. Should significant delay occur (schedule extension of more than 60 days) for reasons beyond Ascent's control, a budget amendment may apply to the remaining work, based on labor rates in effect at that time. Ascent will consult with the County about a course of action, if a significant delay occurs.
4. **Price Allocation to Tasks:** The proposed price has been allocated by tasks to determine the total budget. Ascent may reallocate budget among tasks, as needed, as long as the total budget is not exceeded.
5. **Coordination Meetings, Conference Calls, Public Meetings:** A total number of proposed meetings and conference calls is specified. If the number of meetings or conference calls or the required level of effort exceeds this total, a budget augment would be warranted. Ascent will advise the County if this circumstance arises.
6. **Administrative Costs:** An administrative cost of five percent will be applied to subcontractor costs for purposes of subcontract execution and management, invoicing, and payment processing.
7. **Changes to the Description of the Project or Alternatives:** After the descriptions of the project and alternatives are approved by the County for use in the environmental document, it is assumed they will not change during the course of analysis and document preparation. If changes are necessary, amendment of the budget will be warranted to the extent that already completed analysis and document preparation need to be revised or redone.

8. **Changes in the Scope of Analysis:** The proposed price assumes that no new technical issues, alternatives, field surveys, modeling, or topical areas of research or analysis will be identified following the completion of the administrative draft EIR or by other affected agencies after contract execution.
9. **Document Review Cycles:** Review cycles for preliminary versions of the deliverables are specified in the enclosed schedule. Responses to additional reviewers, and additional review cycles or additional versions of administrative or other drafts, if desired, can be provided with a budget augment.
10. **Consolidated/Reconciled Comments:** The County will provide Ascent with one set of consolidated, non-conflicting comments on preliminary draft deliverables that are submitted for review to facilitate the overall schedule and promote efficiency.
11. **References Cited in the Deliverables:** Ascent will maintain electronic copies of reference documents or portions of documents cited and will make the electronic files available during public review. Ascent will submit electronic copies of references to the County for project files upon completion of the authorized work.
12. **Reproduction Costs:** Reproduction costs for the administrative drafts of work products for lead agency review and comment are included in the enclosed price estimate. A proposed budget for reproduction of public documents is included in the price, based on assumptions regarding the number of copies, document length, and extent of color graphics. If the number of copies increases or the document length and color content substantially exceed assumptions, a budget augment will be warranted.
13. **Litigation Support:** Ascent is available to assist in the lead agency's response to CEQA litigation, if it occurs, subject to an amendment to the contract and budget. Except for electronic files of cited references, which will be provided as described above, assembly of an administrative record or project record, whether needed for litigation or other purposes, is not included in the budget, but can be provided with a budget augment.

D – QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Ascent Environmental is a full-service environmental planning and natural resources consultancy providing services related to CEQA and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance, natural resources, strategic regulatory guidance, climate change/GHG, urban design and specialty planning, and air quality and noise analysis. We have diverse experience working for a variety of governmental entities and local municipalities providing environmental compliance and planning services and most recently worked with Nevada County through the preparation of the EIR for the Lake Van Norden Spillway Modification Project.

Our environmental compliance experience includes a wide range of projects, including public infrastructure and facilities, private development projects, land management plans, and proposed regulations. We are more than document preparers; we help devise the most effective and efficient environmental review strategies and work with our clients as they seek to manage future challenges. We also have extensive experience in leading and conducting public meetings, including stakeholder meetings, consensus-building meetings, public workshops, and meetings required for CEQA and NEPA public review processes. We invest time in the community to understand issues and concerns and are experts at conducting fair, impartial, and effective public outreach meetings.

Most relevant to this opportunity, Ascent has unparalleled experience and interest in conducting CEQA analysis of regulatory proposals including cannabis regulations. From changes to zoning ordinances to the establishment of new statewide regulations, Ascent has evaluated (or is evaluating) the environmental implications of a variety of state and local regulations. We enjoy close working relationships with agencies and the challenges involving the development and refinement of new land use regulations. Municipalities who have sought our services include:

- ▶ **Humboldt County:** Amendments to Humboldt County Code Regulating Commercial Cannabis Activities EIR
- ▶ **Calaveras County:** Medical Cannabis Cultivation Ordinance EIR
- ▶ **Yolo County:** Yolo County Cannabis Land Use Ordinance Program EIR (project recently initiated)
- ▶ **San Joaquin County:** Cannabis Policy Project (project recently awarded)
- ▶ **City of Stockton:** Cannabis Ordinance CEQA Review (project recently awarded)
- ▶ **California Air Resources Board (CARB):** CEQA equivalent documents evaluating adoption of regulations for: Advanced Clean Cars, Low-Carbon Fuel Standards, Cap-and-Trade Program, and over a dozen others;
- ▶ **Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD):** EIR for the Integrated Pest Management Plan, covering policies and activities for 60,000 acres of vegetation management in the mountains of Santa Cruz and San Mateo counties;
- ▶ **State Water Board:** EIR evaluating statewide regulations for onsite wastewater treatment (septic tank) systems;
- ▶ **California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW):** CEQA equivalent documents for Spiny Lobster Fishing Regulations;
- ▶ Climate Action Plans and related CEQA documents in several cities and counties throughout California;

- ▶ General Plan EIRs in El Dorado County, City of Sacramento, and several other communities.

This experience is only a sample, but Ascent has addressed numerous “first in kind” regulations, and takes a thoughtful approach to the environmental implications of these various regulatory regimes. This experience will need to be on display with the proposed Nevada County Cannabis Ordinance.

Ascent is committed to providing Nevada County with a team of technical experts on both the implications of regulatory changes and the technical issues pertinent to cannabis cultivation and distribution. Regulatory CEQA documents require special consideration and wording with enough flexibility to allow agencies to govern while maintaining the technical rigor that CEQA requires. In that regard, Ascent’s experience and expertise is unparalleled on both a local level and with respect to statewide regulations.

Our Subcontractor

The Ascent team is supplemented by the specialized expertise of KD Anderson. KD Anderson is a consulting engineering practice serving Northern California and Nevada since 1990. They provide private clients and government agencies with regional planning studies, traffic impact and air quality studies, traffic operations and safety studies, and infrastructure design for projects in the Metropolitan Sacramento Area, and throughout a service area which ranges from Fresno to Redding and into Northern Nevada and Lake Tahoe.

KD Anderson has been involved in the preparation of CEQA/NEPA level traffic studies for projects throughout California ranging from conventional residential and commercial development proposals to ski resorts in the Sierra Nevada. They have worked with many agencies to prepare traffic studies in support of governing documents, including general plans for counties and cities, community plans, and specific plans. Presently, they are addressing the transportation impacts of Placer County’s Winery and Farm Brewery Ordinance Update and Yolo County’s Cannabis Ordinance. They have also prepared traffic impact analyses to support Negative Declarations for projects throughout California, including work for roadway widening projects, landfills and government buildings, as well as residential and commercial development proposals. KD Anderson has worked extensively on projects throughout Nevada County in rural and urban settings.

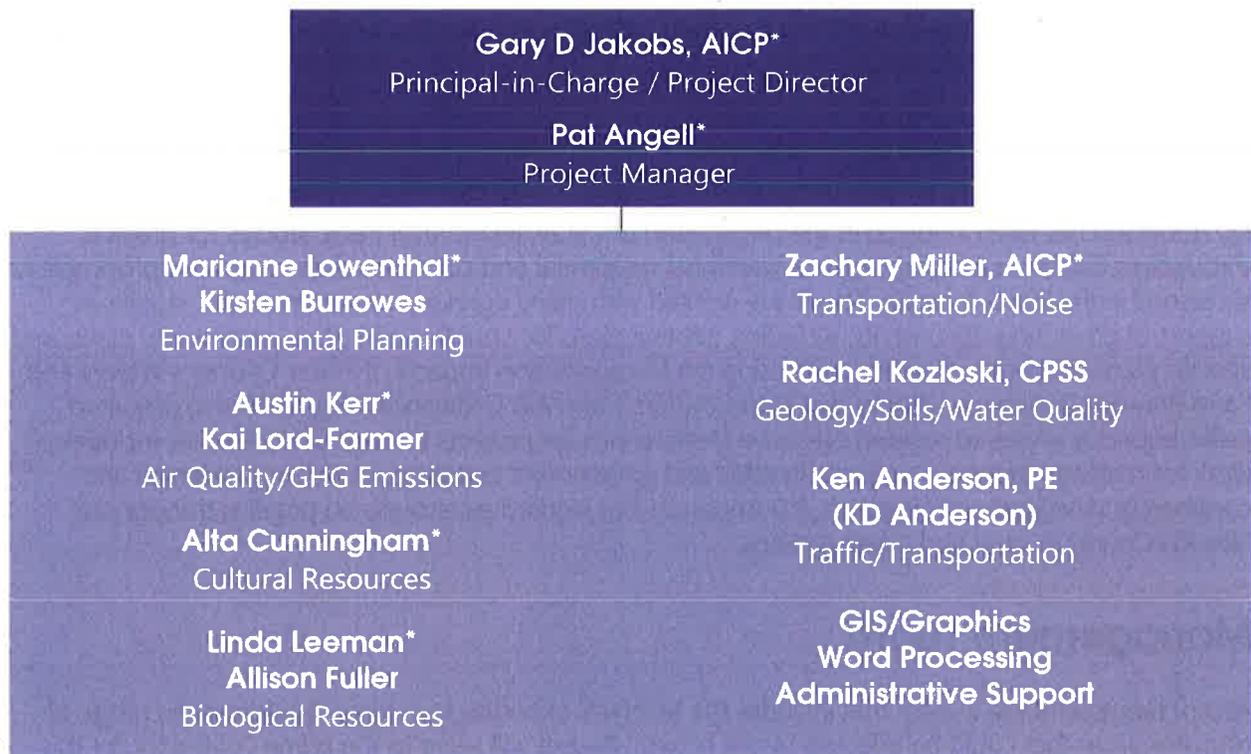
Management Team

Ascent has assembled a team that includes the technical expertise necessary to address the range of resource areas that could be affected by the project. Ascent will serve as the prime contractor for this work and provide the overall technical expertise related to CEQA compliance, natural resources, air quality, GHG emissions and climate change, and strategic regulatory guidance. Our subcontractor, KD Anderson, will provide specialized expertise in traffic/transportation.

The project management team will be led by Gary Jakobs, AICP, who will serve as PIC/project director and Pat Angell, who will serve as project manager. Gary, a principal and owner of Ascent, will provide overall contract management and quality assurance, as well as strategic advice related to CEQA compliance. Gary has over 35 years of CEQA experience and served as PIC of the Calaveras Cannabis Ordinance EIR, the Humboldt Commercial Cannabis Ordinance EIR, and currently the Yolo County Cannabis Land Use Ordinance EIR. He has served as project director/manager for a number of regulatory EIRs, including the State Water Board’s Statewide On-site Wastewater Treatment Regulations EIR. Gary also serves as Curriculum Director for Association of Environmental Professional’s

(AEP) annual Advanced CEQA Workshop. Pat Angell will serve as project manager and will be the primary point-of-contact for Nevada County. With over 25 years of CEQA experience, Pat has managed several EIRs involving new or modified land use regulations, including management of the Humboldt County Cannabis Regulations EIR, Yolo County Cannabis Land Use Ordinance EIR, City of Stockton Cannabis Ordinance CEQA review, and evaluation of potential vineyard development streamlining in Napa County. Gary and/or Pat will attend and facilitate public meetings and presentations on behalf of the Ascent team.

The organizational chart below presents the management team, key personnel, and support staff available to the County. Key staff are indicated with an asterisk (*). Biosketches presenting the qualifications for our proposed key staff members, including education, project experience, professional affiliations, and relevant certifications follow.



KEY STAFF



Gary Jakobs, AICP
Principal-in-Charge

YEARS EXPERIENCE 35

EDUCATION

B.A., Economics and Environmental Studies, UC Santa Barbara

CERTIFICATIONS

American Institute of Certified Planners

AFFILIATIONS

Association of Environmental Professionals

American Planning Association

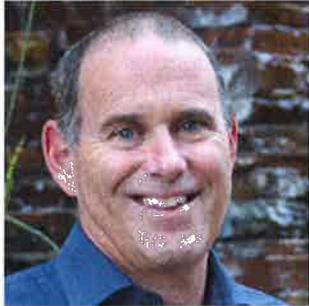
BIOGRAPHY AND PROJECT EXPERIENCE

Gary is a principal/project director with a diverse background in preparing environmental planning studies throughout California and the western United States. He leads Ascent's NEPA and CEQA practice, ensuring all practitioners are current on practice methods, regulations, emerging trends, and applicable case law. Gary specializes in NEPA/CEQA compliance projects, and also focuses on environmental policy and numerous other environmental regulations. He regularly instructs other professionals and public agencies on environmental compliance. With 35 years of professional experience, he has participated in the analyses and management of projects ranging from large-scale planned communities and general plans, urban high-rise and redevelopment to water resources development, wastewater treatment, industrial and energy developments (including renewable energy projects), telecommunications, prisons, and land use regulations.

Representative project experience includes:

- ▶ *Amendments to Humboldt County Code Regulating Commercial Cannabis Activities EIR, Humboldt County* (Project Director). Ascent led the EIR evaluating the repeal and replacement of the County's commercial medical cannabis ordinance. The proposed replacement ordinance establishes land use regulations for the commercial cultivation, processing, manufacturing, distribution, testing, and sale of cannabis within the County. These changes would allow and regulate commercial cannabis facilities for both medical uses and adult recreational uses.
- ▶ *Medical Cannabis Cultivation and Commerce Ordinance EIR, Calaveras County* (Project Director). Directing preparation of the EIR for the County's proposed regulatory ordinance that addresses the cultivation, manufacture, testing, distribution, transportation, and storage of medical marijuana. Key environmental issues included aesthetics, air quality and odors, biological resources, hydrology and water quality, and traffic.
- ▶ *Yolo County Cannabis Land Use Ordinance Program EIR, County of Yolo* (Project Director). Ascent was recently selected to prepare a Program EIR for the Yolo County's proposed Cannabis Land Use Ordinance. The EIR will evaluate five alternatives (project plus four alternatives) at an equal level of detail in order to cover a range of options for the proposed ordinance that Yolo County may consider.
- ▶ *Integrated Pest Management Plan Program EIR and Site-Specific Weed and Pest Management Project Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND), MROSD* (Project Director). EIR addressed Integrated Pest Management and its effects on biological species, water quality, hazards, other issues, throughout the 60,000-acre district.
- ▶ *Assembly Bill 885 Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (Statewide) Program EIR, SWRCB* (Project Director). Evaluated impacts of statewide (by region) effects of uniform regulations pertaining to septic systems.

KEY STAFF



Pat Angell
Project Manager

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE 25

EDUCATION

B.A., Environmental Science with a government emphasis, California State University, Sacramento

Land Use and Environmental Planning Certificate Program, UC Davis

AFFILIATIONS

Association of Environmental Professionals

BIOGRAPHY AND PROJECT EXPERIENCE

Pat has 25 years of experience serving as a project director and manager and technical analyst for a variety of projects. He specializes in environmental and urban land use planning, supporting a full range of projects including water and wastewater facilities, energy facilities, flood control projects, mixed-use urban developments, general plans, and land use regulations. His experience includes establishing environmental review divisions for cities, coordinating and facilitating large-scale private and public projects.

Representative and recent local project experience includes:

- ▶ *Amendments to Humboldt County Code Regulating Commercial Cannabis Activities EIR, Humboldt County* (Project Manager). Managed the EIR evaluating the repeal and replacement of the County's commercial medical cannabis ordinance. The changes would allow and regulate commercial cannabis facilities for both medical uses and adult recreational uses.
- ▶ *Yolo County Cannabis Land Use Ordinance Program EIR, County of Yolo* (Project Manager). Ascent was recently selected to prepare a Program EIR for the Yolo County's proposed Cannabis Land Use Ordinance. The EIR will evaluate five alternatives (project plus four alternatives) at an equal level of detail in order to cover a range of options for the proposed ordinance that Yolo County may consider.
- ▶ *Stockton Cannabis Ordinance CEQA Review, City of Stockton* (Project Manager). Ascent was recently selected to provide recommendations on the proper CEQA review process and streamlining opportunities to the City of Stockton for the proposed development of its Cannabis Ordinance.
- ▶ *Cannabis Regulation Ordinance Development* (Project Director). Provided senior oversight in the development of several Northern California city cannabis dispensary ordinances and associated environmental review prior to joining Ascent.
- ▶ *Napa County General Plan Update/Vineyard Streamlining Program and EIR, Napa County* (EIR Project Manager). This was the first comprehensive general plan update since the 1980s and included land use designation and use modifications. A key component of the proposed General Plan Update was the consideration of a new streamline process for the processing of new vineyards that meet certain environmental protection standards. The General Plan Update EIR projected the extent and likely location of new vineyard development in the County between year 2006 and 2030.
- ▶ *Lake Van Norden Spillway Modification Project CEQA Review, Nevada County* (Project Manager) – The Truckee Donner Land Trust is proposing modifications to the Lake Van Norden Dam Spillway. The existing dam has been determined to be a safety hazard by the California Department of Water Resources, Division of Safety of Dams. Ascent is currently conducting peer view of hydrologic and revegetation technical studies and conducting an initial evaluation of the environmental impacts of the project to determine the appropriate type of environmental document to be prepared.

KEY STAFF



Marianne Lowenthal
Project Planner

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE 7

EDUCATION

B.S., Environmental Toxicology, UC Davis

BIOGRAPHY AND PROJECT EXPERIENCE

Marianne is an environmental analyst who prepares environment settings, impacts, and mitigation measures for CEQA and NEPA documents. In addition to seven years of environmental analysis experience, she has spent six years in research laboratories examining various aspects of biological systems. Marianne has prepared environmental analyses for a variety of projects ranging from straight-forward initial study environmental checklists, to controversial combined EIR/EISs. In addition to section preparation, she has provided project coordination support and has acted as an assistant project manager. Marianne's technical experience includes preparation of initial study environmental checklists and EIR sections such as agricultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, geology and soils, land use, public services, utilities, and visual resources.

Representative project experience includes:

- ▶ *Amendments to Humboldt County Code Regulating Commercial Cannabis Activities EIR, Humboldt County* (Assistant Project Manager). Ascent led the EIR evaluating the repeal and replacement of the County's commercial medical cannabis ordinance. The proposed replacement ordinance establishes land use regulations for the commercial cultivation, processing, manufacturing, distribution, testing, and sale of cannabis within the County. These changes would allow and regulate commercial cannabis facilities for both medical uses and adult recreational uses.
- ▶ *Medical Cannabis Cultivation and Commerce Ordinance EIR, Calaveras County* (Assistant Project Manager). Calaveras County's proposed regulatory ordinance addresses the cultivation, manufacture, testing, distribution, transportation, and storage of medical marijuana. Marianne is serving as the assistant project manager and prepared the hydrology and water quality, utilities, and service systems analysis of the EIR.
- ▶ *Yolo County Cannabis Land Use Ordinance Program EIR, County of Yolo* (Assistant Project Manager). Ascent was recently selected to prepare a Program EIR for the Yolo County's proposed Cannabis Land Use Ordinance. The EIR will evaluate five alternatives (project plus four alternatives) at an equal level of detail in order to cover a range of options for the proposed ordinance that Yolo County may consider.
- ▶ *ARB GHG Regulatory Program* (Project Manager/Environmental Planner). Marianne supported preparation of the Rice Cultivation Protocol Cap-and-Trade Environmental Analysis (EA), Low-Carbon Fuel Standard/ Alternative Diesel Fuel Regulations EA, AB 32 Scoping Plan Update E, GHG Emissions Standards for Crude Oil and Natural Gas Operations Regulations EA, Second Update to the AB 32 Scoping Plan EA, Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction Strategy EA, State Implementation Plan EA, and U.S. Forest Protocol Update Cap-and-Trade EA.

KEY STAFF

BIOGRAPHY AND PROJECT EXPERIENCE



J. Austin Kerr
**Senior Air Quality, Noise, and
 Climate Change Task Lead**

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE 16

EDUCATION

B.A., Economics and Sociology,
 Oberlin College

AFFILIATIONS

Association of Environmental Professionals
 Air and Waste Management Association
 Clean Air Society of Australia and New
 Zealand

Austin is a senior scientist and air quality and noise specialist with 16 years of experience assessing impacts of proposed development projects as they relate to air quality and noise. In addition to his proficient use of multiple emission estimation models (e.g., CalEEMod, the emission factors model [EMFAC2014], the Off-Road Emissions Inventory Program [OFFROAD] and protocols (e.g., the Local Government Protocols) for estimating mass emissions levels, Austin has developed sophisticated sets of spreadsheet calculations. Austin has evaluated a range of noise impact issues, including the potential for residents to experience sleep disturbance, conversation disruption, or noticeable ground vibration levels from noise and vibration generated by nearby freeways/roadways, light-rail lines, airports, and construction activity. Austin has applied multiple models to analyze health risk, including the Hot Spots Analysis Reporting Program (HARP), American Meteorological Society/Environmental Protection Agency Regulatory Model Improvement Committee modeling system (AERMOD), and the Industrial Source Complex (ISC) model.

Representative project experience includes:

- ▶ *Medical Cannabis Cultivation and Commerce Ordinance EIR, Calaveras County, Calaveras County* (Sr Air Quality, Climate Change, & Noise Analyst). Austin estimated the levels of criteria air pollutants and GHG emissions associated with the construction and operation of new outdoor and indoor grow sites. Austin developed mitigation to address GHGs associated with the construction and operation of new grow sites and developed a suite of options to reduce GHG emissions. Austin also addressed the potential for cannabis grow sites to expose off-site receptors to objectionable odors. For the noise analysis Austin examined noise generated during the construction and operation of new grow sites. This included an analysis of the increase in traffic noise levels along roads in the county during harvest season, when the increase in vehicle trips associated with grow operations would be highest.
- ▶ *Amendments to Humboldt County Code Regulating Commercial Cannabis Activities EIR, Humboldt County* (Sr. Air Quality, Climate Change, & Noise Analyst). Ascent led the EIR evaluating the repeal and replacement of the County's commercial medical cannabis ordinance. The proposed replacement ordinance establishes land use regulations for the commercial cultivation, processing, manufacturing, distribution, testing, and sale of cannabis within the County. These changes would allow and regulate commercial cannabis facilities for both medical uses and adult recreational uses.

KEY STAFF



Linda Leeman, CWB
Natural Resources Task
Lead

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE 18

EDUCATION

M.S., Natural Resources, Humboldt State University

B.S., Wildlife and Fisheries Biology, UC Davis

CERTIFICATIONS

Certified Wildlife Biologist by the Wildlife Society since February 2005

Professional Development Certificate by the Wildlife Society

AFFILIATIONS

The Wildlife Society Executive Board Member, 2006-2014

Association of Environmental Professionals
 Central Valley Bird Club

BIOGRAPHY AND PROJECT EXPERIENCE

Linda is a wildlife biologist and project manager with over 18 years of professional experience. She specializes in habitat assessments, wildlife impact analyses, restoration and mitigation planning, and endangered species permitting. Linda has extensive experience with CEQA, NEPA, and federal and California ESA compliance for projects throughout northern and central California. She has worked on many complex, multidisciplinary projects requiring a high degree of organization and coordination. She is adept at managing teams of technical specialists and providing senior review, quality assurances, and budgetary oversight. Linda coordinates frequently with local, state, and federal regulatory and resource management agencies, providing reliable, unbiased information to help inform regulatory decisions that allow her clients to achieve their objectives.

Representative project experience includes:

- ▶ *Medical Cannabis Cultivation and Commerce Ordinance EIR, Calaveras County, Calaveras County* (Senior Biologist). Calaveras County's proposed regulatory ordinance addresses the cultivation, manufacture, testing, distribution, transportation, and storage of medical marijuana. Linda Leeman served as the senior reviewer of the biological resources analysis for the EIR.
- ▶ *Amendments to Humboldt County Code Regulating Commercial Cannabis Activities EIR, Humboldt County* (Sr Biologist). Ascent led the EIR evaluating the repeal and replacement of the County's commercial medical cannabis ordinance. The proposed replacement ordinance establishes land use regulations for the commercial cultivation, processing, manufacturing, distribution, testing, and sale of cannabis within the County. These changes would allow and regulate commercial cannabis facilities for both medical uses and adult recreational uses. Linda Leeman served as the senior reviewer of the biological resources analysis for the EIR.
- ▶ *Yolo County HCP/NCCP EIS/EIR* (Senior Biologist). Linda is providing senior guidance and review for biological resources of this comprehensive, county-wide plan designed to provide long-term conservation and management of natural communities, sensitive species, and the habitats upon which those species depend, while accommodating various public and private activities in the County.
- ▶ *Integrated Pest Management Plan Program EIR and Site-Specific Weed and Pest Management Project IS/MND, MROSD* (Senior Biologist). Ascent prepared an EIR to address a broad range of invasive plant and pest management treatments in open space lands of the MROSD. Linda served as the senior reviewer of the biological resources analysis for the EIR and IS/MND.

KEY STAFF



Alta Cunningham
**Cultural Resources Task
 Lead**

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE 10

EDUCATION

B.S., History, UC Davis

M.A., Historic Preservation, Savannah
 College of Art and Design

AFFILIATIONS

California Preservation Foundation

BIOGRAPHY AND PROJECT EXPERIENCE

Alta has eight years of experience in the preparation of CEQA compliance documents, including EIRs, MNDs, and MMRPs. She is also experienced with cultural resources management and Section 106 compliance. She has successfully coordinated technical staff on projects with compressed schedules, tight budgets and precise document styles to ensure that the needs of the client are met. Alta's technical experience includes preparation of initial study environmental checklists and EIR sections such as agricultural resources, cultural resources, land use, public services and recreation, utilities, and visual resources.

Representative project experience includes:

- ▶ *Medical Cannabis Cultivation and Commerce Ordinance EIR, Calaveras County, Calaveras County* (Cultural Resources). Calaveras County's proposed regulatory ordinance addresses the cultivation, manufacture, testing, distribution, transportation, and storage of medical marijuana. Alta prepared the cultural resources section of the EIR.
- ▶ *Amendments to Humboldt County Code Regulating Commercial Cannabis Activities EIR, Humboldt County* (Cultural Resources). Ascent is leading the EIR evaluating the repeal and replacement of the County's commercial medical cannabis ordinance. The proposed replacement ordinance establishes land use regulations for the commercial cultivation, processing, manufacturing, distribution, testing, and sale of cannabis within the County. These changes would allow and regulate commercial cannabis facilities for both medical uses and adult recreational uses. Alta prepared the cultural resources section of the EIR and coordinated with the County on the documentation of its AB 52 consultation process.
- ▶ *Yolo County HCP/NCCP EIS/EIR* (Environmental Planner). A county-wide plan designed to provide long-term conservation and management of natural communities, sensitive species, and the habitats upon which those species depend, while accommodating various public and private activities in the County. Alta prepared the cultural resources and public services section of the EIS/EIR.
- ▶ *Integrated Pest Management Plan Program EIR and Site-Specific Weed and Pest Management Project IS/MND, MROSD* (Technical Writer). Ascent prepared an EIR to address a broad range of invasive plant and pest management treatments in open space lands of the MROSD. Alta prepared the cultural resources section of the EIR.

KEY STAFF



Zachary Miller, AICP
Transportation and Noise
Task Lead

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE 6

EDUCATION

M.S., City and Regional Planning,
 Environmental Planning Emphasis,
 California Polytechnic State University, San
 Luis Obispo

M.S., Engineering, Transportation
 Planning, California Polytechnic State
 University, San Luis Obispo

B.A., Urban Studies and Planning,
 UC San Diego

CERTIFICATIONS

American Institute of Certified Planners

BIOGRAPHY AND PROJECT EXPERIENCE

Zachary is an environmental and sustainability planner with six years of experience in transportation planning, long-range planning and environmental impact analysis. Zachary has worked on a variety of projects throughout the state ranging from multi-billion-dollar public infrastructure and transit projects to small-scale traffic studies. He has prepared a variety of CEQA and NEPA environmental documents, including EIRs, initial studies, and technical studies. Prior to joining Ascent, Zachary worked as an associate transportation planning consultant and received dual master's in city and regional planning and civil engineering where his focus was on environmental and transportation planning.

Representative project experience includes:

- ▶ *Medical Cannabis Cultivation and Commerce Ordinance EIR, Calaveras County, Calaveras County* (Transportation Planner). Calaveras County's proposed regulatory ordinance addresses the cultivation, manufacture, testing, distribution, transportation, and storage of medical marijuana. Zach prepared the transportation and circulation analysis, as well as the noise analysis for the EIR.
- ▶ *Amendments to Humboldt County Code Regulating Commercial Cannabis Activities EIR, Humboldt County* (Transportation Planner). Ascent is leading the EIR evaluating the repeal and replacement of the County's commercial medical cannabis ordinance. The proposed replacement ordinance establishes land use regulations for the commercial cultivation, processing, manufacturing, distribution, testing, and sale of cannabis within the County. These changes would allow and regulate commercial cannabis facilities for both medical uses and adult recreational uses.
- ▶ *Yolo County HCP/NCCP EIS/EIR* (Environmental Planner). A county-wide plan designed to provide long-term conservation and management of natural communities, sensitive species, and the habitats upon which those species depend, while accommodating various public and private activities in the County. Zach prepared the traffic and transportation section of the EIS/EIR.
- ▶ *US 50/South Shore Community Revitalization Project EIR/EIS/EIS, Tahoe Transportation District* (Environmental Planner). Ascent is currently working with the Tahoe Transportation District (TTD), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the TRPA to prepare a joint EIR/EIS/EIS for the proposed US 50/South Shore Community Revitalization Project. The primary goals of the proposed project are to relieve traffic congestion by diverting through traffic around the casino corridor while encouraging pedestrian traffic within.
- ▶ *Placer County Tahoe Basin Area Plan EIR/EIS/EIS, Placer County* (Environmental Planner). Ascent is completing the environmental review and guiding Placer County through the TRPA environmental review process for an Area Plan implemented under the 2012 TRPA Regional Plan. The project area extends from the northern edge of the town of Tahoma to the Nevada state line.

KEY STAFF



Ken Anderson, PE
Transportation Engineer

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE 40

EDUCATION

B.S., Transportation Engineering, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

REGISTRATIONS

Civil Engineer (CA, C32774)
Traffic Engineer (CA, TR1194)

BIOGRAPHY AND PROJECT EXPERIENCE

Ken Anderson is the firm's president and principal engineer. He has more than 40 years consulting experience and is a registered Civil / Traffic Engineer. Since establishing the firm in 1990, Ken has focused on analysis of projects in the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada Foothills. He has been responsible for regional transportation planning projects and for preparation of traffic studies for CEQA/NEPA review. He recently prepared the traffic analysis for Placer County's Winery and Farm Brewery Ordinance Update and is on the team preparing the Yolo County Cannabis Land Use Ordinance Program EIR. He has experience with projects in Nevada County, including work for the Dark Horse Golf Course Expansion, North Star House, and Deer Creek II EIR.

Representative project experience includes:

- ▶ *Yolo County Cannabis Land Use Ordinance Program EIR, County of Yolo* – Ken is currently preparing the traffic analysis in support of Yolo County's Cannabis Land Use Ordinance Program EIR.
- ▶ *Winery and Farm Brewery Ordinance Update EIR, Placer County* - This project involves forecasting and addressing the impacts of changes to Placer County's Winery and Farm Brewery Ordinance that are intended to provide wineries and farm breweries with greater flexibility to schedule agricultural promotional events. The analysis focused on Placer County's western winery region and included identification of the typical travel characteristics of events at existing wineries. The relative effects of additional events at existing and potential future wineries and farm breweries were address on rural collector and arterial streets and at key intersections under weekday and Saturday conditions. The cumulative impacts of additional events were assessed in conjunction with other reasonable foreseeable projects, including the pending Hidden Falls Regional Park Expansion.
- ▶ *San Juan Ridge Mine EIR Traffic Study, Nevada County* – KD Anderson prepared a comprehensive traffic impact analysis addressing project specific and cumulative impacts of operating a mine on Tyler Foot Road east of SR 49 in the Nevada City area of Nevada County. Because on-site waste recovery was anticipated, our work focused on the impacts of employee commute traffic to state highways and county roads.
- ▶ *Hidden Falls Expansion EIR, Placer County* - KD Anderson is currently working with Placer County to prepare the Draft EIR for the second expansion to Hidden Falls Regional Park. The new park elements propose additional parking and new access to the park to support an expanded trails network. Key issues included the feasibility of public access via existing local roads and regional impacts to this rural area.

Our Relevant Experience

We have distinguished ourselves by offering high quality services that provide clients value, creativity, legal defensibility, and positive planning outcomes. We apply our skills in coordination with our clients to develop strategic approaches, weigh advantages and disadvantages, and provide recommendations that effectively address the requirements of applicable laws and regulations and meet the needs of the project and the client. Projects that demonstrate our team’s proven experience on programmatic environmental documents are summarized in the following matrix. Select representative projects, indicated by shaded rows, are discussed in more detail on the following pages.

PROJECT / CLIENT	PROGRAMMATIC DOCUMENT	CANNABIS EXPERIENCE	REGIONAL POLICY / REGULATIONS
Medical Cannabis Cultivation and Commerce Ordinance EIR County of Calaveras	✓	✓	✓
Amendments to Humboldt County Code Regulating Commercial Cannabis Activities EIR County of Humboldt	✓	✓	✓
San Joaquin County Cannabis Policy Project County of San Joaquin		✓	✓
Yolo County Cannabis Land Use Ordinance Program EIR County of Yolo	✓	✓	✓
Stockton Cannabis Ordinance CEQA Review City of Stockton		✓	✓
Integrated Pest Management Plan Program EIR and Site-Specific Weed and Pest Management Project IS/MND, MROSD	✓		✓
Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District Community Wildlife Protection Plan and IS/MND, Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District	✓		✓
City of South San Francisco Zoning Amendment Prohibiting Large Format Retail EIR, City of South San Francisco	✓		✓
City of Sacramento General Plan Update and Master EIR City of Sacramento	✓		✓
Napa County General Plan Update / Vineyard Streamlining Program EIR* County of Napa	✓		✓
California Air Resources Board GHG Regulatory Program California Air Resources Board	✓		✓
Rice Cultivation Protocol Cap-and-Trade Regulation EA California Air Resources Board	✓		✓
AB 885 Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (Statewide) Program EIR* State Water Resources Control Board	✓		✓
California Statewide Vegetation Treatment Program EIR Board of Forestry and Fire Protection	✓		✓
Road and Trail Change-in-Use Evaluation Process Program EIR California State Parks	✓		✓
Second Revised Draft EIR for the Adoption of Statewide Regulations Allowing the Use of PEX Tubing, California Building Standards Commission	✓		✓

* Ascent key staff led or played a substantial role in the environmental compliance during their tenure at a prior firm.

Cannabis Project Experience

Amendments to Humboldt County Code Regulating Commercial Cannabis Activities EIR County of Humboldt

This project involves the repeal of the County's existing Commercial Medical Marijuana Land Use Ordinance (Section 313-55.4 and 314-55.4 of Chapter 3 of Division 1 of Title III of the County Code) as well as repeal of the Medical Cannabis Testing and Research Laboratories provisions and on-site consumption prohibition found in Sections 313-55.3.15, 314-55.3.15, 313-55.3.11.7 and 314-55.3.11.7 of Division 1 of Title III of the County Code, respectively. These regulations would be replaced by the provisions of the proposed ordinance, which would establish land use regulations for the commercial cultivation, processing, manufacturing, distribution, testing, and sale of cannabis within the County. These changes would allow and regulate commercial cannabis facilities for both medical uses and adult recreational uses. Ascent prepared the EIR for the proposed ordinance. Key environmental issues addressed in the EIR include: disclosure of existing illegal cannabis operations, nighttime lighting, air quality impacts associated with roadway dust and odors, biological resources, hydrology and water quality, water diversions, noise from cultivation and harvesting operations, and groundwater resources. The ordinance was adopted in April 2018.

LOCATION:
Humboldt County

YEARS OF SERVICE:
2017 - 2018

PROJECT BUDGET:
\$218,939

Medical Cannabis Cultivation and Commerce Ordinance EIR County of Calaveras

Calaveras County began by proposing to adopt a new regulatory ordinance that addresses the cultivation, manufacture, testing, distribution, transportation, and storage of medical marijuana within the County. These regulations include permitting requirements to manage conditions that create public nuisances by enacting restrictions on the location, type, and size of marijuana cultivation sites; the location, type, and size of commercial activities involving medical marijuana; and the use of screening, security, and other protective measures to more effectively control the adverse environmental impacts associated with medical marijuana cultivation and commercial activities. Due to changes in the political direction of the Board of Supervisors, the EIR also addresses a ban on cultivation as an alternative to the project. The EIR provided additional recommendations for performance standards in the ordinance to address environmental impacts. Key environmental issues included aesthetics, air quality and odors, biological resources, hydrology and water quality, and traffic. The County Board of Supervisors decided to adopt a ban on cannabis in 2018.

LOCATION:
Calaveras County

YEARS OF SERVICE:
2016 - 2018

PROJECT BUDGET:
\$221,947

Yolo County Cannabis Land Use Ordinance Program EIR County of Yolo

Yolo County's proposed Cannabis Land Use Ordinance (proposed ordinance) would replace portions of an existing licensing ordinance. The proposed ordinance would require all existing and new cannabis cultivation operation license applicants to go through a Use Permit process (discretionary review). The proposed ordinance would regulate indoor, outdoor, and mixed-light cultivation, trimming and associated processing activities, and nurseries, and may include distribution, testing, and manufacturing, and retail/dispensary uses. It is anticipated that the proposed ordinance and alternatives will address lighting, buffers, canopy sizes for outdoor cultivation operations, fencing, co- and re-location of operations, signage, water supply, efficient energy use, and consideration of density of cannabis activities within specific geographic locations among other regulatory items. In concert with the proposed ordinance, the County will also identify amendments to the General Plan to ensure consistency with the new regulations.

Ascent was recently selected to prepare a program-level EIR for the proposed ordinance, with the intent that subsequent individual license applications will be able to rely on it for CEQA clearance /compliance. The EIR will evaluate five alternatives (project plus four alternatives) at an equal level of detail in order to cover a range of options for the proposed ordinance that County may consider.

LOCATION:

Yolo County

YEARS OF SERVICE:

2018 - Ongoing

PROJECT BUDGET:

\$375,000

Stockton Cannabis Ordinance CEQA Review City of Stockton

Ascent and Freedman & Koski are both members of a team led by Mintier Harnish are working with the City of Stockton to develop cannabis ordinance that would address personal and commercial cannabis cultivation.

LOCATION:

City of Stockton

YEARS OF SERVICE:

2018 - Ongoing

PROJECT BUDGET:

\$8,000

San Joaquin County Cannabis Policy Project County of San Joaquin

Ascent and Freedman & Koski are both members of a team led by Mintier Harnish that was recently selected by the County of San Joaquin to develop and fully implement a sustainable regulatory structure for personal cultivation and commercial cannabis businesses pursuant to the Board of Supervisors' direction and California's Medicinal and Adult-Use Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act.

LOCATION:

San Joaquin County

YEARS OF SERVICE:

2018 - Ongoing

PROJECT BUDGET:

\$8,000

Other Relevant Experience

Napa County General Plan Update/Vineyard Streamlining Program and EIR County of Napa

Ascent staff functioned as key technical staff and project management of the EIR for Napa County General Plan Update. This was the first comprehensive general plan update since the 1980s and included land use designation and use modifications. A key component of the proposed General Plan Update was the consideration of a new streamline process for the processing of new vineyards that meet certain environmental protection standards. The General Plan Update EIR projected the extent and likely location of new vineyard development in the County between year 2006 and 2030.

LOCATION:

Napa County, CA

YEARS OF SERVICE:

2006 - 2008

RELEVANCE:

Landscape environmental impact analysis of land use changes

Program/Policy EIR

CEQA Expertise

Integrated Pest Management Plan Program EIR and Site-Specific Weed and Pest Management Project IS/MND

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Ascent prepared a program-level EIR to address a broad range of invasive plant and pest management treatments in open space lands of MROSD. A primary goal of the integrated pest management plan was to conduct a comprehensive assessment of environmental impacts of the vegetation management and other pest control actions on tens of thousands of acres of District lands to facilitate CEQA streamlining and rapid approval of individual actions in the future. Extensive community involvement was implemented along with a coordination strategy with regulatory and other affected agencies. Key issues included climate change adaptation and resiliency, wildlife habitat effects, sensitive species, fire hazard management, watershed effects, and water quality.

Ascent also prepared an IS/MND for a site-specific weed and pest management project on 42 distinct treatment sites within open space preserves managed by MROSD. The project's objective was to control noxious and invasive weed and pest species in high priority natural areas in order to halt or minimize the spread of those species through an Integrated Pest Management approach.

LOCATION:

Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and San Mateo County

YEARS OF SERVICE:

2014-2015

RELEVANCE:

Program Level EIR

Regulation

Hazardous Materials Assessment

Community Outreach

California Statewide Vegetation Treatment Program EIR Board of Forestry and Fire Protection

The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection's Vegetation Treatment Program (VTP) is intended to lower the risk of catastrophic wildfires on nonfederal lands by reducing hazardous fuels. Such fires can result in substantial loss of life and property as well as multi-million dollar suppression costs. Treatment actions included fire breaks, fuel reduction through mechanical removal and controlled burns, and habitat restoration. Other VTP goals include control of unwanted vegetation, including invasive species, improvement of rangeland for livestock grazing, improvement of fish and wildlife habitat, enhancement and protection of riparian areas and wetlands, and improvement of water quality in priority watersheds. Ascent supported Board staff with preparation of a revised draft program EIR by completing technical analysis for air quality, GHG, and hazardous materials impacts, as well as overall CEQA compliance strategies.

LOCATION:

Statewide

YEARS OF SERVICE:

2014-2015

RELEVANCE:

Air Quality Analysis

GHG Reduction Strategies

Hazardous Materials Assessment

Climate Change Issues

Air Resources Board GHG Regulatory Program California Air Resources Board

CARB embarked on a series of regulatory actions to implement AB 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act, and air quality management authorities. CEQA environmental documents were prepared under the ARB certified regulatory program for CEQA compliance in support of rulemaking for air quality and GHG regulations. Ascent assisted ARB staff with environmental documents to support the following programs:

- ▶ AB 32 Scoping Plan FED
- ▶ AB 32 Cap-and-Trade and Offsets Quantification Methods Regulation FED Document
- ▶ AB 32 Scoping Plan Update EA
- ▶ 33-Percent Renewable Electricity Standard Regulation Functionally Equivalent Document (FED)
- ▶ Advanced Clean Cars Program Regulations FED
- ▶ Low-Carbon Fuel Standard/Alternative Diesel Fuel Regulation EA
- ▶ Mine Methane Capture Cap-and-Trade Regulation EA
- ▶ Rice Cultivation Protocol Cap-and-Trade Regulation EA
- ▶ Proposed GHG Emission Controls from Crude Oil & Natural Gas Operations Regulation EA
- ▶ Short-Lived Climate Pollutants Strategy
- ▶ U.S. Forest Service Protocol Update Cap-and-Trade EA
- ▶ Linkage Cap-and-Trade EA

LOCATION:

Statewide, CA

YEARS OF SERVICE:

2010-Ongoing

RELEVANCE:

Public Agency CEQA Work
Program/Policy EIR
CEQA Expertise

Rice Cultivation Protocol Cap-and-Trade Regulation EA California Air Resources Control Board

CARB proposed a new Compliance Offset Protocol for Rice Cultivation Projects (Rice Cultivation Protocol), which is an amendment to the Cap-and-Trade Regulation. The voluntary Rice Cultivation Protocol would allow for the issuance of carbon offset credits for emission reductions achieved from alternative rice cultivation practices that adjust the timing and duration of rice field flooding, which would reduce anaerobic conditions and thus reduce methane emissions to the atmosphere. Ascent prepared an EA pursuant to CARB's Certified Regulatory Program for compliance with CEQA that evaluates reasonably foreseeable environmental effects associated with anticipated compliance response activities that could occur under the Rice Cultivation Protocol. Key issues included potential effects on waterfowl species and habitat as a result of potential changes in field flooding patterns.

LOCATION:

Statewide, CA

YEARS OF SERVICE:

2014

RELEVANCE:

Regulation on
agricultural cultivation

AB 885 Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (Statewide) Program EIR State Water Resources Control Board

Legislation (AB 885) passed in 2000 to address numerous reports throughout the state of water contamination from septic systems. AB 885 required development of a unified set of state regulations for OWTS. In addition to helping State Water Board, Ascent key staff, while with a prior firm, identified the effectiveness of different potential regulations and focused on the various state bioregions and primary watersheds. The EIR addressed water quality, biological resources, and land use. An economic impact analysis was also completed.

LOCATION:
Statewide

YEARS OF SERVICE:
2005-2009

RELEVANCE:
Program Level EIR
Regulation

Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District Community Wildfire Protection Plan and EIR Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District

Ascent developed a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) for the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District (District), the 7th largest fire agency in California with a service area of approximately 417 square miles in Sacramento County. The CWPP compiles and maps risk factors for wildland fire, implements risk reduction and response planning actions, including a monitoring program, and shares data with interested stakeholders throughout the emergency management area and response cycle. The CWPP identifies wildfire risk reduction measures and incorporates mitigation actions with a focus on the wildland urban interface. With data from Cal Adapt and in collaboration with a fire ecologist, Ascent's assessment of the risk factors examined the potential increase in the frequency and intensity of wildfire associated with climate change-related effects such as hotter dryer conditions, and a longer fire season.

Ascent also prepared the IS/MND for the CWPP that evaluates the potential environmental impacts associated with several fuel treatment activities. Key issues included balancing fire risk reduction actions with habitat quality protection in sensitive locations, such as the American River Parkway.

LOCATION:
Sacramento County, CA

YEARS OF SERVICE:
2013-2014

RELEVANCE:
Biological Resources
Air Quality
Community Outreach

Record of Legal Defensibility

Ascent principals are experts in CEQA and NEPA compliance and have led and/or prepared over 1,500 environmental documents. Many have been for projects that are highly scrutinized by the public, regulatory agencies, and potential project opponents. Our clients have sought our help on their most controversial or sensitive projects, or projects requiring creative compliance approaches. While our documents have helped avert many litigation threats, opponents have filed environmental lawsuits just because of their project objections, regardless of the quality of the environmental documents. Once litigated, the defensibility record of environmental documents led by Ascent principals is outstanding. The table below summarizes the outcome of litigation. Those with an asterisk (*) represent projects led by the proposed principal, Gary Jakobs, AICP.

DEFENSIBILITY RECORD – CEQA AND NEPA DOCUMENTS LED AND/OR PREPARED BY ASCENT PRINCIPALS

Lawsuits Settled and Withdrawn with Document Adequacy Sustained

Tahoe Vista Residential Project EIR	County of Placer / Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
California State Prison Fresno County – Coalinga EIR*	California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR)
Foothill Ranch Planned Community EIR*	County of Orange
Trabuco Hills High School Stadium EIR	Saddleback Valley Unified School District
Disneyland Resort EIR	City of Anaheim
Foothill Transportation Corridor EIR	Transportation Corridor Agencies of Orange County
Tasman Rail Transit Corridor Supplemental EIR	Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
Substance Abuse and Treatment Facility at Corcoran EIR*	CDCR
Mossdale Landing EIR*	City of Lathrop
River Islands at Lathrop EIR*	City of Lathrop
California Health Care Facility (Stockton) EIR*	CDCR
Buena Vista Biomass Power Plant EIR*	County of Amador

Projects Concluded at Superior Court – Adequacy Upheld

Nishi Gateway Project EIR*	City of Davis
Greenbriar Development Project EIR*	City of Sacramento
Santa Clara Gardens Project / Bay Area Research and Extension Center (BAREC) Re-use EIR	City of Santa Clara / California Department of General Services
Condemned Inmate Complex, San Quentin State Prison EIR*	CDCR
El Dorado County General Plan 2004 EIR*	County of El Dorado
Las Flores Planned Community EIR	County of Orange
Disney Philharmonic Hall EIR*	County of Los Angeles
KOA Kampround – Shingle Springs EIR*	County of El Dorado
Salinas Valley Water Project EIR/EIS*	Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Fox Canyon Groundwater Recharge / Seawater Intrusion Project MND	United Water Conservation District
Atwater Wastewater Treatment Improvement Project EIR*	City of Atwater

Projects Concluded on Appeal – Adequacy Upheld

Tahoe Regional Plan Update EIS (Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals)	Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
California Prison Reception Center – Los Angeles County EIR*	CDCR
San Marcos Landfill Expansion EIR	County of San Diego
California State Prison at Delano EIR*	California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
Camp Wawona Master Plan EIR	County of Mariposa

Projects Concluded at California Supreme Court – Adequacy Upheld

Walmart Distribution Center EIR*	City of Merced
Day Creek Sand and Gravel Mining and Reclamation EIR*	San Bernardino County

EIR Overturned in Appellate Court

Pierce's Disease Control Program EIR	California Department of Food and Agriculture
Upper Truckee River Restoration and Golf Course Reconfiguration EIR/EIS/EIS, Lake Valley SRA and Washoe Meadows SP	California State Parks

E – REFERENCES

Clients for whom we have worked in the past provide the best testimony to the dedication we make to their projects. We encourage and authorize you to contact the following three references for an appraisal of the services they received from Ascent staff.

1

**Peter Maurer, Planning Director (formerly El Dorado County)
County of Calaveras County**

p: 209.754.6394 | e: pmaurer@co.calaveras.ca.us
a: 891 Mountain Ranch Road, San Andreas, California 95249

PROJECTS:

- ▶ Medical Cannabis Cultivation and Commerce Ordinance EIR, Calaveras County
- ▶ 2003 El Dorado County General Plan EIR, El Dorado County

2

**Michael Richardson, Supervising Planner
County of Humboldt**

p: 707.268.3723 | e: mrichardson@co.humboldt.ca.gov
a: 3015 H Street, Eureka, California 95501

PROJECT:

- ▶ Amendments to Humboldt County Code Regulating Commercial Cannabis Activities EIR

3

**Meredith Manning, Senior Planner
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District**

p: 650.625.6535 | e: mmanning@openspace.org
a: 330 Distel Circle, Los Altos, California 94022

PROJECTS:

- ▶ Integrated Pest Management Plan Program EIR
- ▶ Site-Specific Weed and Pest Management Project IS/MND

