Mission Statement: To foster a safe, vibrant, and prosperous community that enhances the quality of life for all

CITY OF SONORA
City Council Regular Meeting
Agenda
Monday, May 18, 2026
5:00 PM

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Sonora City Council will have their regular meeting on May 18, 2026, at 5:00 PM in the City of Sonora Council Chambers located at 94 N. Washington Street Sonora, CA 95370.

This meeting is physically open to the Public and citizens who wish to provide public comment during the meeting will be invited to do so by the Mayor.

Written comments can be submitted to be included as part of the administrative record; they will not be read during the meeting. All comments must be received by 3:00 pm on the day of the noticed meeting and can be submitted to the City Clerk at 94 N. Washington Street Sonora, CA 95370, or via email to nmccutchen@sonoraca.com.

Public Access Audio and Video Live Streaming

The Public will not have access to give public comments via public access audio and video live streaming; they are available for audio and visual only; and can be accessed via our website at www.sonoraca.com.

Remote viewing of the meeting via live streaming is provided to members of the public as a courtesy. If the live streaming connection malfunctions for any reason and no Council Members are attending via teleconference, the City Council will continue the public meeting in Chambers without remote access.

CITY COUNCIL appreciates your interest and encourages participation. Regularly scheduled meetings are held on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month.

The numerical order of the items on this agenda is for convenience of reference. Items may be taken out of order upon request of the Mayor or Council Members. All questions shall be directed to the Mayor who, at their discretion, will refer to Staff.

Mayor Ann Segerstrom

Vice Mayor Andy Merrill

Council Members Bess Levine, Stephen Opie, Mark Plummer

City Administrator Christopher Gorsky

City Attorney Douglas White

Vision Statement: With leadership and integrity, the City of Sonora commits to excellent service through collaboration and innovation

Mission Statement: To foster a safe, vibrant, and prosperous community that enhances the quality of life for all

OPEN SESSION - 5:00 PM

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

2. **ROLL CALL**

3. **CITY CLERK'S REPORT ON AGENDA POSTING**

4. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

5. **PUBLIC COMMENT** (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)

The public may address the Council on any item of public interest not otherwise on the agenda that is within the jurisdiction of the City. No action may be taken. Matters to be addressed may be referred to City Staff or placed on a subsequent meeting Agenda. Speakers are limited to a three (3) minute presentation.

6. **CONSENT CALENDAR**

Items on the Consent Calendar are considered routine and will be voted on in one motion unless a Council member or member of the public has a question or wishes to discuss an item. In that case, the item will be removed from the Consent Calendar and considered separately.

A. Consider Approval of the Meeting Minutes from May 4, 2026; Stacy Enos-Del Razo, Deputy City Clerk.

B. Approve a Proclamation Recognizing National Travel and Tourism Week, May 3-9, 2026, and California Tourism Month (May 2026); Ann Segerstrom, City of Sonora Mayor.

C. Consider Acceptance of an Informational Report for April 2026 Accounts Payable Payment Register and Void Report; Chris Gorsky, City Administrator.

D. Consider Acceptance of Disbursements in the Amount of $232,628.60 and $198,523.10 for Payroll, Including Employee Salaries, Employer and Employee Taxes, Retirement Contributions, Miscellaneous Voluntary Employee Deductions, Holiday Pay, and Other Adjustments, Including Retro-Pay; Nicole McCutchen, Administrative Services Officer.

7. **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

A. Consider Adoption of Resolution 05-18-2026-B Accepting the Updated Safety Element and Amending the City of Sonora General Plan; Tyler Summersett, Community Development Director.

B. Waive the First Reading, Read by Title Only, and Introduce Ordinance No. 916 of the Sonora City Council Amending the City of Sonora Municipal Code to Add Chapter 8.50 to Title 8 Regulating Tobacco Product Sales and Consider a Fee Schedule for Tobacco Retailer Licenses; Tyler Summersett, Community Development Director.

8. QUARTERLY REPORTS

A. Receive the Administrative Services Department Report for the 3rd Quarter of FY25/26; Chris Gorsky, City Administrator.

B. Receive the Community Development Departments Quarterly Report for January, February and March 2026; Tyler Summersett, Community Development Director.

C. Receive City of Sonora Fire Department Quarterly Report for January, February and March 2026; Brittan Gregory, Fire Chief.

D. Receive the City of Sonora Police Department Quarterly Report for January, February and March 2026.

E. Receive the Sonora Public Works Department Quarterly Report for January, February, and March 2026; Matt Lewallen, Public Works Supervisor.

9. COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

10. ADJOURNMENT

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the City Clerk at City Hall (209) 532-4541, nmccutchen@sonoraca.com. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting (28 CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title II).

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CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

CITY HALL

CITY OF SONORA 94 N. WASHINGTON STREET, SONORA, CA 95370 P: (209) 532-4541

SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

DATE: May 18, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council.

FROM: Stacy Enos-Del Razo, Deputy City Clerk.

SUBJECT: Meeting Minutes from May 4, 2026.

RECOMMENDATION:

Consider Approval of the Meeting Minutes from May 4, 2026.

DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS:

Staff Recommends the City Council Approve the Meeting Minutes from May 4, 2026.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No Fiscal Impact to the General Fund.

ATTACHMENTS:

Meeting Minutes from May 4, 2026.

CORE COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

Fiscal Responsibility and Stability, Infrastructure and Engineering, Public Safety and Disaster Preparedness, Economic Development/Growth and General Plan, Homelessness Issues, Staffing - Salary, Benefits, Training, and Retention

Mission Statement: To foster a safe, vibrant, and prosperous community that enhances the quality of life for all

CITY OF SONORA
City Council Regular Meeting
Minutes
Monday, May 04, 2026
5:00 PM

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Sonora City Council will have their regular meeting on May 4, 2026, at 5:00 PM in the City of Sonora Council Chambers located at 94 N. Washington Street Sonora, CA 95370.

This meeting is physically open to the Public and citizens who wish to provide public comment during the meeting will be invited to do so by the Mayor.

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Mayor Ann Segerstrom

Vice Mayor Andy Merrill

Council Members Bess Levine, Stephen Opie, Mark Plummer

City Administrator Christopher Gorsky

City Attorney Douglas White

Vision Statement: With leadership and integrity, the City of Sonora commits to excellent service through collaboration and innovation

Mission Statement: To foster a safe, vibrant, and prosperous community that enhances the quality of life for all

CLOSED SESSION - 4:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT
Mayor Ann Segerstrom
Vice Mayor Andy Merrill
Councilmember Bess Levine
Councilmember Stephen Opie
Councilmember Mark Plummer

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comment.

ADJOURN INTO CLOSED SESSION

1. Conference with Legal Counsel—Consideration of Initiation of Litigation (Government Code section 54956.9(d)(4)) (one matter); Douglas White, City Attorney, Chris Gorsky, City Administrator, Tyler Summersett, Community Development Director.

RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION

OPEN SESSION - 5:00 PM

REPORT OUT OF CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Ann Segerstrom stated direction was given to staff.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilmember Mark Plummer led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mission Statement: To foster a safe, vibrant, and prosperous community that enhances the quality of life for all

ROLL CALL

PRESENT
Mayor Ann Segerstrom
Vice Mayor Andy Merrill
Councilmember Bess Levine
Councilmember Stephen Opie
Councilmember Mark Plummer

CITY CLERK'S REPORT ON AGENDA POSTING

The Agenda was posted on Friday, May 1, 2026, at 9:20 am.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion made by Councilmember Mark Plummer, Seconded by Vice Mayor Andy Merrill. Voting Yea: Mayor Ann Segerstrom, Vice Mayor Andy Merrill, Councilmember Bess Levine, Councilmember Stephen Opie, Councilmember Mark Plummer

PUBLIC COMMENT (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)

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No public comment.

CONSENT CALENDAR

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2. Consider Approval of the Meeting Minutes from April 20, 2026; Stacy Enos-Del Razo, Deputy City Clerk.

3. Review and Discuss Adding to a Future Agenda a Proclamation Recognizing National Travel and Tourism Week, May 3-9, 2026, and California Tourism Month (May 2026); Ann Segerstrom, Mayor.

   Councilmember Mark Plummer clarified when the Proclamation would appear on the next Agenda.

4. Consider Acceptance of the Quarterly Investment Report for the Third Quarter of Fiscal Year 2025/26, for the period ended March 31, 2026; Chris Gorsky, City Administrator.

   No public comment.

   Motion made by Councilmember Mark Plummer, Seconded by Vice Mayor Andy Merrill. Voting Yea: Mayor Ann Segerstrom, Vice Mayor Andy Merrill, Councilmember Bess Levine, Councilmember Stephen Opie, Councilmember Mark Plummer

NEW BUSINESS

5. Consider Approval of Resolution 05-4-2026-A Recognizing and Celebrating the 175th Anniversary of the City of Sonora's Incorporation; Chris Gorsky, City Administrator; and

   Receive a Presentation from Pat Perry on the History of Sonora.

   Chris Gorsky City Administrator read to those in attendance Resolution 05-4-2026-A Recognizing and Celebrating the 175th Anniversary of the City of Sonora's Incorporation.

   Mayor Ann Segerstrom extended gratitude and thanks to the public officials who recognized the significant occasion and milestone in Sonora's history; Marla Livengood League of California Cities for assistance in contacting the public officials; and the Union Democrat.

   Historian Pat Perry presented an abridged version of the History of Sonora and its development.

   Mayor Ann Segerstrom thanked the Community Development Department for creating the banners on Washington Street.

   Vice Mayor Andy Merrill shared additional Historic information.

   A member of the public representing District 1 Supervisor Mike Holland read a statement on Sonora's 175th Anniversary.

   Motion made by Vice Mayor Andy Merrill, Seconded by Councilmember Mark Plummer. Voting Yea: Mayor Ann Segerstrom, Vice Mayor Andy Merrill, Councilmember Bess Levine, Councilmember Stephen Opie, Councilmember Mark Plummer

   Mayor Ann Segerstrom thanked Historian Pat Perry for her presentation.

Mission Statement: To foster a safe, vibrant, and prosperous community that enhances the quality of life for all

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Councilmember Stephen Opie had nothing to report.

Councilmember Bess Levine had nothing to report.

Councilmember Mark Plummer attended Cable 8 - Access Tuolumne.

Vice Mayor Andy Merrill had no official City business to report and shared information on Sonora Cat Rescue.

Mayor Ann Segerstrom attended the Cal LAFCO 201 Seminar; Safe Streets for All meeting; and commended the Columbia College Spring Concert.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned.

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CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

CITY HALL

CITY OF SONORA 94 N. WASHINGTON STREET, SONORA, CA 95370 P: (209) 532-4541

SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

DATE: May 18, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Ann Segerstrom City of Sonora Mayor

SUBJECT: Approve a Proclamation Recognizing National Travel and Tourism Week, May 3-9, 2026, and California Tourism Month (May 2026).

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve a Proclamation Recognizing National Travel and Tourism Week, May 3-9, 2026, and California Tourism Month (May 2026).

BACKGROUND:

Tourism plays a vital role in the economic vitality of the City of Sonora, Tuolumne County, and the surrounding Mother Lode Region. Visitors support local businesses, restaurants, lodging establishments, retail shops, cultural attractions, and recreational destinations, generating revenue and employment opportunities throughout the community.

The State of California recognizes May as California Tourism Month, highlighting the importance of travel and tourism to the state's economy and communities. In addition**,** National Travel and Tourism Week is celebrated annually to recognize the contributions of the travel industry and its positive impact on local economies nationwide.

Visit Tuolumne County serves as the destination marketing organization for the region and works to promote Tuolumne County as a premier travel destination through advertising, partnerships, visitor services, and tourism development efforts. Their work helps attract visitors to Sonora and the surrounding area, supporting local economic growth and showcasing the region's unique history, outdoor recreation, arts, and hospitality.

DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS:

This Proclamation recognizes the importance of tourism to the City of Sonora and acknowledges the efforts of Visit Tuolumne County, local businesses, hospitality professionals, and community partners who contribute to a welcoming visitor experience.

Recognition of California Tourism Month and National Travel and Tourism Week provides an opportunity to celebrate the positive impact of tourism, encourage continued collaboration, and thank those who help promote Sonora and Tuolumne County as outstanding destinations to visit.

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

CITY HALL

CITY OF SONORA 94 N. WASHINGTON STREET, SONORA, CA 95370 P: (209) 532-4541

SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

Representatives from Visit Tuolumne County may be present at the meeting to accept the Proclamation and share brief remarks regarding tourism initiatives and regional visitor activity.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No Fiscal Impact to the General Fund.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Proclamation Recognizing National Travel and Tourism Week, May 3-9, 2026, and California Tourism Month (May 2026).

CORE COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

Fiscal Responsibility and Stability, Infrastructure and Engineering, Public Safety and Disaster Preparedness, Economic Development/Growth and General Plan, Homelessness Issues, Staffing - Salary, Benefits, Training, and Retention

A PROCLAMATION

OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SONORA

National Travel and Tourism Week, May 3-9, 2026, and California Tourism Month (May 2026)

WHEREAS, National Travel and Tourism Week, May 3-9, 2026, and California Tourism Month (May 2026) provide an opportunity to recognize the importance of the travel and tourism industry and the positive impact it has on Tuolumne County and the City of Sonora; and

WHEREAS, The travel and tourism industry is a vital contributor to the economy of Tuolumne County and the City of Sonora, generating significant revenue, creating jobs, and supporting local businesses; and

WHEREAS, Visitors to the City of Sonora, in 2025, directly contributed $497,753 of Transient Occupancy Tax dollars into the City's revenue; and

WHEREAS, The tourism sector also generated $25.2 million in total state and local tax revenue in 2025, which supports emergency and essential services; and

WHEREAS, Visitors to Tuolumne County contributed $304 million to local accommodations, shops, dining establishments, and recreational activities; and

WHEREAS, The tourism industry provided employment for over 4,000 individuals directly and supported thousands more through indirectly related industries and jobs; and

WHEREAS, Travel enables success for all industries—including manufacturing, agriculture, utilities, services, automotive, healthcare and more—by driving sales growth, innovation, education, and operations that power our economy; and

WHEREAS, The natural beauty, cultural heritage, and recreational opportunities of Tuolumne County attract visitors from around the world, enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors alike; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Sonora hereby proclaims National Travel and Tourism Week, May 3-9, 2026, and California Tourism Month (May 2026); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, National Travel and Tourism Week, May 3-9, 2026, and California Tourism Month (May 2026) provide an opportunity to recognize the importance of the travel and tourism industry and the positive impact it has on Tuolumne County and the City of Sonora.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City to be affixed this 18th Day May of the year two thousand and twenty-six.

Signed _____ Attest _____

Ann Segerstrom, Mayor Nicole McCutchen, City Clerk

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

CITY HALL

CITY OF SONORA 94 N. WASHINGTON STREET, SONORA, CA 95370 P: (209) 532-4541

SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

DATE: May 18, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Chris Gorsky, City Administrator

SUBJECT: Consider Acceptance of an Informational Report for April 2026 Accounts Payable Payment Register and Void Report.

RECOMMENDATION:

Consider Acceptance of an Informational Report for April 2026 Accounts Payable Payment Register and Void Report.

BACKGROUND:

The Administrative Services Department manages the payment processing for all City disbursements. The City has three main types of payments which includes the following:

1. Vendors – These payments are associated with goods received and contractual services provided to the City and payroll benefits paid by the City on behalf of City employees.
2. Refunds – These payments are associated with refunds issued for deposits collected and have been authorized to be released for business licenses, building permits, rental agreements, etc.
3. Employees – These payments are associated with City-related travel advances and reimbursements related to training events or City business reimbursements.

DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS:

On a monthly basis, Administrative Services Staff prepare a monthly warrant report for vendors receiving payment from the City. The informational report for the monthly payments provides Council the oversight and ability to review all spending activity for the City.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact will result from this informational report on the April 2026 Accounts Payable Payment Register and Void report. Expenditures are tracked according to budget authority.

All payments have been approved for payment through the adoption of the fiscal year budget or by an additional item passed by Council.

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

CITY HALL

CITY OF SONORA 94 N. WASHINGTON STREET, SONORA, CA 95370 P: (209) 532-4541

SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

ATTACHMENTS:

- Accounts Payable Warrants Report

CORE COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

Fiscal Responsibility and Stability, Staffing - Salary, Benefits, Training, and Retention

City of Sonora

Warrants Register

April 2026

Check Number	Effective Date	Document Description	ID	Payee	Check Amount	Payment Type	VOID ?
204199	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200001	Access Tuolumne (Cable 8)	1,291.00	Check	No
204200	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200012	Columbia Communications, Inc.	42.45	Check	No
204201	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200016	Tuolumne County Public Power Agency	2,714.56	Check	No
204202	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200032	Mountain Oasis Water	38.20	Check	No
204203	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200035	Pacific Gas and Electric	2,343.56	Check	No
204204	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200036	O'Reilly Auto Parts	50.00	Check	No
204205	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200038	Safeguard Pest Control	56.00	Check	No
204206	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200043	Sonora Lumber Company	174.98	Check	No
204207	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200055	Keenan Associates	102,859.51	Check	No
204208	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200058	Unum Life Insurance Company of Amer	2,523.51	Check	No
204209	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200060	Combined Benefits Administrators	180.00	Check	No
204210	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200065	ProClean Supply	1,216.73	Check	No
204211	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200080	JTM Cleaning Co.	1,350.00	Check	No
204212	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200207	Sonora Police Officers Association	1,040.67	Check	No
204213	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200210	Operating Engineers #3	234.50	Check	No
204214	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200263	Hunt & Sons LLC	6,082.99	Check	No
204215	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200303	Pat Perry	200.00	Check	No
204216	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200413	CSG Consultants	3,580.00	Check	No
204217	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200477	Code 3 Technology LLC	915.97	Check	No
204218	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200505	Valley Strong Credit Union	2,106.00	Check	No
204219	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200535	Toshiba Financial Services	2,204.42	Check	No
204220	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200581	Regional Government Services	5,119.80	Check	No
204221	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200640	Diamond Digital Marketing Co.	2,600.00	Check	No
204222	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200810	HELIX Environmental Planning	2,357.10	Check	No
204223	4/2/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200811	Holt AG Solutions	320.00	Check	No
204224	4/13/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200011	AT&T Calnet 3	498.05	Check	No
204225	4/13/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200018	U.S. Bank Corporate Payment System	12,623.33	Check	No
204226	4/13/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200024	Comcast Business	367.51	Check	No
204227	4/13/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200024	Comcast Business	168.57	Check	No
204228	4/13/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200036	O'Reilly Auto Parts	39.45	Check	No
204229	4/13/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200038	Safeguard Pest Control	150.00	Check	No

City of Sonora

Warrants Register

April 2026

Check Number	Effective Date	Document Description	ID	Payee	Check Amount	Payment Type	VOID ?
204230	4/13/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200043	Sonora Lumber Company	37.43	Check	No
204231	4/13/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200074	Vision Service Plan (CA)	887.04	Check	No
204232	4/13/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200096	General Supply Company	1,463.44	Check	No
204233	4/13/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200117	Verizon Wireless	38.01	Check	No
204234	4/13/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200223	Department of Conservation	3.80	Check	No
204235	4/13/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200262	California Building Standards Commissi	54.00	Check	No
204236	4/13/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200263	Hunt & Sons LLC	3,219.28	Check	No
204237	4/13/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200345	Oak Valley Hospital	203.00	Check	No
204238	4/13/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200413	CSG Consultants	190.50	Check	No
204239	4/13/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200616	Granite Peak Alarms LLC	3,549.00	Check	No
204240	4/13/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200735	Przybyla Advisors	1,250.00	Check	No
204241	4/13/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200806	X-naut LLC	3,022.71	Check	No
204242	4/13/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	Emp2027	Mikale Bell	177.00	Check	No
204243	4/13/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	Emp2031	Jennifer Hannula	271.81	Check	No
204244	4/13/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	Emp2058	Eric Nygard	177.00	Check	No
204245	4/13/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	Emp2079	Zachary Argenal	1,882.60	Check	No
204246	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200005	Amazon Business	73.63	Check	No
204247	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200011	AT&T Calnet 3	441.66	Check	No
204248	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200013	JS West Propane Gas	67.31	Check	No
204249	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200020	AT&T Mobility (FirstNet)	1,565.52	Check	No
204250	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200020	AT&T Mobility (FirstNet)	67.56	Check	No
204251	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200024	Comcast Business	784.13	Check	No
204252	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200024	Comcast Business	382.51	Check	No
204253	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200024	Comcast Business	179.97	Check	No
204254	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200033	ODP Business Solutions, LLC	84.29	Check	No
204255	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200035	Pacific Gas and Electric	898.14	Check	No
204256	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200036	O'Reilly Auto Parts	3.63	Check	No
204257	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200038	Safeguard Pest Control	58.00	Check	No
204258	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200043	Sonora Lumber Company	558.48	Check	No
204259	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200047	Tuolumne Utilities District	173.48	Check	No
204260	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200048	The Union Democrat	882.00	Check	No
204261	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200075	Waste Management	12.18	Check	No

City of Sonora

Warrants Register

April 2026

Check Number	Effective Date	Document Description	ID	Payee	Check Amount	Payment Type	VOID ?
204262	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200101	Pine Alley Saw Shop	93.28	Check	No
204263	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200105	County of Tuolumne Information Tech D	2,538.90	Check	No
204264	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200111	Division of the State Architect	130.11	Check	No
204265	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200207	Sonora Police Officers Association	922.90	Check	No
204266	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200210	Operating Engineers #3	234.50	Check	No
204267	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200231	Visit Tuolumne County	84,326.73	Check	No
204268	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200263	Hunt & Sons LLC	706.99	Check	No
204269	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200354	Sonora Rentals & Sales	462.40	Check	No
204270	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200402	Viking Shred	129.98	Check	No
204271	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200413	CSG Consultants	10,758.50	Check	No
204272	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200505	Valley Strong Credit Union	2,106.00	Check	No
204273	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200598	Top Dog Police K9 Training & Consultin	250.00	Check	No
204274	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200737	TransUnion Risk and Alternative	152.00	Check	No
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204277	4/24/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200006	Central San Joaquin Valley Risk Manag	161,478.00	Check	No
204278	4/24/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200024	Comcast Business	252.57	Check	No
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204280	4/24/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200035	Pacific Gas and Electric	738.81	Check	No
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204282	4/24/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200047	Tuolumne Utilities District	4,744.55	Check	No
204283	4/24/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200059	Cal.Net Motherlode	89.01	Check	No
204284	4/24/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200060	Combined Benefits Administrators	3,353.70	Check	No
204285	4/24/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200071	Trotter's Welding	41.61	Check	No
204286	4/24/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200108	CISCO Fire Sprinklers, Inc.	200.00	Check	No
204287	4/24/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200263	Hunt & Sons LLC	3,977.37	Check	No
204288	4/24/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200282	Employee Relations, Inc.	683.07	Check	No
204289	4/24/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200430	Barton Overhead Door of Sonora, Inc.	9,185.57	Check	No
204290	4/24/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200616	Granite Peak Alarms LLC	360.00	Check	No
204291	4/24/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200787	Nickerson Investigate Services	3,016.87	Check	No
204292	4/24/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	Emp2072	Stacy Enos-Del Razo	250.00	Check	No
ACH413	4/13/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200600	Dewberry Engineers Inc.	35,585.62	Voucher	No

City of Sonora

Warrants Register

April 2026

Check Number	Effective Date	Document Description	ID	Payee	Check Amount	Payment Type	VOID ?
ACH414	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200003	Abila	745.85	Voucher	No
ACH415	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200010	American Tower	1,594.59	Voucher	No
ACH416	4/17/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200301	RingCentral	859.07	Voucher	No
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ACH424	4/24/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200600	Dewberry Engineers Inc.	993.21	Voucher	No
ACH425	4/24/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200600	Dewberry Engineers Inc.	1,096.19	Voucher	No
ACH426	4/24/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200600	Dewberry Engineers Inc.	1,244.88	Voucher	No
ACH427	4/24/2026	System Generated Check/Voucher	200600	Dewberry Engineers Inc.	606.71	Voucher	No
Report Total					570,977.88		

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

CITY HALL

CITY OF SONORA 94 N. WASHINGTON STREET, SONORA, CA 95370 P: (209) 532-4541

SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

DATE: May 18, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Nicole McCutchen, Administrative Services Officer

SUBJECT: Disbursements in the Amount of $232,628.60 and $198,523.10 for Payroll.

RECOMMENDATION:

Consider Acceptance of Disbursements in the Amount of $232,628.60 and $198,523.10 for Payroll, Including Employee Salaries, Employer and Employee Taxes, Retirement Contributions, Miscellaneous Voluntary Employee Deductions, Holiday Pay, and Other Adjustments, Including Retro-Pay.

DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS:

The April payroll included Hiring Bonuses and Employee Leave Payouts.

These were the 21st and 22nd payrolls of 26 for FY 25/26; In total, we have expended 77.4% of the Salaries and Wages for the FY25-26 budget, which is below budget.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Disbursements are part of the approved FY25-26 Budgets.

CORE COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

Fiscal Responsibility and Stability, Staffing - Salary, Benefits, Training, and Retention

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

CITY HALL

CITY OF SONORA 94 N. WASHINGTON STREET, SONORA, CA 95370 P: (209) 532-4541

SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

DATE: May 18, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Tyler Summersett, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Consider Adoption of Resolution 05-18-2026-B Accepting the Updated Safety Element and Amending the City of Sonora General Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

Consider Adoption of Resolution 05-18-2026-B Accepting the Updated Safety Element and Amending the City of Sonora General Plan.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Sonora developed a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) in 2024. The City had previously participated in the development of the 2018 Tuolumne County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, however the LHMP was created to identify specific needs, goals, mitigation actions, capital improvement projects, and local and regional partnerships relevant to the City of Sonora, for the purpose of protecting the community from natural and human-caused hazards.

Further details regarding these natural disasters, including relevant mitigation actions to reduce vulnerability, are included in the City of Sonora Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP). The City of Sonora LHMP was developed in accordance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000) and followed FEMA's 2023 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan guidance. The LHMP incorporates a process where hazards are identified and profiled, the people and facilities at risk are analyzed, and mitigation actions are developed to reduce or eliminate hazard risk. The implementation of these mitigation actions, which include both short-term and long-term strategies, involve planning, policy changes, programs, projects, and other activities. The LHMP is on the City's webpage and may be viewed at: *https://sonoraca.com/local-hazard-mitigation-plan/* .

The LHMP and Safety Element address similar issues, but the Safety Element provides a higher-level framework and policies that pertain to safety in the City, while the LHMP focuses on more specific mitigation, often short-term, and actions to enable jurisdictions to better protect lives, property, and natural systems. The Safety Element Update (SEU) addresses hazards of concern relevant to the City and provides goals, policies, and implementation measures to adapt to and minimize these hazards. The 2026 Sonora SEU

was developed in conjunction with the development of the 2024 City of Sonora Local

Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP). The hazards identified in the SEU and many of the goals, policies, and implementation measures included in the SEU coincide with the hazards, goals, and actions included in the LHMP.

Natural and human-caused hazards determined relevant to the City of Sonora in the SEU include the following: wildfire and urban fire hazards, seismic hazards, geologic hazards, flooding, hazardous materials/wastes, emergency operations, human-caused hazards, climate change, critical infrastructure, and evacuation.

DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS:

Required by State law, the City's Safety Element is a plan to minimize the hazards to public health and safety in and around the City of Sonora. It identifies the natural and human-caused hazards that affect, or have the potential to affect, existing and future development and operations, and provides guidance for protecting residents and other community members from injury and death. It describes existing conditions and sets policies and standards for improved public safety. The Safety Element also intends to minimize physical harm to the buildings and infrastructure in and around Sonora as a result of hazard events, and to reduce damage to local economic systems and community services (**Attachment 2** – *City of Sonora Safety Element dated 2026*).

The Safety Element reflects the City of Sonora's regard for the health and safety of its residents, and the well-being of other community assets. The Element addresses issues that would require government intervention to effectively achieve public safety. It is the responsibility of the City of Sonora to protect community members from danger and harm. The Safety Element helps to guide new development, as well as community programs and other efforts, with the intent of reducing the potential for harm from natural and human-caused hazards within Sonora and the Planning Area, which includes the land within City limits and the City's sphere of influence.

Some degree of risk is inevitable, as the potential for many disasters cannot be completely eliminated or avoided and efforts to predict when such disasters may occur are limited. Notwithstanding, the goal of the Safety Element is to reduce the risk of injury, death, property loss, or other hardships to acceptable levels. In accordance with California law, the Safety Element serves the following purposes:

- Protect the community from risks associated with a variety of hazards, including seismic activity, landslides, flooding, and wildfire, as required by the California Government Code Section 65302(g)(1).

- Map and assess the risk associated with flood hazards, develop policies to minimize the flood risk to new development and essential public facilities, and establish effective working relationships among agencies with flood protection responsibilities, as required by California Government Code Section 65302(g)(2).

- Map and assess the risk associated with wildfire hazards, develop policies to reduce the wildfire risk to new land uses and essential facilities, ensure there is adequate road and water infrastructure to respond to wildfire emergencies, and establish cooperative relationships between wildfire protection agencies, as required by California Government Code Section 65302(g)(3).

- Assess the risks associated with climate change on local assets, populations, and resources. Note existing and planned development in at-risk areas and identify agencies responsible for providing public health and safety and environmental protection. Develop goals, policies, and objectives to reduce the risks associated with climate change impacts, including locating new public facilities outside of at-risk areas, providing adequate infrastructure in at-risk areas, and supporting natural infrastructure for climate adaptation, as required by California Government Code Section 65302(g)(4).

The City of Sonora Safety Element is one of several plans that address community public safety and related topics, including other Sonora General Plan Elements, the Sonora Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), the Tuolumne County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), and local regulations. The 2026 Sonora Safety Element Update was developed in conjunction with the development of the 2024 City of Sonora Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Safety Element should be consistent with other Elements and plans in order to minimize conflicts between documents and ensure that the City has a unified strategy to address public safety issues. The Safety Element incorporates information and policies from these other documents where appropriate to help support this consistency. The following is a summary of each section in the Safety Element:

Section 1 – This section provides an introduction to the City's Safety Element and State law requirements. The Safety Element reflects the City of Sonora's regard for the health and safety of its residents, and the well-being of other community assets. The Element addresses issues that would require government intervention to effectively achieve public safety. It is the responsibility of the City of Sonora to protect community members from danger and harm. The Safety Element helps to guide new development, as well as community programs and other efforts, with the intent of reducing the potential for harm from natural and human-caused hazards within Sonora and the

Planning Area, which includes the land within City limits and its Sphere of Influence.

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

CITY HALL

CITY OF SONORA 94 N. WASHINGTON STREET, SONORA, CA 95370 P: (209) 532-4541

SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

Section 2 – This section discusses relationships between the Safety Element and other documents such as the other General Plan Elements, City of Sonora Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, Tuolumne County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, Tuolumne County Emergency Operations Plan and City of Sonora Emergency Operations Plan.

Section 3 – This section provides an overview of the City's geographic context and community profile.

Section 4 – This section provides an analysis of the City's Existing Conditions, including Fire, Wildfires, Wildland-Urban Interface Fires, Structural Fires, Past Fire Occurrences, Potential Changes to Fire Risk in Future Years, Climate Change and Wildfire, Fire Protection, Fire Hazards Goals, Policies, and Program Implementation.

Seismic and Geologic Hazards, Past Occurrences, Potential Changes to Geologic and Seismic Rish in Future Years, Climate Change and Geologic and Seismic Hazards, Seismic and Geologic Hazards Goals, Policies, and Programs/Implementation.

Flooding Hazards, Past Flood Occurrences, Potential Changes to Flood Rish in Future Years, Climate Change and Flooding, Flood Hazards Goals, Policies, and Programs/Implementation.

Hazardous Materials/Wastes, Hazardous Materials Goals, Policies and Programs/Implementation.

Emergency Operations, Pandemic, Emergency Operations Goals, Policies, and Programs/Implementation.

Human-Caused Hazards, Aircraft Crashes, Civil Disturbance, Cyberattacks, Human-Caused Hazards Goals, Policies, and Program/Implementation.

Climate Change, Vulnerable Populations and Assets, Climate Change Hazards Goals, Policies, and Programs/Implementation.

Critical Facilities and Infrastructure, Critical Facilities and Infrastructure Goals, Policies, and Programs/Implementation.

Evacuation, Evacuation Hazards Goals, Policies, and Programs/Implementation and Constraints

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

CITY HALL

CITY OF SONORA 94 N. WASHINGTON STREET, SONORA, CA 95370 P: (209) 532-4541

SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

CEQA DETERMINATION:

An Initial Study/Negative Declaration (IS/ND) was prepared for the Safety Element Update Project. Based upon the Initial Study, the City determined that preparation of an EIR to address the potential environmental impacts associated with the project consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15161 and 15168 was not required. The Initial Study evaluated several potential environmental effects of the proposed project. These resource categories were determined to be less than significant or have no impact based upon project specific impacts, including Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology/Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology/Water Quality, Noise, Recreation, Utilities/Service Systems, Agriculture and Forestry Resources, Land Use/Planning, Population/Housing, Wildfire, Energy, Mineral Resources, Public Services, Tribal Cultural Resources and Transportation (**Attachment 3** – *Initial Study/Negative Declaration*).

PUBLIC AND AGENCY COMMENTS:

Public Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration and Notice of Public Hearing for the project was prepared and posted pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines and State law. The Negative Declaration was circulated through the Office of Planning & Research for a 30-day public review period from July 14, 2025, through close of business on August 12, 2025.

The Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD) responded to the Community Development Departments request for review by stakeholder agencies, with some suggested edits and updates. These modifications were incorporated into the document. Comment letters on the project are in **Attachment 4** – Comments on Initial Study/Negative Declaration.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Adoption of the updated Safety Element is not anticipated to have a direct fiscal impact on the City's General Fund. Implementation of future goals, policies, and mitigation measures identified in the Safety Element will be incorporated into future budget discussions and may be supported through grant funding opportunities, capital improvement planning, and other available funding sources.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution No. 05-18-2026-B
2. Final City of Sonora Safety Element dated March 2026
3. Initial Study/Negative Declaration (IS/ND)—For Safety Element/Housing Element
4. Comments on IS/ND and Draft Safety Element

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

CITY HALL

CITY OF SONORA 94 N. WASHINGTON STREET, SONORA, CA 95370 P: (209) 532-4541

SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

CORE COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

Economic Development/Growth and General Plan

Resolution Number: 05-18-2026-B

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SONORA APPROVING THE GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT ADOPTING THE CITY OF SONORA SAFETY ELEMENT 2026

WHEREAS, the City of Sonora is mandated by the State of California to maintain an adequate and proper General Plan; and,

WHEREAS, because of this mandate, the City of Sonora's General Plan and various elements thereof must be periodically updated in accordance with State law; and

WHEREAS, Cities are required to review their Safety Element of the General Plan when their Housing Element or Local Hazard Mitigation Plans are updated, at least once every eight years, and make updates to include new information related to natural hazards, climate adaption, resiliency strategies, and evacuation accessibility, and to comply with statutory changes outlines in California Government Code Sections 65302(g) and 65302.15; and

WHEREAS, the City of Sonora updated its 2024-2029 Housing Element in 2025, which then necessitated the Safety Element Update for the Public Health and Safety; and

WHEREAS, the City updated its Safety Element to meet the requirements of California Government Code Sections 65302(g) and 65302.15 as updated by Senate Bills 1241, 379, 1035, and 99 as well as Assembly Bills 747 and 1409; and

WHEREAS, the City released a public draft of the Safety Element Update for public comment from July 14, 2025 to August 12, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the City submitted the draft Safety Element Update to the California Board of Forestry and Fire Prevention (Board of Forestry) for review on February 5, 2026; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Forestry reviewed the City's draft Safety Element on March 10, 2026, and provided the City with confirmation that the Safety Element Update was reviewed and approved; and,

WHEREAS, the City has determined, based upon the Initial Study/Negative Declaration prepared for the Safety Element, that the Safety Element will not result in new policies, programs or objectives that may result in a direct or indirect physical change in the environment, and that the Initial Study/Negative Declaration is the appropriate level of environmental review in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines; and,

WHEREAS, on April 27,2026, the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on the final Safety Element, and by a 5-0 vote, recommended the City Council adopt the Initial Study/Negative Declaration as the appropriate level of environmental review and adopt the Draft Safety Element; and,

WHEREAS, on May 18, 2026, the City Council conducted a public hearing on the final Safety Element; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has reviewed and held public hearings on the recommended General Plan Amendments including the Safety Element; and

Resolution Number: 05-18-2026-B

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the proposed amendments to the General Plan are consistent with all elements of the General Plan not otherwise amended; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE SONORA CITY COUNCIL HEREBY ADOPTS the Safety Element attached herewith and incorporated by reference.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED as a Resolution by the Sonora City Council at a meeting held by the City Council on the 18 day of May, 2026 by the following vote:

AYES: _____

NOES: _____

ABSENT: _____

ABSTAINING: _____

Dated:

_____
Ann Segerstrom, Mayor

ATTEST:_____
Nicole McCutchen, City Clerk

Prepared for:

City of Sonora
94 Washington Street
Sonora, California 95370
Contact: Tyler Summersett

City of Sonora

Safety Element

Prepared by:

CSG CONSULTANTS
3707 W. Garden Grove Boulevard,
Suite 100
Orange, California 92868
Contact: Glenn Lajoie

JANUARY 2026

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1 Introduction

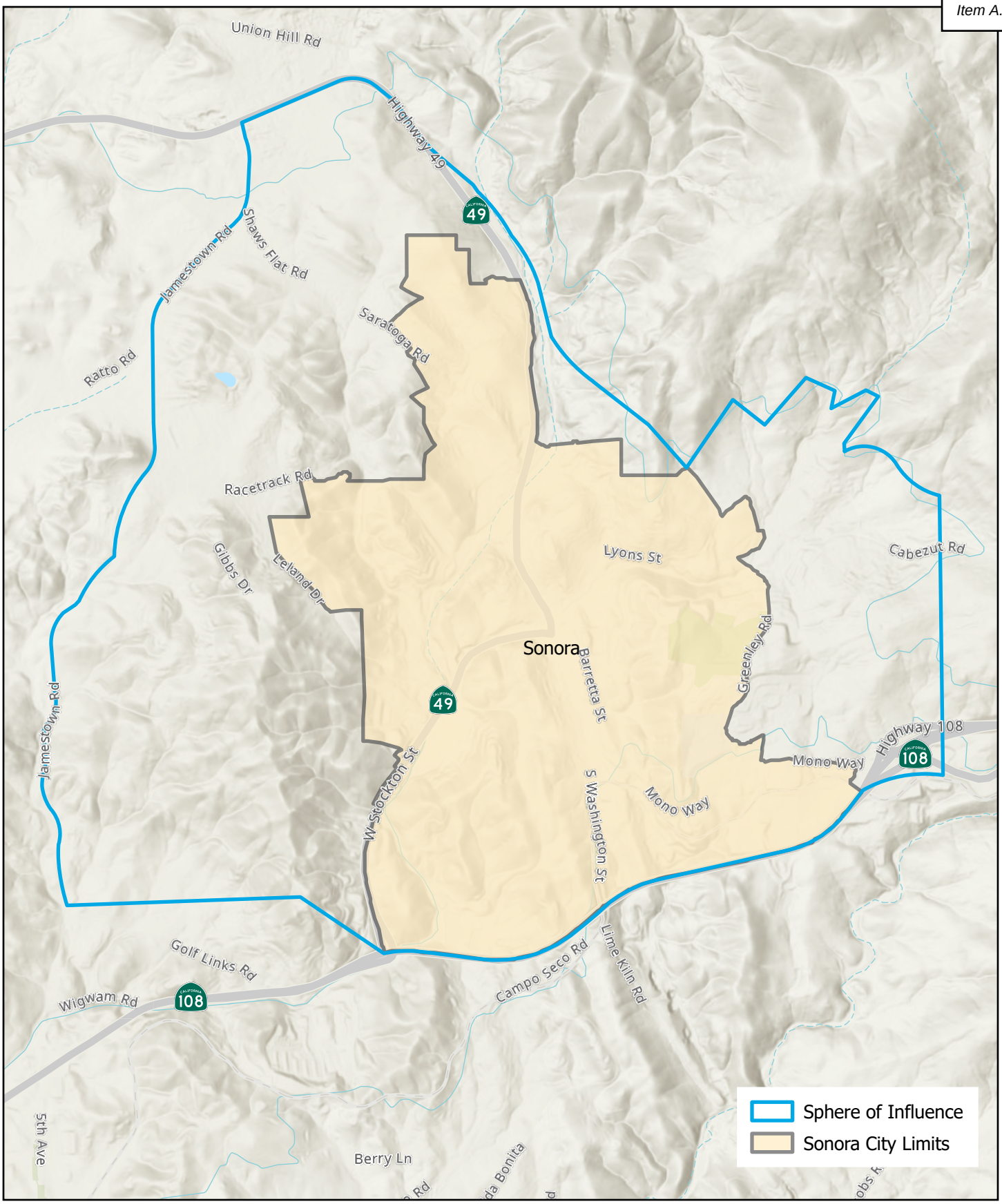


The Safety Element is a plan to minimize the hazards to public health and safety in and around the City of Sonora. It identifies the natural and human-caused hazards that affect, or have the potential to affect, existing and future development and operations, and provides guidance for protecting residents and other community members from injury and death. It describes existing conditions and sets policies and standards for improved public safety. The Safety Element also intends to minimize physical harm to the buildings and infrastructure in and around Sonora as a result of hazard events, and to reduce damage to local economic systems and community services.

The Safety Element reflects the City of Sonora's regard for the health and safety of its residents, and the well-being of other community assets. The Element addresses issues that would require government intervention to effectively achieve public safety. It is the responsibility of the City of Sonora to protect community members from danger and harm. The Safety Element helps to guide new development, as well as community programs and other efforts, with the intent of reducing the potential for harm from natural and human-caused hazards within Sonora and the Planning Area, which includes the land within City limits and the City's sphere of influence; refer to Exhibit 1-1, Project Location.

Some degree of risk is inevitable, as the potential for many disasters cannot be completely eliminated and efforts to predict when such disasters may occur are limited. The goal of the Safety Element is to reduce the risk of injury, death, property loss, or other hardships to acceptable levels. In accordance with California law, the Safety Element serves the following purposes:

- Protect the community from risks associated with a variety of hazards, including seismic activity, landslides, flooding, and wildfire, as required by the California Government Code Section 65302(g)(1).
- Map and assess the risk associated with flood hazards, develop policies to minimize the flood risk to new development and essential public facilities, and establish effective working relationships among agencies with flood protection responsibilities, as required by California Government Code Section 65302(g)(2).
- Map and assess the risk associated with wildfire hazards, develop policies to reduce the wildfire risk to new land uses and essential facilities, ensure there is adequate road and water infrastructure to respond to wildfire emergencies, and establish cooperative relationships between wildfire protection agencies, as required by California Government Code Section 65302(g)(3).
- Assess the risks associated with climate change on local assets, populations, and resources. Note existing and planned development in at-risk areas and identify agencies responsible for providing public health and safety and environmental protection. Develop goals, policies, and objectives to reduce the risks associated with climate change impacts, including locating new public facilities outside of at-risk areas, providing adequate infrastructure in at-risk areas, and supporting natural infrastructure for climate adaptation, as required by California Government Code Section 65302(g)(4).



Sources: City of Sonora, Tuolumne County
Map Export: 5/1/2024 12:43 PM.

EXHIBIT 1-1
Project Location

2 Relationship to Other Documents

The Sonora Safety Element is one of several plans that address community public safety and related topics, including other Sonora General Plan Elements, the Tuolumne County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP), the Tuolumne County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), and local regulations. The 2024 Sonora Safety Element Update was developed in conjunction with the development of the 2024 City of Sonora Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Safety Element should be consistent with other Elements and plans in order to minimize conflicts between documents and ensure that the City has a unified strategy to address public safety issues. The Safety Element incorporates information, technical analyses, and policies from these other documents where appropriate to help support this consistency.

2.1 General Plan Elements

The Sonora General Plan has twelve chapters that cover state-mandated Elements. The Safety Element provides policy direction and identifies safety improvements that complement the intent and policies of other General Plan Elements and City plans. Crucial relationships exist between the Safety Element and the other General Plan Elements. For instance, the Public Facilities and Services Chapter standards correspond with safety concerns related to emergency operations in the Safety Element and must be consistent with the policies to address those hazards.

2.2 City of Sonora Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

The City of Sonora developed a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) in 2024. The City had previously participated in the development of the 2018 Tuolumne County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, however the LHMP was created to identify specific needs, goals, mitigation actions, capital improvement projects, and local and regional partnerships relevant to the City of Sonora, for the purpose of protecting the community from natural and human-caused hazards.

Further detail regarding these natural disasters, including relevant mitigation actions to reduce vulnerability, are included in the City of Sonora Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP). The City of Sonora LHMP was developed in accordance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000) and followed FEMA's 2023 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan guidance. The LHMP incorporates a process where hazards are identified and profiled, the people and facilities at risk are analyzed, and mitigation actions are developed to reduce or eliminate hazard risk. The implementation of these mitigation actions, which include both short-term and long-term strategies, involve planning, policy changes, programs, projects, and other activities. The LHMP is on the City's webpage, linked here: *https://sonoraca.com/local-hazard-mitigation-plan/ (link)*

2.2 Tuolumne County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan

In collaboration with other local agencies, the County of Tuolumne led preparation of the updated MJHMP in 2024. The MJHMP assesses hazard vulnerabilities from natural and human-caused hazards, including risk to people and facilities, and identifies mitigation actions to reduce or eliminate hazard risks in Tuolumne County, including in unincorporated communities. The current MJHMP was developed in accordance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 and follows FEMA's 2011 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan guidance. The current MJHMP, as approved by FEMA, is incorporated into this Element by reference, as permitted by California Government Code Section 65302.6, and is available online at: *Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (link)*

The MJHMP and Safety Element address similar issues, but the Safety Element provides a higher-level framework and policies that pertain to safety in the City, while the MJHMP focuses on more specific mitigation, often short-term, and actions to enable jurisdictions to better protect lives, property, and natural systems.

Hazard mitigation plans form the foundation for a community's long-term strategy to reduce disaster losses and break the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage.

2.3 Tuolumne County Emergency Operations Plan

The Tuolumne County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) describes the County's response to small- and large-scale emergency situations associated with natural disasters and/or human-caused emergencies. The EOP is the principal guide for the County to respond to and mitigate emergencies and disasters within Tuolumne County's geographic boundaries. It outlines the methods for carrying out emergency operations, the process for rendering mutual aid, and the emergency services of governmental departments and agencies. It also describes how resources are to be mobilized, how the public will be informed, and the process to ensure continuity of government during an emergency or disaster. The current Tuolumne County EOP was updated in 2023 and adopted in March 2024.

2.4 City of Sonora Emergency Operations Plan

The City is in the process of developing its Emergency Operations Plan. At the time of publication of this Safety Element, the Emergency Operations Plan was being prepared and was not available. Once completed, the Emergency Operations Plan will describe how the City shall respond to and mitigate emergencies and disasters within the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI) and City limits. The Emergency Operations Plan will address the City's mobilization and processes that shall be implemented following any disaster that may occur as a result of the hazards identified in this Safety Element.

3 Community Profile

The City of Sonora is located in the eastern portion of Tuolumne County, covering approximately 3.18 square miles within the Sierra Nevada Foothills. Sonora is the only incorporated jurisdiction within Tuolumne County and serves as the County seat. The Planning Area, which includes the City's Sphere of Influence and the area within City limits, is surrounded by unincorporated Tuolumne County. The communities of Columbia and Springfield are located to the north, East Sonora to the east, and Jamestown to the west; refer to Exhibit 3-1, Regional Location. Regional access to the City of Sonora is provided by State Route (SR) 49 (north/south) and SR 108 (east/west). State Route 49 begins south of Sonora in Mariposa and passes through the City on its way north through Central California to Sattley/Sierraville. The western terminus of SR 108 is located in Sonora, where the highway turns into SR 49. State Route 49 is the main transportation route in Sonora and passes directly through Downtown; refer to Exhibit 3-2, Local Vicinity. State Route 49 is an important state highway that runs through the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and is a designated state scenic highway in many areas. Sonora consists of primarily hilly land; Sonora Creek extends through the City in a northeast to southwest direction and provides drainage outside of the Planning Area.

Sonora's Mediterranean climate is typical of the Sierra Nevada foothills, with a cool, rainy winter season and dry, hot summers. On average, annual high temperatures in Sonora range from 54 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) in December and January to 92°F in July. Low temperatures range from 32°F in January to 56°F in July. The City receives an average of 34.71 inches of precipitation annually.[1] Most precipitation falls during the winter months; summer storms are rare.



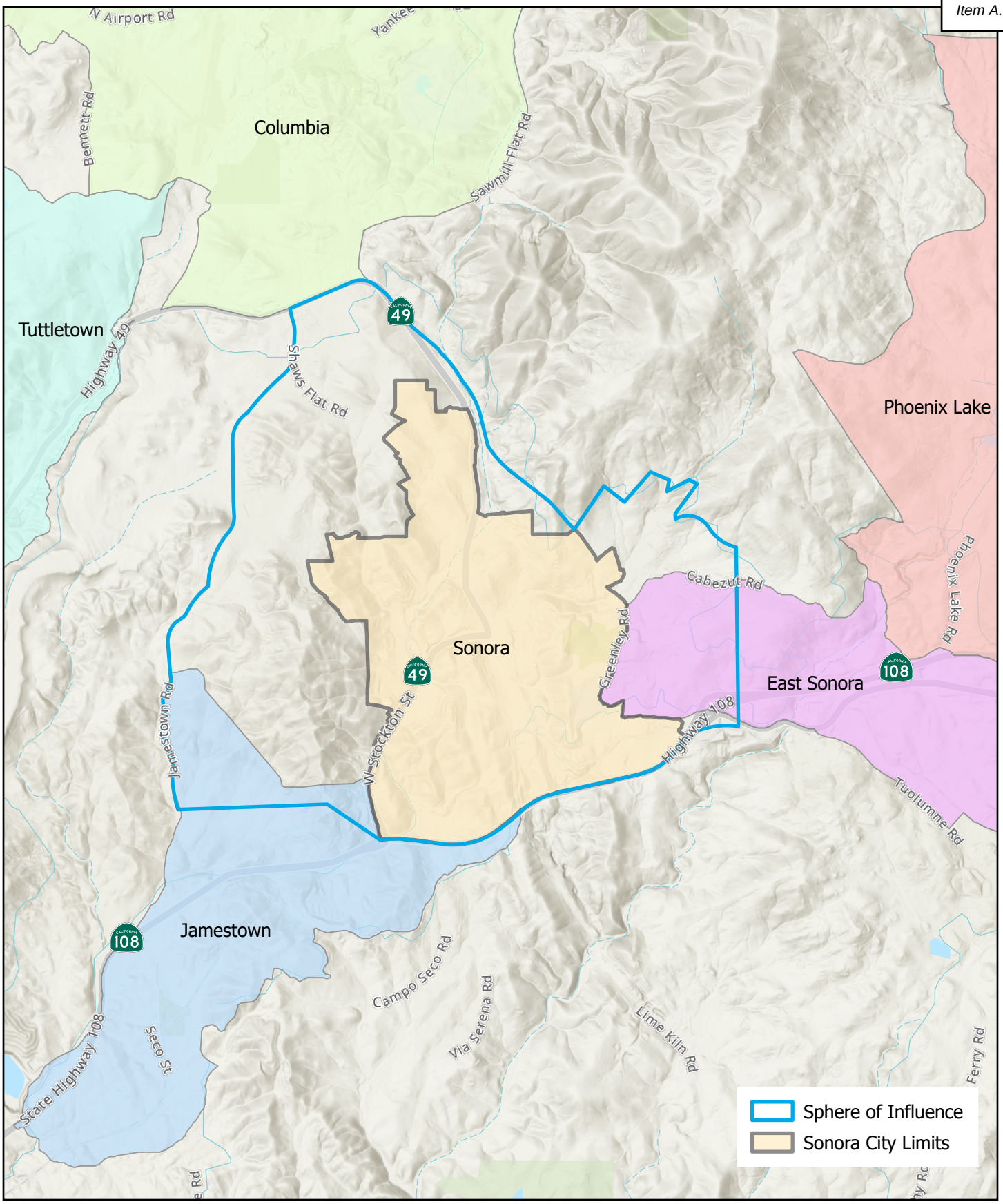
TCT Bus Stop

Land uses in the City primarily consist of commercial, residential, and agricultural uses. According to the 2022 U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year Estimates, the City of Sonora has an estimated population of 4,963 persons.[2] The median age of City residents is 41.5 years of age. Sonora has four schools/school facilities, one fire station, one police station, and community facilities such as City Hall, a public works facility, a hospital, transportation infrastructure, utilities properties, and several small parks (Cofill, Grigsby, Woods Creek). The Sonora Police Department and Sonora Fire Department provide police services, fire services, and emergency medical response to the community.

Sonora's primary transportation access is from State Route 49 and State Route 108. State Route 49 connects Sonora to Angels Camp and Calaveras County to the north and Mariposa to the south. State Route 108 connects Sonora to the Sierra Nevada Mountains and Highway 395 to the east. Bus service is the only public transportation service for all of Tuolumne County. Public bus service is provided to the Sonora area by Tuolumne County Transit (TCT). TCT links Sonora with East Sonora, Sierra Village, Columbia, and Groveland.

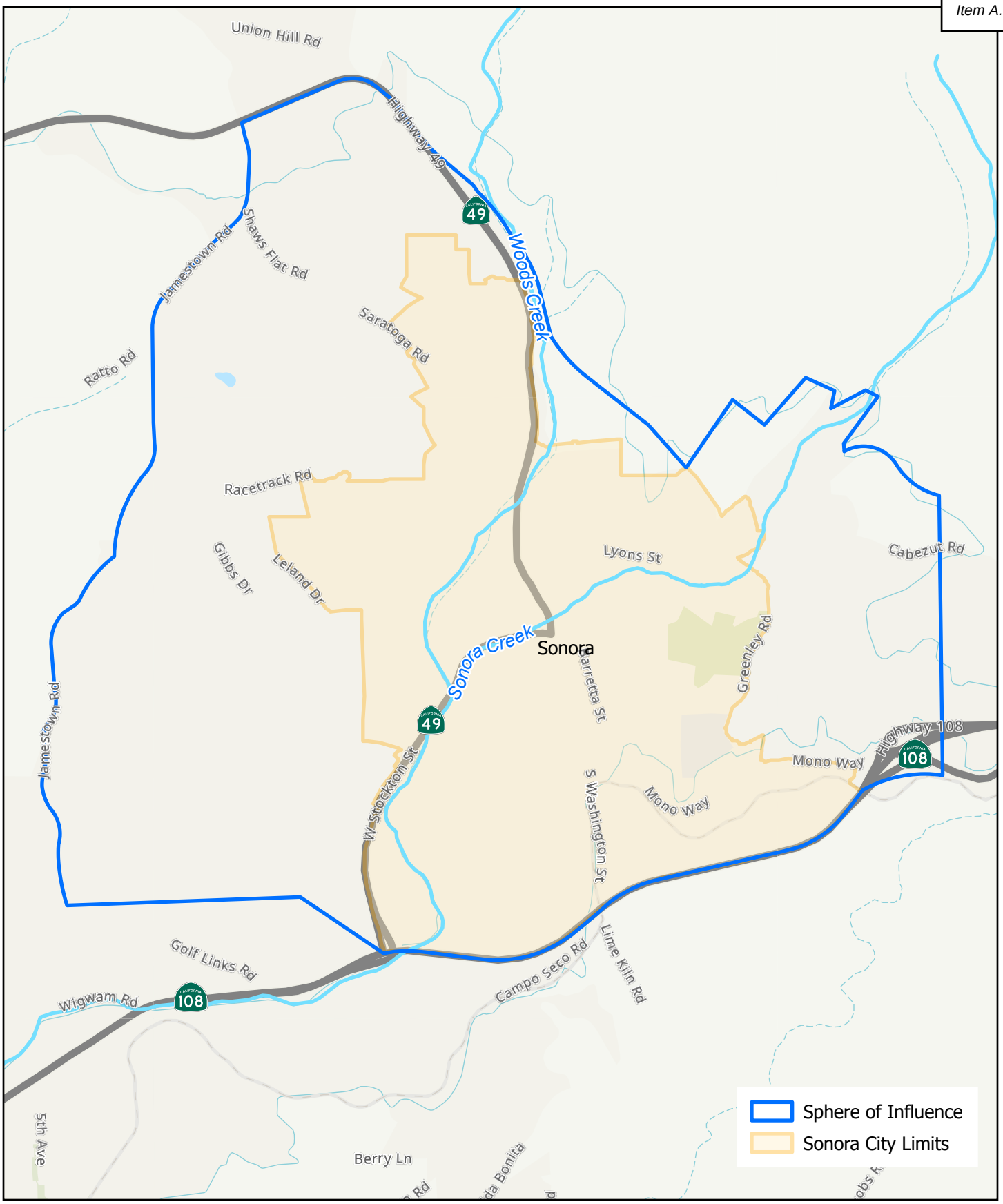
[1] U.S. Climate Data, "Climate Sonora – California," n.d., https://www.usclimatedata.com/climate/sonora/california/united-states/usca1077. Accessed 05 March 2024.

[2] United States Census Bureau, "American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data, Table DP05, 2022", https://data.census.gov/table?q=2022%20ACS%20DP05&g=050XX00US06109_160XX00US0672674. Accessed 05 March 2024.



Sources: City of Sonora, Tuolumne County
Map Export: 5/1/2024 1:08 PM.

EXHIBIT 3-1
Regional Location



Sources: City of Sonora, Tuolumne County
Map Export: 5/1/2024 4:33 PM.

EXHIBIT 3-2
Local Vicinity

4 Existing Conditions

This section outlines the existing hazardous conditions and other public safety issues in Sonora, including fire (urban and wildland), seismic and geologic hazards, flood, hazardous materials/wastes, emergency operations, human-caused hazards, climate change, critical facilities and infrastructure, and evacuation. This section provides details pertaining to probable locations where each hazard or issue is likely to occur (per availability of data), past notable events in and around Sonora, agencies responsible for providing protection from these public safety issues, and other background information as required by the State.

The goals and policies in this report were developed by the City of Sonora in 2024. These goals and policies are presented by topic and sequentially, not by priority.

4.1 Fire

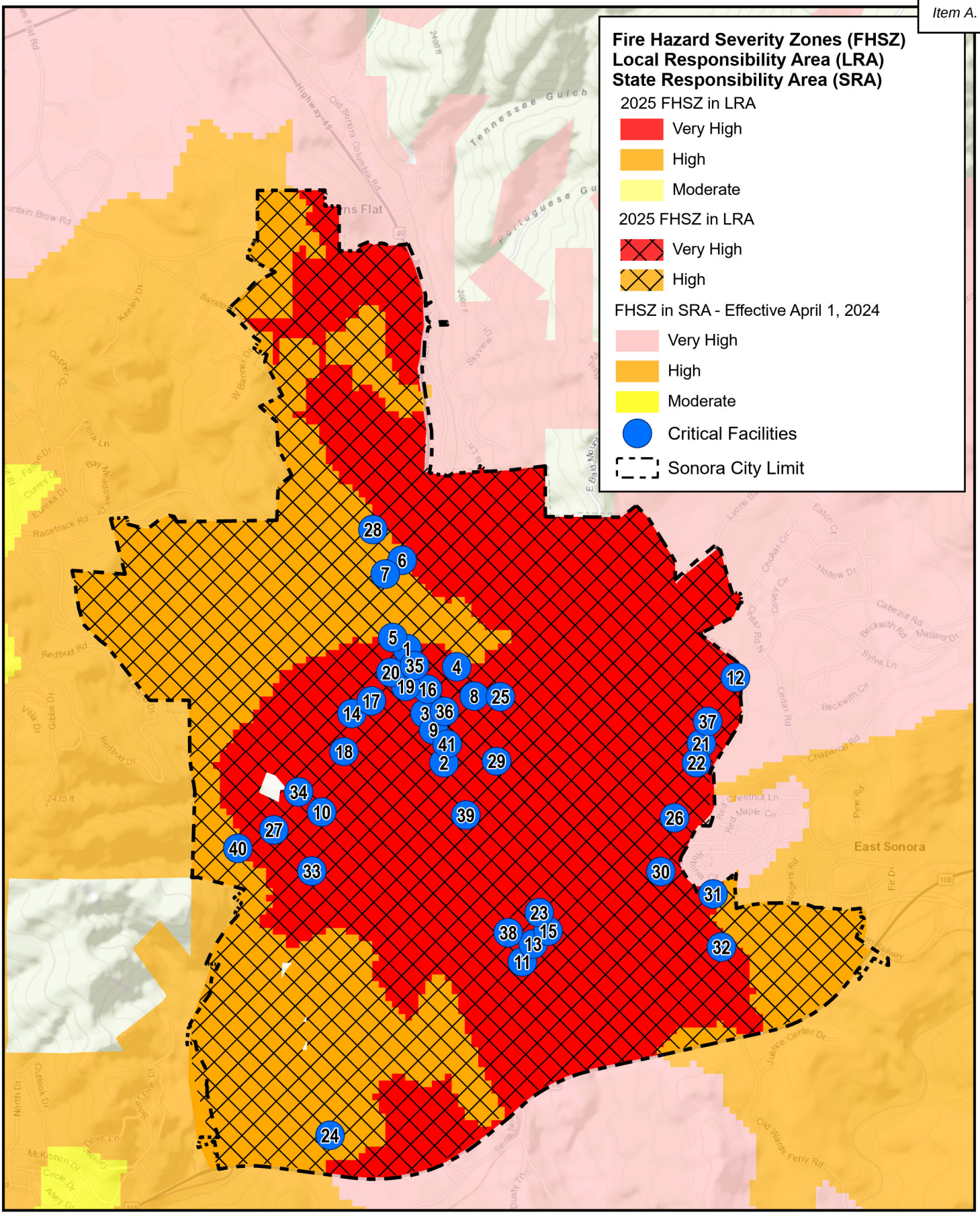
Fire hazards can occur in the form of both wildfires and urban fires. The combination of complex terrain, Mediterranean climate, and productive natural plant communities, along with ample ignition sources, have created conditions for extensive wildfires throughout California. Wildfire is an ongoing concern for communities in Tuolumne County and the Sierra Nevada Foothills. Generally, the fire season extends from early spring through late fall of each year during the hotter, dryer months. Factors which may influence the potential for wildfire include the extent and type of vegetation, temperature, humidity, wind, topography, and fuel moisture content. As mentioned above, the foothills, including Sonora, experience long, dry summers. Even fires that do not threaten the community of Sonora itself can still generate harmful levels of air pollution.

Three types of fires are of concern to the City of Sonora: (1) wildfires, (2) wildland-urban interface fires, and (3) to a lesser extent, structural fires.

4.1.1 Wildfires

Wildfires may occur at any time of the year when conditions are right, although the wildfire potential for Tuolumne County is typically greatest from June to November. This is when dry vegetation coexists with extremely hot average daily temperatures and seasonal drought conditions, all of which exacerbate fire hazards. Vegetation, wind, temperature, humidity, and slope are all factors that affect how wildfires spread. Wildfires typically occur on mountains, hillsides, and grasslands. The City of Sonora and the areas immediately surrounding the City have heavily wooded communities and steep terrain that create substantial wildfire risk to the City. The climate of the Sonora region keeps the grass dry and more readily combustible during the fire season. Steep slopes bring grass and brush within reach of upward flames while impeding access of fire-fighting equipment. Seasonal drought conditions and unregulated camping activities in areas with vegetative fuel exacerbate fire hazards.

Much of the City of Sonora is designated as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ), the highest risk level designated by the State Fire Marshal. The majority of the VHFHSZs are located in residential areas in the northern, eastern, and western areas of the City. These wildfire zones extend into the City until reaching the developed commercial corridors surrounding Washington Street, Greenly Road, Mono Way, and West Stockton Street. The large undeveloped open space and wooded areas in the southwestern portion of the City are also mapped as a VHFHSZ. The City FHSZ falls under local jurisdiction responsibility (City of Sonora Fire Department) and is classified as a Local Responsibility Area (LRA); refer to Exhibit4-1, Wildfire Hazard Zones.



Data Sources: City of Sonora, Tuolumne County, CAL FIRE 2025
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EXHIBIT 4-1
Wildfire Hazard Zones



Motherlode Fairgrounds

The Planning Area is surrounded by unincorporated areas of Tuolumne County, which include fire hazard severity zones in State Responsibility Areas (SRAs). The majority of these unincorporated areas are very high fire hazard severity zones, with pockets of moderate and high severity areas to the northwest and east of the City. This indicates a significant risk of wildfire in the surrounding areas of Tuolumne County that could spread rapidly and threaten the City of Sonora; refer to Exhibit 4-2, Fire Responsibility Areas.

Due to the location of development within VHFHSZs in the City, there is potential for a wildfire to spread quickly within the City, depending on the conditions and nature of the fire. Further, the mapped areas of high and very high FHSZ that surround the City boundary are indicative of a greater wildfire extent, as wildfires could begin outside of the City and spread toward Sonora.

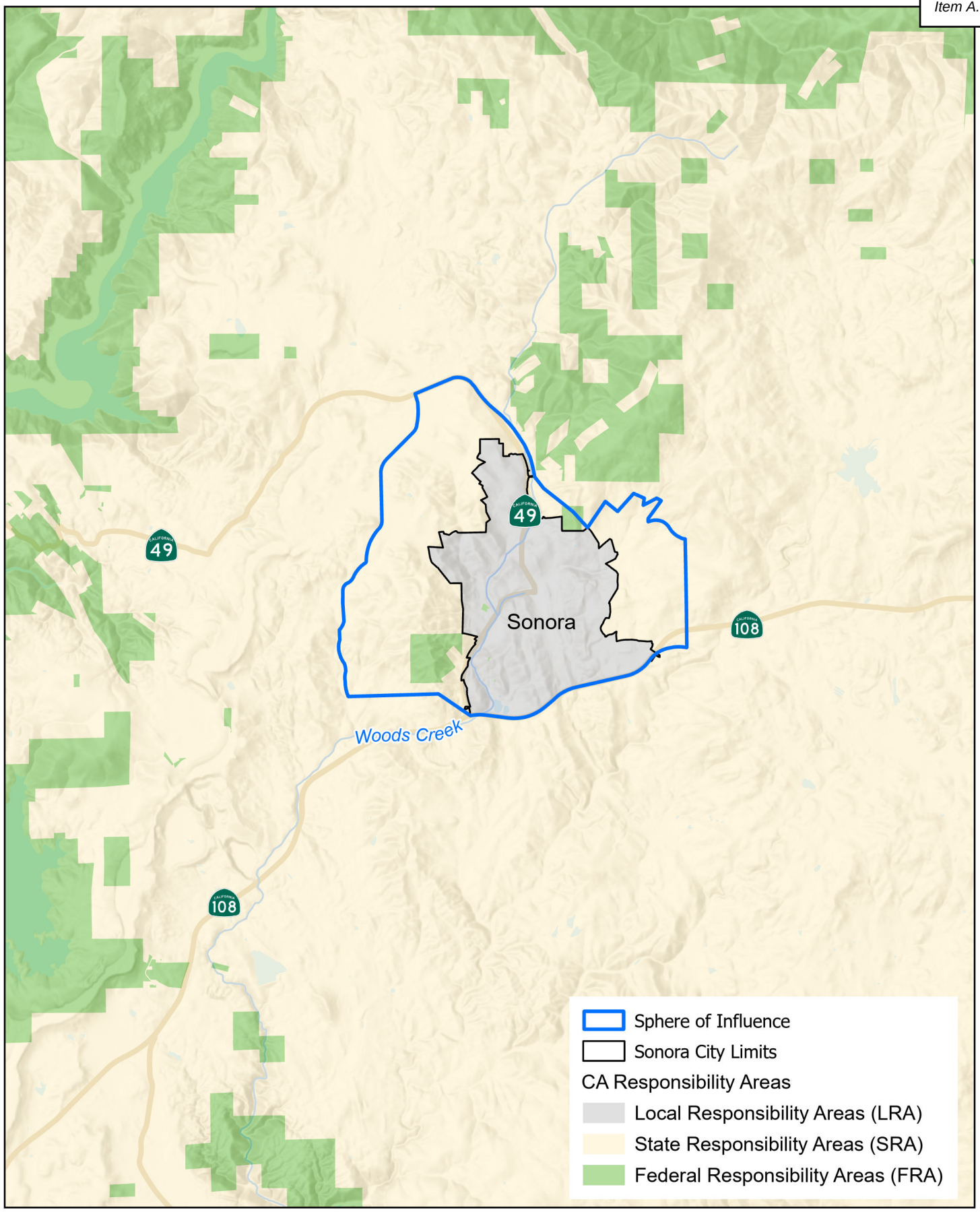
A substantial portion of the City is located within a VHFHSZ, categorized as an LRA, the majority of which is located in residential areas. A marginal portion of the City along the southwest boundary is within a HFHSZ, categorized as an SRA. A vulnerability analysis was conducted for the 2024 LHMP, which identified critical facilities located in the VHFHSZ (refer to Table 3-6, City of Sonora Critical Facilities, and Exhibit 3-1, Critical Facilities, in the LHMP). One fire station, two city bridges, the Tuolumne County IT Department, Adventist Health (Hospital), Tuolumne County Sheriff Department, Tuolumne County Main Library, Tuolumne County Senior Center, Sonora Wastewater Treatment Plant, PG&E Tar Flat Substation, Motherlode Fairgrounds, Heaven for Kids Playground, and AT&T Property were among the facilities identified within the VHFHSZ. Though no areas of the City are identified as lacking service under existing conditions, it is feasible that one or multiple vulnerable critical facilities may be at risk during a wildfire, including facilities critical to the coordination of emergency services, as well as communication services. There are approximately 2,179 residential units and approximately 10,372,072 square feet of non-residential structures located within the VHFHSZ.

Additionally, potential air pollution from wildfires within the region, but outside of the Planning Area, may pose health risks to the City. The pollutant of most concern from wildfire smoke is fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$). $PM_{2.5}$ from wildfire smoke is damaging to human health due to its ability to deeply penetrate lung tissue and affect the heart and circulatory system. Although wildfire smoke presents a health risk to everyone, sensitive groups may experience more severe acute and chronic symptoms from exposure to wildfire smoke, such as children, older adults, or people with chronic respiratory or cardiovascular disease. Wildfire vulnerability is also closely related to vulnerability with other natural hazards, including drought.

4.1.2 Wildland-Urban Interface Fires

The wildland-urban interface is an area where buildings and infrastructure (e.g., cell towers, schools, water supply facilities) mix with areas of wildland vegetation. This interface is sometimes divided into the defense zone (areas in close proximity to communities, usually about a quarter-mile thick) and threat zones (an approximately one and a quarter-mile buffer around the defense zone.[3] In areas where structures and other human development intermingles with wildland or vegetative fuels, wildfires can cause significant property damage and present extreme threats to public health and safety.

[3] California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection. "Appendix PD-1 Description of Treatable Landscape Modeling." *Program EIR for the California Vegetation Treatment Program.* PDF.



Data Sources: State of California; ESRI
Map Export: 8/22/2025 1:33 PM.

EXHIBIT 4-2
Fire Responsibility Area

The classic wildland-urban interface exists where well-defined urban and suburban development adjoins open wildland areas. The mixed wildland-urban interface is characterized by isolated homes, subdivisions and small communities situated predominantly in wildland settings. The City of Sonora is characterized by both classic and mixed wildland-urban interfaces, with heavily wooded communities and steep terrain. The City of Sonora is one of many communities in Northern California facing increased wildfire hazards from fuel growth and density. This is causing a strain on existing fire protection systems beyond their original or current design and capability.



Saint James' Episcopal Church and Sonora Fire Museum

The City of Sonora is heavily wooded, and most of the Planning Area is categorized as a VHFHSZ. Much of the VHFHSZ is in residential areas that are located within the wildland-urban interface. Additionally, the City is surrounded by unincorporated, vegetated areas that are categorized as moderate to very high fire hazard severity. Development on the outskirts of the City is located in the wildland-urban interface located in Tuolumne County.

As the number of structures/developments in the wildland-urban interface increases, so does the risk of incidence of fire. Due to the location of development in Sonora, there is potential for wildfire to spread quickly within the City, whether ignition occurs within City limits or in the surrounding area. In the wildland-urban interface, efforts to prevent ignitions and limit wildfire losses hinge on hardening structures and creating defensible space through a multi-faceted approach, which includes engineering, enforcement, education, emergency response, fuel reduction grants, and economic incentive. The Sonora Fire Department enforces the City's defensible space ordinance through routine inspections in order to implement wildfire prevention and protection practices and minimize the spread of fire to surrounding areas. The defensible space zone is characterized by the establishment and maintenance of a thirty-foot buffer of wildfire prevention measures around a building, structure, or dwelling, and a reduced fuel zone that extends between thirty to one hundred feet away from a building, structure, or dwelling, or to the property line.

4.1.3 Structural Fires

Urban fires occur in built-up environments, destroying buildings and other human-made structures. Sonora is at risk from structural fires, which are often due to faulty wiring or mechanical equipment and combustible construction materials. The absence of fire alarms and fire sprinkler systems are often conditions that exacerbate the damage associated with structural fire. Structural fires occur largely from human accidents, although deliberate fires (arson) may be a cause of some events. Older buildings that lack modern fire safety features may face greater risk of damage from fires. To minimize fire damage and loss, the City's Fire Code, based on the State Fire Code, sets standards for building and construction. It requires the provision of adequate water supply for firefighting and fire-retardant construction, among other provisions.

4.1.4 Past Fire Occurrences

Given the landscape and terrain of Tuolumne County, including forested areas along the western Sierra Nevada Mountains, significant wildfires have historically occurred within proximity to the City. These fires have resulted in varying impacts with the amount of acreage ranging from a few hundred acres to over 250,000 acres. Most wildfire occurrences within the Planning Area have been smaller in nature. Major wildfires have not regularly occurred within the City of Sonora. However, regionally significant wildfires negatively affect the Planning Area by causing smoke and poor air quality in Sonora. Large regional wildfires could also spread toward Sonora, prompting evacuation and shelter in place procedures, or otherwise strain local public safety agencies. Major

wildfires (greater than 10,000 acres burned) in the surrounding area since 1987 and wildfires with specific impacts to the City of Sonora are discussed below.

1987 Stanislaus Complex Fire – The Stanislaus Complex Fire burned approximately 145,950 acres south of Highway 108, across Highway 120, and south toward Mariposa.

1996 Ackerson Fire – The Ackerson Fire burned approximately 61,070 acres in Yosemite National Park and Stanislaus National Forest east of Sonora.

2001 Creek Fire – The Creek Fire burned approximately 11,500 acres south of Sonora near Coulterville, spanning both sides of Highway 49.

2001 Darby Fire – The Darby Fire burned approximately 14,280 acres north of Sonora in Calaveras County.

2013 Rim Fire – The Rim Fire burned approximately 257,314 acres, east of Sonora in Yosemite National Park and the Stanislaus National Forest. The fire began as a result of an illegal campfire, approximately 20 miles east of Sonora. The Rim Fire is the 11th largest wildfire in California history. The fire burned 11 homes, 3 commercial structures, 98 outbuildings, and injured 10 people.

2018 Donnell Fire – The Donnell Fire burned approximately 36,450 acres east of Sonora around Highway 108 in the Stanislaus National Forest.

2021 Washington Fire – The Washington Fire burned 160 acres and destroyed 18 structures. The fire ignited outside the City limits in Tuolumne County, at the intersection of Golf Links Road and SR 108 southwest of Sonora. Tuolumne County and the City of Sonora both proclaimed a Local State of Emergency as a result of the Washington Fire, and the fire resulted in multiple road closures and evacuation orders in the City.

2022 Woods Fire – The Woods Fire occurred near SR 108 and SR 49 near the southwest border of Sonora in Tuolumne County. The fire burned 21 acres; however, it resulted in the closure of Stockton Road between SR 108 and Ponderosa Way in Sonora. Evacuation orders and warnings were issued for residential areas just outside of Sonora. The Tuolumne County Sheriff Posse Grounds served as an evacuation center.

4.1.5 Potential Changes to Fire Risk in Future Years

Possible Future Fire Occurrences

From June to November each year, Tuolumne County has historically faced a serious wildfire threat that is very likely to continue. The threat of wildfire and potential losses are constantly increasing as human development and population increase and the wildland-urban interface areas expand. Due to its fuel load and long, dry summers, most of Tuolumne County continues to be at risk from wildfire. While the City has limited major wildfire occurrences within the Planning Area, there is a high probability of future wildfire occurrence in surrounding areas. The likelihood of structural fires in the City is likely to remain consistent with historic levels.

CALFIRE and the Tuolumne County Fire Department developed a Strategic Plan 2021-2025 to expand funding and outreach, enhance the firefighter volunteer program, and improve fire monitoring and fighting equipment for Tuolumne County Fire and areas surrounding the City of Sonora. The City has taken similar measures to prevent wildfires, including vegetation management, defensible space inspections, staffing increases, and code enforcement actions within the Planning Area.

Climate Change and Wildfire

Changing climate conditions are expected to increase the wildfire risk in and around Sonora. Warmer temperatures brought on by climate change can exacerbate drought conditions. Droughts can kill or dry out plants, creating more fuel for wildfires. It is possible that higher temperatures could cause local native chaparral and scrub ecosystems to become even more flammable grasslands. This would increase dry plant

matter, which could cause wildfires to move faster or spread into developed areas. In recent years, California has witnessed the largest fires in state history, some burning more than or close to 1,000,000 acres. Increasingly, wildfires are being ignited by thunderstorms and lightning strike activity over the summer, which is expected to continue with more extreme weather patterns as a result of climate change.

The annual average area burned in Sonora is expected to remain relatively constant, with an historical average of approximately 135 acres per year, to approximately 128 to 141 acres per year by mid-century. Additionally, climate projections indicate that the number of days per year during which the dryness of the soil in and around Sonora indicates severe drought will increase from an historical average of 106 days to an average of approximately 130 days by mid-century.[4] The annual average area burned in Tuolumne County is expected to increase from an historical average of approximately 11,850 acres per year, to approximately 17,180 to 20,500 acres per year by mid-century.[5] Regional wildfires will become an increased threat in Tuolumne County, and are likely to occur near or impact the City of Sonora, in part by releasing smoke, ash, and other particulate matter that degrades air and water quality. Due to warmer temperatures, the fire season is also likely to begin earlier in the year and extend later than it has historically.

4.1.6 Fire Protection

Fire protection in the Planning Area is provided by the City of Sonora. The City of Sonora Fire Department (SFD) has one fire station located at 201 South Shepherd Street. SFD is responsible for all risk/fire/hazard emergency services to the City of Sonora and all fire-related incidents within the Local Responsibility Area. SFD is also part of the 2016 Tuolumne County Fire Service Providers Automatic Aid Agreement, which includes all the fire service providers in the County and establishes a basic tenant of the fire service of the closest resource concept. These agencies include the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE), Columbia Fire Protection District, Jamestown Fire Protection District, Chicken Ranch Tribal Fire Department, Tuolumne City Fire Protection District, Tuolumne Rancheria Fire Department, Twain Harte Fire District, Miwuk Sugar Pine Fire District, Groveland Fire District, and the Tuolumne County Fire Department. This agreement allows for decreased response times and increases fire ground staffing while still respecting jurisdictional boundaries.[6] As a result, the SFD responds to calls in neighboring unincorporated Tuolumne County as well as the communities of Columbia and Jamestown, in addition to servicing the City. The City of Sonora has a Mutual Threat Zone Agreement (MTZA) with CALFIRE to provide services and cooperative efforts in both the SRA and LRA.

SFD provides fire protection and prevention, emergency medical services, public education, non-emergency public services, and disaster preparedness and response to the City and surrounding areas. The department is staffed with two full-time personnel (Fire Captain and Fire Engineer) and two Volunteer Intern Firefighters when positions are filled. At the time of writing of this Safety Element, the SFD had one Fire Chief, one Administrative Assistant, three Fire Captains, three Fire Engineers, three Relief Fire Engineers, 5 Intern Firefighters, and 8 Volunteer Firefighters. SFD relies on the participation of volunteers, off duty full-time personnel, and other fire agency resources during large-scale emergency events.[7] At any given time, there is a minimum of two paid staff members at the fire station 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. The City Fire Department responds with the following equipment: a 2020 Type 1 Smeal Fire Engine, 2023 Type 6 Rosenbauer Fire Engine, 2024 Type 3 BME Fire Engine, 1996 75’ Arial Quint (Truck), 2005 Reserve Type 3 Fire Engine, and three staff vehicles. The Sonora Fire Department’s average response time is approximately 4 minutes within the City limits 90% of the time.

[4] Cal-Adapt. 2024. “Local Climate Change Snapshot for Sonora.” Accessed 07 March 2024. https://cal-adapt.org/tools/local-climate-change-snapshot.
[5] Cal-Adapt. 2024. “Local Climate Change Snapshot for Tuolumne County.” Accessed 07 March 2024. https://cal-adapt.org/tools/local-climate-change-snapshot.
[6] Tuolumne County. “CAL FIRE/Tuolumne County Fire Department 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.” Accessed 07 March 2024. https://www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/25399/TCFD-2021-2025-STRATEGIC-PLAN-signed_1.
[7] City of Sonora. “Fire Department.” Accessed 07 March 2024. https://sonoraca.com/city-services/departments/fire-department/.

4.1.7 Fire Hazards Goals, Policies, and Programs/Implementation

GOAL 1: Minimize risk of injuries, property damage, and economic loss resulting from urban and wildland fires in and around Sonora.

Policy 1.1: Continually identify any areas of likely wildfire or urban fire risks in Sonora.

Program/Implementation 1.1.A: The Sonora Fire Department shall conduct an annual assessment of properties in Sonora pre-fire season to determine potential fire risk and initiate any necessary mitigation.

Policy 1.2: Require all new residential and commercial development in areas identified as very high fire hazard severity zones to comply with State Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) building and fire code regulations.

Policy 1.3: Prevent fuel accumulation around any City-owned infrastructure and other areas where fires may occur.

Program/Implementation 1.3.A.: Establish a comprehensive vegetation management and fuel reduction program applicable to the entirety of the City. Work with the City Fire Department to identify areas with high wildfire hazard risk as top priority for fuel clearance and reduction. Prioritize the removal of hazardous vegetation and trees that are confirmed invasive (non-native species), dead, dying, or infested with bark beetles. Work with a contractor to estimate fuel reduction pricing to apply for CALFIRE or Cal OES/FEMA grant funding.

Program/Implementation 1.3.B.: The City shall draft a vegetation removal program that includes the clearance of vegetation located on roadsides where ownership/property boundaries are unknown. The City shall consider methods by which to engage the public in this process, to encourage vegetation removal on personal property, and to properly notify in advance of City-led removal in roadside areas.

Program/Implementation 1.3.C: Promote a culture of volunteerism and "neighbors-helping-neighbors" regarding vegetation management and fuel reduction on private property. Partner with local nonprofits/community organizations such as the Sonora Sunrise Rotary, Sonora Lions Club or Cub Scouts or CERT to help elderly or disabled community members with vegetation management and fuel reduction on their property.

Program/Implementation 1.3.D: The City and Sonora Fire Department shall support and participate with partner agencies, such as Tuolumne County and CALFIRE, to develop a local program to identify, prioritize, and fund fuel modification projects, including community fire breaks and long-term maintenance to protect new and existing developments in the Local Responsibility Area, and leverage the California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP) for eligible projects in the State Responsibility Area. Fuel modification projects shall include, but are not limited to, a roadside fuel reduction plan, defensible space clearances around structures, subdivisions, and other development in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. The City, in coordination with partner agencies, shall be responsible for maintaining community fire breaks and other fuel modification projects on an annual basis, and shall establish a process for annual review and remediation.

Policy 1.4: Maintain an adequate peak load water supply for fire suppression efforts in Sonora.

Program/Implementation 1.4.A: The City shall require each new large-scale development to submit a water usage plan showing that Sonora's water system can supply the new

development with minimum water amounts while maintaining optimal water supply for fire suppression work.

Program/Implementation 1.4.B: The City shall conduct a water supply and infrastructure assessment to determine the adequacy of existing water supply infrastructure. The assessment shall include a mapping effort to identify the geographic location of anticipated water supplies. System improvements shall be conducted by Tuolumne Utilities District, in coordination with the City, if any part of the water supply system is found insufficient to meet peak load water supply requirements for fire suppression efforts. The City, in coordination with Tuolumne Utilities District, shall be responsible for maintaining the consistent and long-term integrity of water supplies. The City shall work with Tuolumne Utilities District to set a schedule for re-assessing the water supplies and associated infrastructure.

Policy 1.5: Continue to enforce and, as necessary, adopt new development standards, including relevant sections of the State Building Code, to reduce fire hazard risks for new and existing development in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones and utilize home hardening techniques.

Program/Implementation 1.5.A: The City shall continue to enforce requirements to provide defensible space around homes and other buildings in fire-prone areas, and strengthen standards as needed to provide adequate protection.

Program/Implementation 1.5.B: The City shall develop a fire-safe assessment to use prior to issuing a building permit or other formal approval for significant retrofits to buildings in identified very high and high fire hazard severity zones, including installation of sprinklers and fire-safe exterior materials as feasible.

Program/Implementation 1.5.C: Require new developments in very high and high fire hazard severity zones to include fuel reduction plans.

Program/Implementation 1.5.D: Secure grant funding to implement a community wildfire retrofit program for property owners within Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. Replicate the California Wildfire Mitigation Program Pilot Home Hardening project, where FEMA grant funding is distributed through the local jurisdiction to eligible private property owners to conduct wildfire retrofits. Wildfire retrofits could include ignition resistant siding, roofs, decks, eaves, attic vents, fencing, windows, and gutters. Retrofits could also be used to establish a defensible space around property, including removal of flammable vegetation, mulch, or tree branches within five feet of the property. Establish a system to prioritize retrofits for residents with social-vulnerability characteristics, such as poverty status, disability status, or aged over 65.

Program/Implementation 1.5.E: Partner with the American Red Cross Sound the Alarm program to help distribute and install free smoke detectors in homes. Prioritize distribution and installation within the Social Vulnerable Population (SVP) (Census Tract 12), or within other small neighborhoods/communities where populations are known to have characteristics associated with social vulnerability. Promote the Sound the Alarm program through existing City communication channels.

Program/Implementation 1.5.F: Develop and update programs as needed that ensure compliance with the most recent version of the California Fire Code, recovery and redevelopment after a large fire, and that reduce future vulnerabilities to fire hazard risks through site preparation, redevelopment layout design, fire-resistant landscape planning, and home hardening building design and materials.

Program/Implementation 1.5.G: Create a planning process to determine what new and significant remodel projects are subject to preparing fire protection plans that incorporate project-specific risk reduction measures, subject to the determination and approval of the City. Require Fire Protection Plans for all new development in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. Fire Protection Plans shall contain the following elements:

- Risk Analysis
- Identification of Areas Lacking Service
- Fire Response Capabilities
- Fire Safety Requirements – Defensible Space, Infrastructure, and Building Ignition Resistance
- Mitigation Measures and Design Considerations for Non-Conforming Fuel Modification
- Wildfire Education Maintenance and Limitations
- Evacuation Plan

Program/Implementation 1.5.H: The City shall require conditional approval of parcel maps and tentative maps in State Responsibility Areas or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones based on compliance with the State Responsibility Area Fire Safe Regulations (Title 14, CCR, Division 1.5, Chapter 7, Subchapter 2, Articles 1-5 [commencing with Section 1270]) and the Fire Hazard Reduction Around Buildings and Structures Regulations, including those regarding road standards for ingress, egress, and fire equipment access (Title 14, CCR, Division 1.5, Chapter 7, Subchapter 3, Article 3 [commencing with Section 1299.01]). Require that all new development in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones include adequate ingress/egress. Update the approach to reviewing new development and land use entitlements and to the extent feasible, retrofit development, and include the amendments/updates to regulations/requirements. Ensure that new development is located where fire and emergency services have sufficient capacity to meet project needs or require that they be upgraded to provide necessary capacity as part of the proposed development activities to ensure new development has adequate fire protection. The following provisions shall be required:

- Provision of public and private standards for road and driveway design, to ensure the ability of emergency service providers to respond to structural and wildland fires and calls for medical and law enforcement emergency assistance. Designs shall provide for secondary road access necessary for fire safety or emergency access;
- Ensure that each property outside of a developed water system shall maintain water storage to provide wildfire and structure protection on their property;
- Ensure that sign and address standards for new development as well as retrofit, are met, which will provide for easy identification of roads, streets, driveways, and buildings by emergency service providers;
- Create measures/standards for defensible space to reduce hazards associated with structural and wildland intermix, including:
  - Fuel modification and vegetation management procedures adjacent to structures and fuel breaks where appropriate;
  - Vegetation management adjacent to roads and driveways to provide safe travel for residents, and firefighting, medical, and police personnel; and
  - Building setbacks.
- Update buildings to meet or exceed building hardening requirements in Part 7, California Wildland-Urban Interface Code, of the California Building Code or other applicable codes, based on local studies or conditions identified in the LHMP.

- Revise Zoning Code to prohibit land uses that could exacerbate the risk of ignitions, such as outdoor storage of hazardous or highly flammable materials, outdoor welding, or temporary fireworks sales.
- Revise Zoning Code and/or process for simplifying the tree removal process to help reduce fuels on properties.

Policy 1.6: Conserve healthy tree cover in forested areas to protect ecosystem services, including carbon sequestration, soil retention, and water supply, while maintaining responsible fuel-reduction practices.

Policy 1.7: Work with Tuolumne County, State agencies, and federal agencies, as necessary, to support wildfire fuel management activities in areas devastated by bark beetles and other pests.

Policy 1.8: Work with PG&E to reduce wildfire risk and coordinate wildfire prevention and preparation efforts.

Program/Implementation 1.8.A: Advocate for PG&E to continue undergrounding powerlines within the Planning Area, along with supporting enhanced powerline safety settings and other grid strengthening projects to reduce Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) incidents.

Program/Implementation 1.8.B: Promote the PG&E Report It app as a means to report hazardous trees or vegetation conditions, or other non-emergency concerns related to PG&E infrastructure.

Program/Implementation 1.8.C: Partner with PG&E to promote the Generator and Battery Rebate program, to incentivize residents and businesses to purchase back-up generators for use during Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events.

Policy 1.9: Work with Tuolumne County and State agencies to continuously modernize the City's firefighting techniques and coordinate fire prevention and preparation efforts where applicable.

Program/Implementation 1.9.A: Work with the City Fire Department, Tuolumne County Fire Department, and CALFIRE to evaluate advancements in wildfire fighting, detection, and suppression technology. Where appropriate, partner to fund or purchase technology identified to have benefits across multiple public safety agency jurisdictions.

Program/Implementation 1.9.B: Work with Caltrans to establish sufficient defensible space and vegetation management programs along major evacuation corridors, including State Route 49 and State Route 108. Secure funding to complete roadside brushing on City rights-of-ways.

Program/Implementation 1.9.C: Seek grant funding to prepare a comprehensive wildfire behavior model for the Planning Area to aid in wildfire suppression efforts.

Program/Implementation 1.9.D: Collaborate with CALFIRE, Tuolumne County, local community organizations, and others to regularly study and develop strategies, including through Community Wildfire Protection Plans, that address the change in wildfire risk associated with climate change.

Policy 1.10: Reduce the risk of fire ignition from camping-related activities.

Program/Implementation 1.10.A: Continue to enforce City Ordinance Number 889, added to City Municipal Code Chapter 9.61, prohibiting camping, occupying camp facilities, or using camp paraphernalia within 25-feet of critical infrastructure or areas designated as

a Fire Hazard Severity Zone. The purpose of this ordinance is to mitigate the threat of wildfire and damage to critical infrastructure. Continue to enforce City Ordinance Number 828, added to City Municipal Code Chapter 8.32, prohibiting open burning unless conducted in accordance with the California Fire Code.

Program/Implementation 1.10.B: Continue to enforce City Ordinance Number 888 added to City Municipal Code Chapter 9.62, alleviating hazardous conditions of encampments by authorizing the Public Works Department or other authorized agent to conduct temporary clean and clear operations and permanent encampment closures as necessary to protect the public welfare, health, and safety. The purpose of this ordinance is to mitigate the threat of wildfire and damage to critical infrastructure.

Policy 1.11: Ensure the City has adequate critical facilities for use during emergency wildfire scenarios.

Program/Implementation 1.11.A: Establish two or three critical facilities within the City that are suitable for a designated shelter in place during a wildfire scenario. Facilities for consideration include Sonora High School, Sonora Elementary School, and commercial centers/surface parking lots along Mono Way and Sanguinetti Loop Road. Identify opportunities to make each designated shelter in place location more resistant to wildfire hazards, such as expanding defensible space around the property, upgrading construction materials to be ignition resistant, and proactively staging emergency response equipment/materials. Seek funding for a community resiliency center in the City.

Policy 1.12: Require that all homes have visible street addressing and signage. Support measures that help firefighting crews and emergency response teams respond to fire hazards or work under low-visibility conditions, such as high-visibility signage for streets and building addresses that meet or exceed the standards in the California Fire Safe Regulations (Sections 1273 and 1274 of the California Code of Regulations – Title 24, Division 1.5, Chapter 7, Articles 2 and 3).

4.2 Seismic and Geologic Hazards

Seismic and geologic hazards are risks caused by the movement of different parts of the Earth's crust, or surface. Seismic hazards are the hazards associated with potential earthquakes in a particular area. Geologic hazards are hazards involving land movements such as landslides that are not linked to seismic activity and are capable of inflicting harm to people or property.

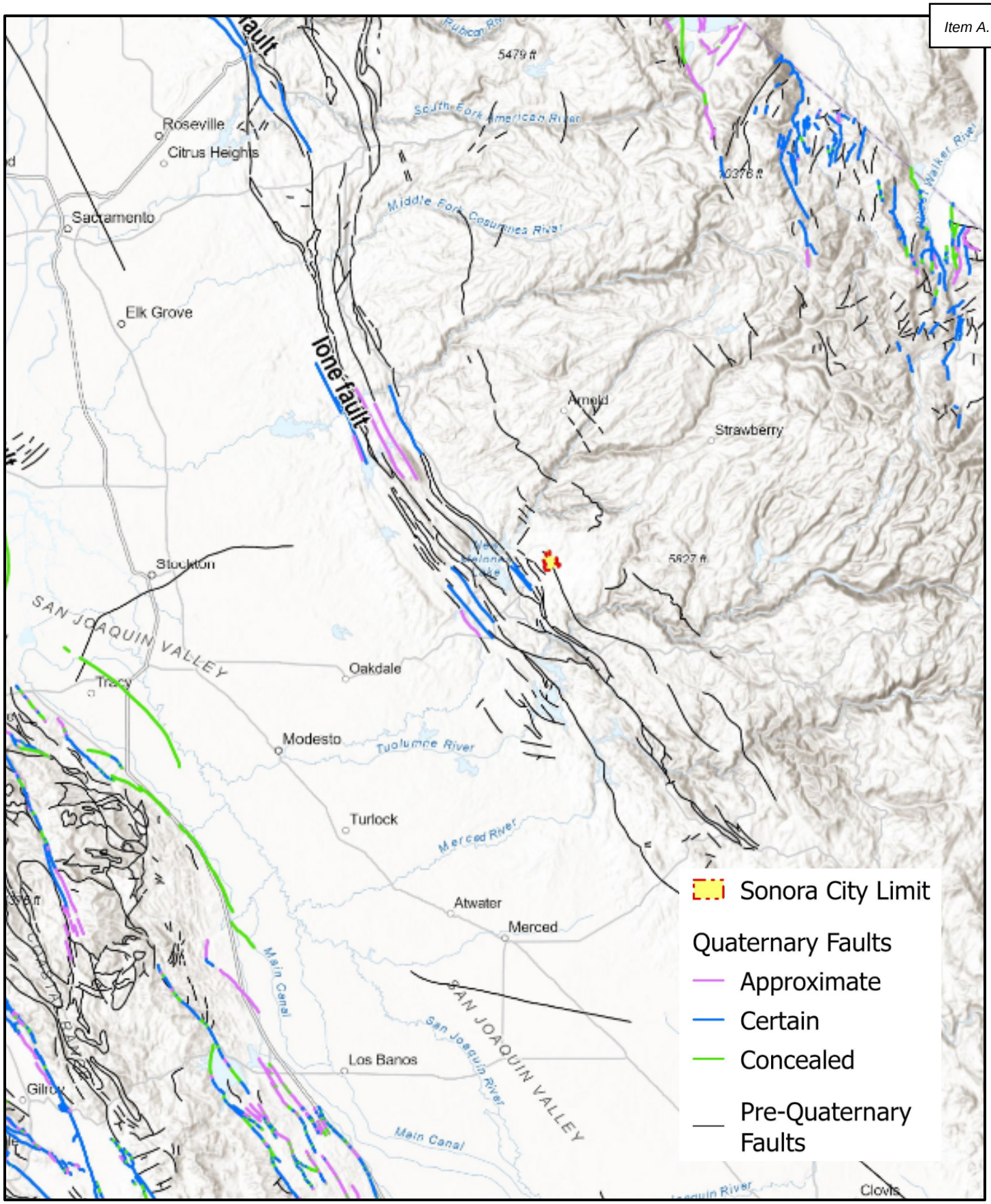
4.2.1 Seismic Hazards

The City of Sonora is located in an area of concern for seismic activity. There is a high potential that the area will be subject to at least moderate earthquakes one or more times over the next century. Seismic activity causes pressure to build up along a fault, and the release of pressure results in ground shaking. This shaking itself is known as an earthquake. Earthquakes can also trigger other hazards, including surface rupture (cracks in the ground surface), liquefaction (causing loose soil to lose its strength), landslides, and subsidence (sinking of the ground surface).

According to the California Geological Survey (CGS), no active earthquake faults are known to exist within or around the City of Sonora. The City is not within an Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone. The City of Sonora is located on a pre-quaternary fault, which is a fault that ruptured over 1.6 million years ago. If fault rupture was to occur within the City of Sonora, the location and extent of damage would be isolated around the mapped fault trace. Fault rupture is unlikely to occur within the Planning Area, as pre-quaternary faults are generally considered inactive.

However, active and potentially active faults pose a risk to the City of Sonora. Active faults have experienced displacement in historic time, suggesting that future displacement may be expected, whereas potentially active faults are those that have shown displacement within the last 1.6 million years and may or may not have a reasonable chance of creating future earthquakes. The Planning Area is susceptible to impacts caused by ground shaking triggered by seismic activity outside of Sonora. Tuolumne County is located east of the Foothills Fault Zone, which includes the Melones Fault Zone along the east side of the system and the Bear Mountain Fault Zone on the west side. The closest known fault of the Melones Fault Zone is located approximately 3.5 miles southwest of the City; refer to Exhibit 4-3, Regional Faults.

The Melones Fault Zone is classified as "active", demonstrating displacement within the last 100,000 years, and the Bear Mountain fault is classified as "indeterminable active", where definitive evidence has not been established locally concerning its activity within the last 100,000 years. Portions of the City of Sonora are underlain by mine workings and could be hazardous to the City if ground shaking were to occur. According to the Sonora General Plan 2020, there are four "capable" faults, faults with tectonic displacement within the last 35,000 years which could produce a quake, located within Tuolumne County. The faults include Negro Jack Point, Bowie Flat, Rawhide Flat West, and Rawhide Flat East. The City could also be susceptible to ground shaking caused by earthquakes originating outside of the region. Major faults in the Bay Area (such as the San Andreas Fault, Hayward Fault) or Mono/Inyo County (including the Long Valley Caldera) could trigger large earthquakes that could generate ground shaking in the City of Sonora.



Sources: City of Sonora, Tuolumne County, Michael Baker Int, CA DOC, CGA 2010
Map Export: 5/2/2024 12:36 PM.

EXHIBIT 4-3
Regional Faults

Structures that are most likely to be affected are those that are old or constructed of wood or unreinforced masonry construction, and mobile homes. Structures built before 1960 may not have adequate anchorage of framing and foundations. Historic buildings within Downtown Sonora predate modern seismic codes and would be at risk in the event of seismic ground shaking. Soft-story buildings, which have a story that lacks adequate strength or toughness due to too few shear walls, also do not typically perform well during earthquakes. In addition, the City is underlain by various tunnels and historic mines constructed prior to modern seismic codes. Underground mines and tunnels could collapse during strong ground shaking, causing ground failure and subsidence and damaging nearby structures. Ground shaking caused by local or regional earthquake activity has the potential to affect the entire Planning Area, and the extent of likely damage is correlated with the strength of the specific earthquake.



Downtown Sonora

If a major earthquake were to occur in the region, critical damage may occur to public and private buildings, homes, and structures, including those that provide emergency services (hospitals, fire stations, schools, emergency shelters) and essential services, and infrastructure such as roads and utility lines for water, gas, power, telephone, sewer, and storm drainage. Access and continuity of services may be disjointed, and services could be offline for extended periods. Damage to essential and critical structures requires special attention in the public safety programs of the City. Damage to the following infrastructure systems could occur, in addition to the damage to public and private buildings:

- Telephone communications: Telephone communications could be adversely affected due to overloading resulting from post-earthquake calls within the area and from outside, and the electronics needed to support communication systems could be damaged. The situation could be further complicated by physical damage to equipment due to ground shaking, loss of services due to loss of electrical power, and subsequent failure of some auxiliary power sources.
- Water supplies: Ground shaking could cause existing vulnerable water supply and drainage infrastructure to rupture or become damaged. The existing Main Drain that is located under the City would be susceptible to failure during a large earthquake.
- Natural gas and propane: Many buildings in Sonora rely on natural gas for fuel. Earthquake damage could cause natural gas line breaks and disruption of service, and damage to propane tanks by knocking them off their foundations, posing potential fire hazards.

Based on the proximity of the City of Sonora to the San Andreas Fault, the earthquake shaking potential mapped for Tuolumne County, and the history of shaking with no surface rupture, the probability of damaging seismic ground shaking in the City is considered to be occasional.



Saint James' Episcopal Church

Seismic hazards associated with earthquake activity, including liquefaction, are considered unlikely to occur. Liquefaction typically occurs in areas of low-lying, current, or former floodplains; the City is not located within mapped liquefaction hazard zones. The City is located approximately 117 miles from the ocean and is not at risk from tsunamis.

Most of the loss of life and injuries from earthquakes are due to damage and collapse of buildings and structures. Manufactured housing is particularly susceptible to damage from ground shaking because their foundations are not built to withstand seismic movement. Building codes for new construction have generally been made more stringent following damaging earthquakes. The City of Sonora Municipal Code adopts the most recent version of the California Building Code, which contains requirements for all newly constructed buildings to decrease the risk of damage during a seismic event. However, in Sonora, structures built prior to enactment of these improved building codes and that have not been upgraded to current standards are vulnerable to earthquakes.

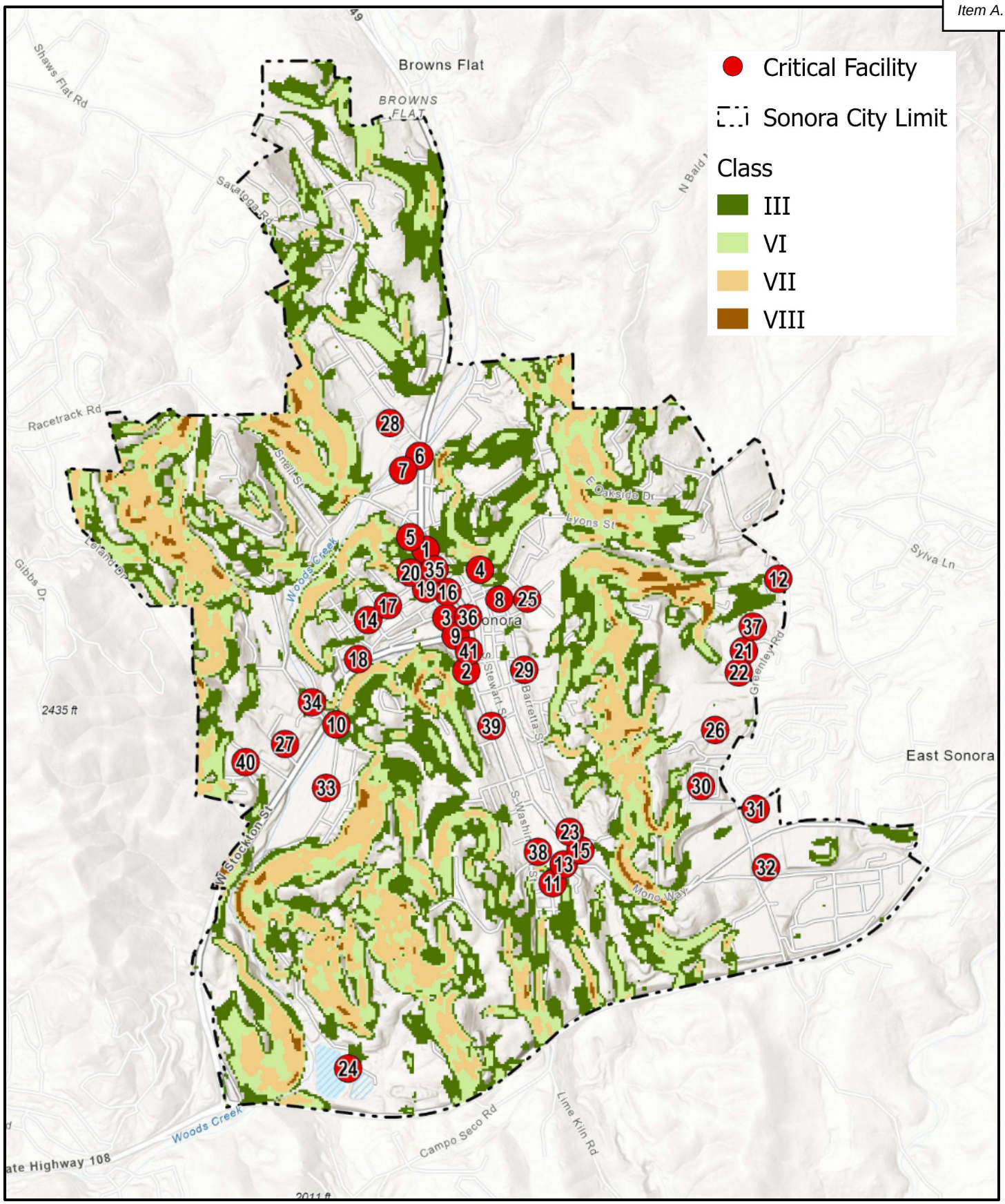
4.2.2 Geologic Hazards

Geologic hazards, such as landslides, depend on the geologic composition of the area. Rock type and composition, slope, pore water pressure, and any natural or human-caused undercutting are among the factors that influence these hazards. Landslides and rock falls occur in sloped areas and are often triggered by other natural hazards such as earthquakes, heavy rain, floods, or wildfires. The City of Sonora consists of sloped terrain, and where slopes are unstable, areas may be subject to erosion and landslides. Increased excavation on these slopes can expose more weaknesses in the underlying rock mass, creating a greater potential for failure. Landslides can damage or destroy structures or roadways as well as underground infrastructure, including pipelines or telecommunication lines, which could lead to infrastructure-induced flooding. Landslides also present a risk of serious injury or death. Mudslides are fast-moving landslides that occur when water rapidly accumulates in the ground and results in a surge of water-saturated rock, earth, and debris. Mudslides often occur following wildfire due to a lack of vegetation and soil stability.

Exhibit 4-4, Landslide Potential Zones, maps the landslide risk areas in the City, which primarily include steep slopes, particularly in the west, north, and east residential areas of the City. Three critical facilities are located within a mapped landslide hazard zone, including the Sonora Fire Station, the bridge on Southgate Drive over Sonora Creek, and a park that could serve a variety of uses during and after an emergency incident. Approximately 1,546 residential units and approximately 11,212,780 square feet of non-residential development are located within a landslide susceptibility zone. Hilly areas in Sonora have varying risk to deep-seated landslides based on regional estimates of rock strength and steepness of slopes. Areas of steep or unstable slopes could be at risk from seismically induced landslides.

Mudslide and sinkhole risk exists outside of the mapped landslide potential zones. Mudslides often occur during heavy rain incidents on wildfire burn scars; no major burn scars currently exist in the Planning Area, however there is the possibility for a future wildfire to occur and create a location with elevated vulnerability for mudslides.

The City of Sonora is also susceptible to subsidence. Sinkholes are a form of subsidence in which depressions in the ground form when the underlying rock and soil has been dissolved, eroded, or saturated by water and



Sources: City of Sonora, Tuolumne County, Michael Baker Int, CA DOC, CGS 2018
Map Export: 5/2/2024 12:37 PM.

EXHIBIT 4-4
Landslide Potential Zones

collapses. Sinkholes are most often triggered in the Planning Area by heavy rains over known historic mines. Miles of abandoned tunnels and mining shafts exist within the City of Sonora, dating back to the 1850s. Mines and tunnels effectively act as eroded areas of subsurface rock, increasing the risk for sinkhole occurrences within the City.



Southgate Drive Bridge Over Sonora Creek

The location and extent of sinkhole vulnerability in Sonora is not fully known. Historic mine tunnels and shafts are distributed throughout the Planning Area; vulnerability is assumed to be highest around historic tunnels and mining shafts. Mapped historic mine data is documented by the California Department of Conservation and the Tuolumne County History Research Center. Tunnels and retired mines are located throughout the City, including the commercially developed areas in Downtown Sonora. Some historic maps are not digitized, and due to the age of mining infrastructure there is the possibility for unmapped mines to exist.

The City of Sonora is also at risk of a variety of hazards associated with volcanoes, which are located in Mono County, east of the City. Mono County contains the most significant volcanic center in California outside of the Cascade Range, the Long Valley Volcanic Region. Also known as the Long Valley-Mono Basin Region, this area has experienced hundreds of eruptions over the last 4 million years.[8] Today the region is dominated by two distinct but interrelated systems, the Long Valley Caldera and the Mono-Inyo Craters. The Long Valley Caldera is a 20-mile-by-10-mile, oval-shaped depression which formed during a cataclysmic eruption about 760,000 years ago.[9] The caldera is located at the base of the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada range, roughly 80 miles southeast from the City of Sonora. The younger system, the Mono-lnyo Craters, are an 18-mile-long chain of lava domes, lava flows and explosive craters. The chain runs from along the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada range, from Mono Lake to Mammoth Mountain near the rim of the caldera. Eruptions began more than 50,000 years ago and are estimated to have occurred as recently as 300 years ago.[10]

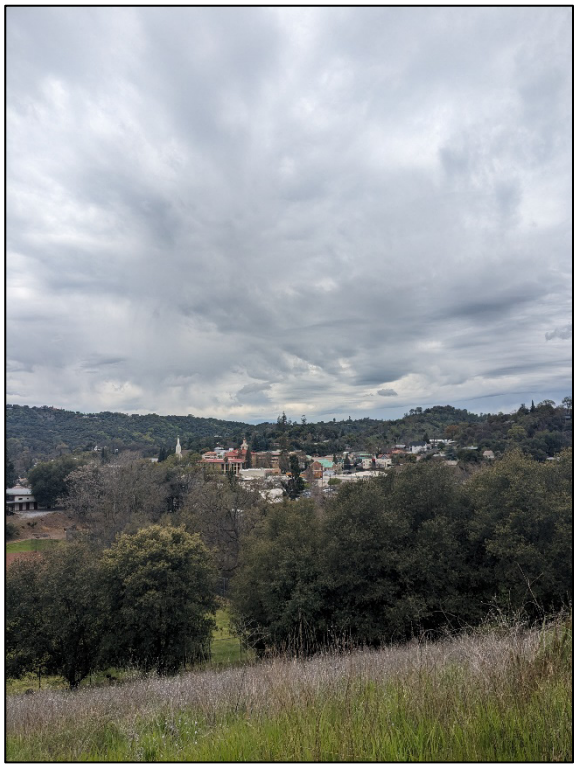
Hazards associated with volcanoes include volcanic flood, volcanic ash, lava flow, pyroclastic flow (fast-moving, sudden eruption of lava, ash, and gases), lahar (slow-moving lava eruption), volcanic gas, and ballistics (large fragments of rock with a cannonball-like trajectory typically landing within a few miles of the vent). Hazards resulting from volcanoes are dependent on the type of eruption, and hazard types may vary significantly. The specific hazards to people and property depend on which volcano erupts, the style (effusive or explosive), the volume of lava, the location of the vent, the eruption duration, and local hydrologic (water) conditions. The severity of the hazard generally decreases with distance from the volcano vent. The impact of an eruption in the Long Valley Volcanic Region may impact Tuolumne County and the City of Sonora, however, it would depend on its location, size, type, and wind direction.

Considering the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range is located between the City of Sonora and the Long Valley Volcanic Region, it is unlikely that immediate impacts of lava flows, lahars, volcanic floods, or ballistics would impact the City. These types of hazards associated with volcanoes would not flow over the Sierra Nevada range, and/or do not have an impact area widespread enough to impact the City. However, volcanic ash and volcanic gas may traverse the mountain range and impact the City. An eruption large enough to impact the City of Sonora would likely be

[8] USGS, *Geologic history of the Long Valley, Mono Basin region*, https://www.usgs.gov/volcanoes/long-valley-caldera/geologic-history-long-valley-mono-basin-region#:~:text=Sources%2FUsage%3A%20Public%20Domain.,caldera%20and%20the%20Mono%20Basin., accessed October 9, 2023.
[9] USGS, *California's Exposure to Volcanic Hazards*, Version 1.1 December 2019.
[10] USGS, *Mono-Inyo Craters*, https://www.usgs.gov/volcanoes/mono-inyo-craters, accessed October 10, 2023.

worse in eastern areas of the City, however, it is feasible that all areas in Sonora would be impacted by volcanic ash. Volcanic ash can pose a threat to buildings, roads, utilities, and communications. Ash particles released from an eruption may also cause respiratory effects, which would have particularly significant impacts on the elderly and people with difficulty breathing or asthma. A large explosive eruption could also potentially contribute to slope instability or seismic activity that would impact the City. Earthquake swarms have been known to occur in the Long Valley Caldera from 1978-1983, 1990-1995, 1996, and 1997-1998.

4.2.3 Past Occurrences



Sonora, California

According to the LHMP, there are no recently recorded fault rupture occurrences in the City of Sonora, however, the City has previously experienced ground shaking from earthquakes originating outside of the Planning Area. The most recent earthquake in Tuolumne County occurred in August 1983 and had a magnitude of 3.5. Earthquakes also occurred in nearby Mono and Mariposa Counties in 1933 and 1965, and 1975, respectively. No ground rupture has been reported in Sonora as a result of these earthquakes. Information regarding associated damages (if any) is unknown. The most recent ground shaking experienced by the City occurred on July 8, 2021, at 3:49 PM when a 5.9 magnitude earthquake in Mono County rattled the City of Sonora's downtown and the greater region. The earthquake epicenter was located in the unincorporated community of Walker, approximately 60 miles northeast of Sonora. There were no reports of damage or injuries.

Landslide occurrences in Sonora have typically been associated with heavy rains and flood events. The most recent landslide and mudslide incidents occurred during the 2022 and 2023 winter storm events. In March 2023, a mudslide on SR 49 resulting from snowy conditions caused traffic impacts in the City. In March 2023, Tuolumne County (including the City of Sonora) was part of a federal emergency disaster declaration due to the extreme winter storms, including precipitation-induced landslides and mudslides, among other impacts.[11]

Sinkholes have also occurred due to extreme weather events in the City over the last decade. In 2014, a damaged AT&T duct blocked an old storm drain at 201 South Stewart Street, creating a sinkhole approximately five to seven feet wide and eight feet deep. The City of Sonora Public Works Department worked with AT&T engineers to drain and patch the sinkhole. In 2019, a sinkhole emerged behind the Bank of America building at 180 South Washington Street, due to a heavy rain event. The sinkhole was approximately five to six feet wide and occurred directly on top of the City's Main Drain structure, an historic tunnel that serves as storm water drainage infrastructure. In 2023, heavy rain in January caused a sinkhole to occur behind the parking lot of the St. James' Episcopal Church. The majority of reported sinkholes in recent years have been relatively small, did not cause significant damages or injury, and have been repaired by the City.

Since the Long Valley Caldera's formation 760,000 years ago, clusters of smaller volcanic eruptions have occurred in the Caldera at roughly 200,000-year intervals. About 100,000 years ago, one of these eruptions along the Caldera's ring fault resulted in the formation of the Mammoth Knotts, low hills just north of the Town

[11] FEMA, *President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. Approves Emergency Declaration for California*, https://www.fema.gov/press-release/20230310/president-joseph-r-biden-jr-approves-emergency-declaration-california, March 10, 2023, accessed October 16, 2023.

of Mammoth Lakes. Repeated eruptions from vents on the southwest rim of the Caldera formed Mammoth Mountain roughly 220,000 to 50,000 years ago.[12]

The Mono-Inyo volcanic system began erupting in the west moat of Long Valley Caldera 400,000 to 60,000 years ago and then in the Mono Basin 40,000 to 13,000 years ago. Over the last 3,000 years, the Mono-lnyo chain has erupted at intervals of 700 to 250 years. The Mono Craters were formed by multiple eruptions 40,000 to 600 years ago, and the Inyo Craters were formed by eruptions 5,000 to 500 years ago. The most recent activity in the chain occurred with the formation of Mono Lake's Paoha Island approximately 350 years ago.[13]

As these historic incidents of volcanic activity pre-date written history within the Planning Area and the region, specific impacts to the City of Sonora from previous eruptions are unknown.

4.2.4 Potential Changes to Geologic and Seismic Risk in Future Years

Likelihood of Future Geologic and Seismic Hazard Occurrence

There is a low probability of fault rupture occurring within the City of Sonora. Fault zones known to be active in the region are located a considerable distance from the City. Earthquakes in the region are likely to continue to occur on an occasional basis and are likely to be small. They may cause no substantive damage and may not even be felt by most people. Major earthquakes are rare, but a possibility in the region. If serious shaking does occur, newer construction is in general more earthquake resistant than older construction because of improved building codes. Manufactured housing is very susceptible to damage because their foundation systems are barely braced for earthquake motions.

Mudslides, landslides, and sinkholes are likely to continue to occur with moderate frequency in the Planning Area. Much of the topography in the City is considered susceptible to landslides. Similarly, because the City is considered to be high risk for wildfire, which increases the likelihood of mudslides on wildfire burn scars, the Planning Area may be more susceptible to mudslides in the future. Because most sinkhole occurrences within the City are related to the presence of historic mines located under the Planning Area, the probability for future sinkhole occurrences is expected to remain similar to existing conditions, and moderate.

The Long Valley Volcanic Region has a long history of geologic activity that includes both earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. This pattern of volcanic and seismic activity is likely to continue into the future. The best estimate of the future behavior of a volcanic system is its past behavior. Geological studies of the Long Valley Caldera and the Mono-Inyo Craters volcanic chain provide insight into potential future activity. The pattern of volcanic activity suggests that future eruptions are more likely to occur along the Mono-Inyo volcanic chain than within the Caldera. Generally, the probability of an eruption occurring in any given year is less than 1 percent, comparable to the odds for a great (magnitude 8) earthquake along the San Andreas fault. The odds of a small eruption along the Mono-Inyo volcanic chain having a significant impact in any given year are one in 1,000 (0.1 percent). Future eruptions are likely to be explosive in style but small to moderate in size. Larger eruptions are possible but less likely. An eruption that would cause significant impacts to the City of Sonora would have to be very large. Scientists see no evidence pointing toward the possibility of a massive eruption along the lines of the one that formed the Caldera 760,000 years ago.[14]

Future volcanic activity may be linked with seismic activity. Geologic unrest, including series of earthquakes, ground deformation, and gas emissions, can signal a change in the likelihood of an eruption. A period of ongoing geologic unrest in the Long Valley area began in 1978 with a magnitude 5.4 earthquake centered 6 miles southeast of the Caldera. Since then, earthquake activity has increased. The most intense earthquakes

[12] USGS, *Geologic history of the Long Valley, Mono Basin region*, https://www.usgs.gov/volcanoes/long-valley-caldera/geologic-history-long-valley-mono-basin-region#:~:text=Sources%2FUsage%3A%20Public%20Domain.,caldera%20and%20the%20Mono%20Basin., accessed October 9, 2023.
[13] Ibid.
[14] USGS, *Long-term outlook for volcanic activity in Long Valley caldera*, https://www.usgs.gov/volcanoes/long-valley-caldera/long-term-outlook-volcanic-activity-long-valley-caldera, accessed October 10, 2023.

occurred in May 1980 and included four magnitude 6 earthquakes. Between 1979 and 1980, the center of the Caldera rose almost a foot, after decades of stability. The swelling continues, and to date totals more than 2.7 feet, suggesting magmatic activity beneath the caldera. During the early 1990s, trees began dying at several places on Mammoth Mountain at the southwest edge of Long Valley Caldera. Studies showed that the trees were being killed by large volumes of carbon dioxide gas seeping up through the soil from the magma below.[15]

As noted, seismic activity is generally an indicator that volcanic activity will occur. Volcanic activity is more likely to occur on a small scale rather than large explosive eruptions with regional impacts. However, even small-scale volcanic activity may introduce hazardous conditions to surrounding areas. Future seismic and volcanic activity in the Long Valley Volcanic Region is expected to continue in the future but will likely be rare in terms of yearly eruptions. Volcanic impacts to Sonora are unlikely.

Climate Change and Geologic and Seismic Hazards

At the time of this writing, there is no significant data to support a direct link between seismic activity and climate change. Thus, climate change is not expected to have any direct influence on the likelihood, size, and/or severity of any future primary seismic hazard.

Although climate change is unlikely to increase earthquake frequency or strength, the threats from seismic and geologic hazards are expected to continue. Climate change will likely result in precipitation extremes (i.e., wetter wet periods and drier dry periods). While total average annual rainfall may decrease only slightly, rainfall is predicted to occur in more frequent, intense precipitation/storm events. Heavy rainfall due to climate change will lead to saturated slopes, erosion, and likely will exacerbate the effects of landslides and mudslides within the Planning Area. Increased rainfall and severe storm events will also likely exacerbate sinkhole events. Heavy rain may lead to more frequent flooding and bedrock erosion which contributes to sinkholes. Storm conditions will also increase stress on the tunnels and mines that underlie the City and are already damaged and eroding, therefore increasing the likelihood of larger and more frequent sinkhole occurrences.

There is no known or suspected connection indicating climate change would impact volcanic activity, however, volcanoes may impact climate change. Major explosive eruptions can introduce huge amounts of volcanic gas, aerosol droplets, and ash into the atmosphere. Volcanic gases like sulfur dioxide can cause global cooling, while volcanic carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, has the potential to promote global warming.

4.2.5 Seismic and Geologic Hazards Goals, Policies, and Programs/Implementation

GOAL 2: Minimize risk of injuries, loss of life, property damage, and economic and social disruption resulting from seismic and geologic hazards in Sonora.

Policy 2.1: Continually identify sections of Sonora that would be more susceptible to damage from seismic shaking, landslides/mudslides, sinkholes, volcanoes, or other geologic risks.

Program/Implementation 2.1.A: Identify opportunities to strengthen or relocate existing weak critical structures and lifeline utilities through geotechnical investigation to increase public safety and minimize or avoid potential damage from seismic and geologic hazards.

Program/Implementation 2.1.B: Require mitigation for buildings that change occupancy or use that require a permit for structural alterations, especially un-reinforced masonry buildings, to ensure structural safety.

[15] USGS, *Living With a Restless Caldera - Long Valley, California*, https://pubs.usgs.gov/dds/dds-81/Intro/facts-sheet/fs108-96.html, accessed October 10, 2023.

Program/Implementation 2.1.C: Require preparation of a soils report as part of the development review and/or building permit process.

Program/Implementation 2.1.D: The City shall stabilize burned slopes located above developed areas, important infrastructure, or key transportation corridors as soon as possible after a wildfire event. The City will cooperate with the Tuolumne County Department of Public Works and/or the California Department of Transportation when necessary.

Program/Implementation 2.1.E: The City shall conduct structural retrofits of at-risk bridges to protect against flooding and landslides/debris flows. The City shall coordinate with the California Department of Transportation to achieve this implementation program when necessary.

Program/Implementation 2.1.F: Identify historic structures in need of seismic retrofit and prioritize implementation as funding becomes available.

Program/Implementation 2.1.G: Consider using ground penetrating radar to map historic underground tunnels/mines for use in evaluating sinkhole risk/vulnerability. Integrate digital as-built conditions with historic data and mining maps.

Policy 2.2: Require utilities to be designed to withstand probable seismic forces to be encountered in Sonora.

Policy 2.3: Incorporate resilient design features for roads and trails that are on or below steep slopes and have a history of being damaged or blocked by landslide events.

Program/Implementation 2.3.A: The City shall make single-access roads and key trails less vulnerable to landslides and mudflows through the use of retaining walls, slope stabilization techniques, and other strategies.

Policy 2.4: Increase the resiliency of local schools in the context of geologic and seismic hazards.

Program/Implementation 2.4.A: Support Sonora High School in mitigating Dunlavy Stadium landslide concerns by installing a French Drain to direct surface water and groundwater flows away from structures and building foundations.

Program/Implementation 2.4.B: Support Sonora Elementary School in seeking grant funding to conduct seismic retrofits at the historic dome structure.

Policy 2.5: Increase preparedness for and awareness of a potential volcanic threat.

Program/Implementation 2.5.A: Monitor the National Volcano Early Warning System and Eruption Forecasts for the Long Valley Caldera/Mono-Inyo Volcano Chain. If Volcano Eruption Warning or Watch conditions are issued, distribute relevant safety messaging from USGS and regional public safety partners.

4.3 Flood Hazards

4.3.1 Flooding

Flooding is the rising and overflowing of a body of water onto normally dry land. Floods are among the costliest natural disasters in terms of human hardship and economic loss nationwide. Floods can cause substantial damage to structures, landscapes, and utilities, as well as life-safety issues. Floods can be extremely dangerous, and even six inches of moving water can knock over a person given a strong current. Floodwaters can transport large objects downstream, which can damage or remove stationary structures, such as dam spillways. Ground saturation can result in instability, collapse, or other damage. Objects can also be buried or destroyed through sediment deposition. Floodwaters can also break utility lines and interrupt services. Standing water can cause damage to crops, roads, foundations, and electrical circuits.

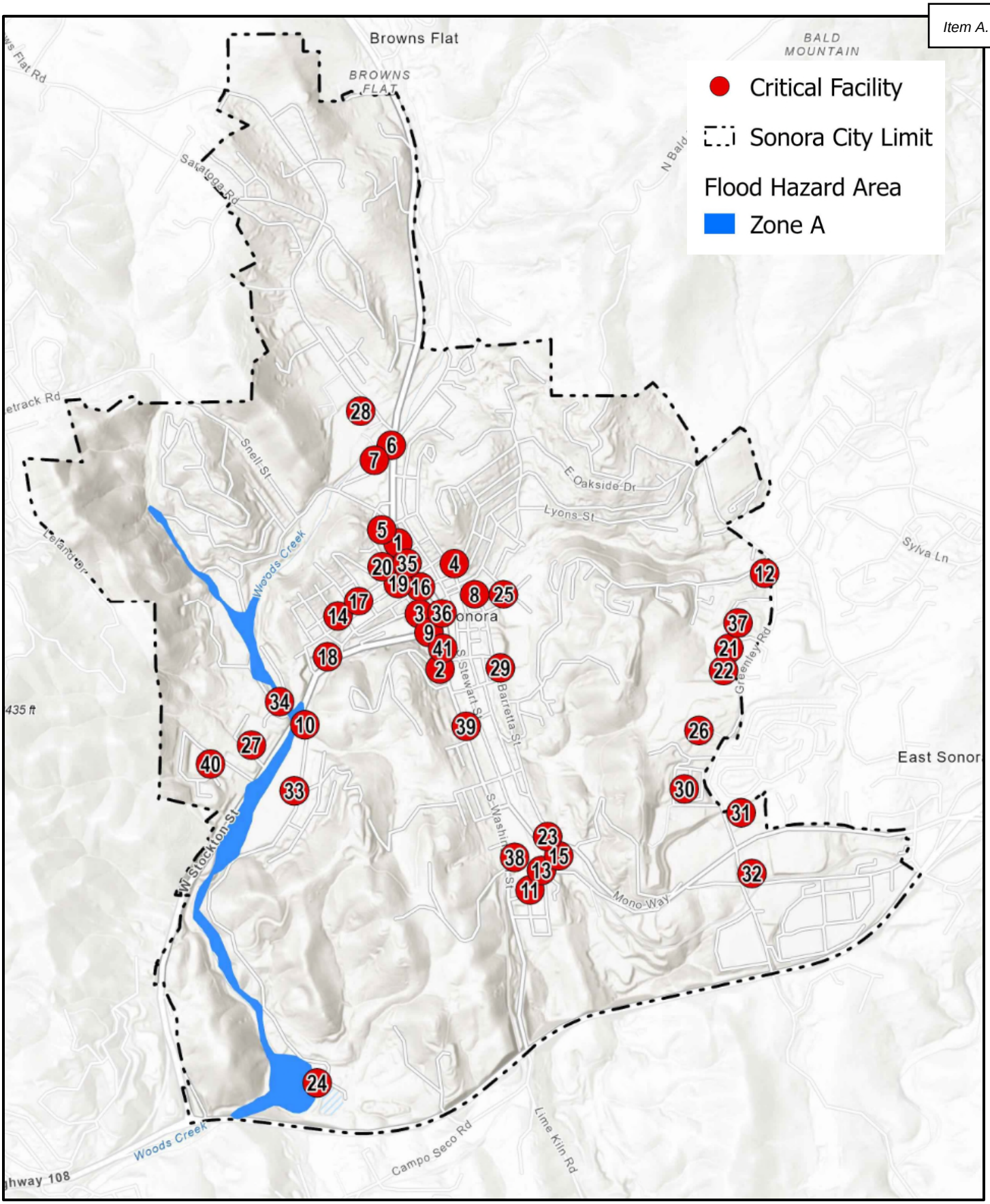
Floods are usually caused by large amounts of precipitation, either from a period of very intense precipitation or a long period of steady precipitation. Historically, precipitation in and around Sonora has been moderate to occasionally heavy, but snowfall is light in the Sonora area. Winter is the rainy season, with approximately 87 percent of the annual total precipitation falling in the six months from November to April. In addition to storms, floods can also be caused by very rapid snow melting or from hydrologic infrastructure failure, such as dam collapses or burst water storage tanks. Type and density of vegetation, absorption capacity of the ground, patterns of land use/urbanization, and wildfires also affect flood risk.

Sonora is located within the Upper Tuolumne Watershed and has two major drainages, Sonora Creek and Woods Creek. Areas of flooding concern are generally around Woods Creek, which runs southbound along the west side of the City. Areas at an elevated risk of flooding are generally divided into 100-year flood zones and 500-year flood zones. A 100-year flood zone has a 1 percent chance of experiencing a major flood in any given year; a 500-year flood zone has a 0.2 percent chance of flooding in any given year. The Woods Creek area in the City of Sonora is mapped within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 100-year flood zone; refer to Exhibit 4-5, Flood Hazard Area. This exhibit was generated with the latest FEMA FIRM maps, dated effective April 16, 2009. The City has no areas mapped within a 500-year flood zone. Areas adjacent to Sonora Creek and Woods Creek frequently receive surface flooding during major rain events. Two critical facilities are located within the mapped flood zone, however, flooding has occurred in various areas of the City often impacting roadways, residences, and drainage infrastructure. Flood impacts near mapped flood zones include the residential neighborhood east of the Motherload Fairgrounds which has one point of egress on a small Southgate Drive bridge over Sonora Creek. This bridge frequently overtops during major rain events, hindering access, transportation and evacuation options for the residential neighborhoods accessed via Southgate Drive. In addition, Southgate Drive is the primary access route to the Sonora Wastewater Treatment Plant. Flooding restricts staff access to the Wastewater Treatment Plant.



SR 49/Washington Street in Downtown, Facing North

Outside of areas mapped within the 100-year flood zone, localized flooding is a reoccurring issue in Downtown Sonora, primarily along Washington Street and adjacent streets. In addition to localized surface flooding, water intrusion occurs within the basements of many historic structures on Washington Street. The principal storm drain conveyance in Downtown Sonora is the Main Drain, a system including stone tunnels dating back to the late 1880s and storm drain pipeline connections. Over time, portions of the stone tunnel have been resurfaced



Sources: City of Sonora, Tuolumne County, Michael Baker Int, FEMA 2009
Map Export: 5/2/2024 12:37 PM.

EXHIBIT 4-5
Flood Hazard Area

with concrete/shotcrete or replaced with concrete box culverts. A recent field inspection and condition assessment occurred in October 2023, including recommendations for phased improvements; these improvements are reflected within the City's LHMP.

There are 44 dams in Tuolumne County, however, there are none with mapped inundation zones that will affect the City of Sonora. Therefore, dam failure was not included in this Safety Element.

4.3.2 Past Flood Occurrences

Local flooding incidents have historically occurred during heavy rain events. Impacts have typically occurred in the mapped flood zones and the localized flooding areas discussed above. The most recent flooding occurred over the winter months between 2022 and 2023, when the state of California experienced historically heavy rainfall over an approximately four-month period. The heaviest storms occurred in Sonora during March 2023, with the National Weather Service issuing thunderstorm, tornado, and flash flood warnings for the Planning Area. Caltrans District 10 reported a mudslide on State Route 49 between Fairview Lane and Mill Villa Court in Sonora due to heavy rain.[16] Flooding and standing water caused the Sonora Police Department to close down portions of South Washington Street (Downtown) and Southgate Drive, along with Fairview Lane/Stockton Road south of Southgate Drive.

The City of Sonora may also be impacted by regional flood events. Historically, most regional flood events that have impacted Sonora have occurred as a result of heavy rains between September and March and have impacted the mapped flood zone and/or roadways that have been impacted in recent flood events. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration database, the following regional flood events had flood impacts in Sonora; refer to Table 4-1, Historic Flood Events.

Table 4-1
Historic Flood Events

Date	Event Type	Impact
Mar 11, 2023	Flash Flood	Flash flooding was reported in the downtown area of Sonora due to heavy rain from a severe thunderstorm. Tuolumne County OES reported a creek flowing out of banks, and water flowing over Washington Street, impacting approximately 25 to 30 homes, 10 public buildings and 30 businesses.
Mar 13, 2023	Flood	Heavy rain fell bringing widespread roadway flooding, as well as local mudslides, flash flooding, with evacuations ordered in some areas.
Mar 6, 2019	Flood	Heavy rain from training thunderstorms caused flash flooding, particularly in the Sonora area.
Sep 20, 2005	Heavy Rain	Heavy rain caused rock- and mudslides along Highway 49 in Sonora resulting in minor road damage.
Feb 9, 1999	Flash Flood	Woods Creek left its banks and flooded isolated areas of Downtown Sonora.
Nov 22, 1996	Flash Flood	Very heavy rain from a thunderstorm caused Hatch Creek to overflow its banks. One fatality due to an attempt to drive a car through a flooded section of roadway.

Source: NOAA, *Storm Event Database*, https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/stormevents/eventdetails.jsp?id=1090201, accessed November 8, 2023.

[16] NOAA, *Storm Event Database*, https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/stormevents/eventdetails.jsp?id=1090201, accessed November 8, 2023.

4.3.3 Potential Changes to Flood Risk in Future Years

Likelihood of Future Flood Occurrence

Based on the frequency of severe weather events and the capacity of existing infrastructure, there is a high probability of significant flooding occurring in the City of Sonora. Sonora is at risk to both the 100-year flood and localized storm water flooding. The average annual rainfall totals 33 inches, and though the majority of the City is located outside of the designated flood hazard zone, there has been repeated localized flooding in other parts of the City and there are identified structural deficiencies in the Sonora Main Drain. Future floods are likely to occur in similar locations as previous flood events during severe weather incidents. Areas with flood hazards include areas adjacent to Sonora Creek and Woods Creek, Downtown Sonora, the residential neighborhood east of the Motherlode Fairgrounds, and the Southgate Drive bridge over Sonora Creek.



Sonora Creek

The City of Sonora has been subject to historical flooding. Within the City, much of the flood damage occurs as a result of localized storm water flooding. Most recently, flooding occurred in January and March 2023 as a result of heavy storm water runoff caused by severe winter storms. Damages were considerable, and the storms impacted transit on public roads and several buildings in Downtown. Existing storm water infrastructure has been vulnerable and insufficient during these storm events.

Climate Change and Flooding

Climate change is likely to have a direct effect on flooding. According to research conducted by the University of California, Los Angeles, California will experience extremely wet and extremely dry seasons by the end of the century. It is predicted "over the next 40 years, the State will be 300 to 400 percent more likely to have a prolonged storm sequence as severe as the one that caused the legendary California flood more than 150 years ago."[17] This research team confirmed the recent findings from a New York Times article titled "The Coming California Mega storm," predicting a future super storm exacerbated by climate change. A warmer climate can carry atmospheric rivers in rapid succession to California, testing the capacity of dams and flood control infrastructure. The risk of a month-long mega storm as modeled and visualized by this article has a one in 50 chance of occurring annually. If global temperatures continue to climb, the likelihood of such a storm could increase to one in 30.[18]

Floods are among the most damaging natural hazards in the City of Sonora, and climate change is expected to make flood events worse. Climate change will likely result in more years that see particularly intense storms that drop enough precipitation over a short enough period to cause flooding. Therefore, floods are expected to occur more often in and around Sonora, and climate change may expand the parts of Sonora that are considered flood prone. There are also indirect effects of climate change that may increase flooding in Sonora. Climate change is expected to increase the frequency and severity of droughts which cause soil to dry out and become hard. When precipitation does return, more water runs off the surface rather than being absorbed into the ground, which can lead to floods. Wildfires, which are also expected to become more frequent due to

[17] UCLA Newsroom, *Study forecasts a severe climate future for California*, https://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/california-extremeclimate-future-ucla-study, accessed July 12, 2022.

[18] New York Times, *The Coming California Megastorm*, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/08/12/climate/california-rainstorm.html, published August 12, 2022, accessed October 4, 2022.

climate change, cause a similar effect by baking the surface of the ground into a harder and less penetrable layer. Trees and other vegetation help slow water down, which lets the water absorb into the soil and prevents it from turning into runoff. The loss of trees and other plants from wildfires, pests, diseases, or other climate-related exposures can also increase flood risks.

4.3.4 Flood Hazards Goals, Policies, and Programs/Implementation

GOAL 3: Minimize injury, loss of life, property damage, and economic and social disruption from flooding and inundation hazards in Sonora.

Policy 3.1: Identify and regularly update as needed any areas of likely flood inundation in Sonora using Federal Emergency Management Agency-established floodplain mapping along with any local mapping available.

Policy 3.2: Encourage new development in areas outside of the identified 100-year flood inundation zone and areas repeatedly affected by localized storm water flooding, or ensure developments are according to requirements and regulations in order to withstand flooding.

Policy 3.3: Reinforce and protect any City-owned infrastructure from the threat of flood.

Program/Implementation 3.3.A: The City shall increase resiliency of single-access roads, bridges, and trails to flooding by improving drainage systems, increasing roadbed height, and other protective steps, as feasible and appropriate. The City shall conduct regular cleaning and maintenance of storm drains along key roadways, especially in advance of the rainy season. Improve storm drain capacity in areas where ponding is regularly observed.

Program/Implementation 3.3.B: The City shall ensure that wastewater infrastructure in flood-prone areas is retrofitted and protected to minimize the risk of overflow.

Program/Implementation 3.3.C: Improve the bridge at Southgate Drive over Sonora Creek to remain passable during major flood events. If bridge improvements are determined to be infeasible, then work to establish a secondary access point to allow for ingress/egress to the Sonora WTP and residential community off of Southgate Drive during heavy rains. Options could include another access point between Southgate Drive and Stockton Street (SR 49) or obtaining an easement to connect Gerrymander Avenue with West Sunset Street.

Policy 3.4: Increase the use of permeable surfaces and rainwater catchment systems in developed areas to reduce flooding.

Policy 3.5: Maintain the highest feasible rating under the Community Rating System of the National Flood Insurance Program to reduce flood risks and cost of private property insurance.

4.4 Hazardous Materials/Wastes

Hazardous materials are materials that pose a significant risk to public safety or human or environmental health. These include toxic chemicals, flammable or corrosive materials, petroleum products, and unstable or dangerously reactive materials. Hazardous materials can be released through human error, malfunctioning or broken equipment, or as an indirect consequence of other emergencies (e.g., if a flood or earthquake causes damage to a hazardous material storage tank). Hazardous materials can also be released accidentally during transportation, as a consequence of vehicle accidents or train derailments.

Hazardous materials are generated, used, and stored by facilities throughout the City of Sonora and in surrounding unincorporated communities for a variety of purposes in service industries, agriculture, businesses, schools, and households. Uses known to transport, store, use and/or dispose of hazardous materials within the City involve construction, light manufacturing, dry cleaning, landscaping, automotive maintenance and repair, and common residential/commercial maintenance activities.

Most hazardous materials in the City of Sonora are associated with low-risk, small-scale operations consistent with day-to-day activities. Common hazardous materials include diesel fuel, chlorine, fuel waste, fertilizer, pesticides, propane, paint/paint thinner, and solvents. There are multiple propane facilities located within the City. Additionally, hazardous materials are likely used in households throughout the City. Household hazardous materials are commonly found in paints, lawn and garden products, household cleaners, beauty products, medicine, automotive fluids, and batteries. The City does not contain the types of major industrial uses that typically result in larger amounts of hazardous materials, nor are significant areas of heavy industry located in adjoining areas of unincorporated Tuolumne County.



Sonora Inn

According to the Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor database, three sites are classified as "Evaluation Needed" in Sonora. The sites are listed as Tanzy Mine (201 Barretta Street) and Manufactured Gas Plant – Sonora (NE Corner of Shepard & Lyon Streets). These sites are listed as inactive, with historic uses related to mining and gas manufacturing. Tanzy Mine is a former "pocket" gold mine, and historic mining operations were small in scale. Potential contaminants of concern include arsenic and elemental mercury. Although information on the historical use of the mine is limited, the mine operated as recently as 1909 to 1928 and was determined unlikely to generate significant quantities of hazardous waste.[19] This mine is currently inactive, and public access to points of entry are closed. Thus, this facility poses a limited risk of hazardous materials release to the community.

The historic Manufactured Gas Plant at the intersection of Shepard and Lyon Streets was only in operation for one year and closed in 1859. The contaminant of concern is polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHS). The site has been re-developed as a residential property, and no records are found regarding the plant or its status for hazardous materials after 1858. Thus, the Department of Toxic Substances Control has noted this site as

[19] Department of Toxic Substances Control: EnviroStor, *Tanzy Mine (60002452),* https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/profile_report?global_id=60002452, accessed November 8, 2023.

inactive but in need of evaluation.[20] Due to the historic nature of this site, it is also assumed this facility poses a limited risk of hazardous materials release to the community.

Additionally, there is one active State response clean-up site at Sierra Launderers & Cleaners, located at 407 North Washington Street. Hazardous materials spills at dry cleaners are common occurrences, and clean-up activities related to this facility are ongoing.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) biennially collects information regarding the generation, management, and disposal of hazardous materials under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). The Biennial Report Summary for 2021 reported one hazardous waste generator in the City of Sonora, at Adventist Health Sonora. However, this location is not considered to be a large generator. Hazardous waste types generated at the Sonora Regional Medical Center (including aqueous and alkaline solutions, ignitable waste, inorganic and organic wastes, oxygenated solvents, pharmaceutical waste, photochemicals, oils, sludge waste, corrosive waste, reactive waste, lead, and more) are disposed pursuant to RCRA regulations. This type of hazardous materials waste is considered standard for medical and healthcare facilities.

Hazardous material incidents in Sonora have been relatively infrequent and often minor in nature compared to more urbanized or industrialized areas. The majority of historical incidents have involved leaking underground storage tanks, which have been remediated and do not pose substantial health and safety risks. In recent years the City has experienced increasing incidents of illegal camping, which results in littering, discarded debris, and deserted propane tanks. Illegal camping has the potential to contaminate surface water and to contribute to wildfire risks within the City. The Tuolumne Utilities District relies on a series of surface ditches to convey untreated water to water treatment plants, and illegal camping within the vicinity of these ditches poses a risk to water quality. Historically, illegal camping has caused major wildfire incidents in the region, including the 2013 Rim Fire that substantially impacted Tuolumne and Mono Counties. Most reported hazardous materials incidents that occurred in Tuolumne County were accidental and transportation-caused automobile accidents. Most recently on January 20, 2024, a train carrying empty propane tanks was derailed next to the U.S. Post Office in Downtown Sonora and damaged five parked vehicles. The ultimate cause of this train derailment was determined to be a sinkhole threatening the integrity of the railroad tracks.

Several State agencies monitor hazardous materials/waste facilities. Potential and known contamination sites are monitored and documented by the Department of Health Services (DHS) and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). If an imminent public health threat is posed by an outside factor, the City will support local regulating agencies in notifying the public. The transport of hazardous materials/wastes and explosives through the region is regulated by the California Department of Transportation (DOT). City streets are generally not designated as hazardous materials/waste transportation routes, but a permit may be granted on a case-by-case basis. Transporters of hazardous waste are required to be certified by the DOT and manifests are required to track the hazardous waste during transport. The Sonora Police Department, Sonora Fire Department, Tuolumne County Office of Emergency Services, and the Tuolumne County Environmental Health Division are responsible for hazardous materials accidents at all locations within the City. The Tuolumne County Environmental Health Division is certified by Cal-EPA to administer specific hazardous materials/hazardous waste programs. Tuolumne County also monitors groundwater levels and flow conditions to determine groundwater quality. Tuolumne County requires a Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMBP) for any facility that stores materials in quantities greater than 55 gallons for liquids, 500 pounds for solids, or 200 cubic feet for gases. These programs and protocol serve to mitigate the likelihood and severity of hazardous materials releases. [21]

Accidental hazardous materials releases are usually caused by human error unrelated to climate change. However, hazardous materials releases can be a secondary impact as a result of infrastructure failure during a

[20] Department of Toxic Substances Control: Envirostor, *Manufactured Gas Plant – Sonora (55490002),* https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/profile_report?global_id=55490002, accessed November 8, 2023.

[21] Tuolumne County, *Hazardous Materials – Environmental Health,* https://www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/1555/Hazardous-Materials, accessed November 15, 2023.

natural hazard event, such as a wildfire or severe storm. Climate change could cause an increase in destructive natural hazards in the City and surrounding region, and thus increase the risk of future hazardous materials spills. Further, hazardous materials releases during wildfire or severe weather events could spread contamination to large geographic areas and amplify long-term impacts to human and ecological health. Spills or releases in challenging clean-up conditions can result in more severe damage or impacts compared to spills during normal conditions.

4.4.1 Hazardous Materials Hazards Goals, Policies, and Programs/Implementation

GOAL 4: Reduce likelihood of hazardous materials release, exposure, and contamination in Sonora.

Policy 4.1: Maintain a record of all businesses and sites in Sonora with hazardous materials to be filed with the Sonora Fire Department and City Engineer.

Policy 4.2: Encourage commercial or industrial development using hazardous materials in areas away from residential uses and discourage commercial and industrial development using hazardous materials in areas of identified flood or wildfire risk.

Program/Implementation 4.2.A: The City shall discourage new uses of hazardous materials within identified flood and wildland fire risk areas or within a 0.25-mile radius. New hazardous material uses within a 0.25-mile radius of residences shall include a green buffer around the property.

Policy 4.3: Collaborate with other cities/towns, Tuolumne County, and regional hazardous waste management organizations to limit the risk of hazardous materials release.

Program/Implementation 4.3.A: The City shall inform all local governments in Tuolumne County and the County of Tuolumne when a major commercial and/or industrial use has been approved that uses, produces, and/or transports hazardous materials and/or wastes in the area.

Program/Implementation 4.3.B: Identify and establish specific travel routes for the transport of hazardous materials and wastes, with key considerations being capacity to safely accommodate additional truck traffic, avoidance of residential areas, and use of interstate or state-divided highways as preferred routes.

Policy 4.4: Reduce the risk of exposure to hazardous materials in Sonora.

Program/Implementation 4.4.A: The City shall require the proper storage and disposal of hazardous materials to prevent leakage, potential explosions, fire, or the release of harmful fumes. The City shall maintain information channels to the residential and business communities about the illegality of dumping hazardous materials and waste in the storm drain system or in creeks.

Policy 4.5: Require hazardous materials assessments for development projects on sites of concern.

Program/Implementation 4.5.A: Ensure that any proposed new development on identified or suspected hazardous materials sites address hazardous materials through the preparation of Phase I or Phase II hazardous materials studies for each identified site as part of the design phase of each project.

Policy 4.6: Require remediation and cleanup of sites contaminated with hazardous substances.

Policy 4.7: Promote the reduction, recycling, and safe disposal of household hazardous wastes through public education and awareness.

Policy 4.8: Promote and publicize local trash cleanups hosted by community groups such as 1 Pile at a Time and other volunteer organizations.

4.5 Emergency Operations

4.5.1 Communication and Equipment

The City of Sonora does not have a centralized communication system and lacks reliable internet service during emergency scenarios. Emergency operations may be impeded when needed most because emergency responders may not be able to communicate with one another. Response efforts may not be coordinated or effective. City communication is dependent on the service availability of AT&T, which is vulnerable during extreme weather and other hazard events. Reliable communication is necessary for the Sonora Fire Department and Sonora Police Department to respond efficiently and effectively to crises. The lack of dependable communication methods can strain resources that are already limited within the City.



Historic Engine on SR 49

The City also does not have proper emergency response equipment. Basic equipment for emergency operations should include radios, workstations, storage compartments, computers, phones, portable dispatch modules, personal protective equipment, shelter equipment, and generators. The City may be unable to provide adequate emergency response services without necessary supplies during future emergency scenarios. Climate change is likely to increase the severity and occurrence of multiple hazard event types, including wildfires, severe weather, extreme heat, and floods. The City needs proper resources to provide emergency assistance to vulnerable populations and assets in a coordinated and efficient manner in order to be prepared for the expected increase in hazard events.

4.5.2 Pandemic

A pandemic refers to an epidemic that has spread over several countries or continents, usually affecting significant proportions of the population.[22] Pandemic agents are spread from person to person through direct or indirect contact, so humans are understood to be the causal element of pandemics. Effects of a pandemic would likely impact the entirety of the City of Sonora depending on the disease and the susceptible population. While the entire City would be at risk, specific subsets of the population may be more susceptible than others, including vulnerable populations, the very young, elderly, and immune-compromised individuals, depending on the disease.

The extent to which a pandemic would impact the City would depend on the disease type and symptoms. Some diseases may be extremely transmissible and would affect a significant portion of the population, however, the symptoms might be mild. Alternatively, a disease might be very deadly but not easily transmitted. The worst-case pandemic scenario is a disease that is both highly transmissible and highly deadly, such as COVID-19. The severity and extent of a pandemic may also depend on the ability to respond by developing and administering vaccinations, or other methods for mitigating the spread of the disease.

[22] CDC, *Lesson 1: Introduction to Epidemiology,* Section 11, https://www.cdc.gov/csels/dsepd/ss1978/lesson1/section11.html#:~:text=Epidemic%20refers%20to%20an%20increase,a%20more%20limited%20geographic%20area., accessed April 12, 2023.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have identified two recent pandemics and two major historical pandemics in roughly the past 100 years:[23]

- 2019 COVID-19 Pandemic (SARS-CoV-2 virus)
- 2009 H1N1/"Swine Flu" Pandemic (H1N1pdm09 virus)
- 1968 Pandemic (H3N2 virus)
- 1918 Pandemic (H1N1 virus)

The City of Sonora experienced significant impacts from the recent COVID-19 Pandemic. A novel coronavirus disease, SARS-CoV-2, or COVID-19, was identified in Wuhan, China in December 2019. By March 2020, the Governor issued the first statewide stay at home order, closing non-essential businesses. COVID-19 is highly transmissible and can spread by breathing in air or aerosol particles.[24] COVID-19 has a wide range of symptoms including fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, and loss of smell or taste. The symptoms of COVID-19 can result in severe complications that require hospitalization. Severe complications often lead to death, particularly in elderly people and people with underlying health conditions or compromised immune systems.[25]

As of November 2023, 220 confirmed COVID deaths occurred in Tuolumne County.[26] The majority of these deaths occurred between 2020 and 2022. The rate of COVID spread and number of COVID infections/deaths in Tuolumne County is generally lower when compared to urbanized areas and major cities across California. However, the community was greatly affected by federal and State policy designed to stop the spread of COVID-19.

As part of the response to slow the spread of the virus, non-essential businesses and schools were closed or transitioned to remote environments, if feasible. The City followed guidelines and safety standards set by the Tuolumne County Public Health Department, particularly regarding the reopening of non-essential businesses and schools. A significant milestone and improvement against the pandemic came in December of 2020 with the release of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Before COVID-19, the most recent pandemic experienced was in 2009, the (H1N1)pdm09, "swine flu" pandemic.[27] H1N1pdm09 primarily affected children and young/middle-aged adults, atypical from most influenza pandemics. Between April 2009 and April 2010, the CDC estimates over 60 million cases, nearly 275,000 hospitalizations, and over 12,000 deaths in the United States. The World Health Organization declared an end to the global pandemic in August 2010; however, the virus continues to circulate as a seasonal influenza virus.[28]

Both the 1968 and 1918 pandemics were caused by avian flu outbreaks. The 1968 pandemic was caused by the influenza H3N2 virus. The estimated number of deaths in the United States was 116,000 and the worldwide total is estimated at 1.1 million.[29] Medical advances in the 1960s including antiviral medications and expanded influenza vaccine options significantly helped combat this pandemic. The 1918 pandemic was an outbreak of influenza caused by an H1N1 virus. The virus spread worldwide from 1918-1919. It is estimated that one third of the worldwide population at the time, about 500 million people, became infected with the virus. The pandemic resulted in an estimated 675,000 deaths in the United States alone and over 50 million total world-wide.[30]

[23] CDC, *Past Pandemics*, https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/basics/past-pandemics.html, accessed November 9, 2023.
[24] CDC, *COVID-19 Overview and Infection Prevention and Control Priorities in non-U.S. Healthcare Settings*, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/non-us-settings/overview/index.html, accessed November 9, 2023.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Covid19 California State Dashboard, *Tracking Covid-19 in California*, https://covid19.ca.gov/state-dashboard/#county-statewide, accessed November 9, 2023.
[27] CDC, *Origin of 2009 H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu): Questions and Answers,* https://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/information_h1n1_virus_qa.htm, published November 25, 2009, accessed November 9, 2023.
[28] CDC, *Past Pandemics*, https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/basics/past-pandemics.html, accessed November 9, 2023.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.

The likelihood of pandemics has increased over the last hundred years due to increased globalization, urbanization, and changes in land use. Another potential key contributor to an increased likelihood of pandemics is factory farming. The shift from small scale animal agriculture to large factory farming operations may be a driving factor in recent pandemic diseases and may cause the next pandemic. For these reasons, the probability of future occurrences is considered medium. Climate change may also contribute to an increase in pandemics and the transmission of pandemics because climate change will cause humans and animals to relocate to more habitable areas over time. This relocation increases the risk of viral transmissions, particularly between species. Additionally, increased urbanization and globalization will allow pandemics to spread faster.

4.5.3 Emergency Operations Goals, Policies, and Programs/Implementation

GOAL 5: Protect the life and property of residents, businesses, and visitors to Sonora from natural and human-made hazards. Ensure emergency operations equipment and infrastructure is sufficient to protect the City of Sonora.

Policy 5.1: Site critical public facilities outside of the identified 100-year flood plain, high fire hazard severity zones, and potential areas of subsidence to the extent possible. Critical public facilities include hospital and healthcare facilities, emergency shelters and resilience hubs, police and fire stations, and emergency communications facilities – if such facilities must be in mapped hazard zones, ensure that such critical facilities are protected from the risks of flood inundation, fire, and subsidence.

Policy 5.2: Continue to regularly update and implement the City of Sonora Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Program/Implementation 5.2.A: The City shall review and update as needed the Safety Element at least once every eight years, as required by State law, ideally concurrent with updates to the City's LHMP or the Sonora Housing Element so that the best available hazard data is concurrently incorporated into the Safety Element.

Program/Implementation 5.2.B: The City shall incorporate by reference the LHMP into this Safety Element.

Policy 5.3: Enhance public education and awareness of natural and climate change-induced hazards and public understanding of disasters.

Program/Implementation 5.3.A: The City shall encourage all persons in hazard-prone areas, especially those living in neighborhoods along single-access roads, to prepare and keep an emergency and evacuation kit.

Program/Implementation 5.3.B: The City, in partnership with community-based organizations, shall create a community support network to check on socially vulnerable or isolated persons during dangerous conditions. Similarly, the City shall use said network to provide information and services related to hazard mitigation and emergency preparation to persons with limited access to transportation, communication, and other lifeline resources and services.

Policy 5.4: Identify and, as feasible, retrofit any City-owned buildings, roadways, and facilities in areas prone to storm-induced flooding, subsidence, or structural fire to maximize defensible space and outdoor fireproofing, improve drainage systems, and take other actions to harden the property as needed.

Program/Implementation 5.4.A: The City shall, when identifying projects for inclusion in the Capital Improvements Program list, note any potential vulnerabilities to climate-related hazards and ensure that the project maximizes its resilience potential and minimizes any climate vulnerabilities.

Policy 5.5: Continue to coordinate with nearby jurisdictions and land managers to reduce the risk of hazardous events occurring in surrounding areas that may affect Sonora.

Policy 5.6: Develop mitigation strategies to lessen the impacts of future public health crises, including pandemics.

Program/Implementation 5.6.A: The City shall adopt the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) policy recommendations to prepare for, prevent, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of all types of public health crises including any future COVID-19 pandemic.

Program/Implementation 5.6.B: Continue to coordinate with the Tuolumne County Public Health Department and follow the most recent guidance to address pandemics, including the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

Policy 5.7: Acquire adequate emergency operations equipment and communications infrastructure and supplies.

Program/Implementation 5.7.A: Evaluate pricing plans for satellite internet providers (such as Starlink, HughesNet, or Viaset) as a backup communication method during emergency scenarios, where power or cable internet service is unavailable for extended periods of time. Seek grant funding and community partners (such as the local school districts) for cost-sharing purposes.

Program/Implementation 5.7.B: Seek grant funding to purchase radio communications systems (such as Public Safety Radios, HAM radios, satellite phones, or Emergency Responder Radio Communication Systems) for use in emergency situations where other forms of communication are not available. Establish internal communication protocols for use of the radio communication systems and identify key points of contact within City Departments. Partner with external agencies such as local school districts and Adventist Health to expand the radio communication network in case of an emergency.

Program/Implementation 5.7.C: Seek grant funding to purchase a mobile command unit or trailer for public safety agencies to stage emergency operations and dispatch in close proximity to the emergency incident. Include communication technology/radio dispatch, workstations, and storage compartments. Consider partnerships with external public safety agencies for cost sharing and maintenance.

Program/Implementation 5.7.D: Purchase a mobile cell site on a rapid-deployment unit for use during Power Safety Shut Offs (PSPS).

Program/Implementation 5.7.E: Purchase equipment for the City Emergency Operations Center in accordance with FEMA's Authorized Equipment List. High priority equipment includes computers, phones, portable dispatch modules, radios, personal protective equipment, office supplies, and tools.

Program/Implementation 5.7.F: Seek grant funding to purchase permanent and emergency generators in coordination with community stakeholders. At a minimum, coordinate to purchase: (1) two generators in partnership with Sonora High School, to allow for extended shelter in place during power outages and (2) back-up power solutions and battery energy storage system (BESS) in partnership with Adventist Health, to maintain standard of healthcare during power outages.

Program/Implementation 5.7.G: Partner with the Red Cross to identify additional shelter locations within the City suitable for use during a variety of natural or human-caused hazard scenarios. Continue to assist the Red Cross with proactively staging required shelter equipment and resources.

Program/Implementation 5.7.H: The City shall, in coordination with utility companies, explore replacing streetlights with new models, or augmenting existing streetlights with additional features, allowing them to act as public Wi-Fi beacons and relay stations for public emergency alerts.

Policy 5.8: Increase community awareness of, and preparedness for, hazard events and emergency protocols.

Program/Implementation 5.8.A: Promote opportunities to volunteer and partner with the American Red Cross – Gold Country Region through existing City communication channels, such as social media, City newsletters and public hearings. Promote Red Cross programming efforts such as Red Cross Month. Connect local community groups with Red Cross programming and resources.

Program/Implementation 5.8.B: Encourage residents and community leaders to participate in Red Cross training programs, including basic shelter training and shelter supervisor training. Partner with local and County Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) and Search and Rescue Teams to participate in Red Cross training programs, such as first aid and CPR.

Program/Implementation 5.8.C: Participate in regular safety and public awareness campaigns regarding natural and human-caused hazards, and partner with local stakeholders to distribute awareness materials. Include best practices and awareness for emergency evacuations and shelter-in-place orders. Include considerations for “hard to reach groups”, such as senior citizens, disabled persons, or low-income households, who may not consume traditional media or outreach approaches.

Program/Implementation 5.8.D: Promote communication/programming efforts from the Area 12 Agency on Aging organization related to natural hazard preparedness and emergency evacuation for senior citizens.

4.6 Human-Caused Hazards

Human-caused hazards can include a variety of incidents, including active shooter events, terrorist attacks, aircraft crashes, civil disturbance, and cyberterrorism. Most human-caused hazards are unpredictable, and impacts depend on numerous factors specific to the incident.



Sonora High School

4.6.1 Active Shooter/Terrorist Attack/Mass Casualty

Active shooter and terrorist attack incidents both have the potential to cause mass casualties and overwhelm emergency response operations in Sonora. These types of events can occur anytime and anywhere, though places where people gather, places of political importance, infrastructure, and destinations are typically most vulnerable. The City of Sonora serves as the commercial, governmental, and cultural center for Tuolumne County. Commercial corridors along Washington Street, West Stockton Street, and the commercial area in the southeast corner of the City are potential targets for terrorism or an active shooter. As the City also serves as the County seat, there is a high concentration of governmental offices and facilities located within the Planning Area. Additionally, schools, churches, and healthcare facilities are also considered vulnerable to terrorism and active shooter threats. The extent of impacts of terrorism and active shooter events are difficult to predict and would depend on the nature of the attack and target. Impacts may vary in size and severity, but often result in loss of life, psychosocial damage, and service/industry disruptions. The effects of psychosocial damage and service/industry disruptions would likely be experienced by the entire community in the event of an active shooter or terrorist attack.

The City of Sonora has not experienced any active shooter incidents, major terrorism, or mass casualty incidents. In 2015, there was an attempted attack in Tuolumne County outside of the Planning Area, in which four juvenile suspects were arrested for being involved in a shooting plot targeting Summerville High School. The attack was still in the planning stages, and no one was injured at the time of arrest. In April 2023, reports of gunshots near Sonora High School resulted in a four-hour lockdown and prompted a major public safety agency response. The Sonora Police Department was supported by the Sonora Fire Department, Tuolumne County Sheriff's Office, Tuolumne County Probation Department, Stanislaus County Sheriff's Office, Cal FIRE, California State Parks and the Department of Fish and Wildlife in conducting sweeps of the school campus before declaring the reports to be unfounded. No students or faculty at Sonora High School were harmed.[31] This emergency incident resulted in many discussions through the LHMP planning process about ways the City could enhance emergency response by planning, communication, and training. Many mitigation actions are included in the LHMP and are related to lessons learned during this specific incident.

Active shooter and terrorist attack events have a medium probability of occurring within the Planning Area in the future. Sonora is at an increased risk due to the presence of multiple City/County governmental buildings, as well as schools, churches, special events, and other critical assets. These types of threats are difficult to predict, can occur without warning and in any area within the City. Prolonged climate change impacts may increase incidents of these types because of likely impacts and conflicts regarding natural resources, livelihood insecurity, food

[31] The Union Democrat, 'Just panic': *Sonora High School students, parents talk about tense lock down scare Thursday,* https://www.uniondemocrat.com/news/article_97755f10-d4e2-11ed-a3f9-8f81311e7953.html, accessed December 29, 2023.

insecurity, and water scarcity. Terrorist organizations could operate more easily in fragile and conflict-affected environments. However, climate change is generally unrelated to terrorism and active shooter threats.

4.6.2 Aircraft Crash

Tuolumne County owns and operates three municipal airports in proximity to the City of Sonora. These airports primarily serve private aircraft with some small private businesses and flight schools, which could be susceptible to aircraft crashes. The nearest airports include the following: Columbia Airport (4 miles northwest of Sonora), Columbia Airport Fly-In Campground (5.5 miles northwest of Sonora), and Pine Mountain Lake Airport (14 miles southeast of Sonora). The nearest domestic airports to the City include the Merced Regional Airport (60 miles south of the City) and Stockton Metropolitan Airport (50 miles west of the City). Both airports provide general aviation and commercial service.

Aircraft crashes are more likely to occur with private aircraft in general aviation compared to commercial airlines. Many aircraft crashes typically occur on the runway, however, as flight paths between regional airports are also at risk, it is possible for an aircraft crash to impact any area within the City.

Impacts related to an aircraft crash depend on the circumstances, including the size of the aircraft, location of the incident, and number of persons onboard. Most aircraft crash incidents would likely result in loss of life for those onboard and physical damage to the crash site only, however more significant damage and casualties are possible.

A handful of aircraft crashes have occurred near Columbia Airport within the past few years. All incidents listed below occurred outside of the Planning Area. While no recent incidents have occurred within the City of Sonora, the crash occurrence around Columbia Airport does indicate a heightened risk for the Planning Area.

- In July 2016, four people died in a small plane crash at the Columbia Airport in Tuolumne County. A small private plane veered to the left off of the runway during the landing and crashed, engulfing the plane in flames.[32]
- In February 2020, two Sonora men were killed in a plane crash in the 21000 block of Springfield Road, near the Columbia Airport in Tuolumne County. According to the Federal Aviation Administration, the plane was a single-engine Cessna 140A and crashed under unknown circumstances.[33]
- On February 22, 2020, a single-engine Aviat Husky A1A plane crashed at the Columbia Airport in Tuolumne County. The pilot was the only person onboard and suffered minor injuries. The plane nearly crashed into a CALFIRE air tanker.[34]
- On September 5, 2022, an off-duty CALFIRE pilot died in a personal plane crash just behind a home in Tuolumne County. The plane was a single-engine Barnow Barry Vari EZE and was a mile away from the Columbia Airport before the crash.[35]

Aircraft crashes are moderately likely to occur in the Planning Area, based on previous incidents in the region. Global warming related to climate change will affect wind patterns and events, which could increase aircraft crashes due to increased turbulence. Differences in wind speeds at different altitudes have already become

[32] Times Union, *4 die when small plane crashes at airport in Tuolumne County,* https://www.timesunion.com/bayarea/article/4-die-when-small-plane-crashes-at-airport-in-8481366.php, accessed September 27, 2023.
[33] KCRA Channel 3 Sacramento, *4 die when small plane crashes at airport in Tuolumne County,* https://www.kcra.com/article/2-killed-in-tuolumne-county-plane-crash-officials-say/30786807#, accessed September 27, 2023.
[34] KCRA Channel 3 Sacramento, *Plane crashes in Tuolumne County, nearly hits Cal Fire tanker*, https://www.kcra.com/article/plane-crashes-tuolumne-county-hits-cal-fire-tanker-columbia-airport/31062654, accessed September 27, 2023.
[35] KCRA Channel 3 Sacramento, *Cal Fire pilot killed in small plane crash in Tuolumne County near Columbia Airport,* https://www.kcra.com/article/small-plane-crashes-in-tuolumne-county-near-columbia-airport-faa-says/41084924, accessed September 27, 2023.

more pronounced since 1979, and such differences cause turbulence that can affect the safety and vulnerability of aircraft.

4.6.3 Civil Disturbance

The 2014 Emergency Operations Plan for the City of Sonora defines civil disturbance as the spontaneous disruption of normal, orderly conduct and activities in urban areas, or an outbreak of rioting or violence that is of a large nature. Civil disorder is a demonstration of unrest that may manifest in acts of violence and destruction against property or human life. Looting and fires can take place as a result of perceived or actual non-intervention by authorities in the City. Civil disorder can be spurred by specific events, such as large sporting events or criminal trials, or can be the result of long-term disfavor with authority. The threat to law enforcement, safety personnel, and critical facilities can be severe. The City Police Department assumes the primary roles in civil disturbance management.

The specific location of civil disturbance is difficult to predict. Politically motivated civil disturbance may target government facilities like City Hall, County facilities, the public library, schools, and parks. The City of Sonora has many facilities, and public spaces could serve as a starting point for a civil disturbance. Civil disturbance also has the potential to migrate from a specific starting point (including outside of the City of Sonora) and impact multiple public facilities, businesses, and private property throughout the City. For this reason, the entire Planning Area is potentially at risk of civil disturbances.

The extent and severity of damages is dependent on various factors, including the motivation behind the civil disturbance, the number of participants, and the level of law enforcement response. Severe civil disturbance can occur citywide, involve significant numbers of people, result in injuries or deaths, and result in significant property damage from mass rioting, looting, or arson. Financial impacts to residents and business owners who are uninsured or without comprehensive insurance policies would experience the most severe impacts. Most comprehensive insurance policies include coverage for civil disturbance, riots, and other vandalism causes, but payment and repairs may be delayed due to the nature of the unrest incident. Depending on the extent and severity of damage, significant downtime may be required to clean up and/or rebuild after an event.

There have been no recent significant civil disturbance incidents in Sonora. Large-scale occurrences in the City are historic, and any minor incidents have been small in scale and handled quickly by law enforcement.

During June 2020, ongoing civil disturbance across the country resulted in the City of Sonora proclaiming a Local Emergency. Protestors and counter-protesters packed in the City's Courthouse Park and spilled into neighboring sidewalks and side streets. Additional police support from Stanislaus and Calaveras County arrived to maintain peace and lawful protests. Sonora Fire Department filled the first civil unrest preposition strike team through CalOES for additional resources. Later that evening, the City Council implemented a curfew from 8:00 p.m. through 5:00 a.m. to mitigate continued disturbance.[36] This incident was largely peaceful and lawful and did not escalate into a large-scale civil disturbance.

Civil disturbance has a medium probability of occurring with the City of Sonora in the future. Due to frequent changes in the political and social climate, it is reasonable to assume that lawful protests, lawful assembly, and civil disturbance will continue to occur. Climate change is not directly related to civil disturbance, however, limited resources and social, political, and cultural stressors affected by climate change may affect the frequency of civil disturbances.

4.6.4 Cyberattacks

Unlike physical attacks, cyberattacks are not location based. Hacking could occur at great distances away from the City but impacts within the City could be severe and widespread. Cyberattacks may have similar motives to

[36] My Mother Lode, *Sonora Council Imposes A Curfew And Declares Local State Of Emergency*, https://www.mymotherlode.com/news/local/1071616/sonora-council-imposes-a-curfew-and-declares-local-state-of-emergency.html, accessed September 27, 2023.

physical terrorism and likely target similar industries including government, businesses, healthcare or medical facilities, financial institutions, educational institutions, and/or public utilities. Cyberterrorist attacks have the potential to cause violence, service disruptions, physical damages, psychosocial impacts, economic damages, or data breaches. Depending on the target and intended motive, the effects of cyberattacks may impact the entirety of the City or may impact specific businesses. For example, a cyberattack aimed at an energy provider may leave the entire City without power in order to coerce some action from the utility company or the City. On the other hand, cyberattacks may occur on a relatively small scale aimed at individuals to obtain personal or financial information.

The City of Sonora has not experienced a major cyberattack as of April 2024. However, cyberattacks remain a concern for public agencies in the region. On March 18, 2022, a Tuolumne County computer network was impacted by an attempted cybersecurity breach. The County's information was not hacked.

The risk of cyberattacks is likely to increase for the City moving forward. The prevalent use of technology and the internet increases the likelihood of cyberattacks. Likely targets, including governments, businesses, healthcare and medical facilities, financial institutions, educational institutions, and/or public utilities are currently, or will have to consider implementing cybersecurity measures moving forward. Cyberattacks are generally not related to climate change.

4.6.5 Human-Caused Hazards Goals, Policies, and Programs/Implementation

GOAL 6: Improved public safety and reduced human-caused hazards risks in Sonora.

Policy 6.1: Increase City defense against and resilience to cybercrime.

Program/Implementation 6.1.A: Enhance the City server and Virtual Private Network (VPN) capabilities to promote cybersecurity. Establish one computer network for all City Departments (including Police and Fire Departments) to maximize file sharing and communication capabilities, while reducing redundancy.

Policy 6.2: Increase security measures to protect against active shooters and known vulnerable locations and ensure emergency response personnel are trained and prepared for an active shooter situation.

Program/Implementation 6.2.A: Integrate key security measures at Sonora High School, including: electronic key card access system for school buildings and classrooms, strategic fencing around the campus, security lighting, alert/communication systems, and camera systems with remote access for police tie-in. Proactively stage emergency supplies in each classroom, including go buckets with ready to eat foods and pop-up restrooms for prolonged shelter in place scenarios. Replenish/replace emergency supplies as required.

Program/Implementation 6.2.B: Host an inter-agency active shooter training, utilizing Adventist Health facilities as a training exercise location. Partner with external public safety agencies to ensure adequate fire and police coverage within the Planning Area during the active shooter training. Seek grants to support annual training and resourcing.

Policy 6.3: Reduce potential safety hazards and vulnerabilities related to the presence of homeless or transient individuals.

Program/Implementation 6.3.A: Continue conducting mobile outreach to homeless or transient individuals in the Planning Area. Use outreach efforts to connect individuals with shelters and social services offered by the City and Tuolumne County.

Policy 6.4: Enhance preparedness of local law enforcement and emergency response teams for civil disturbance incidents.

Program/Implementation 6.4.A: Coordinate with the Sonora Police and Fire Departments to enhance communication and intelligence for political/social instances that would result in civil disturbance or unrest.

Policy 6.5: Continue to coordinate with Tuolumne County regarding aircraft and flight safety regulations implemented at Columbia Airport. Continue to promote the City of Sonora as a Noise Sensitive Area, and advocate for aircraft traveling to Columbia Airport to avoid low flying over people/property or creating excessive noise.

4.7 Climate Change

Changes to the global climate system are expected to affect future natural hazards in and around Sonora. Many natural hazards are expected to become more frequent and intense in coming years and decades, although some changes are already visible. Sonora can expect the following changes to climate-related hazards:

- Periods of both very high and very low precipitation are likely to become more common, which is expected to increase the frequency of both droughts and floods. More rapid melting of the Sierra snowpack is likely to increase the risk of spring flooding. Prolonged and severe droughts may become more common, particularly in the late summer and autumn.
- Severe weather events, such as intense storms, high winds, and hail are expected to become more frequent and intense. Sonora may experience an increase in hazardous events such as floods and landslides as a result.
- Higher temperatures are expected to cause an increase in extreme heat days. Historically, Sonora experiences an average of two extreme heat days each year, which is any day where temperatures exceed 102.4°F. These extreme heat days are projected to occur 21 to 28 times each year by around 2050, and 30 to 54 times annually by the end of the century.[37]
- Wildfires are expected to occur more frequently around Sonora due to hotter, drier conditions. While locations higher in the Sierras face the greatest risk, the areas immediately surrounding Sonora are still projected to see an increase in wildfire activity.

With the adoption of Senate Bill (SB) 379 in 2015, the State expanded California Government Code Section 65302(g) to require the Safety Element of the General Plan to include more information about wildfire hazards, flooding risks, and short-term and long-term threats posed by climate change. The City conducted a climate change vulnerability assessment in 2024 to assess the long-term impacts of climate change on community assets and populations throughout the City of Sonora. This vulnerability assessment is included in the LHMP. The priority hazards assessed included drought, extreme heat, flood, hailstorm, landslide/mudflow, lightning, severe winter storm, tornado, wildfire, and windstorm. The LHMP discusses the climate change hazards affecting resiliency in the City of Sonora and provides a summary of the vulnerability assessment results.

4.7.1 Vulnerable Populations and Assets

In 2024, the City of Sonora completed a Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment consistent with Government Code Section 65302(G), which assesses how the populations and assets in Sonora are vulnerable to different emergencies and hazardous conditions that may be created or made worse because of climate change. The primary categories assessed included populations, critical facilities and infrastructure, and important community and economic assets. The assessment follows the recommended process in the updated California Adaptation Planning Guide, which is the State's guidance for how local communities should conduct climate adaptation planning efforts, including vulnerability assessments. As defined by the California Adaptation Planning Guide (2020) (link), climate change vulnerability is considered the degree to which natural, built, and human systems are susceptible to harm from exposure or stresses associated with climate change and from the absence of adaptive capacity.

The LHMP indicates that Sonora's populations and assets are most vulnerable to wildfire, severe weather (including power outages), pandemic, landslide/sinkhole, drought, hazardous materials spill, human-caused hazards, and flood.

Populations in Sonora tend to be more vulnerable to extreme heat and human health hazards (pandemics), and wildfire, which directly affect health outcomes. Due to financial limitations, mobility challenges, and lack of access to medical care, the most sensitive populations include households in poverty, seniors living alone,

[37] Cal-Adapt. "Local Climate Change Snapshot for Sonora." California Energy Commission. 2024. Accessed 04 April 2024. https://cal-adapt.org/tools/local-climate-change-snapshot.

outdoor workers, and persons experiencing homelessness. The homes that vulnerable populations live in, especially those located on single access roads, are also highly vulnerable to direct damage from hazards such as landslides, floods, severe weather, and fire.

City-wide, the electricity transmission system is vulnerable to multiple hazards including severe weather, such as high winds that can trigger public safety power shutoffs, extreme heat that reduces the capacity and strains the system, and wildfires that damage the system, ultimately disrupting energy service. An increase in droughts, extreme heat, and wildfire create higher vulnerabilities for the local and regional natural resources. This can in turn affect local economic activities in Sonora such as outdoor recreation activities and visitors that travel through Sonora to get to State and national parks and forests.

A full analysis of the anticipated climate change impacts and vulnerability assessment results can be found in the LHMP.

4.7.2 Climate Change Hazards Goals, Policies, and Programs/Implementation

GOAL 7: Community resiliency to climate change hazards, such as drought and extreme heat.

Policy 7.1: Encourage collaboration with regional organizations and agencies to increase resilience.

Program/Implementation 7.1.A: The City shall engage in partnerships and support local and regional interagency efforts to assess climate change impacts and to develop and implement strategies that increase resiliency of vulnerable populations and ecosystems.

Program/Implementation 7.1.B: The City shall coordinate climate resiliency efforts with Tuolumne County, the Sierra Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Partnership, and other regional bodies.

Policy 7.2: Ensure that there are safe places for community members to gather during hazardous events, including extreme temperatures.

Program/Implementation 7.2.A: The City shall promote the County warming and cooling stations that can offer refuge from extreme temperatures and weather events.

Program/Implementation 7.2.B: The City shall establish an online virtual resilience hub to provide residents and businesses with information and resources during an emergency.

Program/Implementation 7.2.C: The City shall purchase an Air Conditioning Unit and install HVAC systems at the Sonora High School gym annex, for use as a community cooling center during extreme heat events.

Policy 7.3: Coordinate with regional water agencies to reduce drought risks and ensure Sonora has a healthy and reliable water supply.

Program/Implementation 7.3.A: Support Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD) public outreach efforts regarding drought and water conservation. Develop communication methods targeted to underserved communities or vulnerable populations who may be uniquely impacted by water surcharges or other drought-related fee increases.

Program/Implementation 7.3.B: The City shall encourage projects that include landscaping to use plants that will continue to be viable in the area under long-term future climate conditions. Explore modifying Sonora's landscape ordinance (Municipal Code Title 12, Chapter 12.20) to support increased use of these species. All proposed landscaping

shall be required to be compliant with the Water Efficient Landscaping Ordinance (WELO) and the City's water efficient landscape standards.

Program/Implementation 7.3.C: The City shall support and cooperate with the Tuolumne Utilities District during updates to its urban water management plan to support ongoing efforts to plan for sustainable, long-term drinking water supply for City residents and businesses.

Program/Implementation 7.3.D: Proactively monitor drought conditions and water conservation warnings issued by State agencies or Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD).

Policy 7.4: Reduce health and economic risks associated with extreme heat, severe weather, and human health hazards.

Program/Implementation 7.4.A: The City shall install water refill stations at parks, community centers, and sport courts/fields with available water supplies to encourage proper hydration and protection against heat-related illnesses.

Program/Implementation 7.4.B: The City shall provide education, partnership, and other local support to local schools to reduce outdoor exposure during extreme heat events.

Program/Implementation 7.4.C: Continue to distribute severe weather alerts, warnings, and advisories from the National Weather Service (NWS). Ensure community members are aware of severe weather risks and have adequate notice to prepare.

Policy 7.5: Coordinate with the County of Tuolumne and existing organizations to distribute information and provide services or shelter to persons experiencing homelessness.

Program/Implementation 7.5.A: The City shall coordinate with the Tuolumne County Department of Social Services to ensure that emergency shelters are available during extreme heat events, severe winter weather events, and other highly hazardous conditions. The City shall ensure that the local homeless population is made aware of these resources.

Program/Implementation 7.5.B: The City shall provide information and resources about staying safe during hazardous conditions as part of outreach and support efforts with the local homeless population.

Program/Implementation 7.5.C: The City shall identify funding opportunities, such as the California Department of Housing and Community Development Emergency Solutions Grant Program, Homeless Emergency Aid Program, and CalWORKS Housing Support Program, to assist homeless individuals and families, as hazards intensify.

4.8 Critical Facilities and Infrastructure



City Hall, Downtown Sonora

Based on the LHMP, the City of Sonora has 41 critical facilities, which include City Hall, a police station, a fire station, a public works facility, a hospital, transportation infrastructure, utilities properties, schools, and several parks that provide important services to the community. Critical infrastructure in the City also includes bridges, roads, utility infrastructure, and pipelines. Damage to or destruction of any of these facilities could impair emergency response efforts, result in a lack of vital resources for residents, or lead to disruption of services. Table 3-6, City of Sonora Critical Facilities, and Exhibit 3-1, Critical Facilities, of the LHMP, identify existing critical facilities and infrastructure in the City.

The principal storm drain conveyance in Downtown Sonora is referred to as the Main Drain, a system including stone tunnels dating back to the late 1880s and storm drain pipeline connections. Portions of the stone tunnel have been resurfaced with concrete/shotcrete or replaced with concrete box culverts. However, portions of the Main Drain remain vulnerable and insufficient, particularly in the context of hazard events. Structural deficiencies in the Main Drain indicate future floods are likely during severe weather incidents. Such events also put the Drain's infrastructure at further risk. Localized flooding as a result of deficiencies in the Main Drain could impede access to critical facilities, create impassable conditions for first responders, or damage/destroy structures. In 2019, a sinkhole emerged in Downtown as a result of a heavy rain event, creating a five- to six-foot-wide hole directly over the Main Drain. In October 2023 an inspection and condition assessment occurred with regard to the Main Drain and included recommendations for phased improvements to the City's storm water infrastructure; these improvements are included as mitigation actions in the City's LHMP. Additional policies are recommended below to ensure the City has adequate storm water infrastructure in preparation for future extreme hazard events.

4.8.1 Critical Facilities and Infrastructure Goals, Policies, and Programs/Implementation

GOAL 8: Increased resiliency of critical and lifeline facilities and infrastructure to future hazard events in Sonora.

Policy 8.1: Ensure emergency response facilities are adequately funded, staffed, and housed in order to provide sufficient emergency response services.

Program/Implementation 8.1.A: Establish a Social Services Impact Fee (development fees) to fund increased demands on police and fire department services and help public safety agencies maintain adequate personnel and response times during emergency incidents. Develop a fee for service scheduling for assisting other agencies in the County.

Program/Implementation 8.1.B: Build a new or renovated Police Station and Emergency Dispatch that meets both the Department's requirements and community safety needs. Ensure new or renovated construction incorporates current building code requirements and security concerns, and updated technology that would ensure the Police Station would withstand natural disasters. Identify operational and functional deficiencies with the current Police Station to inform key upgrade components in the new or renovated Police Station.

Program/Implementation 8.1.C: Establish an incentive pay structure for police and fire department staff to participate in specialized training, such as the Public Information Officer Program, Standardized Emergency Management System (Disaster Response), or similar.

Policy 8.2: Use Mobile LiDAR to create a pavement management database, sign inventory and other asset management uses.

Policy 8.3: Establish an online database for code enforcement, violation, and inspection procedures.

Policy 8.4: Increase the strength of utilities and assets to increase the resiliency of infrastructure.

Program/Implementation 8.4.A: Support Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD) in ongoing efforts to acquire assets from PG&E, and maintenance improvements on the local water flumes.

Program/Implementation 8.4.B: Support long-term microgrid projects located at critical facilities to avoid extended power outages during Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) incidents. Co-locate and cost-share microgrid projects between multiple critical facilities where feasible, such as Adventist Health and Sonora Elementary School.

Program/Implementation 8.4.C: Extend the life of backup battery power on City traffic signals. Identify streetlights where backup battery power would be most beneficial to facilitate safe ingress/egress in the community.

Policy 8.5: Improve the durability and resiliency of the Main Drain and storm water infrastructure.

Program/Implementation 8.5.A: Seek grant funding to implement the Main Drain Improvement Project, as identified in the Main Drain Field Inspection and Condition Assessment Technical Memorandum. Main Drain improvements are anticipated to enhance storm water flows and reduce flooding in Downtown Sonora but may convey storm water flows beyond system capacity downstream in Sonora Creek. In addition to Main Drain improvements, also identify and fund solutions to mitigate flooding at the Main Drain outlet structure on the 100 block of West Stockton Street (SR 49) and other downstream facilities.

Program/Implementation 8.5.B: Identify opportunities to expand the capacity of Woods Creek such as riprap, dredging, or vegetation clearance programs to avoid overtopping or flooding at critical facilities. Coordinate storm water capacity efforts with Main Drain improvements.

4.9 Evacuation

The City of Sonora has several subdivisions and roads that do not meet ingress/egress requirements for evacuation purposes or are currently designed in a manner which inhibits evacuation and emergency response efforts. The Woodscreek subdivision off of Ponderosa Lane and the subdivision located behind the Mother Lode Fairgrounds, off of Southgate Drive, both have only one point of ingress/egress; refer to Exhibit 4-6, Parcels with Inadequate Emergency Access. These subdivisions have been identified as being particularly vulnerable in the case of a fire or need for emergency access.

Additionally, many roads within the Planning Area do not meet minimum width requirements for evacuation purposes and emergency response infrastructure. There are many narrow one-way streets, and many roads have a tight turning radius that prohibits access for emergency vehicles and firefighting infrastructure. Several roads in the Downtown area offer two-way parking that may impede emergency response capabilities. The City of Sonora is increasingly at risk of wildfires and other hazard events, and evacuation planning is necessary to ensure residents and visitors are not made vulnerable.



Southgate Drive and SR 49

4.9.1 Evacuation Hazards Goals, Policies, and Programs/Implementation

GOAL 9: Decreased vulnerability of critical facilities, residents, and visitors to hazard events through proper evacuation planning.

Policy 9.1: Investigate and minimize vulnerabilities due to inadequate road design and evacuation capabilities.

Program/Implementation 9.1.A: Seek grant funding for a City-wide evacuation study to evaluate the local roadway system capacity and limitations during a hazard incident. Identify roadways that do not meet current code width and turning-radius standards, and neighborhoods with limited opportunities for ingress/egress. Identify areas where on-street parking could be reduced or limited to allow for improved emergency access. Use the planning process to identify recommended transportation improvements, implementation, and phasing. Include provisions for bringing emergency ingress and egress requirements of CALFIRE and City road and driveway standards into conformance and provide alternative methods of evacuation, such as transit, carpooling, and shelter in place. Adopt new requirements/regulations reflecting recommendations from the study such as new development mitigation measures, including restricting residential development within high or very high fire hazard severity zones.

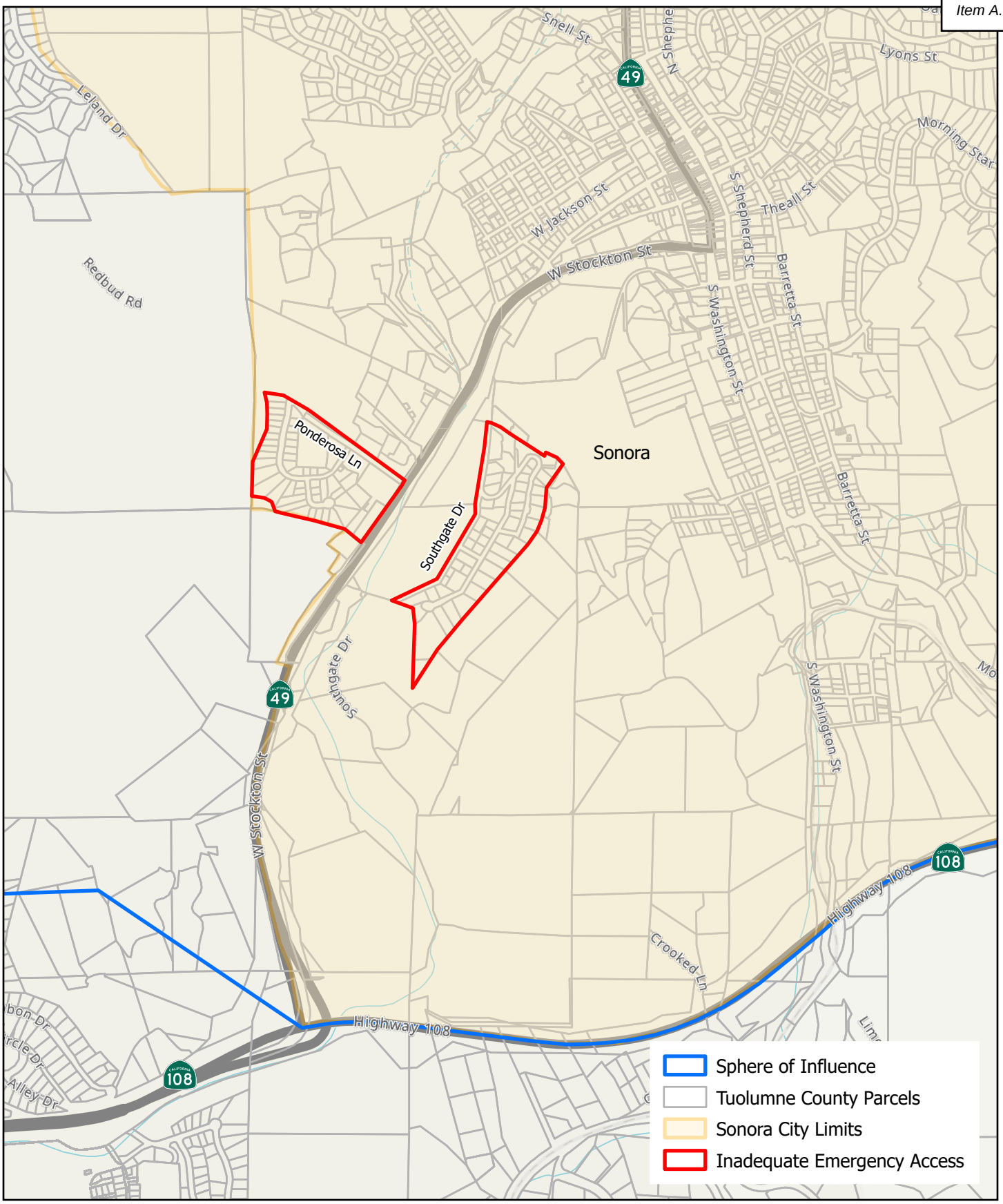
Program/Implementation 9.1.B: Integrate City-wide evacuation considerations and best practices into the City Emergency Operations Plan Update. Identify areas where traffic lanes can accommodate one-way egress out of the Planning Area, or where roadway shoulders could be utilized as emergency evacuation lanes. Include considerations for evacuations during business hours or holiday weekends, when City population can peak at 25,000 individuals. Develop minimum standards for evacuation of residential

areas in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, including, but not limited to, road width, number of ingress/egress points, and capacity thresholds.

Program/Implementation 9.1.C: Identify key locations to construct off-street parking garages to reduce on-street parking and improve emergency ingress/egress. Focus priority within Downtown Sonora and older neighborhoods where residential units do not have garage or off-street parking space.

Program/Implementation 9.1.D: Partner with Sonora High School and conduct a feasibility study with a traffic engineer to re-align ingress/egress, allowing adequate flow of traffic during emergency scenarios. Consider locating a bus turnout along West School Street to allow for two-way traffic during peak pick-up/drop-off times. Consider alternative striping and flow of traffic options for the surface parking lot at the intersection of West School Street/Snell Street.

Program/Implementation 9.1.E; Adopt red flag warning ordinance. Regulate one-side parking in areas of concern for emergency egress/ingress on red flag warning days.



Sources: City of Sonora, Tuolumne County
Map Export: 5/2/2024 2:39 PM.

EXHIBIT 4-6
Parcels with Inadequate Emergency Access

4.10 Constraints

Constraints to public safety are a result of both natural events and the activities of humans. Natural hazards are caused by excess rainfall, seismic activity, landslides, wildfires, or high winds. Human-made hazards are the result of crime, hazardous materials spills, and accidents. The following are some of the factors that constrain protection of the public:

- Unpredictability. Natural disasters are often unpredictable. To reduce the danger of disaster, precautionary measures are required. Avoidance of flood-prone areas and flood-control measures are necessary. Construction to earthquake standards has proven effective to reduce losses in seismic events. Emergency plans that include evacuation, medical aid, and temporary food and shelter are important.
- Existing land development. Prior settlement patterns and very dense development often present difficult access problems for emergency vehicles. Undefined evacuation routes and lack of emergency communication lines are also problems for emergency service providers. Exhibit 4-6 shows residential properties that may have only one emergency evacuation route. The lack of multiple emergency evacuation routes provides these parcels limited roadway access, so they may face difficulty evacuating during or in advance of emergency conditions, particularly if residents are given little notice.
- Priorities. Public safety may be described as the preservation of human life and the protection of property. These values underlie the concept of human settlement; however, the relative importance of saving lives or saving property is sometimes a subjective decision.
- Human carelessness. Carelessness often leads to accidents, which can involve automobiles, airplanes, trains, hazardous materials spills, urban fires, and forest fires. Public education and safety rules and regulations are important to avoid careless attitudes and actions.
- Individual precaution. Citizens often are the cause of their own disasters through lack of available or at-hand precautions, i.e., not locking doors at night or when away, swimming alone, drinking and driving, or smoking in bed.
- Economics. Economic considerations often play an important role in providing public safety. Budget limitations force difficult decisions related to deciding which safety measures are more important or cost-effective.
- Boundaries. Sonora may be threatened or harmed by natural disasters that begin outside of the City limits, such as a wildfire that crosses into Sonora from the Stanislaus National Forest. However, Sonora has no control over development patterns, wildland management strategies, or other factors outside of the community that may reduce the risk of these disasters occurring. Coordination with Tuolumne County and other nearby jurisdictions is critical to Sonora's safety.

DRAFT

Prepared for:

City of Sonora
94 Washington Street
Sonora, California 95370
Contact: Tyler Summersett

2024-2029 Housing Element Update and Safety Element Update

Initial Study/Negative Declaration

Prepared by:

CSG CONSULTANTS
3707 W. Garden Grove Boulevard,
Suite 100
Orange, California 92868
Contact: Glenn Lajoie, AICP

JULY 2025

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TABLES

Table 2-1 Summary of Ability to Meet RHNA 10
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Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym/Abbreviation	Definition
AB 52	Assembly Bill 52
BMP	Best Management Practices
HCD	California Department of Housing and Community Development
HEU	Housing Element Update
IS	Initial Study
LHMP	Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
MS4 Permit	Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit
ND	Negative Declaration
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
PG&E	Pacific Gas and Electric Company
RHNA	Regional Housing Needs Allocation
RHNP	Regional Housing Needs Plan
SB 18	Senate Bill 18
SEU	Safety Element Update
SFD	Sonora Fire Department
SR 49	State Highway/Route 49
SR 108	State Highway/Route 108
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
TUD	Tuolumne Utilities District
UWMP	2020 TUD Urban Water Management Plan
VHFHSZ	Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone

1 Introduction and Purpose

1.1 Project Overview

The City of Sonora (Lead Agency) is proposing updates to both the Housing Element and Safety Element of the City's General Plan ("project"), to align with recently enacted State laws. The City previously updated the Safety Element in 2020 as part of its comprehensive General Plan Update 2020. The Housing Element was previously updated in 2019. The proposed project includes the Seventh Cycle, 2024-2029 Housing Element Update of the General Plan and an update to the City's Safety Element to address various hazards the City has faced, including wildfires, floods, and severe weather. The Housing Element and Safety Element Updates are policy updates only, and no specific development is proposed at this time.

1.2 Statutory Authority Requirements

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended (California Public Resources Code, Section 21000-21177) and pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14, California Code of Regulations [CCR], Chapter 3, Section 15063), the City, acting in the capacity of the Lead Agency, is required to undertake the preparation of an Initial Study (IS) to determine if the project would have significant environmental impacts. The environmental document is intended as informational, undertaken to provide an environmental basis for subsequent discretionary actions on the project. The resulting documentation is not, however, a policy document and its approval and/or certification neither presupposes nor mandates any actions on the part of those agencies from whom permits and other discretionary approval would be required.

The environmental documentation and supporting analysis will be subject to a public review period. During this review, public comments on the documentation should be addressed to the City. Following the review of any comments received pertaining to the CEQA review, the City will consider these comments as part of the project's environmental review and determination. The comments will be included in the IS document for consideration by the City of Sonora's Planning Commission and City Council.

1.3 Purpose of the Initial Study

The purpose of the IS is to: (1) identify environmental impacts; (2) provide the Lead Agency with information to use as the basis for deciding whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) or Negative Declaration (ND); (3) enable a Lead Agency or Applicant to modify a project, mitigating potential adverse impacts before an EIR is prepared; (4) facilitate an environmental assessment early in the design of a project; (5) provide documentation of the factual basis for the finding in an MND or ND that a project would not have a significant environmental effect; (6) eliminate needless EIRs; (7) determine whether a previously prepared EIR could be used for a project; and (8) assist in the preparation of an EIR, if required, by focusing the EIR on the effects determined to be significant, identifying the effects determined not to be significant, and explaining the reasons for determining that potentially significant effects would not be significant.

Section 15063 of the State CEQA Guidelines identifies specific disclosure requirements for inclusion in an IS. Pursuant to those requirements, an IS must include the following: (1) a description of the project, including the location of the project; (2) an identification of the environmental setting; (3) an identification of environmental effects by use of a checklist; (4) a discussion of ways to mitigate significant effects identified, if any; (5) an examination of a project's compatibility with existing zoning, plans, and other applicable land use controls; and (6) the name of the person or persons who prepared or participated in the preparation of the IS.

1.4 California Environmental Quality Act Compliance

In accordance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines, this IS has been prepared for the proposed project and its associated discretionary approvals. The IS indicates that the project would not have any significant or potentially significant environmental impacts, and therefore, the project requires preparation of an Initial Study/Negative Declaration (IS/ND).

The IS/ND serves as the environmental document that presents the analysis of project impacts on each of the environmental topic areas in the CEQA Environmental Checklist provided in Section 3.0. This document will serve to inform City decision makers, representatives of affected trustee and responsible agencies, and other interested parties of the potential environmental effects that may occur with approval and implementation of the proposed project.

1.5 California Environmental Quality Act Review and Comment

This IS/ND has been submitted to potentially affected agencies and individuals. Notices of the availability of the IS/ND for review and comment, as well as the environmental documentation, are available on the City of Sonora's website (https://sonoraca.com/category/city-of-sonora-public-notices/) for review.

A 30-day public review period has been established for the IS/ND in accordance with Section 15073 of the State CEQA Guidelines. During review of the IS/ND, affected public agencies and the interested public should focus on the document's adequacy in identifying and analyzing the potential environmental impacts. Comments on the IS/ND and the analysis contained herein must be received by 5:00 PM on August 12, 2025, and should be addressed to:

City of Sonora
Tyler Summersett
Community Development Director
94 North Washington Street
Sonora, CA 95370
tsummersett@sonoraca.org
1.209.532.3508

Following receipt and evaluation of comments from agencies, organizations, and/or individuals, the City will determine whether any substantial new environmental issues have been raised. If so, further documentation – such as an EIR or an IS/MND – may be required. If not, the project and the environmental documentation are tentatively scheduled to be submitted to the Sonora Planning Commission and City Council for consideration.

1.6 Organization of the Initial Study

The IS/ND is organized into sections, as described below:

- **Section 1.0: Introduction and Purpose**. This section provides an introduction, project summary, and overview of the conclusions in the IS/ND.
- **Section 2.0: Project Description.** This section provides a brief description of the project location and relevant background information. This section provides a description of the proposed project and necessary discretionary approvals.
- **Section 3.0: Environmental Checklist.** The completed Environmental Checklist Form from the State CEQA Guidelines provides an overview of the potential impacts that may or may not result from project implementation. The Environmental Checklist Form also includes "mandatory findings of significance", as required by CEQA. The analysis concludes the significance of impacts and standard conditions, regulatory requirements, and mitigation measures to reduce potentially significant impacts.
- **Section 4.0: References.** This section identifies the references used to prepare the IS/ND and lists the preparers of the document.

2 Project Description

1. **Project Title:**

   City of Sonora 2024-2029 Housing Element Update and Safety Element Update

2. **Lead Agency name and address:**

   City of Sonora
   Community Development Department, Planning Division
   94 North Washington Street
   Sonora, CA 95370

3. **Contact person and phone number:**

   Tyler Summersett, Community Development Director
   tsummersett@sonoraca.org
   1.209.532.3508

4. **Project location:**

   Citywide; Sonora is located in Tuolumne County, in the Sierra Nevada foothills.

5. **Project sponsor's name and address:**

   City of Sonora
   94 North Washington Street
   Sonora, CA 95370

6. **General Plan Designation:**

   Citywide. Under the existing General Plan, the project area consists of a range of land use designations including Commercial, Estate Residential, Heavy Commercial, High Density Residential, Historic Mixed Density Residential, Historic Mixed Use, Light Manufacturing, Medium Density Residential, Mixed Use, Public/Quasi Public, Park/Recreation/Resource/Open Space, and Single Family Residential.

7. **Zoning:**

   Citywide. The project area consists of a range of zoning designations, including Residential Estates, Single Family Residential, Limited Multi-Family Residential, Multi-Family Residential, PD Limited Multi-Family Residential Combining, PD Multi-Family Residential Combining, Tourist and Administrative, Commercial, General Commercial, Limited Manufacturing, Agricultural/Residential, Planned Development Combining Zone, PD Commercial Combining, and Open Space. In order to receive certification of the City's 2024-2029 Housing Element by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), the 5th and 6th Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) candidate site(s) are to be rezoned to accommodate by-right housing pursuant to Government Code Section 65583.2 (c). Specifically, Program 3.1 requires the City to amend the City's Municipal Code by adding Chapter 17.21, entitled Regional Housing Needs Assessment Overlay Zone District (RHNAOZD), to Title 17 of the City of Sonora Municipal Code. The RHNAOZD applies to the Lemke property (APN: 044-430-055), which is zoned R3 (maximum density of 21.75 du/acre). As an overlay zone, the RHNAOZD would layer on top of the base R3 zoning regulations, leaving in place the option to develop under the base zoning, but providing the opportunity to develop the property through a ministerial by-right approval process should an applicant propose 20 percent low-income deed restricted affordable housing.

8. **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.?**

   Consultation with California Native American tribes is addressed in Section 3.18, Tribal Cultural Resources.

2.1 Project Location and Setting

The City of Sonora is in the western portion of Tuolumne County, California, covering approximately 3.18 square miles within the Sierra Nevada foothills. The City boundary extends to the Town of Browns Flat to the north and State Highway 108 (SR 108) to the south. The City is surrounded by unincorporated Tuolumne County. The communities of Columbia and Springfield are located to the north, East Sonora to the east, and Jamestown to the west; refer to Exhibit 1, Regional Location. The nearest highways to the City are SR 108, at the southern boundary of the City, and SR 49, which runs from the western portion of the City, through the City's historical center, and is the primary access through the Downtown area; refer to Exhibit 2, Local Vicinity.

2.2 Project Background

The City is updating the General Plan Housing and Safety Elements in order to align them with other General Plan Elements, as required by State law, including the Land Use, Circulation, Conservation and Open Space, Noise, Public Facilities and Services, Air Quality, Cultural Resources, Economics, Community Identify, and Parks and Recreation Elements. Both updates strive to align with recently enacted State laws and meet State requirements. The Safety Element Update is intended to adopt new climate change and wildfire mitigation strategies that will help the City better prepare for possible new and more severe climate scenarios.

Housing Element Update

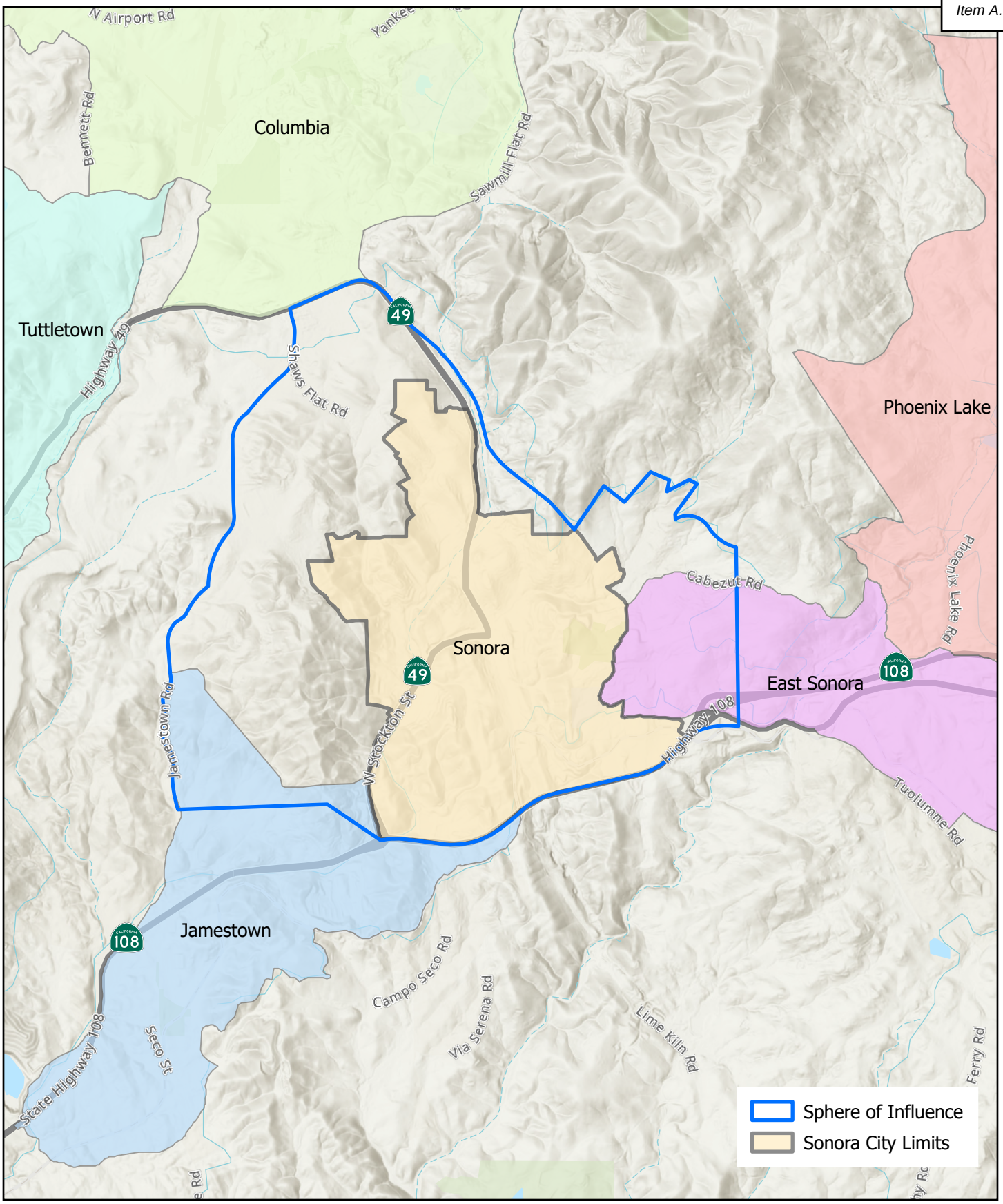
The 2020 Census indicates a citywide population of 5,003, which is estimated to have decreased to 4,940 people in 2021. The City is the only incorporated area in Tuolumne County, and therefore the largest city in the area. The City is proposing to adopt the Housing Element for the Seventh Cycle planning period from 2024 to 2029. The proposed Housing Element Update (HEU) is available on the City's website through this link: Sonora Community Development Department. The Housing Element, which is part of the City's General Plan, is a policy document designed to provide the City with a coordinated and comprehensive strategy for promoting the production of safe and affordable housing within the community. California Government Code Section 65580 states the following regarding the importance of creating housing elements:

> *The availability of housing is of vital statewide importance, and the early attainment of decent housing and a suitable living environment for every Californian, including farmworkers, is a priority of the highest order.*

Per State law, the housing element has two main purposes:

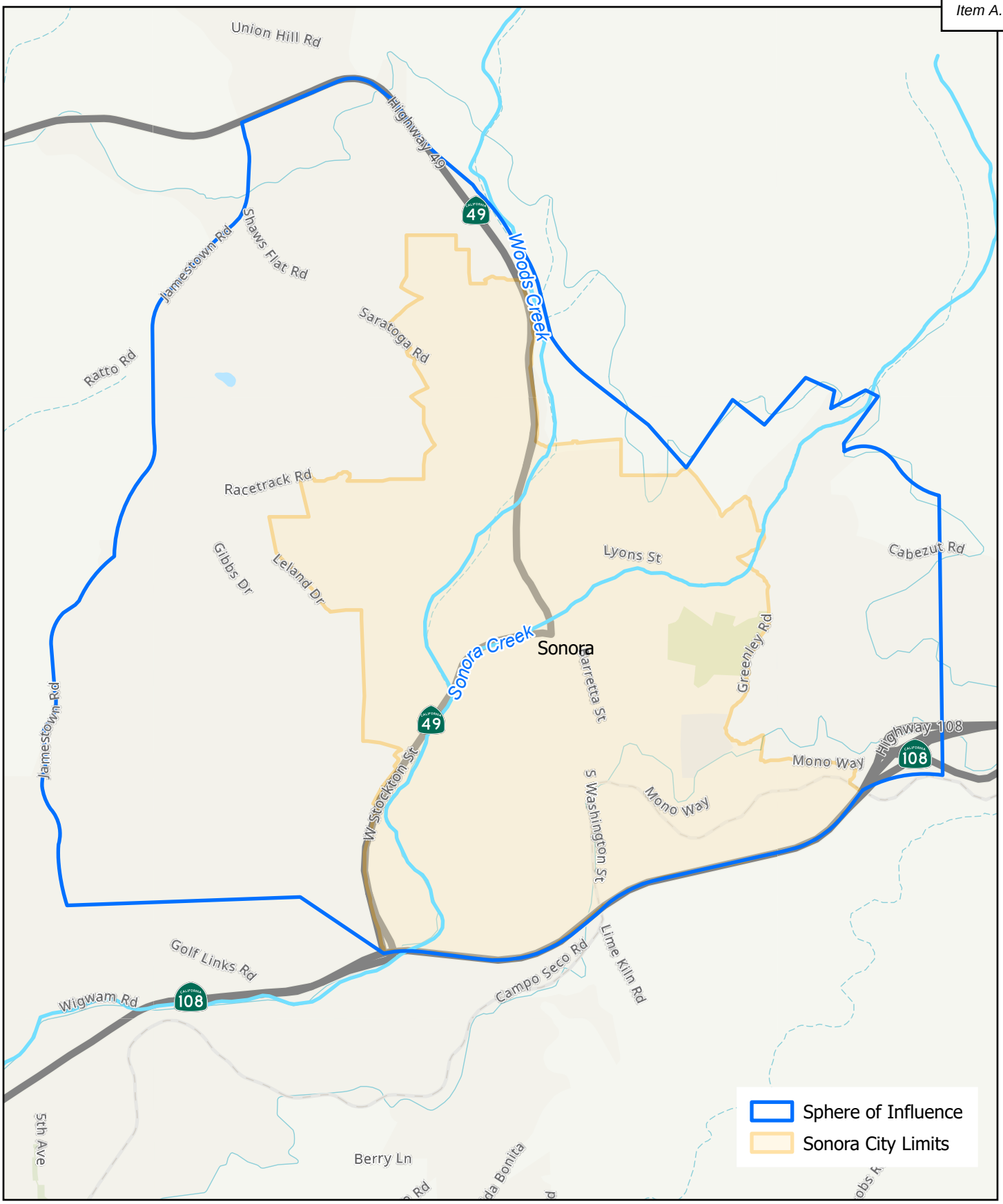
1. To provide an assessment of both current and future housing needs and constraints in meeting these needs; and
2. To provide a strategy that establishes housing goals, policies, and programs.

The proposed Housing Element Update describes and analyzes the housing needs of Sonora residents and the issues confronted by the City, and provides goals, policies, and quantified objectives related to the maintenance, preservation, improvement, and development of housing.



Sources: City of Sonora, Tuolumne County
Map Export: 7/1/2024 3:03 PM.

EXHIBIT 1
Regional Location



Sources: City of Sonora, Tuolumne County
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EXHIBIT 2
Local Vicinity

Safety Element Update

The Safety Element Update (SEU), provided on the City's website through this link: Sonora Community Development Department, analyzes potential natural and human-caused hazards to safety in the City and provides goals, policies, and actions to minimize these hazards. The SEU evaluates hazards that may affect existing and future development and growth and provides guidelines for protecting the community and minimizing harm to the extent feasible. The goal of the SEU is to reduce the risk of injury, death, property loss, and other hardships to acceptable levels. Periodic updates of the Safety Element ensure that goals and policies remain relevant and responsive to community needs, hazard situations, and State law. California Government Code Section 65302(g)(1) identifies the following list of safety risks that, at a minimum, must be examined in each Safety Element:

- Seismically induced surface rupture*
- Ground shaking*
- Ground failure*
- Flooding*
- Tsunami
- Seiche
- Dam failure
- Slope instability leading to mudslides and landslides*
- Subsidence*
- Liquefaction areas
- Other seismic hazards
- Wildland and urban fires*
- Climate change*

Items denoted by an * are potential hazards relevant to the City of Sonora.

2.3 Project Characteristics

Housing Element Update

Background

The City's Housing Element serves as an integrated part of the General Plan and is subject to detailed statutory requirements, including a requirement to be updated every five years and mandatory review by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). This action includes the adoption of the HEU, which is a policy document; no actual development of parcels is included as part of the HEU. The proposed HEU is a five-year plan for the 2024-2029 period.

Pursuant to Government Code Section 65583, a housing element is required to consist of an identification and analysis of existing and projected housing needs and a statement of goals, policies, quantified objectives, financial resources, and scheduled programs for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing. Specifically, a housing element is required to contain the following:

- An assessment of housing needs and an inventory of resources and constraints revelant to meeting those needs (Government Code Section 65583[a])
- A statement of the community's goals, quantified objectives, and policies relative to the maintenance, preservation, improvement, and development of housing (Government Code Section 65583[a])

- A program that sets forth a schedule of actions during the planning period, each with a timeline for implementation of the policies and to achieve the goals and objectives of the housing element (Government Code Section 65583[c])

According to the Regional Housing Needs Plan (RHNP), the City of Sonora has a Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) of two (2) new units for the 2024-2029 period. Of the two units needed, one new unit is needed for very low income and one for low income. This is half of the need of Tuolumne County, in which two units are needed for very low income and two for low income. Combined, the City and Tuolumne County need six new units. The Housing Element Update identified two adequate sites with appropriate densities to meet the current RHNA requirements. The City has sufficient vacant property that, once developed, would result in units across all income categories beyond the cycle's requirement. The Seventh Cycle Housing Element was adopted in summer 2025. The Seventh Cycle Housing Element was submitted to HCD and found to be in compliance in summer 2025, contingent upon timely implementation of stated programs.

Housing Element Overview

The City's HEU consists of the following major components:

- A review of the prior housing element and goals that were accomplished (Appendix B, Housing Accomplishments – Evaluation of the 2019 Housing Element)
- An assessment of housing needs in the City including profile and analysis of the City's demographics, housing characteristics, and existing and future housing needs (Section 3.2, Needs Assessment)
- An assessment of resources available to meet the City's objectives regarding housing production and preservation. Resources include land available for new construction and redevelopment, as well as financial and administrative resources available (Section 3.3, Site Inventory Analysis and Zoning)
- A review of the constraints to housing production and preservation. Constraints include potential market, governmental policy, and environmental limitations to meeting the City's identified housing needs (Section 3.4, Constraints)
- A statement of the housing plan to address the City's identified housing needs, including housing goals, policies, and programs (Section 3.6, Housing Plan)

Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)

State housing element law requires housing elements to be updated regularly to reflect a community's changing housing needs, including preparation of a RHNA plan (Government Code Section 65584[a]). A critical measure of compliance is the ability of a jurisdiction to accommodate its share of the regional housing needs based on a RHNA prepared by HCD for each Council of Governments or regional jurisdiction in the State that identifies projected housing units needed for all economic segments based on the Department of Finance population estimates. HCD is responsible for allocating this total to the jurisdictions within Tuolumne County (the City of Sonora and Tuolumne County). This process is known as the RHNA and occurs every 8.5 years.

The RHNP creates the RHNA by allocating to each city and county a "fair share" of the region's projected housing needs by household income group. In each jurisdiction, the RHNA is distributed among four different income groups. This ensures that each city or county is planning for housing that meets the needs of all economic segments of the community, including lower income households.

For the City of Sonora, the RHNA for 2024-2029 is 2 units. This includes one very low-income unit, and one low-income unit. The 2024-2029 Housing Element demonstrates that the City has the capacity to accommodate this projected housing need.

Summary of Ability to Meet RHNA

As shown in Table 2-1 below, the identified vacant sites can accommodate the RHNA allocation in all income categories. The table illustrates a surplus capacity of 52 very low-income sites, 52 low-income sites, 24 moderate income sites, and 24 above moderate-income sites based on the allowed density of the identified sites.

Table 2-1
Summary of Ability to Meet RHNA

Table 3-26: Capacity to Meet RHNA Requirement					
	Very Low	**Low**	**Moderate**	**Above Moderate**	**Total**
RHNA Requirement	1	1	0	0	2
RHNA Sites					
Lemke	53	53	0	0	106
Cuesta Heights	0	0	24	24	48
Total Capacity	**53**	**53**	**24**	**24**	**154**
Surplus	*52*	*52*	*24*	*24*	*152*

Rezone

As noted in Housing Element Program 3.1 and consistent with the California Department of Housing and Community Development's (HCD) correspondence dated June 9, 2025, the 5th and 6th Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) candidate site(s) are to be rezoned to accommodate by-right housing pursuant to Government Code Section 65583.2 (c). Specifically, Program 3.1 requires the City to amend the City's Municipal Code by adding Chapter 17.21, entitled Regional Housing Needs Assessment Overlay Zone District (RHNAOZD), to Title 17 of the City of Sonora Municipal Code. The Regional Housing Needs Assessment Overlay Zone District (RHNAOZD) applies to the following property:

Table 2-2
RHNAOZD Site

Regional Housing Needs Assessment Overlay Zone District Sites						
Site Name	**APN**	**Existing Zoning/General Plan Designation**	**Approx. Acreage**	**Maximum Density**	**Unit Potential**	**Affordability**
Lemke	044-430-055	R3/HDR	11.05*	21.75 du/acre	106	Low/Very Low

* Based on the site constraints and the topography of the area, the portion of this parcel that falls within the range of 0-15% slope would be developable at 9.19 acres.

The Lemke site is the sole remaining 5th and 6th RHNA site at 9.19 acres of vacant land of an 11.05-acre parcel in the R3 Zone. The R3 Zone has a maximum density of 21.75 dwelling units per acre, making the R3 zone suitable for lower-income housing. However, based upon site constraints, including topography, the realistic capacity of the site is 106 lower income units. The projection is based on taking the developable portion of the site (9.19 acres) at the average density of multi-family developments in the City (11.6) acres.

As an overlay zone, the RHNAOZD would layer on top of the base R3 zoning regulations, leaving in place the option to develop under the base zoning, but providing the opportunity to develop the property through a ministerial by-right approval process should an applicant propose 20 percent low-income deed restricted affordable housing. The by-right approval process is subject to objective design standards. Accordingly, the Lemke property will be rezoned to have a zoning designation of R3/(RHNAOZ), as required for HCD Certification of the City's 2024-2029 Housing Element of the General Plan.

The purpose of the RHNAOZD is to acknowledge existing statutes, thereby memorializing an existing by-right approval process and application of objective design standards afforded to developers of projects that include 20 percent of the units as housing affordable to lower income households in accordance with Government Code Section 65583.2. Other than the by-right approval and objective design standards processes established by the RHNAOZ, no land use changes are proposed with the rezone of the Lemke property.

2024-2029 HEU Goals and Policies

Based on the City's ability to meet the RHNA allocation as described above, the HEU is a policy document; no actual development of parcels is included as part of the approval. The project evaluated herein therefore does not include development. The Housing Element goals, policies, objectives, and programs, which can be found in Chapter 3.6, Housing Plan, reflect the City's continued commitment to actively support residential development and plan for the City's fair share of regional housing needs.

Safety Element Update

Background

Throughout the history of the City of Sonora, the City has dealt with various natural and human-caused hazards, including earthquakes, wildfires, droughts, land movement, train derailments, flooding, and a pandemic. Landslides and mudslides have occurred as a result of severe weather and flooding, and most of the City has been identified as being within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ). The City's Safety Element is updated periodically to ensure the City continues to address the relevant natural and human-caused hazards of the time. In the twenty-first century, climate change has become a prevalent safety concern for all jurisdictions, as it increasingly affects other hazards such as severe weather, flooding, wildfires, diseases, extreme heat, and drought. Safety Element updates are now required to evaluate local hazard events and the likelihood of future hazards in the context of climate change.

Safety Element Overview

The City's SEU addresses hazards of concern relevant to the City and provides goals, policies, and implementation measures to adapt to and minimize these hazards. The 2024 Sonora SEU was developed in conjunction with the development of the 2024 City of Sonora Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP). The LHMP identifies specific needs, goals, mitigation actions, capital improvement projects, and local and regional partnerships relevant to the City of Sonora, for the purpose of protecting the community from natural and human-caused hazards. Further details regarding natural disasters, including relevant mitigation actions to reduce vulnerability, are included in the LHMP. The LHMP incorporates a process where hazards are identified and profiled, the people and facilities at risk are analyzed, and mitigation actions are developed to reduce or eliminate hazard risk. The implementation of these mitigation actions, which include both short-term and long-term strategies, involve planning, policy changes, programs, projects, and other activities. The hazards identified in the SEU and many of the goals, policies, and implementation measures included in the SEU coincide with the hazards, goals, and actions included in the LHMP.

Natural and human-caused hazards determined relevant to the City of Sonora in the SEU include the following:

Wildfire and Urban Fire Hazards

Most of the City is designated a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. The City FHSZ is classified as a Local Responsibility Area and falls under the jurisdiction of the City of Sonora Fire Department. The terrain in the City consists of heavily wooded communities and steep terrain that limits and challenges vegetation management and fire suppression activities. Most of the VHFHSZ in the City is located in residential areas, in which many lots are surrounded by substantial vegetation and dense brush that, when combined with increasingly frequent drought conditions, presents a significant fire hazard as vegetative fuel. Additionally, the City is surrounded by unincorporated areas of Tuolumne County, which include fire hazard zones in State Responsibility areas. The majority of these unincorporated areas are VHFHSZs, indicating a significant risk of wildfire in the surrounding areas of Tuolumne County that could spread rapidly and threaten the City. The City of Sonora also has many historical buildings that were not built in compliance with modern fire codes and are at an increased risk of structural fire.

The threat of wildfire in Sonora has been increasing in recent decades and is expected to continue to worsen due to the effects of climate change. The foothill area in which Sonora is located offers a substantial fuel load for fires and experiences long, dry summers that further increase fire risk. More severe drought conditions, severe weather, and extreme heat are expected throughout the remainder of the century. The annual fire season is expected to become longer and more severe on average.

Seismic Hazards

The City of Sonora is located in an area of concern for seismic activity. The City is located on a pre-quaternary fault which is generally considered inactive, however, known active faults and potentially active faults are located west of the City in the Foothills Fault Zone. The nearest mapped fault of the Melones Fault Zone, which is part of the Foothills Fault Zone, is located approximately 3.5 miles southwest of the City. There are also four “capable” faults, faults with tectonic displacement within the last 35,000 years which could produce an earthquake, located within Tuolumne County. The City is therefore susceptible to seismic ground shaking as a result of seismic activity in the region. Major faults in the Bay Area could also trigger large earthquakes that could generate ground shaking in Sonora.

Downtown Sonora has many historic buildings that predate modern seismic codes and would be at risk in the event of seismic ground shaking. The City is also underlain by various tunnels and mines constructed prior to modern seismic codes that could collapse during ground shaking, causing ground failure and subsidence. The earthquake potential for the City is considered occasional. The City has a low potential for liquefaction.

Geologic Hazards

The City of Sonora consists of sloped terrain that may be subject to landslides and erosion. Steep slopes in the west, north, and east residential areas of the City are at risk of landslides that may occur as a result of earthquakes, heavy rain, floods, or wildfires. Mudslides may also occur in the City in areas where wildfires have removed vegetation from the soil, leaving the soil exposed and susceptible to movement in the event of heavy rain. The City is at risk of subsidence in the form of sinkholes occurring over historic mines. Heavy rains saturate the soil and pose a risk to structures located above the tunnels and mines. Additionally, the City is at risk of a variety of hazards associated with volcanoes, which are located in Mono County, east of the City. A volcanic eruption from the Long Valley Volcanic Region would have to be very large to directly reach the City of Sonora, however, volcanic ash and volcanic gas may impact the City depending on the size, location, and type of eruption and wind direction. Volcanic ash can pose a threat to buildings, roads, utilities, and communications, and can also cause respiratory effects such as asthma.

Flooding

The City is at risk of flooding caused by an overflow of Woods Creek, which is located within the Federal Emergency Management Agency 100-year flood zone. The areas adjacent to Woods Creek and Sonora Creek are

at risk of flooding in the event of extreme precipitation. Localized surface flooding poses a threat to City and emergency operations and historic structures in the Downtown area. The City's primary stormwater conveyance system, the Main Drain, located under Downtown Sonora, is outdated and in need of improvements. The LHMP includes improvements to the Main Drain. The City is not at risk of dam inundation.

Hazardous Materials/Wastes

Hazardous materials are generated, used, and stored by facilities throughout the City of Sonora and in surrounding unincorporated communities for a variety of purposes in service industries, agriculture, businesses, schools, and households. The City does not contain the types of major industrial uses that typically result in larger amounts of hazardous materials, nor are significant areas of heavy industry located in adjoining areas of unincorporated Tuolumne County. According to the Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor database, three sites in the City are classified as "Evaluation Needed". There is one active State response clean-up site at Sierra Launderers & Cleaners, located at 407 North Washington Street. All four of the above sites are assumed to pose a limited risk of hazardous materials release to the community.

Emergency Operations

The City of Sonora does not have a centralized communication system and lacks reliable internet service during emergency scenarios. The City also does not currently have proper emergency response equipment. Without proper emergency response equipment and communications technology, the City may be unable to provide adequate emergency response services. Hazard events are expected to increase in frequency and severity as a result of climate change; the City needs the necessary resources to be prepared for future hazards. Additionally, the City of Sonora is at risk of pandemics, the most recent of which occurred in 2019 and caused hundreds of deaths in Tuolumne County and much of the City to shut down.

Human-Caused Hazards

Human-caused hazards in Sonora can include a variety of incidents, including active shooter events, terrorist attacks, aircraft crashes, civil disturbance, and cyberterrorism. These hazard types are often difficult to predict and impacts can vary greatly depending on the specific incident. The City of Sonora is at an increased risk of active shooter events, terrorist attacks, cyberterrorism, and civil disturbance because of the presence of multiple City/County governmental buildings, schools, churches, and other critical assets in the City.

Climate Change

The City of Sonora is expected to see the following changes as a result of climate change in coming years and decades: periods of very high and very low precipitation resulting in both droughts and severe flooding, severe weather events that may also cause flooding, an increase in extreme heat days per year and higher average annual temperatures, and more frequent and severe wildfires in the region.

Critical Facilities and Infrastructure

The City's principal stormwater conveyance system, the Main Drain, includes stone tunnels dating back to the late 1880s. Portions of the Main Drain remain vulnerable, insufficient, and in need of modern improvements. Structural deficiencies in the Main Drain increase the risk of future floods during severe weather events. Due to the location of the Main Drain, flooding as a result of the pipeline's deficiencies could threaten access to critical City facilities.

Evacuation

The City of Sonora has several subdivisions and roads that do not meet ingress/egress requirements for evacuation purposes or are currently designed in a manner which inhibits evacuation and emergency response efforts. The Downtown area has many one-way streets, and several roads have a tight turning radius that prohibits access for emergency vehicles. The City of Sonora is increasingly at risk of wildfires and other hazard events, and evacuation planning necessary to reduce evacuation-related vulnerabilities.

SEU Goals and Policies

Similar to the HEU, the SEU is a policy document; no actual development of parcels is included as part of the approval. In addition to the goals and policies, the SEU includes implementation measures for action items for the City. The goals, policies, and implementation measures for the SEU are included in each hazard type analysis.

2.4 Project Construction and Phasing

The proposed project includes two policy documents that do not include any actual development of parcels. Therefore, no construction would occur as a result of this project. Any development that might occur as a result of the goals, policies, and implementation measures contained within this project would be subject to further environmental review and approval on a project-specific basis. Any development that may occur pursuant to the RHNAOZD would not require additional environmental review; however, the RHNAOZD maintains the existing R3 zoning designation for the Lemke site, and no land use changes are proposed with the rezone of the Lemke property.

2.5 Project Approvals

The actions and/or approvals the City needs to consider for the proposed project include, but are not limited to, the following. This list is preliminary, and may not be comprehensive.

City of Sonora

- CEQA adoption of the Initial Study/Negative Declaration (IS/ND)
- Adoption of the City of Sonora 2024-2029 Housing Element Update
  - Pursuant to State law, the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is empowered to review the housing element of each community to ensure its compliance with the provisions of the Government Code related to facilitating the improvment and development of housing in order to make adequate provisions for the housing needs of all economic segments of the community. HCD has review but not approval authority.
- Adoption of the Regional Housing Needs Allocation Overlay Zone District
- Adoption of the City of Sonora Safety Element Update
  - Prior to adoption of the Safety Element, coordination and feedback from the Sonora Fire Department and Sonora Police Department is required.

3 Environmental Checklist

Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

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

☐ Aesthetics	☐ Agriculture and Forestry Resources	☐ Air Quality
☐ Biological Resources	☐ Cultural Resources	☐ Energy
☐ Geology and Soils	☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☐ Hazards and Hazardous Materials
☐ Hydrology and Water Quality	☐ Land Use and Planning	☐ Mineral Resources
☐ Noise	☐ Population and Housing	☐ Public Services
☐ Recreation	☐ Transportation	☐ Tribal Cultural Resources
☐ Utilities and Service Systems	☐ Wildfire	☐ Mandatory Findings of Significance

Determination (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

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 "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 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signature

6.10.25

Date

Evaluation of Environmental Impacts

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except “No Impact” answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A “No Impact” answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A “No Impact” answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project would not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. “Potentially Significant Impact” is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more “Potentially Significant Impact” entries when the determination is made, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required.
4. “Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated” applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less Than Significant Impact.” The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level.
5. The explanation of each issue should identify:
    a. the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
    b. the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance

3.1 Aesthetics

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
I.	**AESTHETICS –** Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:				
a)	Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b)	Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c)	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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d)	Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

No Impact: Scenic vistas in the City of Sonora include views available from State Route 49 and State Route 108. Scenic resources in the City include significant trees, hillsides, hilltops, scenic corridors, creeks, and historic resources. Woods Creek, Dragoon Gulch, Sonora Creek, public parks, and cultural facilities are all considered scenic resources in the City.[1] The HEU identifies two sites in the City with the capacity to meet the City's RHNA allocation, Lemke and Cuesta Heights. Neither site is located near or visible from SR 49 or SR 108. Potential future development on these sites is therefore not anticipated to be located within a scenic vista. Both sites have sloped terrain, are in hilly locations, and have a substantial number of trees. Potential future development would be required to comply with the City's design standards, Hillside Preservation Ordinance, and requirements of the Tree City USA program. No rivers or creeks are located on either site. Any potential development on either of these sites would be required to undergo separate and project-specific environmental review which would be completed prior to project implementation.

The SEU includes programs that require the following improvements: a French Drain at Sonora High School Dunlavy Stadium, improving the bridge at Southgate Drive over Sonora Creek, the Main Drain Improvement Project, and expanding the capacity of Woods Creek to avoid flooding in the area. Woods Creek and Sonora Creek are both considered scenic resources and are located adjacent to SR 49 in certain areas. The Main Drain is located under the Downtown area, in the middle of the City, as well as partially under SR 49. However, any reduction in visual character of these sites due to construction would be temporary in nature and once implemented, it is anticipated that none of these developments would substantially alter the existing visual character of the sites. Furthermore, any development related to the implementation of these improvements

[1] City of Sonora. 2020. *City of Sonora General Plan*. Website: https://sonoraca.com/city-services/general-plan/. Accessed June 11, 2024.

would be required to undergo separate and project-specific environmental review which would be completed prior to project implementation.

The HEU and SEU are both policy documents and do not include any changes to land use designations, building heights and intensities, or residential densities. Both Elements include policies intended to continue to make the City of Sonora a safe and desirable place to work and live. Potential aesthetic-related impacts are unique to a project's location and design and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project site has been defined. All future development would be subject to the City's zoning requirements. Therefore, the project would result in no impacts to scenic vistas. No mitigation measures are required.

b) Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

No Impact: The City's General Plan identifies the following as scenic resources: trees, hillsides, hilltops, corridors, creeks, historic and/or cultural facilities, public parks, Woods Creek, Sonora Creek, and Dragoon Gulch. The General Plan recognizes the following roadway sections as eligible for local designation as Scenic-Gateway Corridors: SR 49, South Washington Street to SR 108, SR 108, Hospital Road southbound to SR 108, and SR 108 to Sanguinetti Road. Views from SR 108 and SR 49 are considered scenic vistas. According to the California State Scenic Highway Program, SR 49, through the entire City, and SR 108 are eligible for State scenic highway designation. However, the City has not yet proceeded with maintaining official scenic highway designation for either SR 49 or SR 108 and has not established any officially designated Scenic-Gateway Corridor in the City.[2] Therefore, there are no designated State scenic highways in Sonora. The California Public Resources Code Sections 5070-5077.8 designates SR 49 as a heritage corridor, which is a regional, state, or nationwide alignment of historical, natural, or conservation education significance. The Sonora General Plan includes policies and programs intended to preserve the scenic resources of Sonora, including those located adjacent to SR 49 and SR 108.

As mentioned in Threshold a) above, any potential development at the sites identified in the HEU would not be located adjacent to or visible from SR 49 or SR 108 and would be subject to compliance with the City's Hillside Preservation Ordinance, the Tree City USA program, and the City's design standards. Additionally, potential future development related to the programs included in the SEU may include development near or of scenic resources, including Woods Creek. However, it is not anticipated that the infrastructure improvement projects suggested in the SEU would alter the existing visual character of any scenic resources. Any future development related to the HEU or SEU would be subject to project-specific environmental review prior to project implementation, and any potentially significant impacts would be addressed through mitigation measures specific to the project and impact.

The HEU and SEU are both policy documents and do not include any changes to land use designations, building heights and intensities, or residential densities. Both Elements include policies intended to continue to make the City of Sonora a safe and desirable place to work and live. Potential aesthetic-related impacts are unique to a project's location and design and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project site has been defined. All future development would be subject to the City's zoning requirements. Therefore, the project would result in no impacts to scenic resources or State scenic highways. No mitigation measures are required.

c) In non-urbanized areas, would the project 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?

No Impact: The project would implement policies intended to continue to make the City a safe and desirable place to work and live, including efforts such as development policies and critical infrastructure improvements.

[2] California Department of Transportation. 2018. *California State Scenic Highway Mapping System*. Website: https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aacaa. Accessed June 11, 2024.

The City's current Zoning Code contains standards intended to preserve the natural beauty of the City, including provisions related to building standards (heights, setbacks, intensities), screening of utilities in development, outdoor improvements, hillside preservation, and tree preservation and management. The SEU includes suggested improvements to some of the City's scenic resources; however, implementation of these improvements would result in only temporary visual impairments, would not substantially alter existing scenic resources and visual character, and would be subject to project-specific environmental review prior to project implementation. The HEU identifies two sites within the City that would be suitable for potential future residential development. Both sites contain trees and are located on hilly terrain, however any potential future development on either site would be required to comply with the City's Hillside Preservation Ordinance and Tree City USA program. Future development in the City would be required to comply with the provisions of the City's Zoning Code. The proposed project includes two policy documents and does not include any changes to land use designations, building heights and intensities, or residential densities. No development is proposed. Therefore, the project would result in no impacts to the visual character or quality of public views or conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. No mitigation measures are required.

d) Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

No Impact: Sources of light present throughout the City predominantly include residential and commercial uses of both interior and exterior lighting and vehicular traffic, while sources of glare include highly finished building materials such as glass, and roadway traffic. The project consists of two policy documents and would not directly involve construction or development. However, all potential future residential development enabled by the City's General Plan is anticipated to introduce light and glare sources typical of development, and all future development in the City would be subject to the City's zoning requirements. The City's current Zoning Code contains lighting requirements intended to maintain public health, safety, and welfare from noxious or offensive illumination, glare, or similar effects. Capital improvement projects related to the programs included in the SEU are not anticipated to generate substantial sources of light or glare. All future development in the City would be required to comply with the provisions of the City's Zoning Code and would be subject to approval by the City's Design Review Commission. The proposed project would result in no impact related to light or glare which would adversely affect views. No mitigation measures are required.

Mitigation Measures

Project implementation would not result in significant impacts related to aesthetics; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

3.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
II.	**AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES –** In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:				
a)	Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b)	Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c)	Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d)	Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e)	Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a) Would the project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

b) Would the project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

c) Would the project conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?

d) Would the project result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

e) Would the project 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?

No Impact: The City does not contain any Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, forest land, or timberland.[3] No land within the City limits is under a Williamson Act contract.[4] The project involves updates to the City's Housing Element and Safety Element, with no proposed changes to land use designations of parcels within the City. The City is primarily a residential and commercial community; some parcels in the southwest portion of the City and one parcel in the northern part of the City are zoned Agricultural/Residential, however there is no land within the City designated as forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production. No provisions contained in the HEU or the SEU would convert Prime Farmland, farmland of unique or Statewide importance, or an agricultural use. No development is proposed on forest land or timberland zoned Timberland Production. Any future development projects in the City would not conflict with an existing Williamson Act contract, would not result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use, and would not result in the conversion or loss of forest land. Any future development on properties zoned Agricultural/Residential would be subject to project-specific environmental review. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on agricultural or forestry resources. No mitigation measures are required.

Mitigation Measures

Project implementation would not result in significant impacts related to agriculture and forestry resources; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

[3] California Department of Conservation. 2022. *California Important Farmland Finder.* Website: https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/CIFF/. Accessed June 11, 2024.
[4] California Department of Conservation. 2023. *California Williamson Act Enrollment Finder*. Website: https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/WilliamsonAct/. Accessed June 11, 2024.

3.3 Air Quality

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
III.	**AIR QUALITY** – Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a)	Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b)	Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c)	Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d)	Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a) Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

b) Would the project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?

No Impact: The City is located in the Mountain Counties Air Basin, which is currently designated nonattainment for ozone and fine particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM_{10}). Tuolumne County is currently designated as nonattainment-transitional for ozone and is unclassified for PM_{10}.[5] The Tuolumne County Air Pollution Control District is included in a portion of the California State Implementation Plan, which includes regulations for all pollutants and was adopted in 2022. The United States Environmental Protection Agency approved the Tuolumne County portion in 2023.[6] There is no air quality management plan specific to Tuolumne County or the Mountain Counties Air Basin in its entirety.

The project would not directly result in construction or development activity, nor would it enable development beyond that which is currently provided for in the City's General Plan. The number of residential units that could be developed under the HEU is consistent with the City's current General Plan and zoning designations. Potential air quality-related impacts, including potential increases of criteria pollutants, are location-specific and cannot be assessed in a meaningful way until the location and design of a project is known. At such time that a development proposal is considered that project would be subject to adopted development air quality standards. Short-term air quality impacts resulting from construction activities, such as dust generated by clearing and grading activities, exhaust emissions from gas- and diesel-powered construction equipment, and vehicular emissions associated with the commuting of construction workers, would be subject to State air quality management regulations and all other relevant regional rules and regulations.

[5] California Air Resources Board. 2022. *Maps of State and Federal Area Designations*. Website: https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/documents/maps-state-and-federal-area-designations. Accessed June 11, 2024.

[6] United States Environmental Protection Agency. 2023. *EPA-Approved Tuolumne County Air Pollution Control District Regulations in the California SIP.* Website: https://www.epa.gov/air-quality-implementation-plans/ca-sip-tuolumne-county-apcd. Accessed June 11, 2024.

Thus, the project would result in no impacts related to the implementation of any applicable air quality plan, and it would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard. No mitigation measures are required.

c) Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

No Impact: The HEU and SEU are both policy documents that do not include any changes to land use designations. The proposed project does not directly involve construction or development activities. Potential air quality-related impacts are location-specific and cannot be assessed in a meaningful way until the location of a project site and project characteristics are known. The City's General Plan and Municipal Code contain policies and measures related to maintaining air quality in the City and reducing emissions from commercial uses. For potential future projects in residential areas, development buffers would be considered necessary to protect neighbors from air pollution-generating activities. At the time that a development proposal is considered for any future development in the City, that project would be subject to the development review process. Therefore, the proposed project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. No impacts would occur, and no mitigation measures are required.

d) Would the project result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

No Impact: Impacts would be considered potentially significant if the project were to result in the creation of objectionable odors with the potential to affect substantial numbers of people, or if construction or operation of the project would result in the creation or nuisance odors that would be noxious to a substantial number of people. Residential development such as that described in the HEU is not a land use typically associated with odor complaints or noxious emissions. The SEU suggests infrastructure improvement projects that are not anticipated to generate noxious emissions or odors. The SEU also contains policies intended to minimize health hazards related to air quality impacts from wildfires.

The proposed project would not directly involve construction or development activities upon implementation. The proposed project would therefore not result in impacts related to emissions adversely affecting a substantial number of people. No mitigation measures are required.

Mitigation Measures

Project implementation would not result in significant impacts related to air quality; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

3.4 Biological Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES – Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a) Would the project 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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

No Impact: The City's environs have the capacity to house a range of plant and wildlife species, including State and federally listed species. The City's General Plan identifies approximately ten special status species that have the potential to occur within the City's Sphere of Influence. Potential impacts related to biological resources are unique to a project's location and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project

site has been defined. Any potential future development would be subject to federal, State, regional, and local regulatory requirements related to biological resources.

The SEU includes policies intended to lessen impacts to biological resources, including policies for climate adaptation and resiliency. Both the HEU and SEU are policy documents and do not directly include any development, construction, or land use changes. Potential future projects, including those related to the HEU and SEU, would be evaluated by the City for their compliance with goals, policies, and measures contained in the City's General Plan intended to mitigate potential impacts to natural and biological resources, including those contained in the Conservation and Open Space Element. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on candidate, sensitive, or special status species. No mitigation measures are required.

b) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

c) Would the project 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?

No Impact: The City contains several riparian areas, including the habitats around Woods Creek, Sonora Creek, and Dragoon Gulch. The City's General Plan also identifies several other vegetation types throughout the City's Sphere of Influence that have the potential to contain sensitive natural communities, including valley foothill riparian, wet meadow, lake or pond, perennial stream, intermittent stream, blue-oak foothill-pine, mixed chaparral, montane hardwood, blue oak woodland, and annual grassland. The General Plan also identifies the habitats along Woods Creek, Sonora Creek, and Dragoon Gulch as wetlands. According to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory, Sonora Creek is classified as riverine habitat throughout the middle of the City and as freshwater forested/shrub wetland along its eastern section, Woods Creek is classified as a freshwater forested/shrub wetland, and Dragoon Gulch is classified as riverine habitat. The National Wetlands Inventory also identifies riverine habitat and freshwater forested/shrub wetland in the southeastern portion of the City.[7] Potential future development pursuant to the policies and programs of the SEU and HEU could have the potential to impact State or federally protected wetlands as well as riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities.

However, the HEU and SEU are both policy documents and would not directly involve construction or development activity. Potential impacts related to sensitive natural communities, such as riparian or wetland habitats, are unique to a project's location and characteristics and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project has been defined. Therefore, the project would have no impacts on riparian habitat, other sensitive natural communities, or on State or federally protected wetlands. No mitigation measures are required.

d) Would the project 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?

No Impact: The City is a heavily wooded community with numerous undeveloped hillsides and sloped terrain. A few creeks, identified by the City and US Fish and Wildlife Service as riparian habitat and wetlands, also pass through the City. Within these undeveloped areas, the potential exists for nesting birds and other species to occur, as well as for those areas to be wildlife nursery sites. However, the HEU and SEU are policy documents consistent with the City's General Plan and do not propose any land use changes. Further, future development in the City would be subject to all applicable State, regional, and local regulations and standards regarding biological resources. Therefore, the project would have no impact on the movement of native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, corridors, or nursery sites. No mitigation measures are required.

[7] United States Fish and Wildlife Service. *National Wetlands Inventory*. Website: https://fwsprimary.wim.usgs.gov/wetlands/apps/wetlands-mapper/. Accessed June 14, 2024.

e) Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

f) Would the project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

No Impact: The City has a Hillside Preservation Ordinance that governs residential development on hillsides and hilltops in the City in order to maintain visual quality, natural topography, resources, and amenities of the hillsides. The City also received official designation as a Tree City USA in 1995; the Tree City USA program provides standards for the City to manage its tree resources. Potential future development related to the HEU would occur in sloped, undeveloped areas of the City and may be subject to the development standards of the Hillside Preservation Ordinance and Tree City USA program. However, the HEU and SEU are policy documents consistent with the City's General Plan and do not propose any land use changes. Future development in the City would be subject to all applicable State, regional, and local regulations and standards regarding biological resources. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on policies protecting biological resources or any local, regional, or State habitat conservation plan. No mitigation measures are required.

Mitigation Measures

Project implementation would not result in significant impacts related to biological resources; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

3.5 Cultural Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
V. CULTURAL RESOURCES – Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

b) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

c) Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

No Impact: The proposed project involves adoption of two policy documents, the HEU and SEU, which do not directly propose any ground disturbance or development that may impact historical resources. Potential impacts related to cultural resources are unique to a project's location and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project site has been defined. Potential future development in the City would require project-specific environmental evaluation in order to determine any potential impacts to cultural resources. Future development would be subject to federal, State, and local regulatory requirements related to the discovery and proper handling of cultural and historic resources, including Public Resources Code Section 211083.2, which requires avoidance and other measures in the event of discovery. Therefore, no impact to cultural resources would occur with implementation of the proposed project. No mitigation measures are required.

Mitigation Measures

Project implementation would not result in significant impacts related to cultural resources; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

3.6 Energy

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VI. Energy – Would the project:				
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a) Would the project result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?

No Impact: The HEU and SEU are consistent with the City's General Plan and contain policies to conserve energy resources. The HEU includes programs intended to conserve energy through public education on the reduction of residential energy use. However, the SEU and HEU are policy documents and do not directly involve any development. Potential impacts related to energy resources are unique to a specific project and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project has been defined. Any future development would be required to comply with federal, State, and local regulatory requirements related to energy efficiency. Future development projects would incorporate site-specific infrastructure improvements, as necessary, and would be reviewed by relevant energy providers to identify necessary energy facility and service connections. Additionally, future projects would be evaluated by the City for compliance with the goals, policies, and measures contained in the City's General Plan intended to reduce potential impacts to energy resources. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on energy resources as a result of wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary energy consumption. No mitigation measures are required.

b) Would the project conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

No Impact: The HEU and SEU are policy documents; the proposed project does not directly involve any development. Any future development in the City would be subject to federal, State, and local regulatory requirements related to energy efficiency. Any proposed buildings would be required to comply with the most recent version of the California Building Code, including the California Green Building Standards Code, which includes regulations for energy efficiency. Future projects would be evaluated by the City on a project-specific basis for compliance with goals, policies, and measures contained in the City's General Plan and Municipal Code intended to reduce potential impacts to energy resources. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. No mitigation measures are required.

Mitigation Measures

Project implementation would not result in significant impacts related to energy; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

3.7 Geology and Soils

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

a) Would the project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

iv) Landslides?

No Impact: Sonora is a region of California characterized by moderate seismic activity. According to the California Geological Survey, no active earthquake faults are known to exist within or around the City. The City is not within an Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone.[8] The City is located on a pre-quaternary fault, which is a fault that ruptured over 1.6 million years ago and is generally considered inactive. However, Sonora is at risk of seismic ground shaking occurring as a result of seismic activity from regional faults in and around Tuolumne County. Tuolumne County is located east of the Foothills Fault Zone, which includes the Melones Fault Zone along the east side of the system and the Bear Fault Zone on the west side. The closest known fault of the Melones Fault Zone is located approximately 3.5 miles southwest of the City of Sonora.[9]

The City is characterized by hilly, wooded terrain susceptible to landslide risks. Extreme flooding and erosion caused by wildfire burn scars have increased the risk of landslides and mudslides throughout the City in recent years. Liquefaction is considered unlikely as the City is not located within mapped liquefaction hazard zones. According to the City's General Plan, the potential for lateral spreading, lurching, or differential settlement to occur is low.[10]

The SEU addressed the protection of the existing and future population and development from both natural and human-caused hazards through a number of goals, policies, and implementation programs. Among these is Goal 2 of the SEU, which aims to "minimize risk of injuries, loss of life, property damage, and economic and social disruption resulting from seismic and geologic hazards in Sonora". Additionally, the proposed project includes two policy documents, and no development is proposed at this time. Any future development would be subject to federal, State, and local regulatory requirements related to building design and construction, including the most recent version of the California Building Code. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impacts related to the cause of potential substantial adverse effects involving earthquake faults, seismic ground shaking, or seismic-related ground failure. No mitigation measures are required.

b) Would the project result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

No Impact: The proposed project consists of two policy documents and would not directly involve construction or development activities. Any future development in the City would be subject to State, regional, and local requirements related to the prevention of erosion of onsite soils and the discharge of construction-related pollutants. Future projects would be required to prepare and implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and/or Best Management Practices (BMPs), as necessary. Future projects would also be evaluated by the City for their compliance with the goals, policies, and measures contained in the SEU intended to protect

[8] California Geological Survey. *Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation.* Website: https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/EQZApp/app/. Accessed June 13, 2024.
[9] California Department of Conservation. 2015. Fault Activity Map of California. Website: https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/fam/. Accessed June 13, 2024.
[10] City of Sonora. 2020. *General Plan Safety Element*. Website: https://sonoraca.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/SonoraGeneralPlan2020-revision-2017-10-16-17-CC-adopted.pdf. Accessed June 13, 2024.

lives and property. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on soil erosion or the loss of topsoil. No mitigation measures are required.

c) Would the project 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?

No Impact: The City of Sonora is characterized by wooded, sloped terrain that is susceptible to landslide risks. Areas with recent wildfire burn scars or where stormwater drainage systems are insufficient are particularly at risk of landslides and mudslides. Additionally, the City is underlain by various tunnels and historic mines constructed prior to modern seismic codes. These mines and tunnels are not mapped. Underground mines and tunnels could collapse during strong seismic ground shaking or as a result of severe storm events. As a result, sinkholes are a concern for the City. However, the potential for lateral spreading and liquefaction is low.

The HEU and SEU are policy documents; the proposed project does not propose physical changes in the environment and does not directly involve development. To account for any potential instability, all future development projects in the City would be subject to federal, State, and local regulatory requirements related to building design and construction. Pursuant to the CBC, project-specific geotechnical investigations would be required, subject to review by the City's Public Works Department, and any recommendations contained within would be required to be implemented. Additionally, all future development projects would be evaluated by the City for compliance with the goals and programs set forth in the SEU to decrease vulnerability to geologic hazards. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impacts related to unstable soil or geologic hazards, including landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, or liquefaction. No mitigation measures are required.

d) Would the project be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?

No Impact: Expansive soils are characterized as fine-grained, such as silts and clays or soils with variable amounts of expansive clay materials that can change in volume due to changes in water content. According to the City's General Plan, soil types within the City consist predominantly of deep, well drained soils that present only a slight erosion hazard.[11] The risk of expansive soil in the City is considered low.

The HEU and SEU are policy documents and do not directly propose physical changes in the environment. The proposed project does not directly involve future development. Future development in the City would be subject to federal, State, and local regulatory requirements related to building design and construction. Pursuant to the CBC, project-specific geotechnical investigations would be required, subject to review by the City's Public Works Department, and any recommendations contained within would be required to be implemented. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on sites with expansive soil. No mitigation measures are required.

e) Would the project 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?

No Impact: Most of the City of Sonora is serviced by the Tuolumne Utilities District sewage collection system. However, some properties may require the use of a septic tank or alternative waste disposal system. Given the geologic and slope constraints in Sonora, the viability of a septic tank or alternative waste disposal system for a project would depend on the size of the project and the project's location. The HEU and SEU are policy documents consistent with the City's General Plan and do not propose any land use changes. The proposed project would not directly involve any development. All future development in the City would be subject to federal, State, and local regulatory requirements related to building design and construction. Pursuant to the CBC, project-specific geotechnical investigations would be required, subject to review by the City's Public

[11] City of Sonora. 2020. *General Plan Appendix 6b.* Website: https://sonoraca.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/apdx-sonora-general-plan-2020.pdf. Accessed June 13, 2024.

Works Department, and any recommendations contained within would be required to be implemented. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact related to soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste disposal systems. No mitigation measures are required.

f) Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

No Impact: The proposed project includes two policy documents and does not directly involve any development. Potential impacts related to paleontological and geologic resources are unique to a project and site and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project has been defined. In the event that paleontological resources are discovered during the implementation of future development projects, applicants will be required to comply with regulatory standards enumerated in Public Resources Code Section 5097.574, which identifies the protocol for proper handling. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impacts related to paleontological resources or unique geologic features. No mitigation measures are required.

Mitigation Measures

Project implementation would not result in significant impacts related to geology and soils; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

3.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

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

a) Would the project generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

b) Would the project generate conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

No Impact: The HEU and SEU are policy documents consistent with the City's General Plan. The proposed project does not directly propose physical changes in the environment and does not directly propose future development. Impacts related to GHG emissions are unique to a project and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project has been defined. Any future development in the City would be required to comply with the most recent California Building Code, including the CALGreen code, which is intended to reduce GHG emissions through sustainable design and renewable energy considerations. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impacts related to the generation of GHG emissions or conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emission of GHGs. No mitigation measures are required.

Mitigation Measures

Project implementation would not result in significant impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

3.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
IX.	**HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS –** Would the project:				
a)	Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b)	Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c)	Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d)	Be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e)	For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f)	Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g)	Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a) Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

No Impact: The HEU and SEU are policy documents consistent with the City's General Plan. The proposed project does not include physical changes in the environment and does not directly involve future development. The SEU addresses the protection of the existing and future population and development from both natural and human-caused hazards through goals, policies, and implementation programs. Among these are measures to reduce risks related to hazardous materials. SEU Goal 4 aims to "reduce likelihood of hazardous materials release, exposure, and contamination in Sonora".

Construction activities associated with future development projects would likely involve the temporary transportation, management, and use of oils, fuels, and other potentially flammable substances, such as paints, solvents, and cleaners. Hazardous materials that may be present during operation of future development projects are usually associated with landscaping and building maintenance and are not

considered a significant risk. However, all future development in the City would be subject to federal, State, and local regulatory requirements related to the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact related to the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. No mitigation measures are required.

b) Would the project 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?

No Impact: Potential future residential uses enabled by the City's HEU are generally not characterized as substantial generators or hazardous materials, nor are they anticipated to result in upset or accident conditions involving the release thereof. The capital improvement projects suggested in the SEU are not anticipated to result in upset or accident conditions involving hazardous materials either. The SEU addresses the protection of the existing and future population and development from hazardous materials through hazard-specific policies and implementation measures.

The proposed project involves two policy documents and would not directly result in physical changes in the environment. Any future development would be subject to all applicable regulatory requirements concerning the proper handling, treatment, and disposal of hazardous materials. The proposed project would have no impacts related to upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials. No mitigation measures are required.

c) Would the project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

No Impact: The City of Sonora has three high schools (Sonora High School, Theodore Bird High School, and Dario Casina High School), two pre-schools, and one elementary school within City limits. The Lemke site identified by the HEU as a potential residential development site is located approximately 0.25-mile from Sonora Elementary School. Additionally, the capital improvement projects suggested in the SEU may be located within 0.25-mile of a school. However, potential hazardous material-related impacts are location-specific and cannot be assessed in a meaningful way until the location of a project site is known. At such time that a development proposal is considered that project will be subject to the development review process. Potential future residential uses enabled by the City's HEU are generally not characterized as substantial generators or hazardous materials, nor are they anticipated to result in upset or accident conditions involving the release thereof. The capital improvement projects suggested in the SEU are not anticipated to result in upset or accident conditions involving hazardous materials either. The SEU addresses the protection of the existing and future population and development from hazardous materials through hazard-specific policies and implementation measures. The proposed project evaluated herein includes two policy documents and does not directly propose physical changes in the environment. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impacts related to the emission or handling of hazardous materials within 0.25-mile of a school. No mitigation measures are required.

d) Would the project be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

No Impact: According to the Department of Toxic Substances Control, there are 16 potential hazardous waste sites active, certified, historical, or needing evaluation in and near Sonora city limits.[12] None of the listed sites coincide with potential project sites identified in the HEU and SEU. The City and surrounding area do not contain

[12] California Department of Toxic Substances Control. 2024. *EVIROSTOR Project Search Results*. Website: https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/search?CMD=search&city=Sonora&zip=&county=&case_number=&business_name=&FEDERAL_SUPERFUND=True&STATE_RESPONSE=True&VOLUNTARY_CLEANUP=True&SCHOOL_CLEANUP=True&CORRECTIVE_ACTION=True&tiered_permit=True&evaluation=True&operating=True&post_closure=True&non_operating=True&inspections=True&inspectionsother=True. Accessed June 14, 2024.

heavy industrial uses that would create a hazardous material risk in the event of a spill, release, or natural disaster. SR 49 and SR 108 pass through Sonora and are the two primary transit routes through the surrounding area. However, the transport of hazardous materials along SR 49 and/or SR 108 would be subject to all applicable State, regional, and local regulations regarding safe transport of hazardous materials.

The proposed project involves two policy documents and does not directly propose development. Any future development would be subject to all applicable regulatory requirements concerning the proper handling, treatment, and disposal of hazardous materials. Hazardous materials concerns are location- and project-specific and cannot be meaningfully assessed until a project and project site have been defined. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impacts related to sites that are included on a list of hazardous materials sites. No mitigation measures are required.

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?

No Impact: There are no public use airports in Sonora, and the City is not located within an airport land use plan. The nearest public use airport is located approximately 2.1 miles northwest in Columbia. The HEU and SEU are policy documents that analyze housing and safety needs in the City. The SEU considers aircraft hazards and risks associated with the Columbia Airport and includes a policy to coordinate with Tuolumne County regarding aircraft and flight safety regulations implemented at the airport. It is not anticipated that any future development in the City would result in a safety hazard or excessive noise related to proximity to Columbia Airport. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact related to excessive noise and safety hazards within an airport land use plan or two miles of a public use airport. No mitigation measures are required.

f) Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

No Impact: The City of Sonora does not currently have an emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. At the time of publication of this IS/ND, the City is in the process of developing its Emergency Operations Plan. The City is within the boundaries of the Tuolumne County Emergency Operations Plan. State Routes 49 and 108 are the only two transit routes that provide ingress and egress for the City; SR 49 and SR 108 would be the primary evacuation routes for any emergency in the City. The City's General Plan identifies South Washington Street as the primary evacuation route toward SR 108 (southern and western route), North Washington Street (SR 49) as the primary evacuation route toward northbound SR 49, and Mono Way East as the primary evacuation route eastward toward SR 108.[13]

The SEU addresses the protection of the existing and future population and development from both natural and human-caused hazards through a number of goals, policies, and implementation measures. Among these are implementation measures related to the creation of an emergency evacuation plan and a study of the existing conditions for evacuation in the City, as well as measures to provide and maintain a sufficient emergency response system for the City. All future development in the City would be required to comply with the provisions of the City's General Plan, Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, and all regional and local regulations and plans related to evacuation and emergency response. The proposed project includes two policy documents and does not directly involve development. Therefore, the proposed project would result in no impacts related to an emergency response or evacuation plan. No mitigation measures are required.

[13] City of Sonora. 2020. *General Plan Safety Element.* Website: https://sonoraca.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/SonoraGeneralPlan2020-revision-2017-10-16-17-CC-adopted.pdf. Accessed June 14, 2024.

g) Would the project expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

No Impact: Almost the entire City is designated as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) by CALFIRE. The unincorporated areas of Tuolumne County surrounding the City are designated as VHFHSZ or High FHSZ.[14] The SEU addresses the protection of the existing and future population and development from both natural and human-caused hazards through goals, policies, and implementation measures. Among these are measures to minimize the risk from the hazards of wildfire and to ensure the protection of people and wildlife from hazardous materials in the community.

Future development in the City would be required to comply with the provisions of the City's General Plan and all State, regional, and local regulatory requirements related to hazardous materials and wildfire. The proposed project involves two policy documents and does not directly propose any development. Therefore, the proposed project would not expose people or structures to loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. No impact would occur, and no mitigation measures are required.

Mitigation Measures

Project implementation would not result in significant impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

[14] California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. 2024. *Fire Hazard Severity Zone Viewer*. Website: https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/03beab8511814e79a0e4eabf0d3e7247/. Accessed June 14, 2024.

3.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY – Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;	☐	☐	☐	☒
ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or 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) impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a) Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?

No Impact: The proposed project includes two policy documents which are consistent with the City's General Plan and do not directly propose physical changes to the environment. Potential future projects suggested in the SEU would include capital improvement efforts intended to preserve and enhance water drainage in the City. Future development in the City would be required to follow State, regional, and local regulations regarding onsite stormwater retention, to prevent contamination of surface waters and local groundwater. In order to comply with the federal National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements and maintain the Central Valley Region Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit, the Tuolumne County Utilities District, which provides sewer and wastewater services to most of the City, is required to screen and monitor its runoff to avoid compromising downstream water quality standards. Future development projects would be

required by the City to implement BMPs for construction and, if appropriate, SWPPPs to avoid erosion, pollution, sedimentation, and runoff that would degrade water quality. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on water quality standards, waste discharge requirements, or surface or groundwater quality. No mitigation measures are required.

b) Would the project substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

No Impact: The City's water infrastructure is owned, maintained, and operated by the Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD). TUD has a contract with Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) which provides for a perpetual water supply from the South Fork of the Stanislaus River. The water is stored in Pinecrest Lake, Lyons Reservoir, Phoenix Lake, and other small reservoirs on the TUD ditch system, from which it is conveyed through a network of ditches, pipelines, and treatment plants to the TUD service area. The Tuolumne Main Canal, which leads from Lyons Reservoir to the Phoenix powerhouse, is a primary component of the conveyance system and includes 15.7 miles of pipeline, some of which is outdated. The surface water supply from the Stanislaus River accounts for approximately 97 percent of the potable water supply provided by the TUD. The TUD is not currently using groundwater as a primary source of water supply, however, when maintenance work must be conducted on the Tuolumne Main Canal, the TUD uses storage tanks and approximately 25 limited capacity groundwater wells to supply water. According to the TUD Urban Water Management Plan, groundwater is limited due to the impermeable bedrock that covers most of Tuolumne County.[15]

Any future development would also be subject to all applicable State, regional, and local regulatory requirements concerning the efficient use and conservation of water resources and preservation of groundwater resources and quality. The proposed project includes two policy documents and does not directly involve any development. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on groundwater supplies or recharge. No mitigation measures are required.

c) Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:

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

ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or 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?

iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?

No Impact: The proposed project includes two policy documents that are consistent with the City's General Plan and do not directly propose physical changes to the environment. The City's SEU contains goals, policies, and implementation measures intended to minimize risk from flooding or erosion. Any potential future development related to the SEU would include capital improvement projects designed to improve existing drainage patterns and minimize the risk of damage as a result of flooding. Potential impacts related to drainage are unique to a project and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project and project site have been defined. Future development in the City would be required to follow State, regional, and local regulations regarding drainage, erosion, and runoff. The TUD is required to screen and monitor its runoff to avoid compromising downstream water quality standards to comply with federal NPDES requirements and maintain the Central Valley Region MS4 permit. The City would also require BMPs for construction in order to avoid

[15] Tuolumne Utilities District. 2021. *2020 Urban Water Management Plan for Tuolumne Utilities District*. Website: https://tudwater.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/TUD-2020-UWMP_Adopted-June-2021.pdf. June. Accessed June 14, 2024.

erosion, pollution, sedimentation, and runoff that would degrade water quality. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact related to drainage patterns or the course of a stream or river. No mitigation measures are required.

d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, would the project risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

No Impact: The City is located approximately 117 miles from the ocean and is not at risk from tsunamis. There are no bodies of water in the City that could put the City at risk from a seiche. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map, the Woods Creek area is mapped within the FEMA 100-year flood zone.[16] A 100-year flood zone has a 1 percent chance of experiencing a major flood in any given year. There are no other federally mapped flood hazard zones in Sonora. However, the City has experienced extreme flooding in recent years as a result of severe weather events, and areas around Sonora Creek and the Downtown have experienced damage or been at risk. The SEU contains goals, policies, and implementation measures intended to minimize flood hazard risks and increase the resiliency of the community to flood events. Any potential future development projects related to the SEU would improve and reinforce existing drainage patterns and capabilities in flood-prone areas of the City.

Future development would be subject to all applicable federal, State, and local regulatory requirements concerning flood hazards, including measures identified in the City's General Plan. The proposed project includes two policy documents and does not directly propose any development. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on the release of pollutants in a flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zone. No mitigation measures are required.

e) Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

No Impact: The proposed project involves updating two policy documents and does not propose any land use changes or authorize any physical development. Any future development that occurs pursuant to the SEU or HEU would be subject to State, regional, and local regulations regarding water quality, runoff, and hydrology, as well as to City planning, engineering, and building requirements. The proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. No impacts would occur, and no mitigation measures are required.

Mitigation Measures

Project implementation would not result in significant impacts related to hydrology and water quality; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

[16] Federal Emergency Management Agency. 2009. *FEMA Flood Map Service Center – Tuolumne County*. Website: https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search?AddressQuery=sonora%20ca. Accessed June 14, 2024.

3.11 Land Use and Planning

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING – Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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) Would the project physically divide an established community?

b) Would the project 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?

No Impact: The City has prepared its HEU and SEU in accordance with Section 65580 and Section 65302(g) of the Government Code, respectively. The updates have also been prepared consistent with the City's General Plan and the community's vision of its housing and safety needs and objectives. Accordingly, the HEU examines the City's housing needs as they exist currently, and projects future housing needs based on RHNA allocation. No change to the land use plan is proposed as part of the HEU. The HEU includes the establishment of the Regional Housing Needs Allocation Overlay Zone District at the Lemke site, however, this District would layer on top of the existing base R3 zoning regulations, leaving in place the option to develop under the base zoning, but providing the opportunity to develop the property through a ministerial by-right approval process should an applicant propose 20 percent low-income deed restricted affordable housing. The SEU identifies and evaluates both natural and human-caused hazards in the City and includes goals, policies, and implementation measures designed to minimize the City's hazard risks and vulnerabilities. Any subsequent discretionary actions or development that occur(s) pursuant to the HEU or SEU policies would be reviewed and processed in accordance with City planning policies. The HEU and SEU have been prepared in compliance with State law, and no actual development is proposed at this time. No potential adverse impacts related to land use would occur as a result of the proposed project. No mitigation measures are required.

Mitigation Measures

Project implementation would not result in significant impacts related to land use and planning; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

3.12 Mineral Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XII. MINERAL RESOURCES – Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a) Would the project result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?

b) Would the project 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?

No Impact: The City of Sonora was historically a gold-mining town and is known for having rich mineral deposits. According to the California Department of Conservation Mineral Land Classification Maps, the City of Sonora is comprised of three mineral resource zones (MRZ-2b, MRZ-3a, and MRZ-3b). MRZ-2b includes areas underlain by mineral deposits where geologic information indicates that significant inferred resources are present. MRZ-3a includes areas containing known mineral occurrences of undetermined mineral resource significance. MRZ-3b includes areas containing inferred mineral occurrences of undetermined mineral resource significance, but with geologic settings that appear to be favorable environments for the occurrence of specific mineral deposits.[17] Additionally, the City's General Plan recognizes three mineral resource zones throughout the City which are characterized as having precious metals, including lode gold and silver. Much of these mineral resources are no longer available because of existing development, however, the General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element seeks to preserve the City's remaining mineral resources to the extent feasible.[18]

The proposed project includes two policy documents that are consistent with the General Plan. No land use changes are proposed, and the project would not result in direct physical changes to the environment. Future development would be subject to all State, regional, and local rules and regulations pertaining to the preservation of mineral resources. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on a known mineral resource or the availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site. No mitigation measures are required.

Mitigation Measures

Project implementation would not result in significant impacts related to mineral resources; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

[17] California Department of Conservation. 2019. *CGS Information Warehouse: Mineral Land Classification Maps (SMARA Study Areas).* Website: https://maps-cnra-cadoc.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/0f5d685bb11e4c88abc73b7376d4bbca/explore?location=38.056064%2C-119.853535%2C9.11. Accessed June 14, 2024.

[18] City of Sonora. 2020. *General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element.* Website: https://sonoraca.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/SonoraGeneralPlan2020-revision-2017-10-16-17-CC-adopted.pdf. Accessed June 14, 2024.

3.13 Noise

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIII. NOISE – Would the project result in:				
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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) Would the project result in generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

b) Would the project result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

No Impact: The HEU and SEU are both policy documents and would not result in direct physical changes to the environment. Potential noise impacts are project-specific and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project and project site have been defined. Future development would be required to adhere to the goals, policies, and implementation measures outlined in the General Plan Noise Element and the City's Municipal Code. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact associated with an increase in ambient noise or the generation of excessive groundborne vibration or noise. No mitigation measures are required.

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?

No Impact: The City of Sonora is located more than two miles from the nearest public use airport and is not located within an airport land use plan. The HEU and SEU are policy documents, and no development is proposed at this time. Future development would be required to adhere to the policies of the City's General Plan Noise Element and the City's Municipal Code. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact related to excessive noise levels within the vicinity of a public use airport or airport land use plan. No mitigation measures are required.

Mitigation Measures

Project implementation would not result in significant impacts related to noise; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

3.14 Population and Housing

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING – Would the project:				
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)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a) Would the project 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)?

b) Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact: The City of Sonora experienced a population growth of 0.75 percent from 2010 to 2021, however the population decreased at a rate of -1.26 percent between 2020 and 2021. The population of Tuolumne County has been decreasing as well, and according to the California Department of Transportation's Economic Forecast for Tuolumne County, the population is expected to continue to decrease at a rate of approximately 0.5 percent through 2028, because a significant portion of the County's population is elderly and continuing to age, and in-migration is minimal.[19] The housing stock in Sonora increased by approximately 2.6 percent between 2015 and 2023; the City has experienced housing growth at a rate that corresponds with population growth. The RHNA allocation for the City's 2024-2029 HEU is two units, including one very low-income unit and one low-income unit. As shown in Table 2-1, the City has two undeveloped sites with land use designations and zoning permissive of residential development that could accommodate the RHNA allocation in all relevant income categories. The table illustrates a surplus capacity of 152 units, including 52 very low income and 52 low-income units, based on possible residential development over the planning period.

Any potential future development pursuant to the HEU or SEU would be consistent with State and regional growth mandates. The proposed project includes two policy documents and does not directly involve any development. The proposed project would not displace housing or people and is intended to promote affordability and increase housing supply, which could support retention of households in all income categories. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact related to unplanned population growth or the displacement of a significant number of people. No mitigation measures are required.

Mitigation Measures

Project implementation would not result in significant impacts related to population and housing; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

[19] California Department of Transportation. 2023. *Tuolumne County Economic Forecast*. Website: https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/data-analytics-services/transportation-economics/socioeconomic-forecasts/2023/2023-pdf/tuolumne-2023-a11y.pdf. Accessed June 14, 2024.

3.15 Public Services

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

a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

Fire protection?

No Impact: The Sonora Fire Department (SFD) provides fire protection services to the City. The SFD has one fire station located at 201 South Shepherd Street. The proposed project, which includes the HEU and SEU, would implement policies to promote maintenance of acceptable service ratios, response times, and other performance objectives for fire protection. Additionally, since the City is within a CALFIRE-designated VHFHSZ, the SEU includes implementation measures to enforce the most recent California Fire Code standards during development, as well as wildfire adaptation and mitigation measures, including potential retrofitting efforts for outdated buildings. Compliance with these standards would reduce the fire vulnerability of new and old structures in the City. The HEU and SEU are policy documents, and do not directly involve any development. All future development would be subject to review and approval by the SFD. Additionally, all future development would be required to adhere to all State and local regulations regarding fire protection and building standards, as well as policies and implementation standards outlined in other sections of the General Plan. Therefore, the project would have no impact on fire protection services, and no mitigation measures are required.

Police protection?

No Impact: The Sonora Police Department provides police services and protection to the City. The Sonora Police Station is located at 100 South Green Street. The proposed project includes two policy documents and does not directly propose any development. The HEU and SEU would implement policies to promote maintenance of acceptable service ratios, response times, and other performance objectives for police protection. Future development would be required to adhere to State and local regulations, including any relevant policies in the General Plan, intended to maintain adequate police protection services. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on police protection services, and no mitigation measures are required.

Schools?

No Impact: The Sonora Union High School District and Sonora Elementary School District serve the City. School-related impacts depend on the location, type, and size of a project, including students generated per household, and the capacity of facilities in a given attendance area. Impacts to schools cannot be meaningfully determined until a project is defined. The HEU and SEU are policy documents and do not directly involve any future development. Future development would be required to pay development impact fees, pursuant to the City's General Plan and Municipal Code, to offset potential development impacts. Therefore, the project would have no impact on schools, and no mitigation measures are required.

Parks?

No Impact: Park-related impacts depend on the location, type, and size of a project. The City of Sonora has numerous parks, open space areas, and trails. However, the HEU and SEU are policy documents and do not directly involve any future development. All future development would be required to adhere to State and local regulations, including policies and measures outlined in the General Plan to preserve park and recreation facilities. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on parks, and no mitigation measures are required.

Other public facilities?

No Impact: The HEU and SEU are policy documents and do not directly involve any development. All future development would be required to adhere to all applicable State and local regulations. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on other public facilities, and no mitigation measures are required.

Mitigation Measures

Project implementation would not result in significant impacts related to public services; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

3.16 Recreation

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

a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

No Impact: Impacts to recreational facilities depend upon the location, type, and size of a project. The City of Sonora has numerous public parks, trails, and open space areas. Impacts to recreational facilities cannot be meaningfully determined until a project is defined. The HEU and SEU are policy documents and do not directly involve any development. Future development would be required to adhere to all applicable State and local regulations, including policies and measures outlined in other sections of the General Plan intended to preserve the City's recreational facilities. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on recreational facilities, and no mitigation measures are required.

b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

No Impact: The proposed project includes two policy documents and does not directly involve any development or construction. Therefore, the project would not construct any recreational facilities or require the expansion of recreational facilities. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on new or expanded recreational facilities. No mitigation measures are required.

Mitigation Measures

Project implementation would not result in significant impacts related to recreation; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

3.17 Transportation

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVII. TRANSPORTATION – Would the project:				
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a) Would the project conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?

b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

c) Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

No Impact: Impacts related to transportation and circulation depend on the location, type, and size of a project, and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project and project site are defined. The HEU and SEU are policy documents consistent with the City's General Plan and Zoning Code. The updates do not include any changes to land use designations, building heights and intensities, or residential densities. The HEU includes the creation of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment Overlay Zone District on the Lemke site, which would layer on top of the base R3 zoning regulations, leaving in place the option to develop under the base zoning, but providing the opportunity to develop the property through a ministerial by-right approval process should an applicant propose 20 percent low-income deed restricted affordable housing. Any future development in the City would be required to adhere to all applicable State and local regulations, programs, ordinances, and policies that address circulation, including those in the General Plan Circulation Element and the City's Municipal Code. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on circulation, and no mitigation measures are required.

d) Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?

No Impact: Many streets in Sonora lack proper width and turning radii for emergency vehicle access. Several streets allow for on-street parking that limits emergency vehicle access, and certain subdivisions within the City only have one point of ingress/egress that could become blocked during an emergency scenario. The SEU addresses the protection of existing and future population and development from both natural and human-caused hazards through goals, policies, and implementation measures. Among these include policies and programs intended to increase adequate emergency vehicle access and evacuation routes in the City; SEU Goal 8 aims for "decreased vulnerability to critical facilities, residents, and visitors to hazard events through proper evacuation planning". To ensure adequate emergency access, future development in the City would be required to comply with the provisions of the Municipal Code during construction and operation. Future development

would also be required to adhere to all applicable local regulations and policies, including those of a potential future evacuation plan. The proposed project includes two policy documents and does not directly involve any development. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on emergency access, and no mitigation measures are required.

Mitigation Measures

Project implementation would not result in significant impacts related to transportation; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

3.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES				
Would the project 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:				
a) 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	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) 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 Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	☐	☐	☐	☒

Would the project 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:

a) 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)?

b) 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.

No Impact: According to California Public Resources Code Section 21084, a project may have a significant effect on the environment if the project "may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource". Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52) specifies that a project with the potential for adverse effects on tribal cultural resources may be considered a significant effect on the environment. Senate Bill 18 (SB 18) requires a government-to-government consultation process initiated by the local governmental agency prior to adoption or amendment of a General or Specific Plan.

The City, as the Lead Agency pursuant to CEQA and as required by AB 52 and SB 18, initiated consultation on August 29, 2024 through mailing, via certified mail, and emailing AB 52 and SB 18 consultation letters for the proposed project, including project information and contact information to ten Native American tribes. The tribal governments provided with an AB 52 consultation letter include the following list of recipients:

- Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians[20]
- Calaveras Band of Mi-Wuk Indians[21]
- Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians[22]
- Ione Band of Miwok Indians
- Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwuk Indians[23]
- Nashville Enterprise Miwok-Maidu-Nishinam Tribe[24]
- Pakan'yani Maidu of Strawberry Valley Rancheria
- Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation[25]
- Tule River Indian Tribe
- Wuksachi Indian Tribe/Eshom Valley Band

Under SB 18, Native American tribes have 90 days to respond and request further project information and/or formal consultation. On August 29, 2024, the City received a response from the Calaveras Band of Mi-Wuk Indians stating that the Calaveras Band of Mi-Wuk Indians refers to Tuolumne Rancheria and Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians. No further consultation was requested. On August 30, 2024, the City received a response from the Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians confirming receipt of the notification and stating that Chicken Ranch Rancheria would reach out again if there were concerns found with the project. No further contact was received, and no consultation was requested. The City did not receive any other responses during the consultation period.

The HEU and SEU are policy documents that would not directly result in development or construction. To date, two Tribes responded during the consultation process and did not have any comments or concerns. The proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources or in the local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k). Therefore, no impacts would occur, and no mitigation measures are required.

Mitigation Measures

Project implementation would not result in significant impacts related to tribal cultural resources; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

[20] AB 52 and SB 18 letters were sent to two contacts at the Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians.
[21] AB 52 and SB 18 letters were sent to three contacts at the Calaveras Band of Mi-Wuk Indians.
[22] AB 52 and SB 18 letters were sent to four contacts at the Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians.
[23] AB 52 and SB 18 letters were sent to two contacts at the Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwuk Indians. One contact was notified only by certified mail, as no email address was provided.
[24] AB 52 and SB 18 letters were sent to two contacts at the Nashville Enterprise Miwok-Maidu-Nishinam Tribe. One contact only provided a phone number; the City called and left a voicemail for this contact.
[25] AB 52 and SB 18 letters were sent to two contacts at the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation.

3.19 Utilities and Service Systems

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

a) Would the project require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?

No Impact: The proposed project includes the adoption of the City's HEU and SEU, which are policy documents that would not directly result in development or construction. The HEU identifies two currently undeveloped sites as suitable for potential housing development to meet the RHNA allocation. According to the HEU, principal site improvements required upon development of a vacant property in the City include the undergrounding of electrical, gas, and telecommunication lines to the structure, installation of a public sewage system, grading and improvement of public and private streets, storm drainage and flood control facilities within and outside the subdivision, a water supply system providing an adequate supply of potable water to each lot and fire hydrant, and fire hydrants and connections.

All future development in the City would be subject to all applicable State, regional, local, and utility provider regulations and requirements concerning the installation of utilities. Utility services impacts depend on the project type and location and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project has been defined. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impacts related to the construction or expansion of new or expanded

water, wastewater treatment, stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunication facilities. No mitigation measures are required.

b) Would the project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?

No Impact: According to the 2020 Tuolumne Utilities District Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP), approximately 97 percent of the District's water is imported from the South Fork of the Stanislaus River through a contract with PG&E. The UWMP states that multiple dry years have minimal impact on the District's water supply because the District's water source does not rely on carry-over storage, and the reservoirs used to store water for the District are refilled every year to meet demand. According to the UWMP, TUD's surface water supply from the South Fork of the Stanislaus River is expected to be 100 percent reliable during all year types, and all single dry year and multiple dry year projections for 2025, 2030, 2035, 2040, and 2045 demonstrate a significant surplus of water supply for the entire District.[26] Therefore, the District expects that, under all hydrologic conditions, purchased water supplies (in combination with groundwater supplies) will fully serve potable water demands.

All future development would be required to comply with all applicable State, regional, and local regulatory requirements concerning the efficient use and conservation of water resources, including measures identified in the City's General Plan. The proposed project includes two policy documents and does not directly involve any development. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on water supplies, and no mitigation measures are required.

c) Would the project result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

No Impact: Wastewater treatment in the City occurs through either private septic tanks or through the TUD Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant located in the southwestern portion of the City. The TUD owns, operates, and maintains the sewer system that services the majority of the City and consists of gravity sewers, lift stations, and approximately 140 miles of pipeline to collect wastewater from the TUD service area. The Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant provides advanced primary and secondary treatment for approximately 1.2 million gallons per day of wastewater.[27] The plant is capable of treating an average of 2 million gallons of wastewater per day.[28]

The proposed project includes two policy documents and does not directly involve any development. All future development would be subject to all applicable State, regional, and local regulatory requirements concerning the efficient use and conservation of water resources, including measures identified in the City's General Plan. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on wastewater treatment capacity, and no mitigation measures are required.

d) Would the project 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 reduction goals?

e) Would the project comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

No Impact: The City of Sonora contracts with Waste Management/Cal Sierra Disposal to provide solid waste services within the City. Cal Sierra Disposal operates the Buy Back Center Recycling Center, a Transfer Station,

[26] Tuolumne Utilities District. 2021. *2020 Urban Water Management Plan for Tuolumne Utilities District*. Website: https://tudwater.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/TUD-2020-UWMP_Adopted-June-2021.pdf. June. Accessed June 14, 2024.
[27] Tuolumne Utilities District. 2024. *TUD's Sewer System.* Website: https://tudwater.com/customer-service/sewer-services/. Accessed June 14, 2024.
[28] Tuolumne Utilities District. 2024. *"Tuolumne Utilities District Celebrates Completion of New Sonora Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility."* May 28, 2024. Website: https://tudwater.com/sonora-regional-celebration/. Accessed June 14, 2024.

and the Cal Sierra Earth Resource Facility in Sonora.[29] The proposed project involves two policy documents and does not directly involve any development. Future development would be required to comply with all applicable federal, State, regional, and local standards, management and reduction statutes, and regulations related to solid waste. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on solid waste generation or compliance with applicable regulations related to solid waste. No mitigation measures are required.

Mitigation Measures

Project implementation would not result in significant impacts related to utilities and service systems; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

[29] Waste Management. 2024. *Cal Sierra Disposal*. Website: https://www.wm.com/location/california/tuolumne/sonora/locations/index.jsp. Accessed June 18, 2024.

3.20 Wildfire

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XX. WILDFIRE – If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:				
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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) Would the project substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

No Impact: Most of the City is designated as a VHFHSZ by CALFIRE. As mentioned in Section 3.9, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, the City of Sonora does not currently have an emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. At the time of publication of this IS/ND, the City is in the process of developing its Emergency Operations Plan. The City is within the boundaries of the Tuolumne County Emergency Operations Plan. State Routes 49 and 108 are the only two transit routes that provide ingress and egress for the City; SR 49 and SR 108 would be the primary evacuation routes for any emergency in the City. The City's General Plan identifies South Washington Street as the primary evacuation route toward SR 108 (southern and western route), North Washington Street (SR 49) as the primary evacuation route toward northbound SR 49, and Mono Way East as the primary evacuation route eastward toward SR 108.[30]

Many streets in Sonora lack proper width and turning radii for emergency vehicle access. Several streets allow for on-street parking that limits emergency vehicle access, and certain subdivisions within the City only have one point of ingress/egress that could become blocked during an emergency scenario. The SEU addresses the protection of existing and future population and development from both natural and human-caused hazards through goals, policies, and implementation measures. Among these include policies and programs intended to increase adequate emergency vehicle access and evacuation routes in the City; SEU Goal 8 aims for "decreased vulnerability to critical facilities, residents, and visitors to hazard events through proper evacuation planning". The SEU also includes goals, policies, and implementation measures to reduce the risk of fire hazards in the City. However, potential impacts related to emergency response and evacuation are unique to a project and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project has been defined. To ensure adequate

[30] City of Sonora. 2020. *General Plan Safety Element*. Website: https://sonoraca.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/SonoraGeneralPlan2020-revision-2017-10-16-17-CC-adopted.pdf. Accessed June 14, 2024.

emergency access, future development in the City would be required to undergo review by the SFD and to comply with the provisions of the Municipal Code during construction and operation. Future development would also be required to adhere to all applicable local regulations and policies, including those of a potential future evacuation plan. The proposed project includes two policy documents and does not directly involve any development. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on an emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, and no mitigation measures are required.

b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, would the project exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?

No Impact: Most of the City is designated as a VHFHSZ by CALFIRE, and a substantial amount of land in the City consists of hillsides and sloped terrain. The sites identified in the HEU as potential locations for future residential development both contain hilly, wooded terrain. The SEU includes measures intended to minimize the risk of fire hazards and increase the resiliency of the community to future wildfires. However, potential impacts related to fire exacerbation are unique to a project and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project has been defined. The proposed project includes two policy documents and does not directly involve any development. Future development in the City would require project-specific review on behalf of the SFD. Future development would also be required to comply with the provisions of the City's General Plan, LHMP, and all other local regulations pertaining to wildfire risks during construction and operation. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact related to exacerbated wildfire risks, pollutant concentrations from wildfire, or uncontrolled spread of wildfire. No mitigation measures are required.

c) Would the project 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?

No Impact: According to the HEU, principal site improvements required upon development of a vacant property in the City include the undergrounding of electrical, gas, and telecommunication lines to the structure, installation of a public sewage system, grading and improvement of public and private streets, storm drainage and flood control facilities within and outside the subdivision, a water supply system providing an adequate supply of potable water to each lot and fire hydrant, and fire hydrants and connections. Any potential future development on either of the housing sites identified in the HEU would require the installation of infrastructure that could exacerbate fire risks. The SEU includes measures to minimize the risk of fire hazards to existing and future development in the City. However, the proposed project includes two policy documents and does not directly involve any development. Any future development in the City, including development pursuant to the HEU or SEU, would require project-specific review on behalf of the SFD. Potential impacts related to utility installation and fire exacerbation are unique to a project and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project has been defined. Additionally, all future development would be required to comply with all applicable State, regional, local, and utility provider regulations pertaining to infrastructure improvements and wildfire risk. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact related to the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure that may exacerbate fire risk. No mitigation measures are required.

d) Would the project 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?

No Impact: Most of the City is designated as a VHFHSZ by CALFIRE, and a substantial amount of land in the City consists of sloped, wooded terrain susceptible to landslide risks. According to the HEU, principal site improvements required upon development of a vacant property in the City include storm drainage and flood control facilities within and outside the subdivision. The SEU includes measures intended to minimize the risk of fire hazards in the City. However, potential impacts related to post-fire instability and drainage changes are unique to a project type and location and cannot be meaningfully determined until a project has been defined. Future development in the City would require review by the SFD. Future development would also be required to comply with all applicable State, regional, and local regulations regarding wildfire hazards, water quality

standards, and drainage. The proposed project includes two policy documents and does not directly involve any development. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impacts related to downslope or downstream flooding or landslides. No mitigation measures are required.

Mitigation Measures

Project implementation would not result in significant impacts related to wildfire; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

3.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE				
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 the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☐	☒

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 the major periods of California history or prehistory?

b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)

c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

No Impact: As demonstrated throughout this document, the proposed project would have no impacts to Aesthetics, Agricultural and Forestry Resources, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Energy, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Mineral Resources, Noise, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Transportation, Tribal Cultural Resources, Utilities and Service Systems, or Wildfires. Implementation of the City's HEU and SEU would not create any significant or adverse impacts and would therefore not contribute to any cumulatively considerable impacts. The proposed project involves adoption of two policy documents consistent with the General Plan and does not include any changes to land use

designations, building heights and intensities, or residential densities. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impacts or cumulatively considerable impacts on the environment.

4 List of Preparers

IS/ND Preparation:

CSG Consultants
3707 W. Garden Grove Boulevard,
Suite 100
Orange, California 92868

- Glenn Lajoie, AICP – Principal, Director of Environmental Planning
- Kelli Allen – Associate Environmental Planner
- Jennifer French – Document/Publications Specialist

California Water Boards

Gavin Newsom
Governor

Yana Garcia
Secretary for Environmental Protection

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

12 August 2025

Tyler Summersett
City of Sonora
94 North Washington Street
Sonora, CA 95370
tsummersett@sonoraca.org

COMMENTS TO REQUEST FOR REVIEW FOR THE NEGATIVE DECLARATION, 2024-2029 HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE AND SAFETY ELEMENT UPDATE, SCH#2025070498, TUOLUMNE COUNTY

Pursuant to the State Clearinghouse's 11 July 2025 request, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) has reviewed the *Request for Review for the Negative Declaration* for the 2024-2029 Housing Element Update and Safety Element Update, located in Tuolumne County.

Our agency is delegated with the responsibility of protecting the quality of surface and groundwaters of the state; therefore our comments will address concerns surrounding those issues.

I. Regulatory Setting

Basin Plan

The Central Valley Water Board is required to formulate and adopt Basin Plans for all areas within the Central Valley region under Section 13240 of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. Each Basin Plan must contain water quality objectives to ensure the reasonable protection of beneficial uses, as well as a program of implementation for achieving water quality objectives with the Basin Plans. Federal regulations require each state to adopt water quality standards to protect the public health or welfare, enhance the quality of water and serve the purposes of the Clean Water Act. In California, the beneficial uses, water quality objectives, and the Antidegradation Policy are the State's water quality standards. Water quality standards are also contained in the National Toxics Rule, 40 CFR Section 131.36, and the California Toxics Rule, 40 CFR Section 131.38.

The Basin Plan is subject to modification as necessary, considering applicable laws, policies, technologies, water quality conditions and priorities. The original Basin Plans were adopted in 1975, and have been updated and revised periodically as required, using Basin Plan amendments. Once the Central Valley Water Board has adopted a Basin Plan amendment in noticed public hearings, it must be approved by

the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), Office of Administrative Law (OAL) and in some cases, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Basin Plan amendments only become effective after they have been approved by the OAL and in some cases, the USEPA. Every three (3) years, a review of the Basin Plan is completed that assesses the appropriateness of existing standards and evaluates and prioritizes Basin Planning issues. For more information on the *Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins*, please visit our website:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/basin_plans/

Antidegradation Considerations
All wastewater discharges must comply with the Antidegradation Policy (State Water Board Resolution 68-16) and the Antidegradation Implementation Policy contained in the Basin Plan. The Antidegradation Implementation Policy is available on page 74 at:
https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/basin_plans/sacsjr_201805.pdf

In part it states:

Any discharge of waste to high quality waters must apply best practicable treatment or control not only to prevent a condition of pollution or nuisance from occurring, but also to maintain the highest water quality possible consistent with the maximum benefit to the people of the State.

This information must be presented as an analysis of the impacts and potential impacts of the discharge on water quality, as measured by background concentrations and applicable water quality objectives.

The antidegradation analysis is a mandatory element in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System and land discharge Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) permitting processes. The environmental review document should evaluate potential impacts to both surface and groundwater quality.

II. Permitting Requirements

Construction Storm Water General Permit
Dischargers whose project disturb one or more acres of soil or where projects disturb less than one acre but are part of a larger common plan of development that in total disturbs one or more acres, are required to obtain coverage under the General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (Construction General Permit), Construction General Permit Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ. Construction activity subject to this permit includes clearing, grading, grubbing, disturbances to the ground, such as stockpiling, or excavation, but does not include regular maintenance activities performed to restore the original line, grade, or capacity of the facility. The Construction General Permit requires the development and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). For more information on the Construction General Permit, visit the State Water Resources Control Board website at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/constpermits.shtml

Phase I and II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permits[1]

The Phase I and II MS4 permits require the Permittees reduce pollutants and runoff flows from new development and redevelopment using Best Management Practices (BMPs) to the maximum extent practicable (MEP). MS4 Permittees have their own development standards, also known as Low Impact Development (LID)/post-construction standards that include a hydromodification component. The MS4 permits also require specific design concepts for LID/post-construction BMPs in the early stages of a project during the entitlement and CEQA process and the development plan review process.

For more information on which Phase I MS4 Permit this project applies to, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/storm_water/municipal_permits/

For more information on the Phase II MS4 permit and who it applies to, visit the State Water Resources Control Board at:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/phase_ii_municipal.shtml

Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit

If the project will involve the discharge of dredged or fill material in navigable waters or wetlands, a permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act may be needed from the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). If a Section 404 permit is required by the USACE, the Central Valley Water Board will review the permit application to ensure that discharge will not violate water quality standards. If the project requires surface water drainage realignment, the applicant is advised to contact the Department of Fish and Game for information on Streambed Alteration Permit requirements. If you have any questions regarding the Clean Water Act Section 404 permits, please contact the Regulatory Division of the Sacramento District of USACE at (916) 557-5250.

Clean Water Act Section 401 Permit – Water Quality Certification

If an USACE permit (e.g., Non-Reporting Nationwide Permit, Nationwide Permit, Letter of Permission, Individual Permit, Regional General Permit, Programmatic General Permit), or any other federal permit (e.g., Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act or Section 9 from the United States Coast Guard), is required for this project due to the disturbance of waters of the United States (such as streams and wetlands), then a Water Quality Certification must be obtained from the Central

[1] Municipal Permits = The Phase I Municipal Separate Storm Water System (MS4) Permit covers medium sized Municipalities (serving between 100,000 and 250,000 people) and large sized municipalities (serving over 250,000 people). The Phase II MS4 provides coverage for small municipalities, including non-traditional Small MS4s, which include military bases, public campuses, prisons and hospitals.

Valley Water Board prior to initiation of project activities. There are no waivers for 401 Water Quality Certifications. For more information on the Water Quality Certification, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/water_quality_certification/

Waste Discharge Requirements – Discharges to Waters of the State

If USACE determines that only non-jurisdictional waters of the State (i.e., "non-federal" waters of the State) are present in the proposed project area, the proposed project may require a Waste Discharge Requirement (WDR) permit to be issued by Central Valley Water Board. Under the California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, discharges to all waters of the State, including all wetlands and other waters of the State including, but not limited to, isolated wetlands, are subject to State regulation. For more information on the Waste Discharges to Surface Water NPDES Program and WDR processes, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/waste_to_surface_water/

Projects involving excavation or fill activities impacting less than 0.2 acre or 400 linear feet of non-jurisdictional waters of the state and projects involving dredging activities impacting less than 50 cubic yards of non-jurisdictional waters of the state may be eligible for coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board Water Quality Order No. 2004-0004-DWQ (General Order 2004-0004). For more information on the General Order 2004-0004, visit the State Water Resources Control Board website at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/water_quality/2004/wqo/wqo2004-0004.pdf

Dewatering Permit

If the proposed project includes construction or groundwater dewatering to be discharged to land, the proponent may apply for coverage under State Water Board General Water Quality Order (Low Threat General Order) 2003-0003 or the Central Valley Water Board's Waiver of Report of Waste Discharge and Waste Discharge Requirements (Low Threat Waiver) R5-2018-0085. Small temporary construction dewatering projects are projects that discharge groundwater to land from excavation activities or dewatering of underground utility vaults. Dischargers seeking coverage under the General Order or Waiver must file a Notice of Intent with the Central Valley Water Board prior to beginning discharge.

For more information regarding the Low Threat General Order and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/water_quality/2003/wqo/wqo2003-0003.pdf

For more information regarding the Low Threat Waiver and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/adopted_orders/waivers/r5-2018-0085.pdf

Limited Threat General NPDES Permit

If the proposed project includes construction dewatering and it is necessary to discharge the groundwater to waters of the United States, the proposed project will require coverage under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Dewatering discharges are typically considered a low or limited threat to water quality and may be covered under the General Order for *Limited Threat Discharges to Surface Water* (Limited Threat General Order). A complete Notice of Intent must be submitted to the Central Valley Water Board to obtain coverage under the Limited Threat General Order. For more information regarding the Limited Threat General Order and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/adopted_orders/general_orders/r5-2016-0076-01.pdf

NPDES Permit

If the proposed project discharges waste that could affect the quality of surface waters of the State, other than into a community sewer system, the proposed project will require coverage under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. A complete Report of Waste Discharge must be submitted with the Central Valley Water Board to obtain a NPDES Permit. For more information regarding the NPDES Permit and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/help/permit/

If you have questions regarding these comments, please contact me at (916) 464-4684 or Peter.Minkel2@waterboards.ca.gov.

Peter G. Minkel
Engineering Geologist

cc: State Clearinghouse unit, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, Sacramento

CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY GAVIN NEWSOM, GOVERNOR

California Department of Transportation

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT 10 PLANNING
P.O. BOX 2048 | STOCKTON, CA 95201
(209) 948-7325 | FAX (209) 948-7164 TTY 711
www.dot.ca.gov

August 11, 2025

Mr. Tyler Summersett
Community Development Director
City of Sonora
94 N. Washington St.
Sonora, CA 95370

City of Sonora-General Plan Update- Housing & Safety Element Update/Initial Study SCH 2025070498

Mr. Summersett,

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the City of Sonora-General Plan Update- Housing & Safety Element Update/Initial Study (IS).

Caltrans has the following comments:
Caltrans suggests that the Tuolumne County continue to coordinate with Caltrans in identifying and addressing potential pedestrian safety and cumulative transportation impacts from this project and other developments near this location. This will assist Caltrans in ensuring that pedestrian, traffic safety, and quality standards are maintained for the traveling public on existing and future state transportation facilities in Tuolumne County.

Resiliency and Adaptation
Caltrans supports local land use development that is consistent with State planning priorities which is intended to promote equity, strengthen the economy, protect the environment, and promote public health and safety (Government Code § 65041 .1). These priorities inherently include achieving sustainable land use development patterns that accommodate a sufficient supply of adequate housing in and near population and job centers. Projects that support smart growth principles and include improvements to pedestrian, bicycling, and public transit infrastructure are supported by Caltrans and are consistent with State Transportation plans. State housing element law requires housing elements to be updated regularly to reflect a community's changing housing needs, including preparation of a Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) plan (Government Code Section 65584[a]). The City of Sonora RHNA rose above of what is required and Caltrans commends the City for the additional 152 surplus housing units for Very Low and Low income residents.

As noted in the IS, the City of Sonora has been identified to be in the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ). With the growing concerns of climate change, wildfires have become a prevalent concern for all jurisdictions, as climate change increasingly affects other hazards such as severe weather, flooding, wildfires, diseases, extreme heat, and drought. Caltrans recommends creating defensible space as a buffer between buildings and vegetation surrounding it. This space slows or stops the spread of wildfire and additionally protects the buildings from reactive heat impacts. In addition, fire-resistant landscaping may prevent fire ignition, and slow or stop the spread of an existing wildfire. Lastly, hardening of ember and heat-resistant materials may assist in preventing ignition and damage to buildings and assets.
Additional information regarding the potential for expected vehicle volumes that would result from the development should be provided to Caltrans for discussion of possible additional strain to the highway network during an emergency. Such data could assist to determine the need for ensuring safety of the traveling public during wildfire or other emergency requiring evacuation, including when preparing environmental review documents for future developments.

The IS has identified that the City of Sonora is at risk of flooding caused by an overflow of Woods Creek, which is located within the Federal Emergency Management Agency 100-year flood zone. The areas adjacent to Woods Creek and Sonora Creek are at risk of flooding in the event of extreme precipitation, Caltrans ask that any flooding that effects the state highway system (SHS) through City of Sonora be identified so we can explore coordination with any traffic improvements in the area.

While Caltrans applauds the additional housing units for the Housing Element Update, there is a greater opportunity to include measures in the Safety Element such as active transportation options, and multi-modal options to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and enhance carbon sequestration that would assist the City and Caltrans initiatives to achieve alignment with state greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 and 80% reduction levels by 2050.

Additionally, any future developments from the City of Sonora that may impact the State highway system shall be reviewed by Caltrans District 10.

System Planning and Goods Movement

We are pleased with the initiative and commitment on the part of City of Sonora (City) on updating General Plan Housing and Safety Elements to align with other General Plan Elements, as required by state law. We support any local development that is consistent with system planning priorities intended to promote equity, strengthen the economy, protect the environment, and promote public health and safety. This is accomplished by working together with the local jurisdiction to achieve a shared vision of how the transportation system can accommodate interregional and local

travel and development. We look forward to work with the City on any continued development that may have an impact on its state highway system.

At this time, no specific work has been proposed nor any actual development of parcels have been indicated. When these projects are ready for implementation, the City may consider submitting a request identifying the need for the proposed improvement to Caltrans. At that time, we will review and evaluate the proposed improvement to determine the consistency with Caltrans policies, practices, and any unique highway operations or safety considerations.

Traffic Operations
Any projects that are within the State ROW and in the Sonora General Plan update should be submitted for Caltrans D10 review during the developmental stages.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dariana Villamil (209) 986-5762 (email: dariana.villamil@dot.ca.gov) or me at (209) 639 -8832 (email: Gregoria.ponce@dot.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

Gregoria Ponce'

Gregoria Ponce', Chief
Office of Rural Planning

cc: State Clearinghouse

TUOLUMNE UTILITIES DISTRICT
18885 Nugget Blvd. | Sonora, CA 95370
(209) 532-5536 | www.tudwater.com

May 1, 2026

City of Sonora Community Development Department
Attn: Tyler Summerset
94 N. Washington Street
Sonora, CA 95370

RE: SAFETY ELEMENT UPDATE

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter responds to your April 16, 2026 letter to advisory agencies regarding updates to the City of Sonora Safety Element. The Proposed Safety Element states:

> *Policy 1.4: Maintain an adequate peak load water supply for fire suppression efforts in Sonora.*
>
> *Program/Implementation 1.4A: The City shall require each new large-scale development to submit a water usage plan showing that Sonora's water system can supply the new development with minimum water amounts while maintaining optimal water supply for fire suppression work.*
>
> *Program/Implementation 1.4B: The City shall conduct a water supply and infrastructure assessment to determine the adequacy of existing water supply infrastructure. The assessment shall include a mapping effort to identify the geographic location of anticipated water supplies. System improvements shall be conducted by Tuolumne Utilities District, in coordination with the City, if any part of the water supply system is found insufficient to meet peak load water supply requirements for fire suppression efforts. The City, in coordination with Tuolumne Utilities District, shall be responsible for maintaining the consistent and long-term integrity of water supplies. The City shall work with Tuolumne Utilities District to set a schedule for reassessing the water supplies and associated infrastructure.*

Program/Implementation 1.4A appears to apply to discretionary projects (Conditioned and approved by the City Council). For discretionary projects, the Tuolumne Utilities District (District) receives and responds to the City's advisory agency letters with information regarding existing District water supply, treatment, storage, and distribution (pipeline) capacity. In each response, the District includes a disclaimer that additional information from the fire authority is needed before the District can accurately determine whether its facilities have adequate capacity to meet a project's water demands. The District understands that the local fire agency will also respond to the City's advisory agency letter with fire-related conditions for service, including required fire-flow rate and duration. If the project is approved by the City Council, the developer then provides the approved fire conditions to the District, and the District analyzes its system to determine whether improvements are required to serve the project. If improvements are required, the developer funds and/or constructs the improvements and the District notifies the City when the improvements are complete. These are District requirements for all projects requiring service from the District, whether large or small and whether ministerial or discretionary.

The District offers the following language for Program/Implementation 1.4A to align with the City's and the District's development review processes:

Program/Implementation 1.4A: For large or small projects, whether ministerial or discretionary, the developer shall be required to construct and/or fund any public water system improvements necessary to meet the project's required domestic water or fire-flow demands. Fire related conditions, including fire-flow rate and duration, are determined by the City of Sonora Fire Department. These conditions are then provided by the developer to the District. With this information the District will evaluate the water system's ability to meet the conditioned fire-flow and inform the developer of the public water system improvements (if any) needed to satisfy the City's fire-flow conditions. The City's final approval for a project shall be dependent on the developer satisfying all conditions for the project including conditions for water and fire service.

Program/Implementation 1.4B appears to obligate the City to conduct water supply and infrastructure assessments for future development. Is this the City's intent? TUD is the owner and operator of the public water system serving the City and it is TUD's exclusive responsibility to operate and maintain the system. As part of that responsibility, the District ensures that new connections to the public water system do not adversely affect the system's ability to provide domestic water service and fire-flow. TUD has developed a hydraulic model of the water distribution system to evaluate various development scenarios and predict where water system improvements are necessary to serve new development. Per the District's Water Rules and Regulations, if a new development will adversely affect the District's water system, the developer is responsible for mitigating the impacts through off-site improvements. It is not reasonable to expect the City to evaluate the water system or to be responsible for "maintaining the consistent and long-term integrity of water supplies" Please note that the District is not legally obligated to upgrade the entire water system to comply with current standards. Capital improvements to the water system in the City of Sonora are weighed against many other competing priorities and are scheduled based on the District's available finances and staff resources. Improvements needed to serve new development are funded entirely by the project proponent.

One way the City can expedite water system improvements is to secure funding through programs like HUD's Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). As an example, in 2016, the City secured CDBG to replace approximately 2,500 linear feet of District water mains and approximately 90 fire hydrants. In addition, the District assists the City of Sonora Fire Department with hydrant flow tests, which are commonly conducted to verify available fire-flow for a proposed project. The District recommends that the City Fire Department coordinate with the District to perform hydrant flow tests during the District's annual hydrant flushing program at the beginning of each calendar year; hydrant locations and capacity could then be geo-referenced on City mapping. This updated information would be valuable to the City and District when assessing the fire-flow capacity of the District's existing water distribution system and evaluating the accuracy of the District's hydraulic model

The District offers the following language for <u>Program/Implementation 1.4B</u> to align with the City's and District's ongoing collaboration:

Program/Implementation 1.4B: The City shall coordinate with the Tuolumne Utilities District (District) and the City's Fire Department to conduct hydrant flow tests at strategic locations throughout the water distribution system.. The data from that effort will be used to calibrate the District's hydraulic model which can be used as a tool to identify other areas of the system that do not comply with current fire flow standards. If any part of the water supply system is found insufficient to meet peak load water supply requirements for fire suppression efforts the City shall work with the District to identify the improvements needed and to seek grant funding for the improvements. System improvements shall be conducted under the supervision of the District and in coordination with the City. The City shall work with the District to set a schedule for reassessing the water supplies and associated infrastructure.

Lastly, Tuolumne Utilities District's Sonora Water Treatment Plant was excluded from the Safety Element. This facility is located at 520 Bald Mountain Road and has a maximum treatment capacity of 4.0 MGD (2,800 gpm), along with

1,000,000 gallons of storage capacity. In addition, the District's 3,000,000-gallon Greenley Tank, located at 19757 Greenley Road, provides water storage capacity in the southern portion of the City.

Please feel free to contact me at any time with questions regarding this letter or for additional information about the District's water facilities serving the City of Sonora.

Regards,



Antonio J. Ramirez
Engineering Services Technician
(209) 532-5536 Ext. 511

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

CITY HALL

CITY OF SONORA 94 N. WASHINGTON STREET, SONORA, CA 95370 P: (209) 532-4541

SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

DATE: May 18, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Tyler Summersett, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Waive the First Reading, Read by Title Only, and Introduce Ordinance No. 916 of the Sonora City Council Amending the City of Sonora Municipal Code to Add Chapter 8.50 to Title 8 Regulating Tobacco Product Sales and Consider a Fee Schedule for Tobacco Retailer Licenses

RECOMMENDATION:

Waive the First Reading, Read by Title Only, and Introduce Ordinance No. 916 of the Sonora City Council Amending the City of Sonora Municipal Code to Add Chapter 8.50 to Title 8 Regulating Tobacco Product Sales and Consider a Fee Schedule for Tobacco Retailer Licenses; and

Determine the Project Statutorily Exempt as the Appropriate Level of Environmental Review in Accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Guidelines; and

Consider Adoption of Resolution No. 05-18-2026-A Adopting a Fee Schedule for Tobacco Retail Licenses in the City.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Sonora currently lacks a regulatory framework to effectively monitor and enforce tobacco retail activities. As a result, staff is proposing Chapter 8.50 et. seq. of the City's Municipal Code introducing a licensing system for tobacco retailers within the City of Sonora. This ordinance is intended to curb unlawful sales practices and ensure compliance with local, state, and federal tobacco control laws.

The primary objective of Chapter 8.50 is to require tobacco retailers to obtain a license and comply with operational regulations. This ordinance provides the framework for regulating sales of tobacco products within the City and imposes penalties for non-compliance.

The ordinance is intended to prevent youth access to tobacco products, ensure compliance with state and federal regulations, reduce the prevalence of flavored tobacco products, kratom and nitrous oxide (NOX).

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DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS:

The proposed ordinance establishes a comprehensive framework for regulating the sale of tobacco products within the City. The ordinance further aligns with state and federal regulations and addresses concerns regarding illegal access to tobacco.

Chapter 8.50 et. seq. would require tobacco retailers to obtain a license and comply with operational regulations as prescribed in the ordinance. Salient provisions of the ordinance include:

1. **Section 8.50.020 – Licensing Requirements**: All tobacco retailers must obtain a license from the City. Licenses are issued for a one-year period and must be renewed annually.

2. **Section 8.50.020 A – G. Restrictions on Sales:** The ordinance prohibits sales of tobacco products to individuals under 21 years of age and restricts the sale of flavored tobacco products.

3. **Section 8.50.020 J. Security Measures Required**: All tobacco retailers shall follow required measures as specified on the license application.

4. **Section 8.50.030 Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products Prohibited.** It shall be unlawful for any tobacco retailer to sell any flavored tobacco product.

5. **Section 8.50.050 B. Licensed Cannabis Business.** No license may issue, and no existing license may be renewed, to authorize tobacco retailing at a location licensed for commercial cannabis or pharmacy.

6. **Section 8.50.050 E & F. Proximity to Other Tobacco/Cannabis Retailers.** No new license may issue to authorize a smoke shop within 1,000 feet of another tobacco or cannabis retailer.

7. **Section 8.50.050 G Population and Density.** The total number of tobacco retailer licenses issued to Significant Tobacco Retailers within the City shall be limited to one for each 1,650 inhabitants of the City.

8. **Section 8.50.060 Application Procedure.** Outlines the procedures for obtaining a tobacco retailer license.

9. **Section 8.50.070 License Issuance/Denial/Appeal.** Outlines the approval/denial findings for a tobacco retailer license and appeal procedures.

10. **Section 8.50.080 and 8.50.090 License Renewal, Expiration and License not Transferable.** Outlines License Renewal and Expiration procedures.

11. **Section 8.50.120 Compliance and Monitoring:** Regular compliance checks will be conducted to ensure adherence to the ordinance. Violations are subject to penalties, including license suspension and revocation.

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12. **Section 8.50.130 – 8.50.150 Enforcement:** The ordinance designates the City of Sonora Police Department, Code Enforcement and any agency or person designated by the Department to enforce the provisions of the ordinance. Regular inspections will be conducted, and violations will be addressed through civil penalties and potential license revocation, as outlined.

13. **Section 8.50.070 Appeal of Issuance or Denial of License:** Any person aggrieved by any decision to issue or deny a license may appeal to the City Council.

14. **Section 8.5.140 Tobacco Retailing without a Valid License:** Administrative Fines may be levied for unlicensed Tobacco Retailers.

Importantly, the draft Ordinance is not intended to affect or otherwise eliminate existing Smoke shops/significant tobacco retailers or general tobacco retailers within the City. However, Section 8.50.050 A – G contains several location based and other requirements to obtain a new Tobacco Retail License (TRL) including:

8.50.050 A. Mobile Vending prohibited;
8.50.050 B. Licensed Cannabis Business shall not be issued a Tobacco Retail License;
8.50.050 C. Pharmacies shall not be issued a Tobacco Retail License;
8.50.050 D. Locations in proximity to Youth Oriented Facilities, as defined, shall not be issued a Tobacco Retail License within 1,000 feet of Youth Oriented Facility.
8.50.050 E. Locations in proximity to Other Tobacco Retailers shall not issue a Tobacco Retail License within 1,000 feet of another tobacco retailer.
8.50.050 F. Locations in proximity to a Cannabis Retailer shall not issue a Tobacco Retail License within 1,000 feet of existing Cannabis Retailer.
8.50.050 G. Population and Density include the total number of retail licenses to be issued to a significant tobacco retailer to be limited to one for each 1,650 inhabitants of the city (e.g., 5,000/1,650=3 Tobacco Retailer Licenses Total)
8.50.070 Appeal of Issuance or Denial. Any person aggrieved by any decision to issue or deny may appeal to the City Council.

Should any of the existing Tobacco Retailers not comply with any one or more location/proximity based or other provisions of the Tobacco Retail License Ordinance, they would be considered legally non-conforming in accordance with Section 17.58 of the City's Municipal Code and may continue indefinitely unless the use has been abandoned or otherwise ceases for a period of one year or more.

Moreover, the Tobacco Retailer License (TRL) divides City retailers into 2 categories- Significant Retailers/Smoke shops and Tobacco Retailer- General (which includes convenience and retail stores). The definition of "Smoke shop/significant tobacco retailer", applies to any business for which the principal or core business is selling tobacco products, tobacco accessories, or both, as evidenced by any of the following: twenty-percent (20%) or more of floor or display area is devoted to tobacco products, tobacco accessories, or both; or sixty percent (60%) or more of gross sales receipts are derived from the sale or exchange of tobacco products, tobacco accessories, or both; or fifty percent (50%) or more of completed sales transactions include tobacco products or tobacco

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accessories". The ordinance will limit this type of business to three (3) within City limits or 1 per 1650 inhabitants. The General retailers will not be capped within the City.

Additionally, Ordinance 916 will prohibit the sale of Nitrous Oxide and Kratom products in the City of Sonora. This is not currently a State or Federal law, although other City's across the state have chosen to move forward with a similar ban. These products are currently available at some shops within the City, so this represents a curtailment of current practice for a few businesses.

Lastly, as noted, the primary objective of Chapter 8.50 et. seq., is to prevent youth access to tobacco products, ensure compliance with state and federal regulations and with City operational regulations. The Findings Section of the Ordinance substantiates and outlines the basis for the ordinance. The statistics on use of tobacco products is alarming and continues to be an urgent public health issue, particularly for young people in Tuolumne County.

TOBACCO RETAILER LICENSE APPLICATION FEES:

Staff recommends two options for TRL cost recovery for consideration by Council-

Option 1: Costs to the City are captured as part of the Tobacco Retail License Application process

Costs to the City are identified as,

a. Administrative (work to create the application, mail annual invoice, update forms, confirm payment, retailer education)
b. Application Processing (application review for completeness, follow up, permit issuance)
c. Compliance Monitoring (inspection for each Tobacco Retailer at least one time annually, documentation of violations or compliance, prosecution of violaters)

2- 3 hours are anticipated to complete this work at the average hourly rate would put the TRL fee at: $160 (2 hours) or $240 (3 hours)

Option 2:

Alternately, cost recovery for the City could solely be based on penalties for non-compliance. This recovery rate would vary by issue discovered in compliance monitoring, but could be quite significant based on a recent compliance check at a local retailer.

Section 8.50.150 (Additional Remedies), C.- *Violations of this Chapter shall be subject to an administrative penalty. The amount of the administrative penalty shall be fifty dollars ($50.00) for the first offense, one hundred dollars ($100.00) for the second offense, and two hundred fifty ($250.00) for any subsequent offense.*

Additionally, Section H states- For the purposes of the civil remedies provided in this chapter:

1. Each day on which a tobacco product is distributed, sold, or offered for sale in violation of this chapter shall constitute a separate violation of this chapter; and

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2. Each individual tobacco product that is distributed, sold, or offered for sale in violation of this chapter shall constitute a separate violation of this chapter

For example, if Sonora Police department did a compliance check at a retailer who was found to have 150 flavored vapes, kratom or nitrous oxide units for sale in the store, the penalty would be:

First violation $50.00 x # of units discovered, 150 = $7,500 in penalties.

Outreach to Retailers:

During outreach to City businesses, several of the retailers expressed frustration with the City's intent to license on top of the State License that they already need. The real angst seemed to revolve around the fact that the State recently notified license holders that the State fee would increase from $265 dollars annually to $450. This is an increase of $185 dollars.

Additionally, some of the retailers felt they were being punished, even though they had not done anything wrong. A no fee license with penalties for non-compliance could be one approach to address this issue.

BUSINESSES IMPACTED BY A TOBACCO RETAIL LICENSE:

Fourteen (14) Retail Business will be impacted by the Tobacco Retail License.

PLANNING COMMISSION:

The Tobacco Retail License item went to the Planning Commission at the April 25, 2026 meeting. The Planning Commission voted 5-0 to support the Tobacco Retail License. Separately, they voted 5-0 to support no fee for the license, or a very low fee in light of the increased fee at the State level and the requirement for licensing with both the State and City.

CEQA DETERMINATION:

The Ordinance qualifies for Statutory Exemption(s) from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Guidelines pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15061(b)(3). In accordance with Section 15060(c)(2), the ordinance does not constitute a "Project" as defined in the CEQA Guidelines. Section 15061(b)(3) is the "common sense" exemption noting that the project will not have an impact on the environment. As the project will require tobacco retailers to obtain a license and will not result in any physical change to a building or property, there will be no impact on the environment.

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SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

FISCAL IMPACT:

Implementation of the Tobacco Retail License (TRL) program may result in a neutral to minor fiscal impact to the City depending on the fee structure adopted by the City Council. Staff recommends an annual Tobacco Retail License fee of $240 per retailer, which is intended to recover the City's administrative, application processing, inspection, and compliance monitoring costs associated with implementation and enforcement of the ordinance. If the City Council elects to reduce or waive the fee, General Fund revenues or another funding source would need to be utilized to support ongoing compliance inspections, enforcement activities, and program administration.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Ordinance No. 916 – An Ordinance of the City of Sonora Amending the City of Sonora Municipal Code Adding Chapter 8.50 of Title 8 Regulating Tobacco Product Sales and Requiring the Licensure of Tobacco Retailers.
2. Resolution No. 05-18-2026-A Adopting a fee schedule for Tobacco Retail Licensing

CORE COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

Fiscal Responsibility and Stability, Infrastructure and Engineering, Public Safety and Disaster Preparedness, Economic Development/Growth and General Plan, Homelessness Issues, Staffing - Salary, Benefits, Training, and Retention

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SONORA REGULATING TOBACCO PRODUCT SALES, REQUIRING THE LICENSURE OF TOBACCO RETAILERS, AND AMENDING THE CITY OF SONORA MUNICIPAL CODE

The city council of the City of Sonora does ordain as follows:

8.50.000 – See Appendix A: Findings

8.50.010 – DEFINITIONS. The following words and phrases, whenever used in this chapter, shall have the meanings defined in this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

A. "Arm's Length Transaction" means a sale in good faith and for valuable consideration that reflects the fair market value between two informed and willing parties, neither of which is under any compulsion to participate in the transaction.
B. "Cannabis" has the meaning set forth in California Business and Professions Code Section 26001, as that section may be amended from time to time.
C. "Cannabis Product" has the meaning set forth in California Business and Professions Code Section 26001, as that section may be amended from time to time.
D. "Cannabis Retailer" means any retail establishment in which cannabis or cannabis products are sold or offered for sale to persons that do not hold a license to engage in commercial cannabis activity issued by the State of California in accordance with the Business and Professions Code Section 26000 et seq., as that section may be amended from time to time.
E. "Child-Resistant Packaging" means packaging that meets the definition set forth in Code of Federal Regulations, title 16, section 1700.15(b), as in effect on January 1, 2015, and was tested in accordance with the method described in Code of Federal Regulations, title 16, section 1700.20, as in effect on January 1, 2015.
F. "Cigar" means any roll of tobacco other than a cigarette wrapped entirely or in part in tobacco or any substance containing tobacco and weighing more than 4.5 pounds per thousand.
G. "Cigarette" means:
    1. any roll of tobacco wrapped in paper or in any substance not containing tobacco; and
    2. any roll of tobacco wrapped in any substance containing tobacco which, because of its appearance, the type of tobacco used in the filler, or its packaging and labeling, is likely to be offered to, or purchased by, consumers as a cigarette described herein.
H. "Compliance checks" means systems the department uses to investigate and ensure that tobacco retailers are following and complying with the requirements of this chapter. Compliance checks may involve the use of persons between the ages of 18 and 20 who purchase or attempt to purchase tobacco products. Compliance checks may also be conducted by the department or other units of government for

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educational, research, and training purposes or for investigating or enforcing federal, state, or local laws and regulations relating to tobacco products.

I. “Coupon” means any voucher, rebate, card, paper, note, form, statement, ticket, image, or other issue, whether in paper, digital, or other form, used for commercial purposes to obtain an article, product, service, or accommodation without charge or at a discounted price.

J. “Delivery sale” means the sale of any tobacco product to any person for personal consumption and not for resale when the sale is conducted by any means other than an in-person, over-the-counter sales transaction in a tobacco retail establishment. Delivery sale includes the sale of any tobacco product when the sale is conducted by telephone, other voice transmission, mail, the internet, or app-based service. Delivery sale includes delivery by licensees or third parties by any means, including curbside pick-up.

K. “Department” means the City of Sonora Police Department, the City of Sonora Code Enforcement, and any agency or person designated by the Department to enforce or administer the provisions of this chapter.

L. “Electronic smoking device” means any device that may be used to deliver any aerosolized or vaporized substance to the person inhaling from the device, including, but not limited to, an e-cigarette, e-cigar, e-pipe, vape pen, or e-hookah. Electronic smoking device includes any component, part, or accessory of the device, and also includes any substance that may be aerosolized or vaporized by such device, whether or not the substance contains nicotine. Electronic smoking device does not include drugs, devices, or combination products authorized for sale by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, as those terms are defined in the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.

M. “Flavored Tobacco Product” means any tobacco product that contains a taste or smell, other than the taste or smell of tobacco, that is distinguishable by an ordinary consumer either prior to, or during the consumption of, a tobacco product, including, but not limited to, any taste or smell relating to fruit, menthol, mint, wintergreen, chocolate, cocoa, vanilla, honey, molasses, or any candy, dessert, alcoholic beverage, herb, or spice.

N. “Full Retail Price” means the price listed for a tobacco product on its packaging or on any related shelving, advertising, or display where the tobacco product is sold or offered for sale, plus all applicable taxes and fees if such taxes and fees are not included in the listed price.

O. “Kratom product” means any or all parts of the plant Mitragyna speciosa that contains mitragynine or 7-hydroxymitragynine (also known as 7-OH or 7-Hydroxy), or any food product, food ingredient, dietary ingredient, dietary supplement, or beverage intended for human consumption that contains any part of the plant Mitragyna speciosa or any extract, synthetic alkaloid, or synthetically derived compound of such plant or its leaf including, but not limited to, any powder, capsule, pill, beverage, or other edible product intended for human consumption.

P. “Little Cigar” means any roll of tobacco other than a cigarette wrapped entirely or in part in tobacco or any substance containing tobacco and weighing no more than 4.5

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pounds per thousand. “Little Cigar” includes, but is not limited to, tobacco products known or labeled as small cigar, little cigar, or cigarillo.

Q. “Manufacturer” means any person, including any repacker or relabeler, who manufactures, fabricates, assembles, processes, or labels a tobacco product; or imports a finished tobacco product for sale or distribution into the United States.

R. “Moveable place of business” means any form of business that is operated out of a kiosk, truck, van, automobile or other type of vehicle or transportable shelter and not a fixed address store front or other permanent type of structure authorized for sales transactions.

S. "Nitrous oxide" means a colorless, nonflammable gas (N:O) sometimes used in aerosols and sometimes used as an anesthetic, which, when inhaled, produces loss of sensibility to pain, often preceded by exhilaration and laughter and used often as an anesthetic in dentistry. Nitrous oxide is oftentimes called "laughing gas."

T. "Nitrous oxide device" means any cartridge, compressed gas cylinder, apparatus, container, or other device intended or designed to be used to contain or dispense or administer nitrous oxide.

U. “Person” means any natural person, partnership, cooperative association, corporation, personal representative, receiver, trustee, assignee, or any other legal entity.

V. “Pharmacy” means any retail establishment in which the profession of pharmacy is practiced by a pharmacist licensed by the State of California in accordance with the Business and Professions Code and where prescription pharmaceuticals are offered for sale, regardless of whether the retail establishment sells other retail goods in addition to prescription pharmaceuticals.

W. “Proprietor” means a person with an ownership or managerial interest in a business. An ownership interest shall be deemed to exist when a person has a 10% or greater interest in the stock, assets, or income of a business other than the sole interest of security for debt. A managerial interest shall be deemed to exist when a person has or shares ultimate control over the day-to-day operations of a business.

X. “Recreation Facility” means an area, place, structure, or other facility that is used either permanently or temporarily for community recreation, even though it may be used for other purposes, and includes but is not limited to a gymnasium, playing court, playing field, and swimming pool.

Y. “Sale” or “Sell” means any transfer, exchange, barter, gift, offer for sale, or distribution for a commercial purpose, in any manner or by any means whatsoever.

Z. “Self-Service Display” means the open display or storage of tobacco products in a manner that is physically accessible in any way to the general public without the assistance of the retailer or employee of the retailer and a direct face-to-face transfer between the purchaser and the retailer or employee of the retailer. A vending machine is a form of self- service display.

AA. "Smoke shop/significant tobacco retailer" means any person or business for which the principal or core business is selling tobacco products, tobacco accessories, or both, as evidenced by any of the following: twenty percent (20%) or more of floor or display area is devoted to tobacco products, tobacco accessories, or both; or sixty

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percent (60%) or more of gross sales receipts are derived from the sale or exchange of tobacco products, tobacco accessories, or both; or fifty (50%) percent or more of completed sales transactions include tobacco products or tobacco accessories.

BB. "Smoking" means inhaling, exhaling, burning, or carrying any lighted or heated cigar, cigarette, or pipe, or any other lighted or heated product containing, made, or derived from nicotine, tobacco, marijuana, or other plant, whether natural or synthetic, that is intended for inhalation. "Smoking" includes using an electronic smoking device.

CC. "Tobacco Product" means:

1. any product containing, made of, or derived from tobacco or nicotine that is intended for human consumption or is likely to be consumed, whether inhaled, absorbed, or ingested by any other means, including but not limited to, a cigarette, a cigar, pipe tobacco, chewing tobacco, snuff, or snus;
2. any electronic smoking device and any substances that may be aerosolized or vaporized by such device, whether or not the substance contains nicotine; or
3. any component, part, or accessory of 1. Or 2., whether or not any of these contains tobacco or nicotine, including but not limited to filters, rolling papers, blunt or hemp wraps, hookahs, mouthpieces, and pipes.

"Tobacco product" does not mean drugs, devices, or combination products authorized for sale by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, as those terms are defined in the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.

DD. "Tobacco retailer" means any person or business that sells, offers for sale, or exchanges or offers to exchange for any form of consideration, tobacco products or tobacco paraphernalia. This definition includes both tobacco retailers-general (EE below) and smoke shops/significant tobacco retailers (AA above)..

EE. "Tobacco retailer-general" means any person or business that sells, offers for sale, or exchanges or offers to exchange for any form of consideration, tobacco products or tobacco paraphernalia, but for which the sale of such products is not the primary or core business. To qualify as a tobacco retailer-general, the establishment must not meet any of the criteria listed in AA above, which define a smoke shop/significant tobacco retailer. Examples of tobacco retailer-general licensees may include, but are not limited to: convenience stores, supermarkets, grocery stores, gas stations, or mini-marts.

FF. "Tobacco Retailing" means engaging in the activities of a tobacco retailer.

GG. "Youth-Oriented Facility" means a parcel in the city that is occupied by:

1. a private or public kindergarten, elementary, middle, junior high, or high school;
2. a library open to the public;
3. a playground open to the public;
4. a youth center, defined as a facility where children, ages 6 to 17, inclusive, come together for programs and activities;

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5. a recreation facility open to the public, defined as an area, place, structure, or other facility that is used either permanently or temporarily for community recreation, even though it may be used for other purposes;
6. a park open to the public or to all the residents of a private community;
7. a licensed child-care facility or preschool [other than a small-family day care home or a large-family day care home [as defined in California Health & Safety Code § 1596.78]];

8.50.020 – GENERAL REQUIREMENTS AND PROHIBITIONS.

A. TOBACCO RETAILER'S LICENSE REQUIRED. It shall be unlawful for any person to engage in tobacco retailing in the city without first obtaining and maintaining a valid tobacco retailer's license for each location at which tobacco retailing is to occur. Tobacco retailing without a valid tobacco retailer's license is a nuisance as a matter of law.
B. LAWFUL BUSINESS OPERATION. In the course of tobacco retailing or in the operation of the business or maintenance of the location for which a license issued, it shall be a violation of this chapter for a licensee, or any of the licensee's agents or employees, to violate any local, state, or federal law applicable to the sale of tobacco products.
C. SMOKING PROHIBITED. Smoking, including smoking for the purpose of sampling any tobacco product, is prohibited within the indoor area of any retail establishment licensed under this chapter. Smoking also prohibited outdoors within 25 feet of any retail establishment licensed under this chapter.
D. MINIMUM LEGAL SALES AGE. No person engaged in tobacco retailing shall sell a tobacco product to a person under 21 years of age.
E. DISPLAY OF LICENSE. Each tobacco retailer license shall be prominently displayed in a publicly visible location at the licensed location.
F. POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION REQUIRED FOR SALE. No person engaged in tobacco retailing shall sell a tobacco product to another person without first verifying by means of government- issued photographic identification that the recipient is at least 21 years of age.
G. SELF-SERVICE DISPLAYS PROHIBITED. Tobacco retailing by means of a self-service display is prohibited.
H. ON-SITE SALES. All sales of tobacco products shall be conducted in-person in the licensed location. It shall be a violation of this chapter for any tobacco retailer or any of the tobacco retailer's agents or employees to engage in the delivery sale of tobacco products or to knowingly or recklessly sell or provide tobacco products to any person that intends to engage in the delivery sale of the tobacco product in the city.
I. POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION REQUIRED FOR ENTRY: SMOKE SHOPS/SIGNIFICANT TOBACCO RETAILERS. No smoke shop/significant tobacco retailer shall allow the following individuals to enter its premises: (1) any individual who is younger than the minimum age established by state law for the purchase or possession of tobacco products; (2) any individual who appears to be under the age of twenty-seven (27)

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years, unless an examination of the individual's identification confirms that the individual is at least the minimum age under state law to purchase and possess tobacco products.

J. SECURITY MEASURES REQUIRED: SMOKE SHOPS/SIGNIFICANT TOBACCO RETAILERS. All smoke shops/significant tobacco retailers shall follow required security measures as specified on the license application. These measures shall include, but may not be limited to:
    1. The facility shall be alarmed with a monitored burglar alarm. The monitoring center shall be UL-listed. In addition to motion sensors, alarm components shall include contact points on all interior and exterior doors, windows capable of opening, motion sensors in each room of the facility, and glass break sensors on any external windows. The facility alarm shall be equipped with non-emergency notification technology that provides immediate notification of facility management of any system failures (e.g., power outage, sensor malfunction). The burglary alarm shall cause the alarm company to immediately notify the Sonora Police Department Communications Center.
    2. Recorded closed-circuit color video (CCTV) cameras shall be installed and employed to monitor all aspects of the facility. All areas of the facility accessible to patrons shall be equipped with video monitors in a visible location where patrons can clearly see that their activities are being monitored.
    3. Any rear door used to admit employees or deliveries shall be equipped with a 180-degree viewing device.
    4. Height markers that display height measurements are required on the interior of the business, at a minimum, located at entrances and exits.
    5. The patron entrance shall be equipped with signage prohibiting hats and hoods that conceal patrons' facial features.

K. NITROUS OXIDE. It shall be unlawful for an establishment designated as a tobacco retailer-general to sell, offer, distribute, or otherwise provide to any person nitrous oxide or a nitrous oxide device. For tobacco retailer-general licensees only, this section shall not apply to:
    1. The administration of nitrous oxide by a medical or dental practitioner licensed by the state or at the direction or under the supervision of a practitioner licensed by the state for the purpose of providing medical or dental care;
    2. The sale or distribution of nitrous oxide as a propellant in food products such as whipped cream by commercial edible food generators, as defined in the City of Sonora Municipal Code Section 7.08.100;
    3. The sale or distribution of nitrous oxide by a wholesaler licensed by the Board of Pharmacy or manufacturer classified under Code Number 325120 or 424690 of the North American Industry Classification system (NAICS); or
    4. Any other sale or distribution under an express exemption pursuant to Penal Code sections 381b through 381e.

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It shall be unlawful for a an establishment designated as a smoke shop/significant tobacco retailer to sell, offer, distribute, or otherwise provide to any person nitrous oxide or a nitrous oxide device. No exceptions or conditions apply to smoke shop/significant tobacco retailer licensees.

L. KRATOM PRODUCTS. It shall be unlawful for a tobacco retailer to sell, offer, distribute, or otherwise provide to any person a kratom product, as defined in Section 8.50.010.

8.50.030 – SALE OF FLAVORED TOBACCO PRODUCTS PROHIBITED.

A. FLAVORED TOBACCO PRODUCT SALES PROHIBITED. It shall be unlawful for any tobacco retailer to sell any flavored tobacco product.
B. PRESUMPTIVE FLAVORED TOBACCO PRODUCT. A public statement or claim made or disseminated by the manufacturer of a tobacco product, or by any person authorized or permitted by the manufacturer to make or disseminate public statements concerning such tobacco product, that such tobacco product has a taste or smell other than tobacco shall constitute presumptive evidence that the tobacco product is a flavored tobacco product.

8.50.040 – TOBACCO PRODUCT PRICING AND PACKAGING.

A. PACKAGING AND LABELING. No tobacco retailer shall sell any tobacco product to any consumer unless the tobacco product:
    1. is sold in the manufacturer's packaging intended for sale to consumers;
    2. conforms to all applicable federal labeling requirements; and
    3. conforms to all applicable child-resistant packaging requirements.
B. DISPLAY OF PRICE. The price of each tobacco product offered for sale shall be clearly and conspicuously displayed on the tobacco product or on any related shelving, posting, advertising, or display at the location where the item is sold or offered for sale.
C. DISTRIBUTION OF TOBACCO SAMPLES OR PROMOTIONAL ITEMS. It is unlawful for any person to distribute free or nominally priced tobacco products.
D. PROHIBITION OF TOBACCO COUPONS AND DISCOUNTS. No tobacco retailer shall:
    1. honor or redeem, or offer to honor or redeem, a coupon to allow a consumer to purchase a tobacco product for less than the full retail price;
    2. sell any tobacco product to a consumer through a multiple-package discount or otherwise provide any such product to a consumer for less than the full retail price in consideration for the purchase of any tobacco product or any other item; or
    3. provide any free or discounted item to a consumer in consideration for the purchase of any tobacco product.
E. MINIMUM PACKAGE SIZE FOR LITTLE CIGARS. No tobacco retailer shall sell any little cigar unless it is sold in a package of at least 5 little cigars.

8.50.050 – LIMITS ON ELIGIBILITY FOR A TOBACCO RETAILER LICENSE.

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A. MOBILE VENDING. No license may issue to authorize tobacco retailing at other than a fixed location. No tobacco retail license will be issued to a moveable place of business.
B. LICENSED CANNABIS BUSINESSES. No license may issue, and no existing license may be renewed, to authorize tobacco retailing at a location licensed for commercial cannabis activity by the State of California under Business and Professions Code Division 10.
C. PHARMACIES. No license may issue, and no existing license may be renewed, to authorize tobacco retailing in a pharmacy.
D. PROXIMITY TO YOUTH-ORIENTED FACILITIES. No new license may issue to authorize tobacco retailing within 1000 feet of a youth- oriented facility as measured by a straight line from the nearest point of the property line of the parcel on which the youth-oriented facility is located to the nearest point of the property line of the parcel on which the applicant's business is located.
    1. Additionally, no new license may issue to authorize operation of a smoke shop/significant tobacco retailer within 600 feet of a youth- oriented facility as measured by a straight line from the nearest point of the property line of the parcel on which the youth-oriented facility is located to the nearest point of the property line of the parcel on which the applicant's business is located.
E. PROXIMITY TO OTHER TOBACCO RETAILERS. No new license may issue to authorize a smoke shop/significant tobacco retailer within 1000 feet of a tobacco retailer location already licensed pursuant to this chapter as measured by a straight line from the nearest point of the property line of the parcel on which the applicant's business is located to the nearest point of the property line of the parcel on which an existing licensee's business is located.
F. PROXIMITY TO CANNABIS RETAILERS. No new license may issue to authorize tobacco retailing within 1000 feet of an existing cannabis retailer as measured by a straight line from the nearest point of the property line of the parcel on which the applicant's business is located to the nearest point of the property line of the parcel on which an existing cannabis retailer is located.
G. POPULATION AND DENSITY. The issuing of tobacco retailer licenses is limited as follows:
    1. The total number of tobacco retailer licenses issued to significant tobacco retailers within the city shall be limited to one for each 1,650 inhabitants of the city.
    2. For the purposes of this subsection, the total population of the city/county shall be determined by the most current published total available from the U.S. Census Bureau or the California State Department of Finance, whichever has been more recently updated, as of the date the license application is filed. For purposes of calculating the limit established by this subsection, a fraction of .5 or more shall be rounded up to the next whole number. A fractional amount of less than .5 shall be rounded down to the next whole number.

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3. No new license may issue to authorize tobacco retailing if the number of tobacco retailer licenses already issued to smoke shops/significant tobacco retailers equals or exceeds the total number authorized pursuant to subsection (1).

8.50.060 – APPLICATION PROCEDURE.

A. An application for a tobacco retailer's license shall be submitted in the name of each proprietor proposing to conduct retail tobacco sales and shall be signed by each proprietor or an authorized agent thereof. All applications shall be submitted on a form supplied by the Department.
B. A license issued contrary to this chapter, contrary to any other law, or on the basis of false or misleading information shall be revoked pursuant to Sec. 8.50.130(C) of this chapter. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to vest in any person obtaining and maintaining a tobacco retailer's license any status or right to act as a tobacco retailer in contravention of any provision of law.
C. Applicant submissions shall contain the following information:
    1. The name, address, and telephone number of each proprietor of the business seeking a license.
    2. The business name, address, and telephone number of the location for which a license is sought.
    3. The name and mailing address authorized by each proprietor to receive all communications and notices required by, authorized by, or convenient to the enforcement of this chapter.
    4. Proof that the location for which a tobacco retailer's license is sought has been issued all necessary state licenses for the sale of tobacco products.
    5. Whether or not any proprietor or any agent of the proprietor has admitted violating, or has been found to have violated, this chapter or any other local, state, or federal law governing the sale of tobacco products and, if so, the dates and locations of all such violations within the previous five years.
    6. A signed affidavit affirming that the proprietor has not sold and will not sell any tobacco product without a license required by this chapter.
    7. Such other information as the Department deems necessary for the administration or enforcement of this chapter as specified on the application form required by this section.
D. A licensed tobacco retailer shall inform the Department in writing of any change in the information submitted on an application for a tobacco retailer's license within 10 business days of a change.

8.50.070 – LICENSE ISSUANCE OR DENIAL.

A. ISSUANCE OF LICENSE. Upon the receipt of a complete and adequate application for a tobacco retailer's license and the license fee required by this chapter, the Department may approve or deny the application for a license within six working days, or it may delay action for a reasonable period of time to complete any investigation of the application or the applicant deemed necessary.

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B. DENIAL OF APPLICATION. The department may deny an application for a tobacco retailer's license based on any of the following:
    1. The information presented in the application is inaccurate or false. Intentionally supplying inaccurate or false information shall be a violation of this chapter;
    2. The application seeks authorization for tobacco retailing at a location for which this chapter prohibits a licensed to be issued;
    3. The application seeks authorization for tobacco retailing for a proprietor to whom this chapter prohibits a license to be issued; or
    4. The application seeks authorization for tobacco retailing in a manner that is prohibited pursuant to this chapter, that is unlawful pursuant to any other chapter of this Code, or that is unlawful pursuant to any other law.
    5. The application seeks authorization for tobacco retailing at a business location for which the business is lacking a current Business License pursuant to the City of Sonora Municipal Code Section 5.10.
    6. Any other any other suitable reason the granting of a license to the applicant is not consistent with the public health and welfare, including the applicant's history of noncompliance with this chapter and other laws relating to the sale of tobacco products.
C. APPEAL OF ISSUANCE OR DENIAL. Any person aggrieved by any decision of the department with respect to the issuance or refusal to issue a tobacco retailer's license may appeal to the council by filing a notice of appeal with the city administrator. The council shall thereupon fix a time and place for hearing such appeal. The city administrator or designee shall give notice to such person of the time and place of hearing by sending notice by certified mail. The council shall have the authority to determine all questions raised on such appeal. No such determination shall conflict with any substantive provision of this text. The council shall make findings, thereon, which shall be final.
D. Proration of fees for a tobacco retail license will be as follows: If a retailer applies for a tobacco retail license during the first half of the calendar year (January 1 through June 30), said retailer will be charged for a full calendar year. If the retailer applies for a tobacco retail license during the second half of the calendar year (July 1 through December 31), said business will be charged for half a calendar year.
E. The only exception to paragraph D shall be those retailers which apply for a tobacco retail license during the month of December. A retailer will not be required to obtain a current calendar year's tobacco retail license, if, they pay for the following year's license during December of the current year. If said retailer does not elect to pay for the following year, said retailer will pay for half a calendar year, covering the tobacco retail license for the current year.

8.50.080 – LICENSE RENEWAL AND EXPIRATION.

A. RENEWAL OF LICENSE. A tobacco retailer's license is invalid if the appropriate fee has not been timely paid in full or if the term of the license has expired. The term of a tobacco retailer license is 1 year. Each tobacco retailer shall apply for the renewal of

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their tobacco retailer's license by December 1 of each year, on a form supplied by the department. The completed form and payment shall be due to the City by the following January 1, with said payment being delinquent if not received by January 31 of said year. A retailer that fails to timely submit a renewal application and fee is ineligible for license renewal and must submit a new application pursuant to Section 8.50.060.

8.50.090 – LICENSES NOT TRANSFERABLE, PAST VIOLATIONS AT RETAIL LOCATION.

A. LICENSES NOT TRANSFERRABLE. A tobacco retailer's license may not be transferred from one person to another or from one location to another. A new tobacco retailer's license is required whenever a tobacco retailing location has a change in proprietors.
B. PAST VIOLATIONS. Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, prior violations at a location shall continue to be counted against a location and license ineligibility periods shall continue to apply to a location unless:
    1. the location has been transferred to new proprietor(s) in an arm's length transaction; and
    2. the new proprietor(s) provide the city with clear and convincing evidence that the new proprietor(s) have acquired the location in an arm's length transaction.

8.50.100 –LICENSE CONVEYS A LIMITED, CONDITIONAL PRIVILEGE.

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to grant any person obtaining and maintaining a tobacco retailer's license any status or right other than the limited conditional privilege to act as a tobacco retailer at the location in the City identified on the face of the permit. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to render inapplicable, supersede, or apply in lieu of, any other provision of applicable law.

8.50.110 – FEE FOR LICENSE AND INCREASE IN FEES.

A. FEE FOR LICENSE. The fee to issue or to renew a tobacco retailer's license shall be calculated so as to recover the total cost of administration and enforcement of this chapter, including, but not limited to, issuing a license, administering the license program, retailer education, retailer inspection and compliance checks, documentation of violations, and prosecution of violators, but shall not exceed the cost of the regulatory program authorized by this chapter. All fees and interest upon proceeds of fees shall be used exclusively to fund the program. Fees are nonrefundable except as may be required by law.

B. INCREASE IN FEES. The fee to issue or to renew a tobacco retailer's license shall be established or amended by resolution of the city council.

8.50.120 – COMPLIANCE MONITORING.

A. Compliance with this chapter shall be monitored by the Department. In addition, the City may designate additional persons to monitor compliance with this chapter.

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All licensed premises must be open to inspection by city staff or designated persons during regular business hours.

B. The Department shall inspect each tobacco retailer at least 1 time per 12-month period to ensure compliance with this chapter.
C. The city will conduct at least 1 compliance check per 24-month period that involves the participation of persons between the ages of 18 and 20 to enter licensed premises to attempt to purchase tobacco products.
D. Nothing in this section shall create a right of action in any licensee or other person against the city or its agents.

8.50.130 – SUSPENSION OR REVOCATION OF LICENSE.

A. SUSPENSION OR REVOCATION OF LICENSE FOR VIOLATION. In addition to any other penalty authorized by law, a tobacco retailer's license shall be suspended or revoked if the Department finds, based on a preponderance of the evidence, after the licensee is afforded notice and an opportunity to be heard, that the licensee, or any of the licensee's agents or employees, have violated any of the requirements, conditions, or prohibitions of this chapter; such violation is determined by any court of competent jurisdiction; or the licensee has pleaded guilty, "no contest" or its equivalent, or admitted to a violation of any law designated in Section 8.50.020 above.
    1. Upon a finding by the Department of a first violation of this chapter at a location, the license shall be suspended for 30 days.
    2. Upon a finding by the Department of a second violation of this chapter at a location within any 5-year period, the license shall be suspended for 90 days.
    3. Upon a finding by the Department of a third violation of this chapter at a location within any 5-year period, the license shall be suspended for 1 year.
    4. Upon a finding by the Department of four or more violations of this chapter at a location within any 5-year period, the license shall be revoked.
B. APPEAL OF SUSPENSION OR REVOCATION. Any person aggrieved by any decision of the department with respect to the suspension or revocation of a tobacco retailer's license may appeal to the council by filing a notice of appeal with the city administrator. The council shall thereupon fix a time and place for hearing such appeal. The city administrator or designee shall give notice to such person of the time and place of hearing by sending notice by certified mail. The council shall have the authority to determine all questions raised on such appeal. No such determination shall conflict with any substantive provision of this text. The council shall make findings, thereon, which shall be final. An appeal is not available for a revocation made pursuant to subsection (c) below.
C. REVOCATION OF LICENSE WRONGLY ISSUED. A tobacco retailer's license shall be revoked if the Department finds, after the licensee is afforded notice and an opportunity to be heard, that one or more of the bases for denial of a license under Section 8.50.070 existed at the time application was made or at any time before the license issued. The decision by the Department shall be the final decision of the city.

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8.50.140 – TOBACCO RETAILING WITHOUT A VALID LICENSE.

A. INELIGIBLE FOR LICENSE. In addition to any other penalty authorized by law, if the Department finds, or if a court of competent jurisdiction determines, based on a preponderance of evidence after notice and an opportunity to be heard, that any person has engaged in tobacco retailing at a location without a valid tobacco retailer's license, either directly or through the person's agents or employees, the person shall be ineligible to apply for, or to be issued, a tobacco retailer's license as follows:
    1. After a first violation of this section at a location, no new license may issue for the person or the location (unless ownership of the business at the location has been transferred in an arm's length transaction), until 30 days have passed from the date of the violation.
    2. After a second violation of this section at a location within any 5-year period, no new license may issue for the person or the location (unless ownership of the business at the location has been transferred in an arm's length transaction), until 90 days have passed from the date of the violation.
    3. After of a third or subsequent violation of this section at a location within any 5 year period, no new license may issue for the person or the location (unless ownership of the business at the location has been transferred in an arm's length transaction), until 5 years have passed from the date of the violation.
B. ADMINISTRATIVE FINE FOR UNLICENSED TOBACCO RETAILER. In addition to any other penalty authorized by law, a Licensee shall pay a fine if the Licensee or Licensee's agents or employees violate any of the requirements, conditions, or prohibitions of this Chapter. The amount of the administrative fine for each violation of this Chapter shall be as follows:
    1. A fine not to exceed two thousand five hundred dollars ($2,500.00) for each violation identified during the first instance in which the tobacco retailer has committed a violation or violations.
    2. A fine not to exceed five thousand dollars ($5,000.00) for each violation identified during a subsequent instance if the tobacco retailer has committed a previous violation or violations within a 60-month period.
    3. A fine not to exceed ten thousand dollars ($10,000.00) for each violation identified during a subsequent instance if the tobacco retailer has twice committed a previous violation or violations within a sixty-month period.

8.50.150 – ADDITIONAL REMEDIES.

A. The remedies provided by this chapter are cumulative and in addition to any other remedies available at law or in equity.
B. Whenever evidence of a violation of this chapter is obtained in any part through the participation of a person under the age of 18 years, such a person shall not be required to appear or give testimony in any civil or administrative process brought to enforce this chapter and the alleged violation shall be adjudicated based upon the sufficiency and persuasiveness of the evidence presented.

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C. Violations of this chapter shall be subject to an administrative penalty. The amount of the administrative penalty shall be fifty dollars ($50.00) for the first offense, one hundred dollars ($100.00) for the second offense, and two hundred fifty dollars (250.00) for any subsequent offense.
D. Any person who or which violates any of the provisions of this chapter is guilty of a misdemeanor, under Section 594 of the California Penal Code and shall, upon conviction thereof, be punished by a fine of not to exceed one thousand dollars, or by imprisonment in the county jail for a period not to exceed six months, or by both such fine and imprisonment.
E. Violations of this chapter are hereby declared to be public nuisances.
F. In addition to other remedies provided by this chapter or by other law, any violation of this chapter may be remedied by a civil action brought by the city attorney, including administrative or judicial nuisance abatement proceedings, civil code enforcement proceedings, and suits for injunctive relief.
G. Upon inspection and determination by the Department that a product offered for sale is in violation of this chapter, the tobacco retailer shall immediately remove all such prohibited products from the retail premises. Removal requires that the violating products be taken off store shelves, out of any area accessible to the public, and removed from the retailer's inventory to an off-site location or destroyed by the retailer. Failure to comply with an immediate removal request constitutes a separate and distinct violation for each 24-hour period of non-compliance. The decision by the Department may be appealed pursuant to the procedures set forth in Section 8.50.130(b). Prohibited products shall be destroyed and properly disposed of at the cost of the seller after all internal appeals have been exhausted and the time in which to seek judicial review pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure section 1094.6 or other applicable law has expired without the filing of a lawsuit or, if such a suit is filed, after judgment in that suit becomes final.
H. For the purposes of the civil remedies provided in this chapter:
    1. Each day on which a tobacco product is distributed, sold, or offered for sale in violation of this chapter shall constitute a separate violation of this chapter; and
    2. Each individual tobacco product that is distributed, sold, or offered for sale in violation of this chapter shall constitute a separate violation of this chapter.
I. All tobacco retailers are responsible for the actions of their employees relating to the sale, offer to sell, and furnishing of tobacco products at the retail location. The sale of any tobacco product by an employee shall be considered an act of the tobacco retailer.

8.50.160 – EXCEPTIONS.

A. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to penalize the purchase, use, or possession of a tobacco product by any person not engaged in tobacco retailing.

8.50.170 – CONSTRUCTION & SEVERABILITY.

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It is the intent of the city council of the City of Sonora to supplement applicable state and federal law and not to duplicate or contradict such law and this ordinance shall be construed consistently with that intention. If any section, subsection, subdivision, paragraph, sentence, clause, or phrase of this chapter, or its application to any person or circumstance, is for any reason held to be invalid or unenforceable, such invalidity or unenforceability shall not affect the validity or enforceability of the remaining sections, subsections, subdivisions, paragraphs, sentences, clauses, or phrases of this chapter, or its application to any other person or circumstance. The city council of the City of Sonora hereby declares that it would have adopted each section, subsection, subdivision, paragraph, sentence, clause, or phrase hereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more other sections, subsections, subdivisions, paragraphs, sentences, clauses or phrases hereof be declared invalid or unenforceable.

Sec. 8.50.180 – PUBLIC RECORDS.
All information provided to the Department by a licensee or license applicant pursuant to this chapter shall be subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act (California Government Code section 6250 et seq.) or any other applicable law.

SECTION III. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after 30 days after date of enactment; provided, however, that Sections 8.50.000-8.50.180 shall not take effect until 6 months after date of enactment.

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Appendix A: Findings.

The city council of the city of Sonora hereby finds and declares as follows:

WHEREAS, the city council finds that a local licensing system for tobacco retailers is appropriate to ensure that retailers comply with tobacco control laws and business standards of the city council, to protect the health, safety, and welfare of our residents;

WHEREAS, approximately 480,000 people die in the United States from smoking-related diseases and exposure to secondhand smoke every year, making tobacco use the nation's leading cause of preventable death;[2]

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that tobacco kills 8 million people and causes over 1.4 trillion dollars in economic damage each year;[136]

WHEREAS, 5.6 million of today's Americans who are younger than 18 years of age are projected to die prematurely from a smoking-related illness;[2]

WHEREAS, tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable death in California137 and continues to be an urgent public health issue, as evidenced by the following:

- 40,000 California adults die from their own smoking annually;[1]
- More than 25% of all adult cancer deaths in California are attributable to smoking;[138]
- Smoking costs California $13.29 billion in annual health care expenses, $3.58 billion in Medicaid costs caused by smoking, and $10.35 billion in smoking-caused productivity losses;[139]
- Tobacco use can cause disease in nearly all of the organs of the body and is responsible for 87% of lung cancer deaths, 32% of coronary heart disease deaths, and 79% of all cases of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in the United States;[2]

WHEREAS, tobacco use among priority populations in California contributes to health disparities and creates significant barriers to health equity, as evidenced by the following:

- African American (20.4%), Asian or Pacific Islander (11.4%), and Hispanic (15.2%) males all report a higher smoking prevalence than the statewide average among all adults (11.0%);[9]
- American Indian/Alaska Native Californians have the highest smoking prevalence (19.1%) among all reported adult demographic populations;[9]
- Smoking is more prevalent among rural (14.9%) compared to urban (10.6%) Californians;[9]
- Californians with the highest levels of educational attainment and annual household income have the lowest smoking prevalence;[9]
- Adults who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender report smoking at a higher rate (17.4%) than the statewide average (11.0%);[9]
- Those who reported experiencing psychological distress in the past month smoke at rates (26.7%) higher than the statewide average (11.0%);[9]

WHEREAS, despite the state's efforts to limit youth access to tobacco, youth are still able to access tobacco products, as evidenced by the following:

- In California, research indicates over 67% of current and former adult smokers started by the age of 18 and almost 100% start by age 26;[140]

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- In California, from 2017 to 2018, approximately 13% of high school students reported using tobacco;[9]
- Disparities in tobacco use exist among California high school students, with higher rates found among LGBTQ, American Indian, and Pacific Islander youth;[9]
- Unless smoking rates decline, an estimated 441,000 of all California youth who are alive today will die prematurely from smoking-related diseases;[2]
- In 2017, 22.8% of high school students in California had tried cigarette smoking;[141]
- Between 2014 and 2018, electronic smoking device use among California youth increased from 14.1% to 46.2%;[8]

WHEREAS, the tobacco industry encourages youth and young adult tobacco initiation through predatory targeting,11 as evidenced by the following:

- Tobacco companies target young adults ages 18 to 24 to increase their frequency of tobacco use and encourage their transition to habitual users;[66]
- Tobacco industry documents state that if "a man has never smoked by the age of 18, the odds are three-to-one he never will. By age 24, the odds are twenty-to-one";[142]
- The tobacco industry spends an estimated $496 million annually to market tobacco products to California residents;[139]

WHEREAS, California retailers continue to sell tobacco to underage consumers, evidenced by the following:

- 9.3% of high school students in California reported buying their own electronic cigarette from a store;[141]
- 19.1% of California tobacco retailers unlawfully sold tobacco products to underage persons in 2018;[9]

WHEREAS, requiring tobacco retailers to obtain a tobacco retailer license will not unduly burden legitimate business activities of retailers who sell tobacco products to adults but will, however, allow the city council to regulate the operation of lawful businesses to discourage violations of federal, state, and local tobacco control and youth tobacco access laws, as evidenced by the following:

- Tobacco products are the number one seller in U.S. convenience stores, and in 2018, they generated an average of $523,084 in sales per store;[143]
- Systematic scientific reviews indicate that merchant compliance with youth tobacco sales laws reduces the rate of tobacco use among adolescents;[26,27]
- Studies found increased retailer compliance and reduced tobacco sales to youth following implementation and active enforcement of youth tobacco sales laws paired with penalties for violations;[144,145]
- A review of 41 California communities with strong tobacco retailer licensing ordinances found that youth sales rates declined in 40 of these communities after the ordinances were enacted, with an average 69% decrease in the youth sales rate;[25]

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WHEREAS, the federal Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act ("Tobacco Control Act"), enacted in 2009, prohibited candy- and fruit-flavored cigarettes,[28] largely because these flavored products are marketed to youth and young adults,[26,35,145] and younger smokers were more likely than older smokers to have tried these products;[26]

WHEREAS, neither federal nor California state laws restrict the sale of menthol cigarettes or flavored non-cigarette tobacco products, such as cigars, cigarillos, smokeless tobacco, hookah tobacco, electronic smoking devices, and the solutions used in these devices;

WHEREAS, in 2018, more than 86% of tobacco retailers in California sold flavored non-cigarette tobacco products, over 91% of tobacco retailers sold menthol cigarettes,[80] and, as of 2016, 8 out of 10 tobacco retailers near schools sold flavored non-cigarette tobacco products;[147]

WHEREAS, flavored tobacco products are used by the majority of youth and young adult tobacco users (86.4% and 57.7%, respectively) in California;[9]

WHEREAS, mentholated and flavored products have been shown to be "starter" products for youth who begin using tobacco[26,148,149] and that these products help establish tobacco habits that can lead to long-term addiction;[26,150,151]

WHEREAS, between 2004 and 2014, use of non-menthol cigarettes decreased among all populations, but overall use of menthol cigarettes increased among young adults (ages 18 to 25) and adults (ages 26+);[30]

WHEREAS, flavored tobacco has significant public health implications for youth and people of color as a result of targeted industry marketing strategies and product manipulation;[11,26,152,153]

WHEREAS, a review of advertising, promotions, and pack prices near California high schools found that "for each 10 percentage point increase in the proportion of Black students, the proportion of menthol advertising increased by 5.9% … the odds of a Newport [a leading brand of mentholated cigarettes] promotion were 50% higher … and the cost of Newport was 12 cents lower." There was no such association found for non-mentholated cigarettes;[154]

WHEREAS, scientific reviews by the FDA and the Tobacco Products Scientific Advisory Committee ("TPSAC") found marketing of menthol cigarettes likely increases the prevalence of smoking among the entire population, but especially among youth, African Americans,[33] and possibly Hispanic and Latino individuals;[34] and that menthol cigarettes are associated with increased initiation and progression to regular cigarette smoking, increased dependence on cigarettes, and reduced success in smoking cessation, especially among African American menthol smokers;[33]

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WHEREAS, research indicates that the FDA ban in 2009 on all flavored cigarette products (except menthol) led to a 6% decrease in youth tobacco use and a 17% decrease in the likelihood of a youth becoming a cigarette smoker;[155]

WHEREAS, studies indicate that laws prohibiting the sale of flavored tobacco products lead to decreases in youth tobacco use, as evidenced by the following:

- An evaluation of New York City's law, which prohibits the sale of all flavored tobacco, excluding menthol, indicated that as a result of the law, youth had 37% lower odds of ever trying flavored tobacco products and 28% lower odds of ever using any type of tobacco;[156]
- An evaluation of a law in Providence, Rhode Island, which prohibits the sale of all flavored tobacco, excluding menthol, indicated that as a result of the law, current use of any tobacco product among high school youth declined from 22% to 12% and e-cigarette use declined from 13.3% to 6.6%, even as statewide e-cigarette use among high school increased to more than 20%;[157]

WHEREAS, the health effects of non-cigarette tobacco products such as cigars, cigarillos, smokeless tobacco, and shisha are substantial as demonstrated by research that shows that non-cigarette tobacco products have addictive levels of nicotine, harmful toxins, and dangerous carcinogens;[158-164]

WHEREAS, unlike cigarette use that has steadily declined among youth, the prevalence of the use of non-cigarette tobacco products has increased among California youth;[9]

WHEREAS, the availability of inexpensive tobacco products leads to increased tobacco use as evidenced by more than 100 academic studies that conclusively show that when tobacco products are made more expensive, fewer people use tobacco, fewer initiate tobacco use, and more people quit tobacco use;[2,48-51,53-58]

WHEREAS, research has also consistently shown that increases in cigarettes prices will result in less smoking across various sociodemographic populations;[165]

WHEREAS, a systematic review by the U.S. Community Preventive Services Task Force found that a 20% price increase would reduce demand for cigarettes by approximately 10.4%, the prevalence of adult tobacco use by 3.6%, and initiation of tobacco use by young people by 8.6%;[49]
WHEREAS, unequal price increases across different types of tobacco products lead to substitution from one product to another;[56,58]

WHEREAS, youth are particularly responsive to changes in tobacco prices,[26,52,54,166] and evidence suggests that tobacco companies deliberately target youth with price reductions;[26,51,64-66,167]

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WHEREAS, evidence also suggests that cigarettes are cheaper in neighborhoods with lower household incomes,[118,168] Newport menthol cigarettes cost less in areas with higher proportions of African Americans,[118] and underserved communities are targeted with price discounts and coupons;[169-171]

WHEREAS, tobacco companies spend considerably to decrease the price of their products in order to counter state and local tobacco control efforts, appeal to price-sensitive consumers, and increase demand for tobacco products. For example, tobacco companies spent the majority of their cigarette marketing budgets on price discounts, accounting for nearly $6.2 billion of $8.6 billion advertising and promotional expenditures in 2018; [50,51,62]

WHEREAS, the tobacco industry's price discounting strategies, such as coupons and multiple- package discounts, are popular among consumers, with more than half of adults using some price minimization strategy.[70] Coupon receipt and redemption appears more prevalent among white, younger, female, sexual minority, and more nicotine dependent smokers.[172] In California, individuals who used price minimization strategies saved an average $1.04 per pack (or 18.6% off the total) in 2010;[70]

WHEREAS, price-discounted sales account for a substantial proportion of overall tobacco product sales;[63]

WHEREAS, although federal and state law ban the sale of individual cigarettes,[78,173] neither federal nor California state laws restrict the sale of individual little cigars and cigars;

WHEREAS, many retailers sell little cigars and cigars individually, making them more affordable and appealing to youth.[79] Additionally:

- 78.3% of California tobacco retailers sell a popular brand of youth-friendly cigars for less than $1.00;[79]
- Between 2012 and 2016, annual sales of cigarillos increased by 78% overall and by 155% for "concept-flavored" (e.g., Jazz) cigarillos;[174]

WHEREAS, a 10% increase in cigar prices has been associated with decreased cigar sales[175,176] and may significantly reduce cigar use among youth;[177]

WHEREAS, neither federal nor California state laws set a minimum price for tobacco products;

WHEREAS, minimum price markups and related laws in other states have been shown to be effective at increasing the price of cigarettes but may remain vulnerable to price manipulation by the tobacco industry without attention to coupons and discounts;[82]

WHEREAS, studies have estimated that if price discounts were prohibited across the United States, the number of people who smoke would decrease by more than 13%;[68] the impact of a $10 federal minimum floor price for cigarettes could reduce the number of

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packs sold in the United States by 5.7 billion per year and prompt more than 10 million smokers to quit;[55] and that a state-level minimum floor price law designed to raise the average price of cigarette packs by just under $2.00 could decrease the prevalence of cigarette use and consumption by more than 4% and reduce income-based smoking disparities in California;[86]

WHEREAS, by selling tobacco products, pharmacies reinforce positive social perceptions of smoking, convey tacit approval of tobacco use, and send a message that it is not so dangerous to smoke;[178,179]

WHEREAS, pharmacies sell cigarettes cheaper than other stores118 and advertise tobacco product discounts more than other stores in California;[80]

WHEREAS, tobacco-free pharmacy sales policies decrease the availability of tobacco products by reducing tobacco retailer density by up to three times compared with communities that do not have such policies,[119] and immediately after the nationwide CVS policy change to not sell tobacco products, cigarette purchases declined and smokers who had previously purchased their cigarettes exclusively at CVS were up to twice as likely to stop buying cigarettes entirely;[120]

WHEREAS, research indicates that the density and proximity of tobacco retailers increase smoking behaviors, including number of cigarettes smoked per day,[90] particularly in neighborhoods experiencing poverty;[90,180-182]

WHEREAS, the density of tobacco retailers near adolescents' homes has been associated with increased youth smoking rates[101] and initiation of noncigarette tobacco product use;[183]

WHEREAS, adults who smoke are likely to have a harder time quitting when residential proximity to tobacco retailers is closer[107] and density is higher;[184-186]

WHEREAS, tobacco retailers are more prevalent in underserved communities, especially in neighborhoods with a higher proportion of African American or Hispanic residents;[93-98]

WHEREAS, tobacco retailer density is higher in urban compared to rural areas, except for low- income communities, which have higher tobacco retailer densities regardless of geography, and Hispanic communities, which are associated with variable retailer densities across geography;[97,187]

WHEREAS, policies to reduce tobacco retailer density have been shown to be effective[103,104,188,189] and can reduce or eliminate inequities in the location and distribution of tobacco retailers;[103,104]

WHEREAS, six out of 10 tobacco retailers in California sold cigar products using cannabis-related flavor descriptors and these retailers were more prevalent in school neighborhoods with lower median income;[190]

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WHEREAS, both youth and adult tobacco users are more likely to also use cannabis;[191,192]

WHEREAS, strict enforcement of policies prohibiting retail sales of cigarettes to youth, sales of cigarettes via vending machines, and other means through which youth gain access to tobacco in the commercial settings can limit their opportunities to obtain these products;[26,27]

WHEREAS, strong policy enforcement and monitoring of retailer compliance with tobacco control policies (e.g., requiring identification checks) is necessary to achieve reductions in youth tobacco sales;[193,194]

WHEREAS, the Institute of Medicine recognizes that retailers are not likely to comply with youth tobacco access laws unless such laws are actively enforced through retailer compliance checks paired with meaningful penalties on business owners for violations;[195]

WHEREAS, state law explicitly permits cities and counties to enact local tobacco retail licensing ordinances, and allows for the suspension or revocation of a local license for a violation of any state tobacco control law (Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 22971.3);

WHEREAS, California courts have affirmed the power of the city council to regulate business activity to discourage violations of law. See, e.g., Cohen v. Board of Supervisors, 40 Cal. 3d 277 (1985); Bravo Vending v. City of Rancho Mirage, 16 Cal. App. 4th 383 (1993); Prime Gas, Inc. v. City of Sacramento, 184 Cal. App. 4th 697 (2010);

WHEREAS, over 180 cities and counties in California have passed tobacco retailer licensing ordinances in an effort to stop youth from using tobacco;[9]

WHEREAS, the city council has a substantial interest in protecting youth and underserved populations from the harms of tobacco use; and

WHEREAS, the city council finds that a local licensing system for tobacco retailers is appropriate to ensure that retailers comply with tobacco control laws and business standards of the City of Sonora in order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of our residents;

NOW THEREFORE, it is the intent of the city council, in enacting this ordinance, to ensure compliance with the business standards and practices of the city and to encourage responsible tobacco retailing and to discourage violations of tobacco-related laws, especially those which prohibit or discourage the sale or distribution of tobacco products to youth, but not to expand or reduce the degree to which the acts regulated by federal or state law are criminally proscribed or to alter the penalties provided therein.

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Resolution Number 05-18-2026-A

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE CITY OF SONORA TOBACCO RETAIL LICENSING APPLICATION FEE SCHEDULE

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that a local licensing system for tobacco retailers is appropriate to ensure that retailers comply with tobacco control laws and business standards of the City Council to protect the health, safety, and welfare of our residents; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Sonora added Chapter 8.5 to Title 8 of the Sonora Municipal Code regulating tobacco product sales and requiring the licensure of tobacco retailers;

WHEREAS, on April 27, 2026, the City of Sonora Planning Commission convened a public hearing to recommend that the City Council adopt a Tobacco Retail Licensing Ordinance and Fee Schedule for Tobacco Retail Licensing applications; and

WHEREAS, on May 18, 2026 the City of Sonora City Council convened a public hearing to consider the Planning Commission's recommendations; and

WHEREAS, on June 1, 2026 (anticipated) the City of Sonora City Council adopted the Tobacco Retail Licensing Ordinance and Fee Schedule; and

WHEREAS, the City is granted the authority under the State Constitution to charge user fees and regulatory fees for discretionary services or regulatory activities that they provide to the public; and

WHEREAS, the fees may not exceed the estimated reasonable cost for providing the service or performing the activity; and

WHEREAS, the City has established user and regulatory fees for processing administrative permits, including the fees for the City's Tobacco Retail Licensing Applications; and

WHEREAS, the City's existing fee schedule does not include fees for the processing of Tobacco Retail Licensing Applications; and

WHEREAS, the new fee schedule for Tobacco Retail Licensing applications is in accordance with the Planning Study and estimated reasonable cost for providing the service of processing Tobacco Retail License applications.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE SONORA CITY COUNCIL HEREBY ADOPTS the Tobacco Retail Licensing Fee Schedule attached.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED as a Resolution by the Sonora City Council at a meeting held by the City Council on the _____ day of _____, 2026 by the following vote:

Resolution Number 05-18-2026-A

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

Dated:

_____
Ann Segerstrom, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Tracy Skelly, City Clerk

Exhibit A

City of Sonora Tobacco Retail License Fee Adopted May 18, 2026				
Fee Name		**Rate $79.76 x 2 hours**	**Rate $79.76 x 3 hours**	**License Fee Waived**
Tobacco Retail License		$160	$240	$0

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

CITY HALL

CITY OF SONORA 94 N. WASHINGTON STREET, SONORA, CA 95370 P: (209) 532-4541

SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

DATE: May 18, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Chris Gorsky, City Administrator

SUBJECT: Administrative Services Departments Quarterly Report for January, February and March 2026.

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive the Administrative Services Departments Quarterly Report for January, February and March 2026.

DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS:



The Administrative Services Department provides a wide range of comprehensive support services which include: accounting, finance administration and reporting, budgeting, audit, compliance, treasury management, payroll, human resources, recruitments, accounts receivable, local tax collection, accounts payable, procurements, business license management, risk management, information technology for the City.

Quarterly Report to the City Council

3rd Quarter FY25/26

Highlights of General Fund Revenues:

	Current Period	YTD	FY24/25 Budget	% of Budget
Property Tax	$ 279,252	$ 901,684	$ 1,581,100	57.0%
Sales Tax	$ 880,251	$ 2,631,645	$ 3,281,900	80.2%
Measure Y	$ 1,025,922	$ 3,198,499	$ 4,196,700	76.2%
Transient Occupancy Tax	$ 333,606	$ 595,644	$ 711,000	83.8%
Public Benefit Fees	$ 157,955	$ 493,721	$ 660,000	74.8%
Building & Encroachment Permits	$ 19,659	$ 63,075	$ 141,100	44.7%
Business Licenses	$ 68,907	$ 121,111	$ 130,000	93.2%

Highlights of General Fund Expenditures:

	Current Period	YTD	FY24/25 Budget	% of Budget
Salaries and Benefits	$ 1,745,644	$ 5,934,899	$ 8,483,950	70.0%
Operating Expenditures	$ 861,806	$ 1,739,480	$ 4,360,715	39.9%
Capital Improvement Projects	$ 10,786	$ 133,169	$ 2,133,400	6.2%
Transfers	$ 163,215	$ 819,281	$ 833,000	98.4%

	A/P	YTD	H/R	YTD
Total Number of WARRANTS/ACH/DD Processed:	394	1,457	312	1,042

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

CITY HALL

CITY OF SONORA 94 N. WASHINGTON STREET, SONORA, CA 95370 P: (209) 532-4541

SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

CORE COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

Fiscal Responsibility and Stability, Economic Development/Growth and General Plan, Staffing - Salary, Benefits, Training, and Retention

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

CITY HALL

CITY OF SONORA 94 N. WASHINGTON STREET, SONORA, CA 95370 P: (209) 532-4541

SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

DATE: May 18, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Tyler Summersett, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Community Development Department Update- January, February and March 2026

RECOMMENDATION

Receive the Community Development Departments Quarterly Report for January, February and March 2026.

DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS:

The following activities were undertaken by the Community Development Department:

DAILY ACTIVITIES

- Answer Phones
- Staff Office hours
- Issue Permits—Construction, Solar, Special Event, Banner, Planning, Encroachment, etc
- Conduct Inspections (Tuesdays and Thursdays)

SPECIAL EVENT PERMITS

Special Event Permits/Film Permits for the following Community Events:

1. Special Event Permit(s): N/A
2. Film Permit: Backroads Culture, various Sonora locations

FARMERS MARKET

- City Council adopted a resolution to close Stewart Street on Saturdays to accommodate an expanded Farmers Market. Additionally, the Market season was elongated to stretch through the end of October, with a possible holiday market in November. Applications for market were updated for the 2026 season,

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website was updated accordingly. Market manager and Market assistant contracts were executed. Fielding inquiries from interested Market participants.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

- Code enforcement is helping to lead implementation efforts of the shopping cart ordinance and sidewalk encroachment permits.
- Code enforcement continues to support Administration (Business Licenses), Building (Permits), Police Department (abandoned vehicles) and Fire Department (Defensible Space)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) MANAGEMENT

- Sonora Fire Resources CDBG grant in final closeout. Staff working with State HCD to get all submittals approved.
- An application for re-habilitating 290 S. Stewart Street was submitted for Funding. Awards will be made in the Fall.

ORDINANCE UPDATE(S)

- A Tobacco Retail License Ordinance is being drafted in partnership with County Public Health and the Blue Zones Project. Staff is reviewing the initial draft. The draft ordinance will come to City Council for consideration in the second quarter of 2026.

PLANNING COMMISSION

- January Meeting- Cancelled
- February Meeting- Ordinance 908—Overlay Zone to support the Housing Element Update certification was recommended for approval.
- March Meeting—A Development Agreement to extend the life of the Cuesta Heights subdivision was considered and ultimately recommended for approval.

SO BEAUTIFUL (Community Beautification Program)

- All ten (10) pieces of art have been placed in downtown Sonora business windows. The program is being considered in the Economic Development Plan as a way to beautify downtown Sonora is a financially feasible manner.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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- Przybyla Advisors has a draft plan being prepared for consideration by City Council. The plan is being planned for release ahead of budget discussions so that projects identified can compete for discretionary funding in the budget process.

GOLD RUSH PATH

- 60% Design documents for the 1.5-mile multi-use path have been issued. The Environmental document for the project is being prepared for consideration and approval by Caltrans.

ANCHOR PROJECT

- This is a major Caltrans project being planned for 2030. It is a complete streets safety project that will stretch from Jamestown through downtown Sonora, terminating at Steffen Road. Staff is participating in Project Development Team meetings to help guide the development of this project through Sonora.

SONORA AREA FOUNDATION GRANT

- The City was awarded $60,000 from Sonora Area Foundation to re-surface the playground at Woods Creek Park. This project was originally part of the Pickleball court improvements but due to a lack of funding was eliminated. Sonora Area Foundation has provided the City the needed funding to deliver the project. Anticipated for delivery in May.

USE PERMIT

- N/A

HOUSING ELEMENT

- Ordinance 908 was approved by City Council in March 2026. This was the final step in seeking certification for the City's Housing Element.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (ATP) APPLICATIONS

- The City will re-submit its Sonora Moves application to the State ATP program in June. The application narrowly missed funding in the last cycle and is expected to compete well. Staff de-briefed with California Transportation Commission staff on the application.

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- One additional project is being considered—Downtown Sidewalk replacement. This project is being analyzed to see how well it will compete.

ENCROACHMENT PERMITS (Caltrans)

- N/A

BUILDING UPDATE (Building Official, Brian Odom)

- 367 Building Permits Issued
- 523 Inspections
- 148 Final Inspections
- 30 New Business Occupancy Inspections
- 2 Food Truck Approvals
- 4 Certificate of Occupancies issued:
  1. 210 Stockton Rd. - Harvest Church
  2. 850 Sanguenetti - Physical Therapy
  3. 154 Stockton Rd. – Blaze Wings
  4. 940 Sylvan Ln. – Health Education Center (MACT)

FISCAL IMPACT:

No Fiscal Impact to the General Fund.

CORE COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

Fiscal Responsibility and Stability, Infrastructure and Engineering, Economic Development/Growth and General Plan

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SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

DATE: 05/18/2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Brittan Gregory, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: Receive City of Sonora Fire Department Quarterly Report for January, February and March 2026.

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive City of Sonora Fire Department Quarterly Report for January, February and March 2026.

BACKGROUND:

This report provides a summary of Fire Department activity and performance for the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2025/2026.

DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS:

During the reporting period of January 1, 2026, through March 31, 2026, the City of Sonora Fire Department responded to 433 calls for service. These calls included emergency medical responses, fire incidents, public service calls, and automatic or mutual aid responses. The department continued to meet service demands while maintaining training, inspection, and interagency cooperation efforts to support public safety and disaster preparedness within the community.

Primary Incident Type Subcategory	Primary Incident Type	Count of Incidents
Outside fire	Other outside fire	1.0
Outside fire	Trash / rubbish fire	2.0
Structure fire	Confined cooking / appliance fire	2.0
Structure fire	Room and contents fire	1.0
Structure fire	Structural involvement	3.0
Transportation fire	Vehicle fire - passenger	3.0
Hazard non chemical	Electrical hazard / short circuit	1.0
Hazard non chemical	Motor vehicle collision	6.0
Hazardous materials	Fuel spill / fuel odor	1.0
Hazardous materials	Gas leak / gas odor	4.0
Investigation	Smoke investigation	8.0

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Law enforcement support	Law enforcement support	4.0
Illness	Abdominal pain / problems	5.0
Illness	Allergic reaction / stings	1.0
Illness	Altered mental status	21.0
Illness	Back pain (non-trauma)	6.0
Illness	Breathing problems	28.0
Illness	Cardiac arrest	5.0
Illness	Chest pain (non-trauma)	18.0
Illness	Convulsions / seizures	14.0
Illness	Diabetic problems	3.0
Illness	Headache	1.0
Illness	Heart problems	19.0
Illness	Nausea / Vomiting	2.0
Illness	No appropriate choice (medical response)	16.0
Illness	Overdose	3.0
Illness	Pregnancy / childbirth	1.0
Illness	Psychological / behavior issues	5.0
Illness	Sick case	65.0
Illness	Stroke / CVA	3.0
Illness	Unconscious victim	4.0
Illness	Unknown problem (medical)	28.0
Illness	Well person check	3.0
Injury trauma	Assault	5.0
Injury trauma	Burns / explosion	1.0
Injury trauma	Choking	1.0
Injury trauma	Fall	23.0
Injury trauma	Hemorrhage / laceration	5.0
Injury trauma	Motor vehicle collision	12.0
Injury trauma	Other traumatic injury	2.0
Medical other	Medical alarm	2.0
Medical other	Standby request (medical)	1.0
Cancelled	Cancelled	17.0
False alarm	Accidental alarm	7.0
False alarm	Malfunctioning alarm	4.0
False alarm	Other false call	2.0

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Good intent	Controlled burning (Authorized)	1.0
Good intent	No incident found upon arrival / location error	2.0
Good intent	Smoke from non-hostile source (Smoke scare)	4.0
Alarms non medical	CO alarm	1.0
Alarms non medical	Fire / smoke alarm	16.0
Citizen assist	Citizen assist / service call	4.0
Citizen assist	Lift assist	33.0
Citizen assist	Lost person	1.0
Citizen assist	Person in distress	1.0
Disaster weather	Weather response	1.0
Grand Total		433

Emergency Response and Operations Summary

1. Quarterly dollar loss in the city, resulting from fire: 0
2. Automatic or mutual aid given: 129
3. Automatic or mutual aid received: 19
4. Training hours for department staff: 227

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with receiving this report.

CORE COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

Public Safety and Disaster Preparedness, Training.

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CITY OF SONORA 94 N. WASHINGTON STREET, SONORA, CA 95370 P: (209) 532-4541

SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

DATE: April 20, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Turu VanderWiel, Chief of Police

SUBJECT: Sonora Police Department Quarterly Report for January, February and March 2026.

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive the City of Sonora Police Department Quarterly Report for January, February and March 2026.

BACKGROUND:

Each Quarter, the Sonora Police Department reports on general police activity for the previous quarter. This list is not all-inclusive and is guided by the interests of the City Council. The reporting format allows for a comparison of activity with the same period during the previous year.

The City is divided into two areas of responsibility, each overseen by one of our two Police Sergeants. The Sergeants monitor their assigned areas and proactively apply problem-solving community policing principles to address a range of issues, from property crime trends to public nuisance concerns, all with the goal of enhancing public safety.

Most categories in our report reflect criminal case investigation reporting, providing a broad view of our law enforcement efforts. However, it's important to note that these categories primarily indicate the number of criminal case investigations rather than the actual number of incidents occurring in the City. Selected categories, such as Larceny and Homeless Activity, have dual reporting numbers that reflect the number of reported occurrences and the number of criminal case investigations. Similarly, the Total Phone Calls / 911 Calls category reflects the number of 911 calls included in the total number of incoming calls to the Sonora Police Department in a given reporting period, offering a more nuanced understanding of our emergency response.

DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS:

The chart below summarizes activities for February 2025.

Activity	**Jan-Mar 2026**	**Oct-Dec 2025**	**Jul-Sep 2025**
Total Incidents	2,475	3,578	3,262

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Calls for Service	1,522	2,259	2359
Officer Initiated Activity	953	1,319	903
Total Arrests	126	151	87
Felony Arrests	34	44	24
Misdemeanor Arrests	92	107	63
Case Investigations	292	305	269
Parking Citations	16	37	30
Moving Citations	88	120	40
Domestic Violence	15	12	16
Total Larcenies/Larceny Investigations	49	59/25	54/24
Total Collisions/Collision Investigations	80/30	81/32	80/33
Homeless Activity/Case Reports	268/39	326/47	399/35
Animal Control Calls	72	70	130
Public Intoxication and Drug Influence	11	12	14
DUI Arrests (alcohol and/or drugs)	17	13	9
Total Phone Calls / 911 Calls	5,686/832	5,783/847	5,819/937
Text to 911	10	----------	----------
Average Per Day / 911 Average Per Day	63/9	63/10	63/10
Vehicle Tow Releases	33	27	11

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact to the General Fund.

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SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

ATTACHMENTS (3):

Crimes by Area Report

Area 1 Supervisor Report

Area 2 Supervisor Report

CORE COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

Public Safety and Disaster Preparedness, Homelessness Issues, Training, and Retention

January-March 2026 - Crimes by Area

AREA 1 REPORTS:

Violent Crimes:

1 – Felony Rape
1 – Felony Possession of Child Sexual Abuse Material
4 – Felony Domestic Violence (one with possession of a weapon on school campus; one with misdemeanor brandishing of a weapon and misdemeanor criminal threats)
1 – Felony Battery to Transportation Personnel
3 – Misdemeanor Domestic Battery (one including felony possession of controlled substance and misdemeanor child abuse)
2 – Misdemeanor Battery on School Campus
1 – Misdemeanor Sexual Battery (including misdemeanor contribution to the delinquency of a minor)
1 – Misdemeanor Criminal Threats
5 – Misdemeanor Violation of a Domestic Violence Restraining Order

Burglaries / Other Larceny:

1 – Felony Burglary (including felony conspiracy, felony prior theft, felony attempt escape, felony vandalism, and misdemeanor possession of a dirk or dagger)
2 – Misdemeanor Business Burglaries (Shoplifting)
3 – Theft of a Vehicle (one including local recovery by SPD)
2 – Misdemeanor Petty Theft from a residence location
1 – Misdemeanor Petty Theft by access card

AREA 2 REPORTS:

Violent Crimes:

4 – Felony Domestic Violence (one including felony assault with a deadly weapon, other than a firearm, felony damage to a wireless device, felony child abuse, misdemeanor violation of a domestic violence restraining order, and misdemeanor dissuade victim/witness from testifying; one including misdemeanor false imprisonment; one including felony rape and strangulation)
1 – Felony Child Abuse
1 – Felony Battery with Great Bodily Injury (including felony assault with a deadly weapon, other than a firearm)
1 – Felony Criminal Threats
1 – Felony Rape
3 – Misdemeanor Domestic Violence (one including misdemeanor criminal threats and misdemeanor assault)
1 – Misdemeanor Battery on a Person
1 – Misdemeanor Battery on Emergency Personnel
1 – Misdemeanor Violation of a Domestic Violence Order

Burglaries / Other Larceny:

1 – Misdemeanor Business Burglary (Shoplifting)
1 – Stolen Vehicle Recovery for San Andreas CHP Report

Area 1 Quarterly Supervisor Report
January 2026

Neighborhood Watch:

ELKS HILL:
I spoke with members of the Elks Hill Neighborhood Watch concerning abandoned cars parked on the roadway. CSO DaRosa was dispatched to the area to address the issue.

SONORA KNOWLES:

- No updated activity.

Case(s) for Discussion:

- On 3/29/2026, Sonora PD Officers stopped a vehicle for a traffic violation. A K9 sniff of the vehicle was conducted, and the dog alerted to narcotics. A search of the vehicle was completed, and a sizable quantity of illegal narcotics was found. The driver was arrested and booked into the Tuolumne County jail for transportation and sales of illegal drugs.

- On 3/7/2026, Sonora PD responded to a domestic violence call. The victim of the attack sustained multiple lacerations to the wrist and upper forearm from a kitchen knife. The suspect, the victim's Fiancé of 2 years, fled the scene but was later located and taken into custody. After a thorough investigation, the suspect was transported and booked into the Tuolumne County jail on felony domestic violence charges and assault with a deadly weapon.

Investigations:

- Officer Bell was selected for the open Investigations position.

Range:

- Firearms qualifications were completed on April 1st, 2026. All participating officers qualified during this block of instruction.
- Range staff is working with a firearms distributor to procure new handguns to replace the department's aging inventory.

Fleet:

- No updated activity.

Property and Evidence:

- No updated activity.

Respectfully submitted,

Sergeant Eric Nygard

Area 2 Monthly Supervisor Report
January - March 2026

Neighborhood Watch:

MYERS HILL:
- No updated activity.

NORTH STEWART:
- No updated activity.

HIGHLAND VIEW:
- No updated activity

Case(s) for discussion:

On March 25, 2026, at 5:28 p.m., officers with the Sonora Police Department received a call regarding an intoxicated female who was seen driving a red Jeep. Officers arrived and located the matching vehicle and suspected driver, identified as 51-year-old Tara Hill, at Restano Liquor. The officer conducted a Standard Field Sobriety test and determined Hill was under the influence. Hill was also identified as the driver by the caller who saw Hill driving.
Officers also learned that Hill had 3 prior DUIs within the last 3 years and was on probation for DUI. Hill was taken into custody and transported to the Tuolumne County Jail. Hill was booked for felony DUI with prior convictions, misdemeanor DUI while on probation, and misdemeanor driving with a suspended license for DUI.

On February 12, 2026, at 5:07 p.m. The Sonora Police Department received a call regarding an injury hit-and-run collision that occurred on Hospital Road near Mono Way in Sonora. Responding officers were given a description of the vehicle, and a "Be On The Lookout" was issued to our partnering agencies. During this time, the Sonora area California Highway Patrol received multiple calls about a reckless driver near Chicken Ranch Casino matching the fleeing vehicle's description. The investigating officer located private surveillance video from various sources and interviewed witnesses, confirming the driver's identity as 29-year-old Jacqueline Renee Leach of Copperopolis. Leach later turned herself in to the Sonora Police Department on February 14, 2026, and was booked into the Tuolumne County Jail for felony hit-and-run resulting in injuries.

K-9:

- The Sonora PD K-9 Handler has continued to utilize his partner for narcotics and has had positive results.
- The K-9 team is actively training twice a month and consistently showing progress.

Reserves/Volunteers/Explorers:

- Volunteers and Explorers have been holding meetings and training twice a month. We have gained new Volunteers and Explorers and continue to receive applications for the programs.

Recruitment:

- We recently held interviews for open Dispatcher positions. Two candidates were selected and are currently in the hiring process.
- We have recently opened recruitment for Recruit and Lateral Police Officers.

Training:

- We have sent officers to Drug and Alcohol Recognition Training, which was a 32-hour course that provided them with the tools to successfully detect subjects under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Officers were also sent to Basic Rifle School to certify them under P.O.S.T. standards to carry a rifle on patrol. We also sent one of our Dispatchers to the Basic Dispatcher Academy, which is a four-week course. All courses were successfully completed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sgt. Dominic Bertalotto

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CITY HALL

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SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

DATE: May 13, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Matthew Lewallen, Public Works Supervisor

SUBJECT: Receive the Sonora Public Works Department Quarterly Report for January, February, and March 2026

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive the Sonora Public Works Department Quarterly Report for January, February, and March 2026.

DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS:

For January, February, and March, the City of Sonora Public Works Department performed the following activities:

Events

- Staged traffic signs for Court House protest.

Streets

- Loaded and hauled away pay piles as needed.
- Installed bump stops for trash bins along Stewart St.
- Conducted roadside weed abatement along numerous City roads.
- Sprayed sidewalk and edging of weeds throughout city.
- Pressure-washed trash cans and sidewalks in the downtown area.
- Performed roadside trash pickup as needed.
- Repaired a handrail on Mono Way.
- Loaded and disposed of deceased deer along City streets.
- Pressure-wash sidewalks along Washington St.
- Patch City streets as needed.
- Monitor abandoned shopping carts throughout City.
- Trimmed vegetation along roadway and around street signs.
- Continued with green waste pickup throughout City.
- Put away Christmas decorations.
- Continued with street sweeping schedule.
- Sanded streets during icy conditions.
- Performed shoulder repair on Macomber Ave.
- Add two red curb sections on Washington St. and Elkin St.

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- Check U.S.A's and mark roadways as needed.

Facilities

- Continue repairs and cleaning of the Public Works yard.
- Restored and hung chandelier at Opera Hall.
- Removed and updated lighting system at Opera Hall.
- Removed and installed new light dimmers at Opera Hall.
- Repair outside balcony at Opera Hall.
- Applied sealant to Fire Museum roof.
- Monthly check and replacement of HVAC filters as needed.
- Painted interior trim on walls and ceiling of Opera Hall.

Parks/Landscapes/Parking Lots

- Seasonal mowing started at Rotary Park and the wellness center.
- Recharged Rotary parks irrigation and adjusted/repaired sprinklers.
- Pruned shrubs in the Fountain lot.
- Made numerous irrigation repairs in several City landscapes.
- Monthly inspection of playground equipment at Rotary Park.
- Perform weekly trash removal from City lots.
- Open, check, and clean daily public City bathrooms.
- Trimmed bushes/landscape in Coffill Park
- Installed gate lock for pickle ball court.
- Installed automatic door closing arms for Rotary Park bathrooms.
- Repaired and repainted city equipment at Mehun lot from vandalism.

Storm Drains

- Continue with ongoing repairs to the down drain grates.
- Performed clearing of drains as needed.

Cemeteries

- Conducted weed abatement around headstones.
- Daily check of messages and return calls as needed at Mountain Shadow.
- Marked out plots as requested by the Funeral Home as needed.
- Set headstones as requested by the Funeral Home.
- Sprayed Mt. Shadow, and Old City Cemetery.
- Seasonal mowing of Mt. Shadow cemetery started.
- Cut up and removed downed limbs at Old City Cemetery.
- Re-set headstones at Old City Cemetery.

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SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

Fleet

- Monthly vehicle checks and inspections.
- Clean, lube, and service sweeper as needed.

Miscellaneous

- Unlock and service of all public restrooms daily.
- Put up event banners downtown as scheduled.
- Collect Garbage twice a week in all city parking lots, landscapes, and parks.
- Twice weekly, sweep city streets as needed.
- Removed trash from Sonora, and Woods creek.
- Dispose of dead deer as needed.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No Fiscal Impact to the General Fund.

CORE COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

Fiscal Responsibility and Stability, Infrastructure and Engineering, Public Safety and Disaster Preparedness, Economic Development/Growth, and General Plan