

# RESOLUTION NO. 20-043

## OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF NEVADA

### RESOLUTION ADOPTING A NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR THE UPDATE TO THE NEVADA COUNTY GENERAL PLAN CHAPTER 10, SAFETY ELEMENT (PLANNING FILE NOS. GPT19-0002, EIS19-0005)

WHEREAS, the County of Nevada, acting by and through its Board of Supervisors, did on the fourteenth day of November 1995, adopt a General Plan for the County of Nevada, as evidenced by Resolution No. 95-530, pursuant to the provisions of Title 7, Chapter 3, Article 6 of the Government Code of the State of California; and

WHEREAS, the County of Nevada has established a General Plan Amendment procedure; and

WHEREAS, on December 6, 2019 the Planning Department staff prepared an Initial Study and Negative Declaration ("IS/ND") for the Project, a copy of which is attached to this Resolution as Exhibit A; and

WHEREAS, the Notice of Availability for Public Review and Notice of Intent to Adopt a Proposed Negative Declaration for the IS/ND was submitted directly to affected local, regional, state, and federal agencies and the IS/ND was released for a 30-day public review period, commencing on December 6, 2019, and ending on January 6, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the IS/ND analyzes all of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Project and found that no significant impacts would result from the approval of the Project; and

WHEREAS, on January 9, 2020, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed Project in which the Commission reviewed the proposed IS/ND together with all comments received during the public review period, and recommended adoption of this same Negative Declaration before making a recommendation to the Board on the proposed Project; and

WHEREAS, on February 11, 2020, the Board of Supervisors held a public hearing on the proposed Project in which the Board reviewed the proposed IS/ND together with all comments received during the public review period.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Nevada County Board of Supervisors has reviewed and considered the recommendation of the Planning Commission and has independently reviewed the Initial Study and proposed Negative Declaration (Planning File No. EIS19-0005), together with all comments received during the public review period, and hereby finds and determines as follows:

1. The above recitals are true and correct.
2. On the basis of the whole record before the Board of Supervisors, there is no substantial evidence that the proposed Project will have a significant effect on the environment.

3. The IS/ND reflects the Board's independent judgment and analysis.
4. The documents and materials constituting the record of the proceedings on which this decision is based are located and in the custody of the Nevada County Planning Department at 950 Maidu Avenue, Nevada City, California.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors hereby adopts the Negative Declaration (Planning File No. EIS19-0005) for the *Safety Element Update* Project, which furthers the Goals, Objectives, and Policies of the Nevada County General Plan.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Nevada at a regular meeting of said Board, held on the 11th day of February, 2020, by the following vote of said Board:

Ayes: Supervisors Heidi Hall, Edward Scofield, Dan Miller, Susan K. Hoek and Richard Anderson.

Noes: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

ATTEST:

JULIE PATTERSON HUNTER  
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By: \_\_\_\_\_



Heidi Hall, Chair

## Exhibit A

### NEVADA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA INITIAL STUDY

**To:** All Internal and External Governmental and Non-Governmental Agencies, Special Interest Groups and Cities/Counties on the County Planning Department Distribution list; County Counsel\*; State Clearinghouse\*

*\*receives full report; all others receive NOA only with the full report available online*

**Date:** December 6, 2019

**Prepared by:** Sadie Caldas, Associate Planner  
Nevada County Planning Department  
950 Maidu Avenue, Suite 170  
Nevada City, CA 95959  
(530) 265-1345  
Email: [sadie.caldas@co.nevada.ca.us](mailto:sadie.caldas@co.nevada.ca.us)

**File Number(s):** PLN19-0064; GPT19-0002; EIS19-0005

**Assessor's Parcel Numbers:** N/A

**Applicant/Representative:** County of Nevada  
950 Maidu Avenue  
Nevada City, California 95959

**Zoning District:** N/A

**General Plan Designation:** N/A

**Project Location:** Unincorporated Area of Nevada County

**Project Description:** The project is an update to the Nevada County Safety Element, Chapter 10, which was previously adopted by Nevada County in 2014. The Safety Element update is required by Government Code Section 65302(g) upon the County's recent adoption of the Housing Element (2019) and the update to the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (2017). The Safety Element addresses potential and existing hazards in the County, which are outlined in the following categories: Emergency Preparedness, Geological Hazards/Seismic Activity, Flood Hazards, Airport and Military Airspace Hazards, Hazardous Material and Mining Hazards, Public Safety Services and Facilities, Fire Hazards and Protection, and Severe Weather Hazards. Senate Bill 379 (approved in 2015) requires that the risks of climate change are identified in the Safety Element update, and Senate Bill 1000 (approved in 2016) requires that environmental justice policies and goals are integrated into elements of the General Plan. To comply with these requirements, two additional categories for Climate Change Resiliency and Mitigation, and Environmental Justice have been added to the Safety Element. Throughout the rest of the Safety Element there have been several other revisions, to include but not limited to: 1) updating the data, information and references with more current sources; 2) incorporating additional language to comply with new and/or amended California State Laws; 3) revising policies where progress has been made or where changes in situations have occurred; and 4) incorporating the 2017 Local Hazards Mitigation Plan. With these updates, additional information on the following topics has been included: statutory requirements, land use influences, Nevada County evacuation notification categories, earthquakes, subsidence, dam failure, mining hazards, wildland fires, fire protection plans and programs, power outages, and severe weather hazards. The goals, policies and programs in the Safety Element have been updated to reflect the current discussion and hazards in the Safety Element revisions. The list of proposed amendments below identifies revisions to each category in the Safety Element.

**Proposed Amendments:** Please see the draft Safety Element update for all of the proposed revisions and text amendments. The draft of the Safety Element update can be downloaded from the Nevada County website at <https://www.mynevadacounty.com/2870/2019-Safety-Element-Update>. The list below addresses the main changes in each category.

1. Introduction and Setting
  - Provided the purpose of the Safety Element and added Climate Change Resiliency and Mitigation, and Environmental Justice to the list of categories.
2. Statutory Requirements
  - This section has been added to the Safety Element to explain statutory requirements by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Nevada County Office of Emergency Services, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, and the California Geological Survey of the Department of Conservation.
3. Emergency Preparedness
  - Land Use Influences – Discussion on Land Use Influences has been added.
  - Emergency Plans and Guides – Hazards from the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) have been updated in the Emergency Plans and Guides discussion, along with minor text edits and the removal of expired information/dates.
  - Emergency Notification System – Minor text edits and updated information.
  - Evacuation Planning – Minor text edits and additional information on local roads.
  - Nevada County Evacuation Notification Categories – This section was added to provide information on evacuation notification categories and rescue services.
  - Policies – Several policy updates have been made.
4. Geological Hazards/Seismic Activity
  - Avalanches – No changes.
  - Landslides, Debris and Mud Flows – Minor text amendments and additional information on soil and infrastructure hazards have been included.
  - Earthquakes – Updated this section to more current information.
  - Subsidence – This section was added to discuss hazards from subsidence, with descriptions of areas that are more prone to risks, including mining sites, karst, and the drawdown of groundwater.
  - Policies – Redundant and impractical policies were removed.
5. Flood Hazards
  - Flooding – Minor text amendments and added information on frequency, causes of flooding, and impacts.
  - Dam Failure – There have been several revisions to this section, including the categories for downstream hazard potential, a list of dams in Nevada County that have a hazard rating of high and extremely high, and discussion of additional laws and requirements in place after the failure of the Oroville Dam.
  - Seiches – No changes.
  - Policies – Slight text amendments to current policies and a policy has been added.
6. Airport Hazards
  - Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan – Minor text amendments.
  - Military Airspace Compatibility – No changes.

- Program – One program has been removed.
7. Hazardous Materials and Mining Hazards
- Minor text amendments and additional information on mining hazards.
  - Policies – Text amendments have been made to existing policies and one policy has been added.
8. Public Safety Services and Facilities
- Policies and Programs – There have been text amendments to the policies in this section and the addition of two programs.
9. Fire Hazards and Protection
- Wildland Fires – There have been several revisions to this section in order to update information on hazards, causes of hazards and wildfire behavior. A figure on wildfire behavior has been added. References to past fires and the amount of damaged they caused have been removed. Discussion on the Bates Bill of 1992 and Hazard Severity Zones has been added. A list of vulnerabilities and discussion on power outages from public safety power shutoffs has been added, and outdated information has been removed.
  - Policies and Programs – There have been text amendments to existing policies and programs. New policies and programs have been added to this section and some have been combined. Outdated policies and programs have been removed.
10. Fire Safe Infrastructure
- Fire Safe Circulation – Minor text amendments and updated information.
  - Roadside Vegetation Management – Minor text amendments and updated information.
  - Emergency Water Storage – Included statement on maintenance of facilities.
  - Critical Facilities and Populations at Risk – This section has been added. A list of facilities that provide services has been included.
  - Fire Agencies and Support Organizations – Information was clarified and discussion of the Interagency Wildfire Air Attack Base, the White Cloud Helitack base, the Washington Ridge Conservation Camp, and the Fire Safe Council has been included.
  - Fire Protection Regulations – Minor text amendments.
11. Fire Protection Plans and Programs
- Federal and State Plans – Minor text amendments have been made and references to the current LHMP.
  - Community/Area Plans – Section has been removed.
  - Fire Prevention Programs – Section has been removed.
12. Severe Weather Hazards
- Wind, Lightning, Snow (Blizzards), Freezing, Heavy Rain – Several revisions to this section have been made to add current information and more detail on these hazards. A list of incidents from 1960 to 2013 was removed.
  - Policies and Programs – An existing program has been turned into a policy.
13. Climate Change Resiliency and Mitigation
- This category has been added to the Safety Element.
  - Policies – Policies have been added to this section.

14. Environmental Justice and Vulnerable Populations

- This category has been added to the Safety Element.
- Policies – Policies have been added to this section.

15. List of Acronyms

- The list of acronyms has been removed. Acronyms are identified throughout the Safety Element.

**Project Site and Applicability:** The proposed Safety Element update applies to all unincorporated areas of Nevada County that are governed by Nevada County, which includes privately-owned parcels in all zoning districts and General Plan designations. The project area excludes incorporated cities, and state and federal lands in Nevada County. Out of the approximate 625,000 acres of the County, the project area (privately held land) is approximately 429,000 acres.

**Other Permits, Which May Be Necessary:** The proposed update is for a General Plan text amendment. The General Plan is a policy document and it will not result in the approval of a specific project or a change to the physical environment. No other permits are required for the text amendment. All future development projects and/or amendments will require a project-specific environmental review prior to project approval.

**Relationship to Other Projects:** There are no other projects directly related to the Safety Element update.

**Tribal Consultation:** Have California Native American Tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?

On July 26, 2018, Staff sent an invitation to the United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria (UAIC), the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California (Washoe Tribe), the Tsi-Akim Maidu Tribe, and the Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe to begin AB52 and SB18 consultation for the proposed Safety Element update. UAIC responded to the invitation and requested to open consultation on the proposed Safety Element update. On October 19, 2018, staff held a conference call with UAIC to discuss the proposed amendments. After the conferenced phone call, UAIC followed-up with an email on October 19, 2018, advising that they had no additional comments and that they would like to close consultation. No other comments or consultation was requested by any other tribe at that time.

The draft Safety Element was routed for distribution on October 4, 2019, for public comment and agency review. The Planning Department received comments from the UAIC on the draft Safety Element and requested the Planning Department to send the UAIC a copy of the environmental document for the project. The Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians was not part of the initial invitation for consultation on the Safety Element update because this Tribe had not requested consultation on projects in Nevada County until August 2019. The Safety Element update was routed to the Tribe on October 4, 2019, and the County received comments from the Tribe on October 29, 2019, requesting continued consultation and updates as the project progresses. The Tribe also requested records searches, surveys and/or environmental, archaeological, or cultural reports that have been completed for the project. Since the project is for an update to a policy document and it does not require a physical change to a specific site, cultural surveys and records searches are not included in the Safety Element update. The Nevada County Planning Department will continue consultation with both Tribes, and the Planning Department will send the California Native American Tribes a Notice of Availability for public review and a Notice of Intent to adopt a Negative Declaration for this project, which will allow the California Native American Tribes the opportunity to comment on the analysis of environmental impacts.

**SUMMARY OF IMPACTS and PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES**

**Environmental Factors Potentially Affected:**

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Aesthetics	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Agriculture / Forestry Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Air Quality
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Biological Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Energy
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Geology / Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Greenhouse Gas Emissions	<input type="checkbox"/>	9. Hazards / Hazardous Materials
<input type="checkbox"/>	10. Hydrology / Water Quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	11. Land Use / Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	12. Mineral Resources
<input type="checkbox"/>	13. Noise	<input type="checkbox"/>	14. Population / Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	15. Public Services
<input type="checkbox"/>	16. Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	17. Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	18. Tribal Cultural Resources
<input type="checkbox"/>	19. Utilities / Service Systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	20. Wildfire	<input type="checkbox"/>	21. Mandatory Findings of Significance

***No mitigation measures are proposed for this project to update the Safety Element.***

Table 2 Impacts (A)	Table 3 No Impact	Table 4 Less Than Significant Impact	Table 5 Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Table 6 Significant Impact	Table 7 Significant Impact with Mitigation

## INITIAL STUDY AND CHECKLIST

### Introduction

This checklist is to be completed for all projects that are not exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The information, analysis and conclusions contained in the checklist are the basis for deciding whether an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or Negative Declaration is to be prepared. If an EIR is determined to be necessary based on the conclusions of the Initial Study, the checklist is used to focus the EIR on the effects determined to be potentially significant. This Initial Study uses the following terms to describe the level of significance of adverse impacts. These terms are defined as follows.

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

### 1. AESTHETICS

**Existing Setting:** The aesthetic character of Nevada County is generally rural, natural, and historic with spectacular rolling vistas of foothills, valleys, mountains, with green meadows, extensive forests, wetlands and habitats unique to Nevada County and the Sierra Mountains. Important aesthetic resources in the County include natural and historic forms, including river gorges, creeks, mountains, hills, meadows, geologic formations, and native vegetation, which consist of grass-oak woodlands, montane, brush lands, mixed conifer forest, and eastside pine with sage. Historic forms within the County include bridges, homes, and other structures more than 50 years old. Sites and natural forms with cultural importance to, or repeated use by, Native American tribes also contribute to aesthetic significance

Except as provide in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the proposed project	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?				✓	A, L
b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?				✓	A, L, 28
c. In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?				✓	A

Except as provide in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the proposed project	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?				✓	A, 18

**Impact Discussion:**

1a-d The General Plan contains an Aesthetics Element (Chapter 18), which establishes specific goals, objectives and policies related to aesthetic resources in Nevada County. No amendments are currently proposed for the Aesthetics Element of the General Plan. The Safety Element update identifies hazards in Nevada County and does not propose any physical changes to the environment or aesthetics. The proposed update only consists of text amendments to policy documents, which are intended to guide development within the County. The adoption of the proposed update will not grant any entitlements for development projects, and all future development projects will require site/project-specific environmental review at the time of project submittal. The adoption of the update will not have any effects on scenic vistas, scenic resources, or visual character, and it will not create new sources of light or glare that would affect views in the area; therefore, *no impact* would result from the adoption of the Safety Element update.

**Mitigation:** None required.

**2. AGRICULTURAL/FORESTRY RESOURCES**

**Existing Setting:** Farmlands of local importance is scattered throughout western Nevada County with major concentrations occurring northeast and east of Nevada City, near Penn Valley, and in the south and Southwest County. Countywide, there are 6,043 acres of Farmlands of Local Importance, 1,283 acres of Farmlands of Statewide Importance, 462 acres of Unique Farmlands and 290 acres of Prime Farmlands. There are no important agricultural lands mapped in eastern Nevada County. Generally, Nevada County soils are poor for intensive agricultural use; however, some soil types could support limited intensive agricultural use, including timber production. Nevada County supports extensive commercial timber resources, the majority of which are under the jurisdiction of the Tahoe National Forest in the eastern areas of the County. Pursuant to Nevada County Zoning District Maps, there are approximately 166,173 acres that are zoned General Agriculture (AG) and Agriculture Exclusive (AE) which provides for primary agricultural uses and there are approximately 36,712 acres which are zoned Residential Agriculture (RA), which allow agriculture uses as an accessory use to residential development. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural operations in 2017 comprised approximately 52,061 acres, or approximately 12% of total lands, with approximately 673 farms in operation, with an average size of 77 acres.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the				✓	A, L, 7

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
California Department of Conservation's Division of Land Resource Protection, to non-agricultural use?					
b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or conflict with a Williamson Act contract?				✓	A, 18
c. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resource Code section 12220(g)), timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?				✓	A, L, 18
d. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				✓	L, 18
e. Involve other changes in the existing environment, which due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				✓	A, L, 7

**Impact Discussion:**

2a-e The General Plan contains a Forest Element (Chapter 15) and an Agriculture Element (Chapter 16), which establish specific goals, objectives and policies related to forestry and agricultural resources in Nevada County. No amendments are currently proposed to the Forest or Agriculture Elements. The adoption of the Safety Element update will not result in impacts to Important Farmlands (Prime, Unique, Statewide or Local Important Farmlands), nor will it conflict with existing zoning or result in the conversion of agricultural, timberland, timberland uses, or a Williamson Act contract. The proposed update consists only of text amendments to a policy document, which is intended to guide development within the County. No physical construction or changes to the existing land uses would result from the Safety Element update. Any future development projects would require a site/project-specific environmental review and approval. Therefore, *no impact* would result from the adoption of the Safety Element update.

**Mitigation:** None required.

**3. AIR QUALITY**

**Existing Setting:** Nevada County is located in the Mountain Counties Air Basin. The overall air quality in Nevada County has improved over the past decade, largely due to vehicles becoming cleaner. State and Federal air quality standards have been established for specific "criteria" air pollutants including ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, lead, and particulate matter. In addition, there are State standards for visibility reducing particles, sulfates, hydrogen sulfide, and vinyl chloride. State standards are called California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) and federal standards are called National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). NAAQS are composed of health-based primary standards and welfare-based secondary standards.

Western Nevada County is classified as a Serious Nonattainment Area for the 2008 ozone NAAQS and Moderate Nonattainment for the 2015 ozone NAAQS. It is also Nonattainment for the ozone CAAQS. The area is also Marginal Nonattainment for the 2008 ozone NAAQS and is Nonattainment for the ozone

CAAQS. Most of western Nevada County’s ozone is transported to the area by wind from the Sacramento area and, to a lesser extent, the San Francisco Bay Area. Ozone is created by the interaction of Nitrogen Oxides and Reactive Organic Gases (also known as Volatile Organic Compounds) in the presence of sunlight, especially when the temperature is high. Ozone is mainly a summertime problem, with the highest concentrations generally observed in July and August, especially in the late afternoon and evening hours.

Nevada County is also Nonattainment for the PM10 CAAQS, but Unclassified for the PM10 NAAQS due to lack of available recent data. The number after “PM” refers to maximum particle size in microns. PM10 is a mixture of dust, combustion particles (smoke) and aerosols, whereas PM2.5 is mostly smoke and aerosol particles. PM2.5 sources include woodstoves and fireplaces, vehicle engines, wildfires and open burning. PM10 sources include the PM2.5 plus dust, such as from surface disturbances, road sand, vehicle tires, and leaf blowers. Some pollen and mold spores are also included in PM10, but most are larger than 10 microns. All of Nevada County is Unclassifiable/Attainment for the PM2.5 NAAQS and Unclassified for the PM2.5 CAAQS (US Environmental Protection Agency, 2015).

Ultramafic rock and its altered form, serpentine rock (or serpentinite), both typically contain asbestos, a cancer-causing agent. Ultramafic rock and serpentine are likely to exist in several areas of Nevada County. The areas mapped as more likely to contain natural occurrences of asbestos are in portions of western Nevada County (California Department of Conservation, 2000).

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

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

**Impact Discussion:**

3a-e The General Plan contains an Air Quality Element (Chapter 14), which establishes specific goals, objectives and policies related to air quality in Nevada County. No amendments are currently proposed to the Air Quality Element. The adoption of the Safety Element update will not result in impacts to air quality in Nevada County. The proposed update consists only of text amendments to a policy document, which is intended to guide development within the County. The update does not revise, replace or attempt to supersede any existing air quality standards or plans adopted by the County, State, or Federal government. The text amendment does not include any physical construction or changes that would contribute to a cumulative increase of pollutants, or that would impact sensitive receptors. Any future development or projects would require a site/project-specific environmental review and approval. Due to there being no physical changes, the update

would not have an impact on emissions, and it would not generate ash or dust; therefore, there would be *no impact* to air quality from the adoption of the Safety Element update.

**Mitigation:** None required.

**4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

**Existing Setting:** Nevada County contains a wide range of plants, animals, and habitat types. With elevations ranging from 300 feet above mean sea level in the west to 9,143 feet above mean sea level in the east and precipitation amounts varying from 30 inches in the west to 60 inches near the crest of the Sierras, the County supports a true diversity of habitat types. Generally, the County can be characterized by gently rolling oak woodlands in the west that transition to coniferous forest in the middle ranges and a desert-like association on the eastern slope of the Sierras. A given type of vegetation association, with associated animal life, is referred to as a life zone. A life zone is an area with generally uniform or homogeneous characteristics located within general geographic boundaries. The life zones in Nevada County include Upper Sonoran, Transition, Canadian, Hudsonian, Arctic-Alpine and Mixed Conifer-Jeffrey Pine-Sagebrush.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) recognizes five primary wildlife habitat types in California: tree dominated; shrub dominated; herbaceous dominated; aquatic; and developed. These habitats occur in continuous stretches and isolated pockets depending on the overall topography, elevation, climate and pattern of development in a particular area. Wildlife may move between various habitat types to satisfy their life requirements. Wildlife utilize riparian corridors, low lying or “saddle” areas of ridges, established trails, and other corridors for their inter-habitat movement. In addition, many species, including deer, move seasonally in response to their seasonal habitat requirements. In this context, it is possible that loss of a habitat could constitute an adverse effect (because of local or regional scarcity and ecological value of a habitat) even though the individual species of plants that make up the habitat, or animal species which use the habitat may not, in and of themselves, be endangered or rare.

Habitats throughout the County have been modified by human activity. The western portions of the County, especially the Upper Sonoran and Transition life zones, have experienced rapid residential growth in recent decades. The resultant parcelization, fencing, alteration of vegetation, introduction of domestic animals, roadways, noise, and night lighting have served to reduce the habitat values throughout the area. In the mid to high elevations, logging, mining, and development of second homes and subdivisions have also served to alter habitats. Habitat values can be reduced by both direct (construction of housing) and indirect (increased density in wide movement corridors) activities. Although the overall trend in the County is toward a decline in habitat values as identified by the CDFW, there is a wide localized variation in habitats, tolerances of species, and degrees of human disturbance.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?				✓	K,17
b. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by				✓	A,K,L,17

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?					
c. Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?				✓	A,K,L, 10,17
d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?				✓	A,16,17
e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				✓	A,16,17, 18
f. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?				✓	A,16,17, 18
g. Introduce any factors (light, fencing, noise, human presence and/or domesticated animals) which could hinder the normal activities of wildlife?				✓	A,2,16, 17,18

**Impact Discussion:**

4a-g The General Plan contains a Wildlife and Vegetation Element (Chapter 13), which establishes specific goals, objectives and policies related to sensitive biological resources in Nevada County. No amendments are being proposed to the Wildlife and Vegetation Element, or to any other ordinances regarding the protection of biological resources. The adoption of the Safety Element update would not result in potential impacts to biological resources. The proposed update consists only of text amendments to policy documents, which are intended to guide development within in the County. The proposed update would not grant any entitlements for development projects and it does not propose any physical changes. Any future development or projects would require a site/project-specific environmental review and approval. Due to there being no physical changes, the update would not have an impact on biological resources, and it does not conflict with local policies regarding the protection of resources; therefore, there would be *no impact* to biological resources from the adoption of the Safety Element update.

**Mitigation:** None required.

**5. CULTURAL RESOURCES**

**Existing Setting:** The varied environmental zones, the geological characteristics, and the geographical position of Nevada County account for a cultural resource base, which is exceedingly rich and exceptionally complex. This explains the relatively large number of recorded prehistoric and historic sites and the wide array of types. Prehistoric site types which have been inventoried include villages and associated cemeteries, multi-task camps, single task-specific locales (such as bedrock mortar milling features), and special use sites (hunting blinds, petroglyphs and quarries). Historic themes within Nevada County are manifest archaeologically by site types related to mining, water management, logging, transportation,

emigrant travel, ranching and agriculture, grazing, and the ice industry. A number of State laws regulate the disturbance of archaeological sites and the Nevada County General Plan and Zoning Regulations establish procedures for identifying potentially sensitive sites.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?				✓	A,17,18
b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?				✓	A,17,18
c. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?				✓	A,17,18

**Impact Discussion:**

5a-c The adoption of the proposed Safety Element update would not impact cultural resources, and there are no changes being proposed to the Chapter 19 of the General Plan, which establishes policies for Cultural Resources. Pursuant to Nevada County Land Use and Development Code as well as the Nevada General Plan, all applicable projects require an applicant to initiate a North Central Information Center (NCIC) records search to provide the most current information about the sensitivity of a particular parcel to contain cultural resources and to assess the need for a cultural resource study. As part of the review by NCIC, a recommendation will be made as to the determination if a Cultural Resource Study is required based on if there are known cultural, historical or traditional resources within the project area. If the NCIC recommendation determines that a cultural resource is recommended then a qualified professional will be required to submit an archeological survey that will review site-specific cultural resources and the proposed project's impact to those resources, if present.

In addition, pursuant to Assembly Bill 52 (Gatto, 2014) and Senate Bill 18 (Burton, 2004), all applicable projects require will require the County to consult with traditionally and culturally affiliated California Native American tribes. The intent is to provide California Native American tribes an opportunity to participate in local land use decisions at an early planning stage, for the purpose of protecting, or mitigating impacts to, cultural places. The purpose of involving local tribes at these early planning stages is to allow consideration of cultural places in the context of broad local land use policy, before individual site-specific, project-level, land use decisions are made by a local government. Furthermore, the consultation requirements of SB 18 apply to General Plan or Specific Plan processes proposed on or after March 1, 2005.

Thus, future projects will be reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and as a general rule; any potential impacts will be mitigated through project conditioning and review. Therefore, the Safety Element update would have *no impact* on cultural resources.

**Mitigation:** None required.

**6. ENERGY**

**Existing Setting:** Electric and natural gas facilities are provided in Western Nevada County by the Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E). There are five PG&E substations within the County. Four of these substations have distribution voltages of 12kV and one substation has a distribution voltage of 21kV. Three of the substations are served via 60kV transmission lines and two substations are served via 115kV transmission lines. The transmission lines are networked and generation for these transmission lines comes from generators located throughout the state. The transmission lines are operated by California Independent System Operators, CALISO. In Eastern Nevada County, the Truckee Donner Public Utility District also supplies electricity. Propane is a common fuel source used in Nevada County by individual homes and businesses.

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

**Impact Discussion:**

6a-b The adoption of the proposed Safety Element update would not result in an impact to energy resources. The Safety Element update is strictly a policy document and does not provide entitlements to any specific land use projects. Other areas of the General Plan, including the Housing Element (Chapter 8), identify energy conservation with policies regarding energy efficiency. The Safety Element update does not propose any changes to plans or policies for energy efficiency or renewable energy. Any future development or projects would be subject to an environmental review, which will analyze energy impacts. All future development would also be subject to the California Energy Code (Title 24) requirements. Therefore, the Safety Element update would have *no impact* on energy resources, or to state or local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

**Mitigation:** None Required.

**7. GEOLOGY / SOILS**

**Existing Setting:** Nevada County is within the Sierra Nevada Mountains, a geologic block approximately 400 miles long and 80 miles wide which extends in a north-south band along the eastern portion of California. The terrain of Nevada County is distinctly characterized by two features of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The western third of the County is comprised of rolling foothills, which form a transition between the low-lying Sacramento Valley to the west and the mountains to the east. The eastern two-thirds of the County is comprised of the steep terrain and exposed granite of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

The geologic substructure of the County can be divided into three very broad groups, which are reflected in the surface soils:

- Western Foothills – This area, extending from the Yuba County border to just northeast of the Grass Valley/Nevada City area, is generally comprised of metavolcanic and granitic formations.
- Central Portion – The area extending northeast of the Grass Valley/Nevada City area to the upper mountainous area near Bowman Lake Road is generally comprised of sedimentary, metasedimentary and volcanic formations.
- Eastern Portion – This portion of the County through the high Sierra to the Nevada state line is generally comprised of volcanic and granitic formations.

According to the Nevada County Resource Conservation District there are a total of twenty-nine (29) soils series, including cut and fill and alluvial lands within the county. The soil series include Ahwahnee; Aiken; Alluvial lands, Argonaut; Auberry; Auburn; Boomer; Chaix; Chaix thick solum variant; Cohasset; Dubakella; Dubakella shallow variant; Hoda; Horshoe; Hotaw; Iron Mountain; Josephine; Mariposa; Maymen; McCarthy; Musick; Rescue; Secca; Shenandoah; Sierra; Sites; Sobrante; and Trabuco. The soil types are described by topography, slope, permeability, dwelling limitations, septic limitations, erosion hazards, and agricultural and timber capacities. In general, the County soils are variable; the soil permeability ranges from very slow to very rapid, and the erosion hazard ranges from slight to very high. The soil erosion hazard ratings of moderate to high are typically associated with slopes that are fifteen percent (15%) or greater.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including risk of loss, injury or death involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.</li> <li>ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?</li> <li>iii. Seismic-related ground failure including liquefaction?</li> <li>iv. Landslides?</li> </ul>				✓	A,I,5,6, 12,26
b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?				✓	D
c. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?				✓	D,12
d. Be located on expansive soil creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?				✓	D
e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?				✓	A,B,C

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?				✓	A
g. Result in substantial grading on slopes over 30 percent?				✓	A,L,9,18

**Impact Discussion:**

7a-g The Safety Element update is a text amendment to a policy document, and it will not result in any physical changes or ground disturbance. Potential geological hazards, including avalanches, landslides, debris, mud flows, earthquakes, and subsidence are addressed in the Safety Element update. The revisions that have been made in the Geological Hazards/Seismic Activity section are to clarify or update information and to address subsidence, which is a hazard that is not currently discussed in the Safety Element. There were also revisions to the policies for Geological Hazards/Seismic Activity to remove redundancy and policies found to be impractical and unclear. This update is for a text amendment to a policy document that does not propose any changes to building codes or standards for any future construction. Any future development projects would be reviewed on a project-by-project basis for geological hazards. Geological and seismic hazards will be analyzed in the site-specific environmental review for future development projects and will be required to meet all local and State building codes. Therefore, the Safety Element update would have *no impact* on Geology and Soils.

**Mitigation:** None required.

**8. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS**

**Existing Setting:** Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are those gases that trap heat in the atmosphere. GHGs are emitted by natural and industrial processes, and the accumulation of GHGs in the atmosphere regulates the earth's temperature. GHGs that are regulated by the State and/or EPA are carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), sulfur hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>) and nitrous oxide (NO<sub>2</sub>). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are largely from fossil fuel combustion. In California, approximately 43 percent of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions come from cars and trucks. Electricity generation is another important source of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Agriculture is a major source of both methane and NO<sub>2</sub>, with additional methane coming primarily from landfills. Most HFC emissions come from refrigerants, solvents, propellant agents and industrial processes, and persist in the atmosphere for longer periods of time and have greater effects at lower concentrations compared to CO<sub>2</sub>. The adverse impacts of global warming include impacts to air quality, water supply, ecosystem balance, sea level rise (flooding), fire hazards, and an increase in health related problems.

Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32), the California Global Warming Solutions Act, was adopted in September 2006 and requires that statewide GHG emissions be reduced to 1990 levels by the year 2020. This reduction will be accomplished through regulations to reduce emissions from stationary sources and from vehicles. The California Air Resources Board (ARB) is the State agency responsible for developing rules and regulations to cap and reduce GHG emissions. In addition, the Governor signed Senate Bill 97 in 2007 directing the California Office of Planning and Research to develop guidelines for the analysis and mitigation of the effects of greenhouse gas emissions and mandating that GHG impacts be evaluated in CEQA documents. CEQA Guidelines Amendments for GHG Emissions were adopted by OPR on December 30, 2009. The

Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD) has prepared a guidance document, *Guidelines for Assessing Air Quality Impacts of Land Use Projects*, which includes mitigations for general air quality impacts that can be used to mitigate GHG emissions.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?			✓		A,G,20,21
b. Conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?			✓		A,G,20,21

**Impact Discussion:**

8a-b Adoption of the Safety Element update would not result in impacts to greenhouse gas emissions in Nevada County. The update is strictly to a policy document that does not provide entitlements to any specific land use projects. The Safety Element update does not revise, replace or attempt to supersede any existing greenhouse gas emission standards adopted by the County, the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District or the State of California. As part of this update, discussion has been added to the Safety Element to address climate change resiliency and mitigation. Policies and a program to mitigate climate change have been included in the update, which may reduce emissions. Individual future development proposals will be subject to project-specific environmental review to ensure that the project will be in compliance with local and regional standards and procedures for minimizing short-term and long-term impacts related to increases in greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, the Safety Element update would have *no impact* on greenhouse gas emissions.

**Mitigation:** None required.

**9. HAZARDS/HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

**Existing Setting:** The interface of the natural and manmade environments creates potential safety hazards associated with avalanches, landslides, earthquakes, floods, and wildfires. Other potential safety hazards, such as airport operations and transportation of hazardous materials, arise from the potential for accidents during the transport of goods and people. Each of these hazards has particular characteristics that affect the future development of the County. Some of these safety hazards can be minimized with emergency planning, while other hazards are reduced by development standards and land use planning.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?				✓	A,C
b. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?				✓	C

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				✓	A,L
d. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?				✓	C,25
e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?				✓	L,19
f. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				✓	H,19,23
g. Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?				✓	H,M,23

**Impact Discussion:**

9a-g Adoption of the Safety Element update would not result in an impact to, or the creation of, potential hazards or hazardous materials for the citizens of Nevada County or to the environment. The Safety Element is strictly a policy document that identifies and discusses hazards in Nevada County, with the intent to create goals, policies and programs that would reduce short-term and long-term damage and injuries from natural and human-caused safety hazards. The hazards identified in the Safety Element update include Emergency Preparedness; Geological Hazards/Seismic Activity; Flood Hazards; Airport and Military Airspace Hazards; Hazardous Materials and Mining Hazards; Public Safety Services and Facilities; Fire Hazards and Protection; Severe Weather Hazards; Climate Change Resiliency and Mitigation; and Environmental Justice. The update to the Safety Element provides and/or references current data associated with each hazard and incorporates the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP). The LHMP is the implementing tool of the County's Safety Element; whereas, the Safety Element is a policy document that informs, directs and guides land use decisions to avoid or reduce risks from hazards. The LHMP is updated and maintained by Nevada County's Office of Emergency Services and has a separate review and approval than the Safety Element. Individual projects will also be reviewed on a project-by-project basis for hazards and hazardous materials. Any future projects will undergo a project-specific environmental review to ensure that the project will be in compliance with local and State requirements for hazardous materials, and to address significant hazards to the public or the environment. Due to the Safety Element update only being a text amendment to a policy document with goals and policies to reduce hazards, and because the update does not propose any physical changes, *no impact* to hazards or hazardous materials are anticipated.

**Mitigation:** None required.

**10. HYDROLOGY / WATER QUALITY**

**Existing Setting:** Nevada County is located within the watersheds of Truckee River, the Yuba River and the Bear River, which combined drain approximately 420 square miles. Combined, these rivers drain about 420 square miles. The smaller watercourses and creeks that flow into these watersheds are supplied from melting snow pack, annual rainfall, springs, and surfacing groundwater. In general, the County's water quality varies with topography and development. Water quality tends to be good in the mountainous, less developed areas, and is impacted at lower elevations or in more developed areas. Water quality is influenced by several sources, including soil erosion, sedimentation, septic systems, pesticides, and agriculture. Water resources have a multitude of uses from agricultural to domestic, as well as fish and aquatic/riparian habitat, wildlife and plant habitat, and year-round recreation. A number of historic irrigation ditch systems are located throughout the western County, owned and maintained by the Nevada Irrigation District, and on a much smaller scale, by the San Juan Ridge County Water District. There are a number of public water purveyors within the County; the Nevada Irrigation District, and the Cities of Grass Valley and Nevada City primarily serve western Nevada County with the Washington County Water District providing service to the small community of Washington. In eastern Nevada County, the Donner Summit and Truckee Donner Public Utility Districts, and the Glenshire Mutual Water Company provide domestic treated water service.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?				✓	A,D
b. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?				✓	A,C
c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner that would: i. result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site; ii. substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite? iii. create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or iv. impeded or redirect flood flows?				✓	A,B,D,L,9
d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?				✓	L,9,13,19,23
e. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?				✓	A,D,17

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
f. Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?				✓	L,9,13
g. Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures that would impede or redirect flood flows?				✓	L,13

**Impact Discussion:**

10a-g Adoption of the Safety Element update would not result in a significant impact to hydrology and water quality. The General Plan contains a Water Element (Chapter 11), which establishes specific goals, objectives and policies related to water resources in Nevada County, and no amendments are being proposed to the Water Element. The Safety Element update is a document that contains goals, policies and programs to guide land use decisions to minimize risks from hazards, and it does not propose to amend any water quality control plans or sustainable groundwater management plans. The Safety Element is strictly a policy document that identifies hazards in Nevada County and aims to reduce short and long-term loss of life, injuries and damage to property from natural and human-made disasters. There Safety Element update does not involve any physical changes or impacts to water quality, groundwater or drainage patterns. Likewise, there are no changes or disturbance within the floodplain, and the Safety Element does not give approval for any development. In addition, the Safety Element discusses flood hazards in Nevada County and contains goals to maintain the most current flood hazard and flood plain information as a basis for project review. Any future development projects would require a site-specific environmental review and would be reviewed for impacts to hydrology and water quality. Therefore, the Safety Element update would have *no impact* on hydrology/water quality.

**Mitigation:** None required.

**11. LAND USE / PLANNING**

**Existing Setting:** Nevada County is bound by Sierra County to the North, Yuba County to the West, Placer County to the South and the State of Nevada to the East. There are three incorporated cities within the County including Grass Valley, Nevada City and Truckee. The project area is the approximately 429,000 acres of privately held land in the unincorporated area of Nevada County, excluding, incorporated cities, state and federal lands. Land uses in the unincorporated County consists of mixed land use patterns, including residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural and public uses. Federal and State public lands in the County total approximately 314 square miles of the County's 943 square miles, or about thirty-three percent (33%) of the County's total land area. The unincorporated County contains a variety of resources and constraints, diverse topography, and sensitive environments.

Within the unincorporated County, residential and rural development is governed by the General Plan—an overall policy guide—and the Nevada County Land Use and Development Code, which establishes specific zoning standards that vary with each zoning district. Nevada County has four residential districts, four rural districts, five commercial districts, three industrial districts, five special purpose districts, and twelve combining districts.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Physically divide an established community?				✓	A,L
b. Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?				✓	A,17,18

**Impact Discussion:**

11a-b The General Plan contains a Land Use Element (Chapter 1), which establishes specific goals, objectives and policies related to land use planning and community development in Nevada County. As part of this update, there are no amendments being proposed to the Land Use Element of the General Plan. The Safety Element update identifies land use and development as being a critical factor in emergency preparation. The update to the Safety Element would not have any physical changes or environmental impacts on a community, and it would not conflict with land use plans, policies or regulations. The revisions to the Safety Element would inform individuals of how land use influences development. The update is only to a policy document and it does not grant entitlements or approve any development. Any future development projects would require a site-specific environmental review and would be reviewed on a project-by-project basis for impacts to land use and consistency with land use plans, policies, and regulations. Therefore, the Safety Element update would have *no impact* on physically dividing a community or causing a significant environmental impact due to conflicts with land use plans, policies or regulations.

**Mitigation:** None required.

**12. MINERAL RESOURCES**

**Existing Setting:** Significant areas of Nevada County contain mineral deposits and between the 1850's and the early 1900's, the County's economy was mine based. These mineral resources include gold, copper, silver, lead, zinc, chromite, and small amounts of tungsten and manganese. Industrial minerals include barite, quartz for silicon production, and small amounts of limestone, asbestos, clay and mineral paint. In addition, significant deposits of sand, gravel, and rock types suitable for construction aggregate are exposed throughout the County. Within the County are large areas classified as Mineral Resource Zones (MRZs) that have existing deposits measured or indicated by actual site data (MRZ-2a) or inferred from other sources (MRZ-2b).

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?				✓	A, 1
b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?				✓	A, 1

**Impact Discussion:**

12a-b The General Plan contains a Mineral Management Element (Chapter 17), which establishes specific goals, objectives and policies related to mineral resources in Nevada County. There are no amendments being proposed to the Mineral Management Element of the General Plan. Adoption of the Safety Element update would not result in an impact to mineral resources. Any future development project would be assessed for potential impacts to mineral resources at the site where the project is being proposed, and it would be under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. The proposed update does not revise, replace or attempt to supersede any existing mineral resource protection standards adopted by the County or the State of California. Therefore, the Safety Element update would have *no impact* on mineral resources.

**Mitigation:** None Required.

**13. NOISE**

**Existing Setting:** The General Plan and Land Use and Development Code have established maximum allowable noise levels for land use projects and encourages future sensitive land uses to be located in areas where noise generation is limited. Given the rural character of the area, the ambient noise level is quite low. Daytime ambient noise levels are typical of rural and low-density residential areas. Significant noise sources in the County include traffic on major roadways, railroad operations, airports, and localized noise sources such as from industrial uses. Ambient noise levels in areas that are not located in the vicinity of major transportation routes are generally very low.

Would the proposed project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess standards established in the local General Plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?				✓	A,17,18
b. Generation of excessive ground borne vibration or ground borne noise levels?				✓	A
c. For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				✓	A,L

**Impact Discussion:**

13a-c The General Plan contains a Noise Element (Chapter 9), which establishes specific goals, objectives and policies related to noise in Nevada County. There are no amendments being proposed to the Noise Element of the General Plan, and there are no amendments to the noise standards that are identified in the General Plan or the Land Use and Development Code. The Safety Element update is strictly a policy document that addresses hazards in Nevada County, and the adoption of the proposed Safety Element update would not result in the generation of any noise. Any future development projects would require a site-specific environmental review and

would be reviewed on a project-by-project basis for impacts to noise levels or excessive ground borne vibrations. Due to the Safety Element update being a policy document that would not change or conflict with noise standards, and there being no physical changes or development from the Safety Element update, there would be *no impact* on noise levels or ground borne vibrations.

**Mitigation:** None Required.

**14. POPULATION / HOUSING**

**Existing Setting:** In 2018, the State of California Department of Finance estimated that unincorporated Nevada County had a population of 66,207 and consisted of 31,182 housing units. Small towns and rural development that is largely integrated into the natural environment characterize the unincorporated County. Single-family residential development is the predominant housing type within the unincorporated area of the County; much of which occurs in rural areas and small communities.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?				✓	A,17
b. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				✓	A

**Impact Discussion:**

14a-b The General Plan contains a Housing Element (Chapter 8) that lists goals, policies and programs that are focused on maintaining and improving the existing housing stock, and the Housing Element provides guidance to assist in minimizing potential environmental impacts of population growth. However, no amendments to the Housing Element are included as part of this project to update the Safety Element. The proposed update consists only of text amendments to policy documents, which are intended to guide development within the County. Adoption of the update would not directly impact population and/or housing by unplanned population growth or from displacing people or housing. Furthermore, the adoption of the proposed update will not grant any entitlements for development projects and any future development project would be subject to CEQA analysis and a site-specific review. Therefore, *no impact* to population or housing would result from the Safety Element update.

**Mitigation:** None required.

**15. PUBLIC SERVICES**

**Existing Setting:** Public services within the unincorporated County are provided by the County of Nevada, state and federal agencies, and numerous special districts, including fire protection districts, school districts, park and recreation districts, and an irrigation district.

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

**Impact Discussion:**

15a The General Plan contains a Public Facilities and Services Element (Chapter 3), which establishes specific goals, objectives and policies related to public services in Nevada County. No amendments are currently proposed to the Public Facilities and Services Element of the General Plan; however, the Safety Element discusses emergency preparedness and evacuation planning, which involves services from local fire districts and law enforcement agencies. If there is an occurrence of a hazardous event in the County, public services and facilities may be utilized to assist the community and mitigate hazards. The adoption of the proposed Safety Element update, itself, will not make any physical changes or result in a physical impact to public services. Although the Safety Element discusses hazards that may call on public services, the Safety Element itself is a policy document that does not propose any physical changes, new facilities, or changes to existing facilities or services, and it is used as a guide to reduce impacts from natural and human-caused hazards. Any future development projects would require a site-specific environmental review and would be reviewed on a project-by-project basis for impacts to public services. Due to the Safety Element not creating any physical changes, the update is anticipated to have *no impact* on adverse physical changes for new or altered facilities.

**Mitigation:** None required.

**16. RECREATION**

**Existing Setting:** Recreational opportunities within Nevada County are varied, ranging from public parks with intensively used recreational facilities, to vast tracts of forestlands and drainage systems, which provide a natural environment for passive recreation. Three separate Recreation and Park districts are formed within the County, including the Bear River and Western Gateway Park Districts in western Nevada County and the Truckee Donner Recreation & Park District in eastern Nevada County.

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

**Impact Discussion:**

16a-c The General Plan contains a Recreation Element (Chapter 5) which establishes specific goals, objectives and policies related to recreational uses and facilities in Nevada County. No amendments are currently proposed to the Recreation Element of the General Plan. Adoption of the Safety Element update would not result in potential impacts to recreational resources in Nevada County. The Safety Element update is strictly a policy document and does not provide entitlements to any specific land use projects. All future development would be subject to the County's Recreation Mitigation Fee, which will assist in minimizing potential impacts. This fee will be applied at the appropriate timeframe when the project is being built. Additionally, all future projects will be subject to site-specific environmental review and must comply with all applicable County policies and regulations regarding recreational services. Therefore, the Safety Element update would have *no impact* related to recreational resources.

**Mitigation:** None required.

**17. TRANSPORTATION**

**Existing Setting:** The Nevada County circulation system is composed of a combination of state highways, county roadways, city-maintained roadways, and privately maintained roadways. Generally, roadways are grouped into six basic classifications including: Interstate Highways and Freeways, Principal Arterials, Minor Arterials, Major and Minor Collectors, Local Roads and Regional Emergency Access Roads. The County maintains approximately 560 miles of roadways with the remainder being maintained by State and Federal Agencies, Cities, and private Road Maintenance Associations. Numerous county roadways provide intermediate and localized access to rural areas of the county, as well as to the more populated cities of Grass Valley, Nevada City, and Truckee and the communities of Lake Wildwood, Alta Sierra, Lake of the Pines, and others.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Conflict with a program plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle or pedestrian facilities?				✓	A,B
b. Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?				✓	A,B

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
c. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., a sharp curve or dangerous intersection) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?				✓	A,H,M
d. Result in inadequate emergency access:				✓	H,M
e. Result in an increase in traffic hazards to motor vehicles, bicyclists, or pedestrians, including short-term construction and long-term operational traffic?				✓	A,H,M

**Impact Discussion:**

17a-e The adoption of the proposed Safety Housing Element update would not result in potential impacts to transportation and circulation. Traffic and circulation specific mitigation measures have been integrated into the Circulation Element (Chapter 4) of the County’s General Plan in the form of goals, policies and programs, to ensure that local traffic impacts are mitigated to less than significant levels. There are no changes to the Circulation Element being proposed, and there are no conflicts with circulation plans or ordinances in this update. The Safety Element update includes information on evacuation procedures and roads that are considered primary evacuation routes. The update also includes revisions to policies to require road maintenance and to ensure roads are maintained and meet access standards on all new development projects. Any future projects would be subject a review of transportation impacts and may require that a traffic analyses is prepared. The traffic analysis would be reviewed for compliance with County codes, and would require an environmental review for traffic impacts. Due to the Safety Element update being a text amendment that would not cause any physical changes, there would be *no impact* on transportation.

**Mitigation:** None required.

**18. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES**

**Existing Setting:** The varied environmental zones, the geological characteristics, and the geographical position of Nevada County account for a cultural resource base, which is exceedingly rich and exceptionally complex. This explains the relatively large number of recorded prehistoric and historic sites and the wide array of types. Prehistoric site types which have been inventoried include villages and associated cemeteries, multi-task camps, single task-specific locales (such as bedrock mortar milling features), and special use sites (hunting blinds, petroglyphs and quarries). Nevada County lies within the territory of the Nisenan, or Southern Maidu. The Nisenan occupied the upper drainages and the adjacent ridges of the Yuba River, the north, middle and south forks of the American River and at least the upper north side of the Cosumnes River. The territory is conventionally believed to extend to the crest of the Sierra to the east and the Sacramento River to the west. A number of State laws regulate the disturbance of archaeological sites and the Nevada County General Plan and Zoning Regulations establish procedures for identifying potentially sensitive sites. Tribal Cultural Resources include sites, features, and places with cultural or sacred value to California Native American Tribes. Both the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California and United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria (UAIC) have contacted the County to request consultation on projects falling within their delineated ancestral lands. More recently, in August 2019, the Single Springs Band of the Miwok Indians has requested consultation on project in western and eastern Nevada County.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or</li> <li>ii. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.</li> </ul>				✓	A,J,17

**Impact Discussion:**

18a Assembly Bill 52 (Chapter 532, Statutes 2014) required an update to Appendix G (Initial Study Checklist) of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines to include questions related to impacts to tribal cultural resources. Changes to Appendix G were approved by the Office of Administrative Law on September 27, 2016. Senate Bill 18 (SB 18), which went into effect January 1, 2005, requires local governments (city and county) to consult with Native American tribes before making certain planning decisions and to provide notice to tribes at certain key points in the planning process. The intent is to “provide California Native American tribes an opportunity to participate in local land use decisions at an early planning stage, for the purpose of protecting, or mitigating impacts to, cultural places.” The purpose of involving tribes at these early planning stages is to allow consideration of cultural places in the context of broad local land use policy, before individual site-specific, project-level, land use designations are made by a local government. The consultation requirements of SB 18 apply to General Plan or Specific Plan processes proposed on or after March 1, 2005. Both the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California and United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria (UAIC) have contacted the County to request consultation on projects falling within their delineated ancestral lands. Just recently, after the start of the Safety Element update, the Single Springs Band of the Miwok Indians requested consultation on projects in Nevada County.

On July 26, 2018, Staff sent an invitation to the United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria (UAIC), the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California (Washoe Tribe), the Tsi-Akim Maidu Tribe, and the Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe to begin AB52 and SB 18 consultation for the proposed Safety Element update. UAIC responded to the invitation and requested to open consultation on the proposed Safety Element update. On October 19, 2018, staff held a conference call with UAIC to discuss the proposed amendments. After the conferenced phone call, UAIC followed-up with an email on October 19, 2018, advising that they had no additional comments

and that they would like to close consultation. No other comments or consultation was requested by any other tribe at that time.

The draft Safety Element was routed for distribution on October 4, 2019, for public comment and agency review. The Planning Department received comments from the UAIC on the draft Safety Element and requested the Planning Department to send the UAIC a copy of the environmental document for the project. The UAIC also commented about including additional information in the Safety Element update to address the effects of hazardous events, specifically wildfires and floods, have on cultural resources. The Safety Element currently includes that wildfires can cause a loss on cultural resources, and with the update is being revised to include that flood can also cause a loss to cultural resources. The General Plan, Chapter 19, has an Element on Cultural Resources to discuss preservation of protection of cultural resources. This project is only to update the Safety Element and does not include amendments to the Cultural Resources Element.

The Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians was not part of the initial invitation for consultation on the Safety Element update because this Tribe had not requested consultation on projects in Nevada County until after the update was underway. The Safety Element update was routed to the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians on October 4, 2019, and the County received comments from the Tribe on October 29, 2019, requesting continued consultation and updates as the project progresses. The Tribe also requested records searches, surveys and/or environmental, archaeological, or cultural reports that have been completed for the project. Since the project is for an update to a policy document and it does not require a physical change to a specific site, cultural surveys and records searches are not included in the Safety Element update. The Nevada County Planning Department will continue consultation with both Tribes, and the Planning Department will send the California Native American Tribes a Notice of Availability for public review and Notice of Intent to adopt a Negative Declaration for this project, which will allow the California Native American Tribes the opportunity to comment on the analysis of environmental impacts.

The adoption of the proposed Safety Element update, itself, will not impact Tribal Cultural Resources. Any future development project submittal will be required to be reviewed for Tribal Cultural Resources and would require future consultation of traditionally and culturally affiliated California Native American tribes. Additionally, future projects will be reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act, and as a general rule; any potential impacts will be mitigated through project conditioning and review. Therefore, the Safety Element update would have *no impact* on tribal cultural resources.

**Mitigation:** None Required.

## **19. UTILITIES / SERVICE SYSTEMS**

**Existing Setting:** Public utilities serving Nevada County include the Pacific Gas & Electric Company for natural gas and electricity, and in Eastern Nevada County, the Truckee Donner Public Utility District also supplies electricity. Propane is a common fuel source used in Nevada County by individual homes and businesses.

**Wastewater Collection and Treatment:** The County does not comprehensively provide wastewater collection and treatment to all areas of the County. Primarily there are eight Community Regions, two Rural Regions, one Rural Area and two districts in Eastern Nevada County that have access to public sewage disposal. Much of Nevada County is served by onsite sewage disposal/septic systems. Lack of extensive public sewage disposal can be viewed as the primary limiting factor to the development of high-

density housing in Nevada County. All other services are viewed to be adequate to accommodate planned higher density multi-family housing. Seven different sewer service areas within the unincorporated area are identified as adequate to serve all types of housing development in Nevada County. These sewer areas include: City of Grass Valley near and long-term Sphere of Influence areas; City of Nevada City five-year Sphere of Influence areas; Truckee Sanitation District Boundaries; Donner Summit Public Utility District (PUD); and the Lake of the Pines, Lake Wildwood, and Penn Valley Sanitation Districts. Of these seven sanitation districts, the County of Nevada is the sole operator of the Lake of the Pines, Lake Wildwood and the Penn Valley Sanitation Districts only. The County also provides wastewater collection and treatment for the North San Juan and Cascade Shores Sanitation Districts.

Water Service: The County does not act as a domestic water supplier. Residential uses are typically served by groundwater, the Nevada Irrigation District, Truckee-Donner Public Utility District or by smaller community water districts. The Nevada Irrigation District (NID) makes up the largest water purveyor in western Nevada County. NID supplies nearly 20,000 homes, farms and businesses with treated water in Nevada and Placer counties in the foothills of Northern California's Sierra Nevada Mountains. NID collects water from the mountain snowpack and stores it in an extensive system of 10 reservoirs. As water flows to customers in the foothills, it is used to generate clean hydroelectric energy and to provide public recreational opportunities. NID supplies both treated drinking water and irrigation water. Adequate water supply is not seen as a constraint to the development of housing during the current planning period.

Solid Waste: In Western Nevada County, the County maintains a transfer station and contracts with independent waste haulers for curbside pickup through established Franchise Agreements. County residents can also dispose of green waste and hazardous waste at the transfer station. In Eastern Nevada County, solid waste is hauled to the Eastern Regional Landfill located in Placer County by an independent contractor.

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

**Impact Discussion:**

19a-d The adoption of the proposed Safety Element update would not result in an impact to County utilities and service systems. The Safety Element update is strictly a policy document that does not

provide entitlements to any specific land use projects, or require any physical changes to services or utilities. Likewise, the text amendment does not generate solid waste or conflict with policies or regulations regarding solid waste. Any future development projects would be reviewed for their impact to utilities and services as a part of a project-specific environmental review process at the time of project submittal. Therefore, the Safety Element update would have *no impact* on utilities or service systems.

**Mitigation:** None Required.

**20. WILDFIRE**

**Existing Setting:** The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA), requires that each State develop a hazard mitigation plan, in order to receive future disaster mitigation funding following a disaster. The DMA also requires the development of local or county plans for that particular county to be eligible for post-disaster mitigation funding. The purpose of these requirements is to encourage State and local government to engage in systematic and nationally uniform planning efforts that will result in locally tailored programs and projects that help minimize loss of life, destruction of property, damage to the environment and the total cost of disasters before they occur. The Nevada County Office of Emergency Services (OES), in coordination with the Nevada County Operational Area Emergency Services Council, has developed a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) for Nevada County to meet the requirements of the DMA on behalf of the County, its incorporated cities and towns and participating districts. Approved by the Nevada County Board of Supervisors, the LHMP enables Nevada County to be eligible for future post-disaster mitigation funding. The LHMP recognizes the threat of natural and man-made disasters and hazards pose to people and property within Nevada County and that undertaking hazard mitigation action delineated in the LHMP reduces the potential for harm to people and property from future disaster and hazardous incidents.

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire severity hazard zones, would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				✓	A,H,M,23
b. Due to slope, prevailing winds, or other factor, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrollable spread of wildfire?				✓	A,B,H,M, 18
c. Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?				✓	A,H,M
d. Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?				✓	A,H,M,12

**Impact Discussion**

20a-d The Safety Element of the Nevada County General Plan addresses wildfire hazards in Nevada County and has several policies to improve fire safety. The Safety Element discusses the importance of ingress and egress by roadways, as well as maintaining the Nevada County

Defensible Space Standards. The Element also recognizes the importance of Public Resources Code 4290 and 4291, which are known as the State Responsible Area Fire Safe Regulations. Nevada County also has a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) that was updated in August 2017. Objective 3.6 of the LHMP is to improve communities' capabilities to prevent/mitigate hazards by increasing the use of technologies. Goal 4 of the LHMP is to reduce fire severity and intensity, with Objective 4.4 to promote the implementation of fuel management on private and public lands. The update includes the incorporation of the LHMP and current information on hazards associated with wildfires, including emergency preparedness, evacuation planning, fire safety and protection, and fuels management. The update also includes additional policies to guide projects and residents of the County towards more fire-wise decisions, and it supports practices for fuel management and infrastructure to support wildfire suppression, such as emergency water facilities or community water supplies. Although the Safety Element update identifies wildfire as a hazard and the documents supports infrastructure and practices that would reduce risks and the severity of wildfires, it does not give approval for any specific projects or improvements.

Additionally, the Safety Element update does not impair emergency response or evacuation plans. The update provides more current information and identifies additional risks associated with evacuation planning, but it does not conflict with or change any evacuation plans. Another section of the Safety Element that is being updated is to address land use associated with hazards. This section provides details on how land use influences the density and location of development, which should also be considered in emergency preparedness and planning. The additional information in the Safety Element would inform the public of wildfire risks and it does not increase the risks to people or structures. The Safety Element update includes information on wildfire hazards in Nevada County and contains policies to reduce short and long-term impacts to the community from these hazards, but the Safety Element does not approve any physical changes or impacts to the environment. Any future development project would be subject to a project-specific review and environmental impacts would be analyzed. Therefore, the update to the Safety Element would have *no impact* on increasing risks of wildfires, exposing people and structures to significant risks, the installation of facilities that would impact the environment, nor would it impair emergency response or evacuation plans.

**Mitigation:** None required.

**21. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of major periods of California's history or prehistory?				✓	A, M
b. Does the project have environmental effects that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of the project are				✓	A, M

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
considered when viewed in connection with the effects of past, current, and probable future projects.)					
c. Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?				✓	A, M

**Impact Discussion:**

21a,c The proposed Safety Element update is strictly a policy document, intended to guide the County in reducing short and long-term loss of life, injuries, and damage to property, resulting from natural and human-caused public safety hazards. The adoption of the proposed Safety Element update would not grant any entitlements for development or any physical changes. Additionally, all future development projects would require a site/project-specific environmental review at the time of project submittal. Therefore, the Safety Element update would have *no impact* related to these issues.

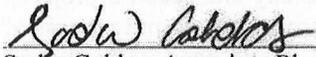
21b A project's cumulative impacts are considered significant when the incremental effects of the project are "cumulatively considerable," meaning that the project's incremental effects are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past, current, and probable future projects. Reasonably foreseeable projects that could have similar impacts to the proposed project include other anticipated projects within the project vicinity that could be constructed or operated within the same timeframe as the project. The proposed Safety Element update is strictly a policy document, intended to guide the County in reducing damage from natural and human-caused safety hazards. The document contains goals, policies and programs that are aimed at reducing aimed at reducing damage and injuries from hazards, but it does not approve any site-specific projects. Environmental impacts and cumulative impacts would be reviewed through the permit process of each project. Therefore, the adoption of the Safety Element update, would have *no impact* on environmental effects that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable.

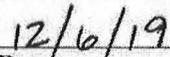
**Mitigation:** None required.

### RECOMMENDATION OF THE PROJECT PLANNER

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or a "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

  
Sadie Caldas, Associate Planner

  
Date

## APPENDIX A – REFERENCE SOURCES

- A. Planning Department
  - B. Department of Public Works
  - C. Environmental Health Department
  - D. Building Department
  - E. Nevada Irrigation District
  - F. Natural Resource Conservation Service/Resource Conservation District
  - G. Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District
  - H. Local Fire Districts
  - I. Regional Water Quality Control Board (*Central Valley* Region)
  - J. North Central Information Service, Anthropology Department, CSU Sacramento
  - K. California Department of Fish & Wildlife
  - L. Nevada County Geographic Information Systems
  - M. California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire)
  - N. Nevada County Transportation Commission
  - O. Nevada County Agricultural Advisor Commission
  - P. Local School District
  - Q. Gold Country Stagecoach
1. State Division of Mines and Geology. *Mineral Classification Map*, 1990.
  2. State Department of Fish and Game. *Migratory Deer Ranges*, 1988.
  3. State Department of Fish and Game. *Natural Diversity Data Base Maps*, as updated.
  4. Cal Fire. *Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map for Nevada County*, 2007. Adopted by CalFire on November 7, 2007. Available at: <[http://www.fire.ca.gov/wildland\\_zones\\_maps.php](http://www.fire.ca.gov/wildland_zones_maps.php)>.
  5. State Division of Mines and Geology. *Geologic Map of the Chico, California Quadrangle*, 1992.
  6. State Division of Mines and Geology. *Fault Map of California*, 1990.
  7. California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection. 2016. *Nevada County Important Farmland Data*. Available at: <ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/FMMP/pdf/2016/nev16.pdf>.
  8. State Dept. of Forestry & Fire Protection. *Nevada County Hardwood Rangelands*, 1993.
  9. U.S.G.S, *7.5 Quadrangle Topographic Maps*, as updated.
  10. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. *National Wetlands Inventory*, December 1995.
  11. Natural Resources Conservation Service. 2007. *Official Soil Series Descriptions (OSD) with series extent mapping capabilities*. Available at [http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov/manuscripts/CA619/0/nevada\\_a.pdf](http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov/manuscripts/CA619/0/nevada_a.pdf).
  12. U.S. Geological Service. *Nevada County Landslide Activity Map*, 1970, as found in the Draft Nevada County General Plan, Master Environmental Inventory, December 1991, Figure 8-3.
  13. Federal Emergency Management Agency. *Flood Insurance Rate Maps*, as updated.
  14. Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District. *Guidelines for Assessing Air Quality Impacts of Land Use Projects*, 2000.
  15. County of Nevada. *Nevada County General Plan Noise Contour Maps*, 1993.
  16. Nevada County. 1991. *Nevada County Master Environmental Inventory*. Prepared by Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Inc. (Sacramento, CA). Nevada County, CA.
  17. Nevada County. 1995. *Nevada County General Plan: Volume 1: Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Implementation Measures*. Prepared with the assistance of Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Inc. (Sacramento, CA). Nevada County, CA.
  18. Nevada County. *Nevada County Zoning Regulations*, adopted July 2000, and as amended.
  19. Nevada County. *Safety Element*, adopted 2014.
  20. California Attorney General's Office. "Addressing Climate Change at the Project Level." January 6, 2010.

21. US Environmental Protection Agency. *Current Nonattainment Counties for All Criteria Pollutants*. January 31, 2015. [www.epa.gov/oaqps001/greenbk/ancl.html](http://www.epa.gov/oaqps001/greenbk/ancl.html).
22. California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines & Geology. "Report 2000-19: A General Location Guide for Ultramafic Rocks in California -- Areas More Likely to Contain Naturally Occurring Asbestos." 2000.
23. Nevada County. *Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Update*. August 2017.  
<https://www.mynevadacounty.com/DocumentCenter/View/19365/Nevada-County-LHMP-Update-Complete-PDF?bidId=>
24. Nevada County. *Land Use and Development Code Section 5, Article 13, Grading*. Amended December 2016.
25. California Department of Toxic Substances Control. Accessed January 24, 2019:  
<http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>
26. USDA Soil Conservation Service. "Soil Survey of Nevada County Area, California." Soil Survey, Reissued 1993.
27. California Department of Conservation, California Geological Survey. 2010. Accessed January 25, 2019. <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/Pages/Earthquakes/affected.aspx>
28. California Department of Transportation. *California Scenic Highway Mapping System*. September 7, 2011. [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16\\_livability/scenic\\_highways/index.htm](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/index.htm)