Appendix J

Wildfire Impact Analysis

FCS
An ADEC Innovation

Memorandum

Date:	June 25, 2025
To:	Ben vanZutphen Arata Properties, LLC
From:	Jason Brandman, Project Director Yael Marcus, Senior Project Manager
Subject:	Wildfire Impact Analysis for the Proposed Los Amigos Cottages Project in the Town of Windsor, California

INTRODUCTION

FirstCarbon Solutions, Inc. (FCS) is pleased to provide this analysis of potential wildfire impacts associated with the proposed Los Amigos Cottages Project (proposed project) located in the Town of Windsor (Town), Sonoma County (County), California. Existing conditions as they relate to wildfire in the project area, as well as the relevant regulatory framework, including the Town's applicable thresholds of significance for evaluating impacts, are provided herein. Based on this information, the potential for impacts related to wildfire that could result from implementation of the proposed project are identified.

Consideration of wildfire-related impacts is consistent with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Appendix G Environmental Checklist Section XX, Wildfire, Impact(a) through (d) and Section IX, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Impact(f) and (g). Information in this section is based primarily on information provided by the following sources:

- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Fire Hazard Severity Zone Viewer (FHSZ Viewer).
- CAL FIRE, Fire Incidents (Sonoma County).
- CAL FIRE, 2018 Strategic Plan for California.
- CAL FIRE, Wildland Hazards and Building Codes.
- California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), Final Statement of Reason for Regulatory Action, Amendments to the State CEQA Guidelines.
- California Office of Emergency Services (Cal/OES), Coastal Region Operational Area Assignments.

- Cal/OES, Regulations for the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS).
- California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), General Order Number 166.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Flood Map Service Center.
- International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), Firewise Guide to Landscape and Construction.
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Monthly Climate Normals (1991-2020)—Santa Rose Sonoma County Airport, California.
- NOAA, U.S. Wind Climatology.
- National Park Service (NPS), Series: Wildland Fire—Learning in Depth, Article 11: Wildland Fire Behavior.
- Northwest Fire science Consortium (NSFC), Fire Facts: What is? Fuel.
- Office of Attorney General, Best Practices for Analyzing and Mitigating Wildfire Impacts of Development Projects under the California Environmental Quality Act.
- Sonoma County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (Update 2021), Volume 1: Area-Wide Elements.
- *The Press Democrat*, Fire Incident Press Releases.
- Town of Windsor, Capital Improvement Plan.
- Town of Windsor, Climate Resilience Plan.
- Town of Windsor, Communities Organized to Prepare for Emergencies (COPE).
- Town of Winsor, Emergency Preparedness & Resources.
- Town of Windsor 2040 General Plan (2040 General Plan), including the 2023-adopted Public Health and Safety Element (PHS Element).
- Town of Windsor, GIS Viewer (GIS Viewer).
- Town of Windsor, Town of Windsor Emergency Evacuation Zones/Sub-Zones.
- United States Fire Administration (USFA), What is the WUI?
- University of California, Field Operations Manual, Wildland Fire Safety.

Proposed Project

Arata Properties, LLC (applicant) proposes to develop Los Amigos Cottages (proposed project), consisting of 32 new housing units on a 2.72–acre site. The project site is located at 263 Arata Lane in the Town of Windsor, in Sonoma County, California (Exhibit 1). The project site is designated by Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 161-020-049. Proposed housing types includes 26 single-family detached homes and six attached "duet" homes. Twenty-two percent of the homes would be designated for lower-income households, including all six of the proposed duet units and one of the detached units,

exceeding the Town's inclusionary requirements. The proposed project would also include a 0.04-acre (1,748-square-foot) bioretention area. The site plan is shown in Exhibit 2.

Proposed off-site improvements include partial frontage improvements along the eastern project site boundary. These improvements would extend Los Amigos Road from its intersection with Arata Lane, adjacent to the southeastern corner of the project site, to the project site's northern access point. Improvements would include a two-lane road as well as sidewalk, curb, gutter, bike lane, and street parking on the project frontage. With this proposed partial extension of Los Amigos Road, the project site would have two points of ingress and egress: one on Arata Lane at the southwestern portion of the project site and a second at the northeast part of the project site on the proposed extended section of Los Amigos Road. However, the partial extension of Los Amigos Road leads to Arata Lane and, therefore, cannot be considered a second access point per the Town's Fire Code standards because Arata Lane already serves as an emergency access for the proposed project. Both the proposed extension of Los Amigos Road and the existing Arata Lane would serve as a protective buffer, or "Zone 0,"[1] between adjacent undeveloped and developed lands to the north, south, and east of the project site. Additional off-site improvements would include sidewalk, planter, curb, and gutter in the existing two-lane Arata Lane (west of Los Amigos Road).

Within the project site, internal circulation would be provided by internal private streets linking to Arata Lane and Los Amigos Road, as previously mentioned. Proposed off-site improvements for the proposed project, including right-of-way delineations, buffered bicycle lanes, and sidewalk improvements along both Arata Lane and Los Amigos Road, would increase site connectivity and accessibility. Emergency vehicle ingress and egress would be provided by the proposed project's primary access point on Arata Lane to the site's internal street network. The project site would be accessible from multiple directions via adjacent roadways, including from the east and west via Arata Lane and from the south via Los Amigos Road. The project site is also accessible to multiple evacuation routes, as delineated in Evacuation Zone Maps compiled by the Windsor Police Department[2] and Figure PHS-3 of the 2040 General Plan,[3] included as Exhibit 3.

In accordance with 2040 General Plan Policy PHS-4.9, Priority Undergrounding, all utilities are required to be installed underground. Additionally, construction equipment would be required to use spark arresters thereby reducing the possibility of ignition risk, and appropriate fire suppression equipment would be required on-site as applicable (Public Resources Code [PRC], Chapter 6, Article 2, §§ 4442–4446).

[1] The term "Zone 0" refers to the first five feet from a protected structure to reduce fire risk.

[2] Town of Windsor. Emergency Preparedness and Resources. Website: https://www.townofwindsor.ca.gov/1116/Emergency-Preparedness-Resources. Accessed April 15, 2025.

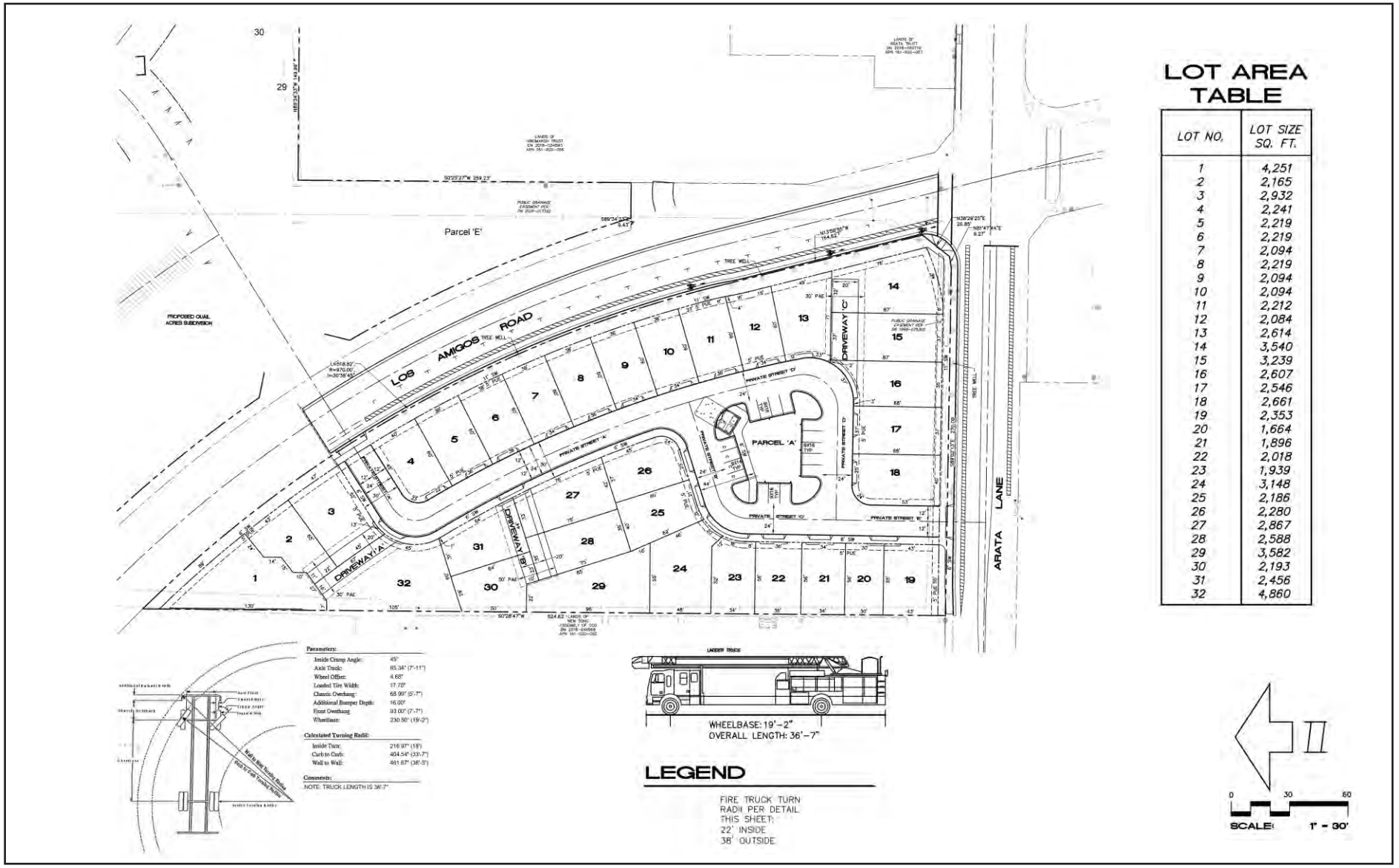
[3] Town of Windsor. 2023. 2040 General Plan Public Health and Safety Element. August 16.



Source: Bing Aerial Imagery. County of Sonoma.

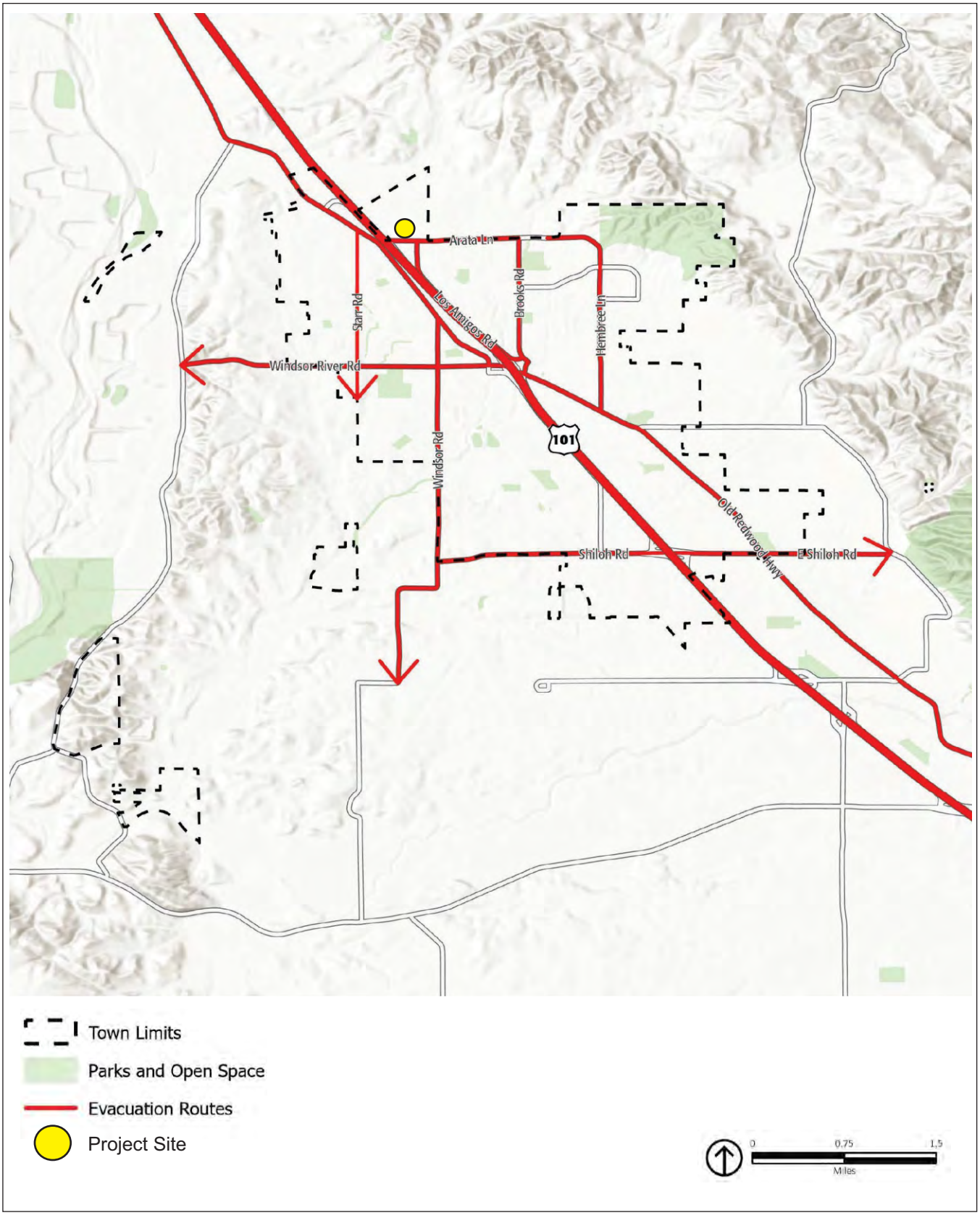
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Feet

Exhibit 1
Project Location



Source: Civil Design Consultants, Inc. October, 2024.

Exhibit 2
Site Plan



Source: Town of Windsor.

Exhibit 3
Town of Windsor Evacuation Routes

The proposed project would be consistent with regulations for development in Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zones as outlined by the California Building Standards Code (CBC) and adopted by Municipal Code Sections 7-2-400 through 7-2-424, including, but not limited to, ignition-resistant construction materials, roofing, vents, exterior coverings, windows, doors, and decking. Specifically, the proposed project would implement the following:

- **Compliance with Building Code Standards.** The Town's Building Code requires use of fire-resistant materials and construction methods for all new home construction within Town limits. Future building permit plans for construction of new homes within the project area will utilize appropriate materials and methods in accordance with the requirements of Town code, including use of fire-resistant attic and crawl space vents, soffits, and fire-resistant materials for exterior siding, porches, and decks. All future building permit applications for construction would be subject to review and approval by the Town to ensure compliance with these standards.
- **Project Construction.** During construction the proposed project would comply with the requirement of Public Resources Code Article 2 (Prohibited Activities), including, but not limited to, the following: Section 4227 (location of flammable materials on burn permit days); Section 4228 (fire suppression equipment); Section 4331 (use of gas-powered tools on burn permit days); and Section 4442 (spark arrestor required).
- **Fire Safe Fencing Materials.** To prevent the spread of fire between parcels and structures, fences and walls attached to and/or within 6 feet of a structure or deck shall be made of non-combustible materials. Examples of non-combustible materials that may be utilized include:
  - Masonry;
  - Steel privacy fencing;
  - Hogwire;
  - Hardiboard; and/or
  - Fire-resistant wood grain vinyl.

Groundwater recharge would be implemented with stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) within the site's private roadways, mimicking the storm conditions of the natural environment. Additionally, recycled water would be used to service the project site. Clarifications regarding landscaping materials is provided in the Clarification and Supplemental Information,[4] included as Attachment A to this memorandum. As described in Attachment A, the proposed landscaping in private yards would include the following:

- **Ground Cover.** To reduce the spread of wildfire due to ember casting, no mulch and/or similar ground cover products will be allowed within 5 feet of any structure. Alternative ground cover materials to be utilized include, but are not limited to, lava rock, river rock, gravel, decomposed granite, or other groundcover materials (subject to approval by the Town).
- **Vegetation Adjacent to Structures.** Trees and shrubs located within 5 feet of any structure shall be planted and maintained at a minimum distance of 5 feet apart.

[4] Arata Properties, LLC. 2025. Clarifications and Supplemental Information from Arata Properties, LLC for the Los Amigos Cottages Development Application. May 23.

- **Allowed Plant Materials.** New landscaping shall incorporate only the firewise plant materials approved by the Sonoma County Fire District and the California Fire Safe Council. The planting of juniper and manzanita will be prohibited.
- No combustible landscape materials will be used within 5 feet of all structures.

The proposed project design would provide a buffer of 5 feet between vegetation, wood fences, gates, or ornamental landscaping and residences or other structures, creating a defensible space, or Zone 0, intended to slow or stop the spread of wildfire while providing increased protection for residences from embers, direct flame contact, and radiant heat. Private landscaping in Zone 0 between residences would consist of hardscape only and no green space. Fire-resistant landscaping would be installed consistent with CBC requirements.[5]

The proposed project would be served by the Town's public water and sewer systems, which would be supplied to proposed dwelling units for private use as well as for CBC-compliant hydrants for firefighting use. A total of three fire hydrants are proposed on-site, alongside an existing hydrant on the west end of the site's frontage with Arata Lane to enhance fire protection coverage (shown in Sheet TM5 of the Tentative Map submitted for the proposed project). As previously mentioned, all utilities would be constructed underground to reduce the possibility of ignition risk.

According to the 2040 General Plan Land Use Diagram, the project site is designated General Business (GB) (0.0-1.0 floor area ratio [FAR]). This designation allows for a broad range of uses, including office, retail and service activities. Residential uses are not allowed in the GB designation. However, because the proposed project was submitted as a Senate Bill (SB) 330 Builder's Remedy project, the proposed project is entitled to review under the Housing Accountability Act (HAA) and Housing Crisis Act (HCA) processes requiring local agencies to approve certain affordable housing projects that do not strictly comply with General Plan land use designations.[6]

The project site is zoned Community Commercial (CC). The CC zone is applied to areas appropriate for a range of local- and community-serving retail and service land uses, including restaurants, shops, personal, and business services.

Land use designations within the Town surrounding the project site consist of Public/Quasi-Public, Neighborhood Center/Mixed Use, Low Density Residential, and Gateway Commercial designations. Existing land uses surrounding the project site include rural single-family homes and undeveloped/pastureland to the east and north, a church to the west, and single-family homes to the

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[5] National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC). 2024. Firewise Guide to Landscape and Construction/ Website: https://www.iafc.org/docs/default-source/1fire-prev/bookletguidetofirewiselandscapeandconstruction.pdf?sfvrsn=badfdd0d_2. Accessed December 20, 2024.

[6] In 2019, SB 330, or the HCA, revised Government Code Section 65589.5, preventing local governments which have not adopted an updated General Plan Housing Element that is in "substantial compliance" with State law from disapproving housing development projects that meet certain affordability criteria. On September 16, 2021, SB 8 was signed into law, making some clarifications and updating SB 330 and extending the Housing Crisis Act from January 1, 2025, to January 1, 2030. The proposed project is processed under the Builder's Remedy, a commonly applied term that refers to the process established in SB 330 that, under certain conditions outlined in the Government Code, prohibits jurisdictions from rejecting a project for non-compliance with existing land use designations.

south, across Arata Lane, with more dense residential development further south and southeast of the project site. Rural/undeveloped lands are found north of the project site. Per the Town's zoning map, a mixture of Neighborhood Center/Mixed Use (NCMU), Gateway Commercial (GC), Public Institution (PI), and Village Residential (VR) zoning districts, consistent with General Plan land use designations surround the project site.[7]

Environmental Setting

Residential developments in the wildland urban interface (WUI) and other wildfire prone areas can significantly increase the risks of wildfires and the risk to public safety. Factors contributing to increased risk are increased anthropogenic fire sources, adjacency of anthropogenic fire sources to flammable vegetation, and placing people in areas of risk.

Overview of Wildfire

A wildfire is an uncontrolled fire in an extensive area of combustible vegetation. Wildfires differ from other fires in that they take place in areas of grassland, woodlands, brushland, scrubland, peatland, and other wooded areas that act as a source of fuel, or combustible material. Buildings may become involved if wildfire spreads to adjacent communities. The primary factors that increase an area's susceptibility to wildfire include slope and topography, vegetation type and condition, and weather and atmospheric conditions.

The indirect effects of wildfires can be catastrophic. In addition to stripping the land of vegetation and destroying forest resources, large, intense fires can harm the soil, waterways, and overall habitat. Soil exposed to intense heat may lose its capacity to absorb moisture and support life. Exposed soils erode quickly and enhance siltation of rivers and streams, thereby increasing flood potential, harming aquatic life, and degrading water quality. Lands stripped of vegetation are also subject to increased debris flow hazards.

Slope and Aspect

Sloping land increases susceptibility to wildfire because fire typically burns faster up steep slopes and slopes may hinder firefighting efforts.[8,9] Following severe wildfires, sloping land is also more susceptible to landslide or flooding from increased runoff during substantial precipitation events.

Aspect is the direction that a slope faces, and it determines how much radiated heat the slope will receive from the sun. Slopes facing south to southwest will receive the most solar radiation; thus, they are warmer

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[7] Town of Windsor. 2024. GIS Viewer. Website: https://maps.srcity.org/Html5Viewer/Index.html?viewer=windsor. Accessed December 19, 2024.

[8] National Park Service (NPS). 2017. Series: Wildland Fire – Learning in Depth, Article 11: Wildland Fire Behavior. Website: https://www.nps.gov/articles/wildland-fire-behavior.htm. Accessed January 28, 2025.

[9] University of California 2018. Field Operations Manual, Wildland Fire Safety. Revised November 2018. Website: https://www.ucop.edu/safety-and-loss-prevention/_files/field-research-safety/wildland-fire-safety.pdf. Accessed January 28, 2025.

and the vegetation is drier than on slopes facing a northerly to northeasterly direction, increasing the potential for wildfire ignition and spread.[10]

The project site is in an area of relatively flat topography. It does not contain any south or southwest facing slopes.

Vegetation

Vegetation is fuel to wildfire, and it changes over time with seasonal growth and die-back. The relationship between vegetation and wildfire is complex, but generally some vegetation is naturally fire-resistant while other vegetation is extremely flammable. It is worth noting that some plant types in California are fire-resistant while others are fire dependent for their seed germination cycles. Wildfire behavior depends on the type of fuels present, such as ladder fuels, surface fuels, and aerial fuels. Ladder fuels, such as low-lying tree branches or shrubs under the canopy of a large tree, provide a path for a surface fire to climb upward into the crown of trees; surface fuels include grasses, logs, and stumps low to the ground; and aerial fuels include limbs, foliage, and branches not in contact with the ground.[11] Weather and climate conditions, including drought cycles, can lead to dry vegetation with low moisture content, increasing flammability.

Vegetation on the project site consists generally of trees, shrubs, and grasses. The site is directly surrounded by rural residences with associated vegetation and pastures, to the north, east, and far west. A church lies to the west of the project site on the adjacent parcel. Hillsides of oak woodland and savanna are approximately 1 mile to the northeast and east. The land to the south and southeast of the project site is developed with single-family residences and contains associated landscaping vegetation. An area of trees lies adjacent to the project site on the north and east.

Weather and Atmospheric Conditions

Wind, temperature, and relative humidity are the most influential weather elements in fire behavior and susceptibility.[12] Fire moves faster under hot, dry, and windy conditions. Wind may also blow embers ahead of a fire (known as “ember cast”), causing its spread. The distance to which embers can spread, and therefore potential risk of spot fire starts, can vary greatly based on conditions. Drought conditions lead to extended periods of excessively dry vegetation, increasing the fuel load and ignition potential.

The NOAA maintains a weather monitoring station in Santa Rosa, approximately 3 miles south of the project site. Most precipitation is received from November through March, with an average annual rainfall of approximately 34 inches.[13] May through September is the driest time of the year and coincides with

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[10] University of California. 2018. Field Operations Manual, Wildland Fire Safety. November. Website: https://www.ucop.edu/safety-and-loss-prevention/_files/field-research-safety/wildland-fire-safety.pdf. Accessed January 28, 2025.

[11] Northwest Fire Science Consortium (NFSC). 2017. Fire Facts: What is? Fuel. Website: https://www.nwfirescience.org/sites/default/files/publications/FIREFACTS_FUELS_0.pdf. Accessed January 28, 2025.

[12] National Park Service (NPS). 2017. Series: Wildland Fire–Learning in Depth, Article 11: Wildland Fire Behavior. Website: https://www.nps.gov/articles/wildland-fire-behavior.htm. Accessed January 28, 2025.

[13] National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). 2021. Monthly Climate Normals (1991-2020)–Santa Rosa Sonoma County Airport, California. Website: https://weather.gov/wrh/Climate?wfo=mtr. Accessed January 28, 2025.

what has traditionally been considered the fire season in California. However, increasingly persistent drought and climatic changes in California have resulted in drier winters, and fires during the autumn, winter, and spring months are becoming more common. Prevailing winds in Sonoma County are generally from the northwest to the southeast.[14]

Wildfire Hazard Area Designations

CAL FIRE is required by law to map areas of significant fire hazards based on fuels, terrain, weather, and other relevant factors (PRC §§ 4201–4204 and California Government Code §§ 51175–89). As described above, the primary factors that increase an area's susceptibility to fire hazards include slope, vegetation type and condition, and atmospheric conditions. CAL FIRE maps fire hazard zones, referred to as Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZs). CAL FIRE's Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP) maps three zones in Local and State Responsibility Areas (SRAs): Moderate, High, and Very High FHSZ. Each of the zone designations influence how people construct buildings and protect property to reduce risk associated with wildfires. Under State regulations, areas within FHSZs must comply with specific building and vegetation management requirements, described under Regulatory Framework, below, intended to reduce property damage and loss of life within these areas.

The mountainous, highly combustible areas in eastern Sonoma County are mostly mapped by CAL FIRE as Very High FHSZs and, therefore, are most susceptible to wildfires. The area immediately east of the Town is characterized as mixture of Moderate and High FHSZs. Very High FHSZs within the SRA are mapped approximately 2.5 miles north, 1.4 miles northeast, and 2.7 miles west of the project site.[15] The nearest SRA is located approximately 0.3 mile to the east, east of Hillview Road, and approximately 0.5 mile to the north, where hilly terrain and vegetative landscapes are present. These areas within the SRA are designated as Moderate FHSZs. The project site is within an Local Responsibility Area (LRA) and is identified as Moderate FHSZ. Exhibit 4 shows the project sites' FHSZ, and Exhibit 5 shows the project site in relation to Moderate, High, and Very High FHSZs in both LRAs and SRAs.

CAL FIRE FHSZ mapping of Sonoma County was updated in February 2025. As shown in Exhibit 4, the project site is located in an area mapped by CAL FIRE as Moderate FHSZ in a LRA.

The WUI is defined in Municipal Code Section 7-2-317 as "a geographic area identified by the Town of Windsor as a Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone in accordance with Public Resources Code Sections 4201 through 4204, and Government Code, Sections 51175 through 51189, or other areas designated by the enforcing agency to be at significant risk from wildfires, or as designated by Fire Severity Risk Maps provided by the Office of the California State Fire Marshall." Section 7-2-416 further states that the "Town of Windsor shall be designated as a 'Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone' or as designated by the Office of the California State Fire Marshall." The Town's self-designation aligns with CAL FIRE's updated mapping. Note that CAL FIRE mapping does not address WUI.

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[14] National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). 2023. U.S. Wind Climatology. May 2023. Website: https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/monitoring/wind/. Accessed January 28, 2025.

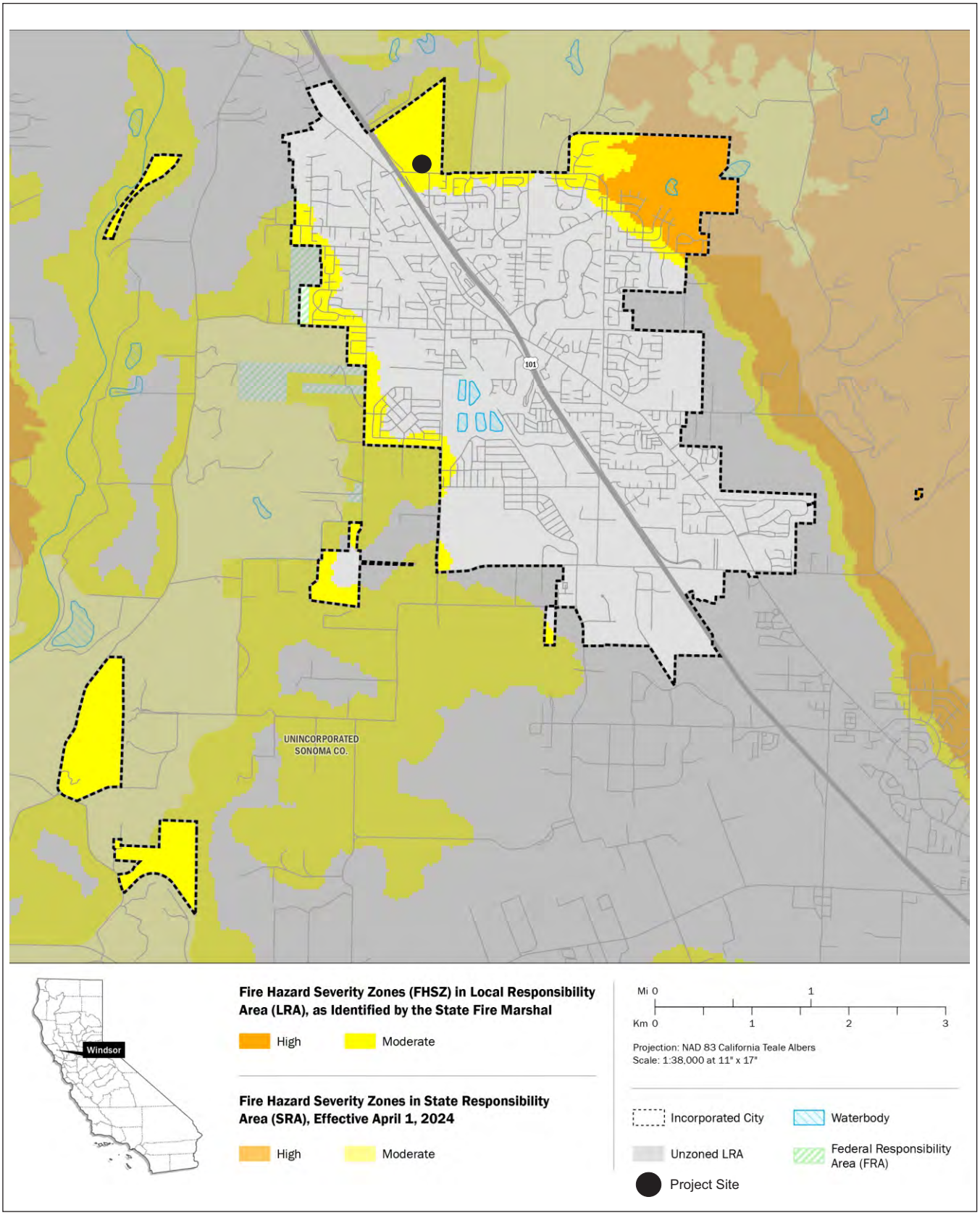
[15] California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). 2023. Fire Hazard Severity Zone Viewer (FHSZ Viewer). Website: https://fire-hazard-severity-zones-rollout-calfire-forestry.hub.arcgis.com/. Accessed February 24, 2025.

The WUI is the zone of transition between unoccupied land and human development. It is the line, area, or zone where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels.[16]

The CNRA and the Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (formerly Office of Planning and Research) have recognized that homes in the WUI are more vulnerable to wildfire, stating that, “although high-density structure-to-structure loss can occur, structures in areas with low- to intermediate-density housing were most likely to burn, potentially due to intermingling with wildland vegetation or difficulty of firefighter access.” Fire frequency also tends to be highest at low to intermediate housing density (rural, very low density of approximately 1–2 dwelling units per acre), at least in regions where humans are the primary cause of ignitions.[17] The proposed project would have a density of 11.7 dwelling units per acre.

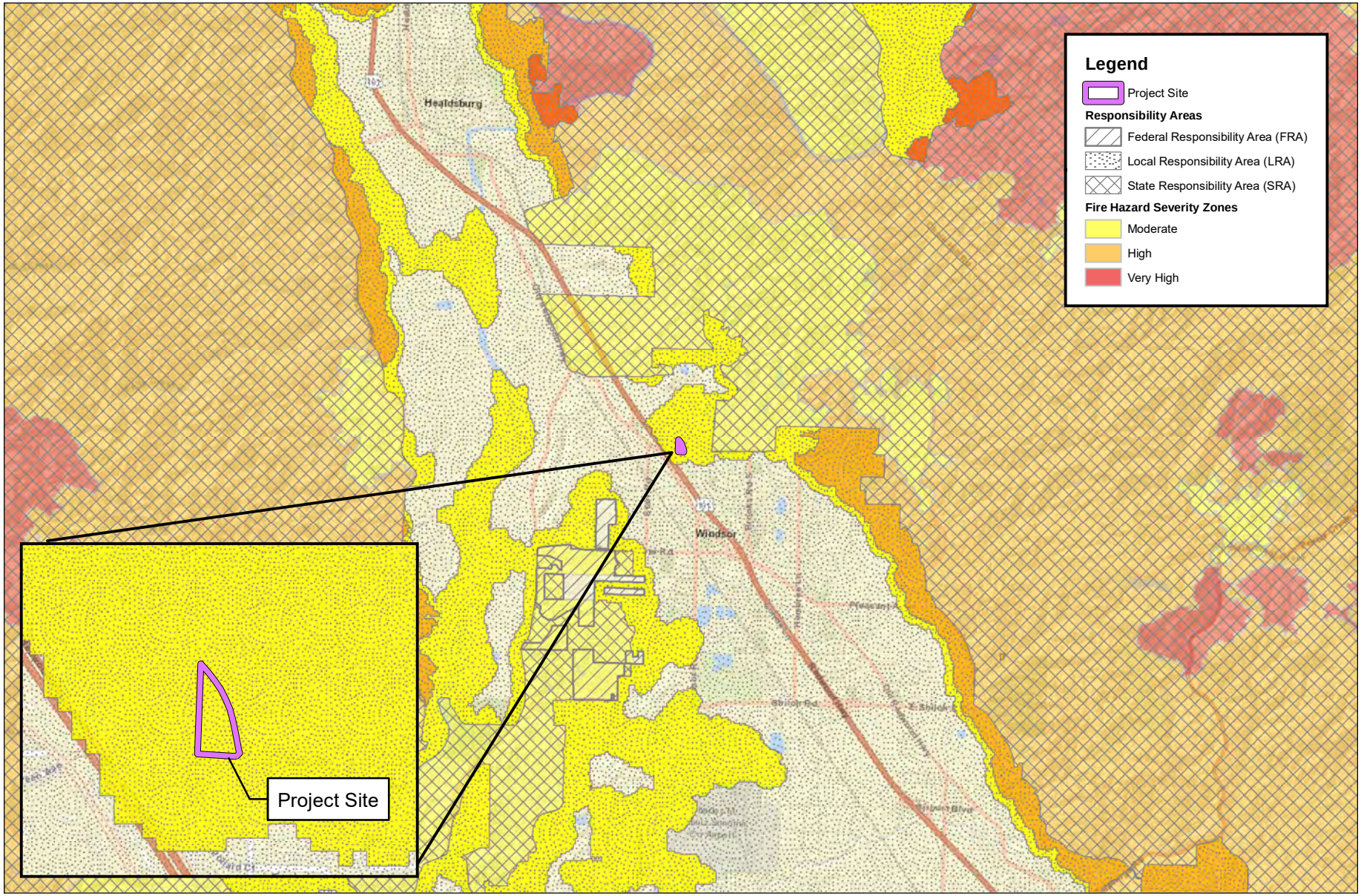
[16] United States Fire Administration. 2023. What is the WUI? Website: https://www.usfa.fema.gov/wui/what-is-the-wui.html. Accessed January 28, 2025.

[17] California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA). 2018. Final Statement of Reason for Regulatory Action, Amendments to the State CEQA Guidelines, OAL Notice File No. Z-2018-0116-12.



Source: Town of Windsor.

Exhibit 4
Local Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zones



Source: World Street Map. County of Sonoma. CAL FIRE FRAP.

7,500 3,750 0 7,500
Feet

Exhibit 5
Fire Hazard Severity Zones

Recent Wildfires

Between 1964 and 2020, Sonoma County experienced 23 large and/or costly wildfires. Between 2017 and 2020, a series of large and damaging wildfires burned over 300,000 acres, destroyed nearly 7,000 structures, and resulted in fatalities in Sonoma County.[18] Notable fires that occurred between 2017 and 2024 are discussed further, below, and their proximities to the project site are illustrated in Exhibit 6.

- The 2017 Nuns Fire (a part of the 2017 Central LNU Complex) burned 56,566 acres, destroyed 1,355 structures, damaged 172 structures, and caused three fatalities. The Nuns Fire came within approximately 13 miles of the project site.
- The 2017 Tubbs Fire started in northeastern Calistoga, California, approximately 12 miles east of the project site, and burned 36,000 acres over 123 days.[19] The fire destroyed 5,636 structures, damaged an additional 317 structures, and caused 22 deaths.[20] The Tubbs Fire came within approximately 4 miles of the project site.
- The 2019 Kincade Fire started near the Geysers geothermal field (northeast of Geyserville, California), approximately 15.6 miles north-northeast of the project site, and burned 77,758 acres over 14 days.[21] The Kincade Fire posed a significant fire threat to the Town of Windsor, requiring evacuation of all residents, businesses, and governmental offices within Town limits, including the Town's Emergency Operations Center. The fire reached the edge of Town limits and was poised to burn through the Town. Fortunately, the fire was stopped through the aggressive firefighting tactics of local and Statewide firefighting agencies deployed to the area and a shift in weather conditions.
- The 2020 Glass Fire started near Deer Park in Napa County and burned over 67,484 acres in 23 days. The fire destroyed 1,528 structures and damaged an additional 282 structures across both Napa and Sonoma counties.[22] The Glass Fire came within approximately 9 miles of the project site.
- The 2020 LNU Lightning Complex fire burned over 363,220 acres across five counties (Napa, Solano, Lake, Sonoma, and Yolo); 57,563 acres burned in Sonoma County and 303 structures were destroyed.[23] The Walbridge portion of the LNU Lightning Complex Fire came within approximately 4 miles of the project site.

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[18] Sonoma County. 2021. Sonoma County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Update 2021. Volume 1: Area-Wide Elements.

[19] California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). 2019. Tubbs Fire Incident. Website: https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents/2017/10/8/tubbs-fire-central-lnu-complex/. Accessed January 28, 2025.

[20] Ibid.

[21] California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). 2020. Kincade Fire Incident. Website: https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents/2019/10/23/kincade-fire/. Accessed January 28, 2025.

[22] California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). 2022. Glass Fire Incident. Website: https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents/2020/9/27/glass-fire/. Accessed January 28, 2025.

[23] California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). 2023. LNU Lightning Complex Incident. Website: https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents/2020/8/17/lnu-lightning-complex. Accessed January 28, 2025.

- The 2022 Roblar Fire started near Roblar Road southwest of Rohnert Park in western Sonoma County, approximately 16 miles south of the project site.[24] The fire burned approximately 63 acres and resulted in one fatality, according to the County Sheriff's Office.[25]
- The 2024 Point Fire started near Geyserville near Lake Sonoma Recreation Area, approximately 14 miles northwest of the project site.[26] The fire resulted in the evacuation of approximately 400 residents northwest of Dry Creek Valley, burned approximately 1,207 acres and resulted in the loss of three structures and damage to two structures. One firefighter was injured and 328 people were ordered to evacuate.[27,28] The Point Fire came within 11 miles of the project site.

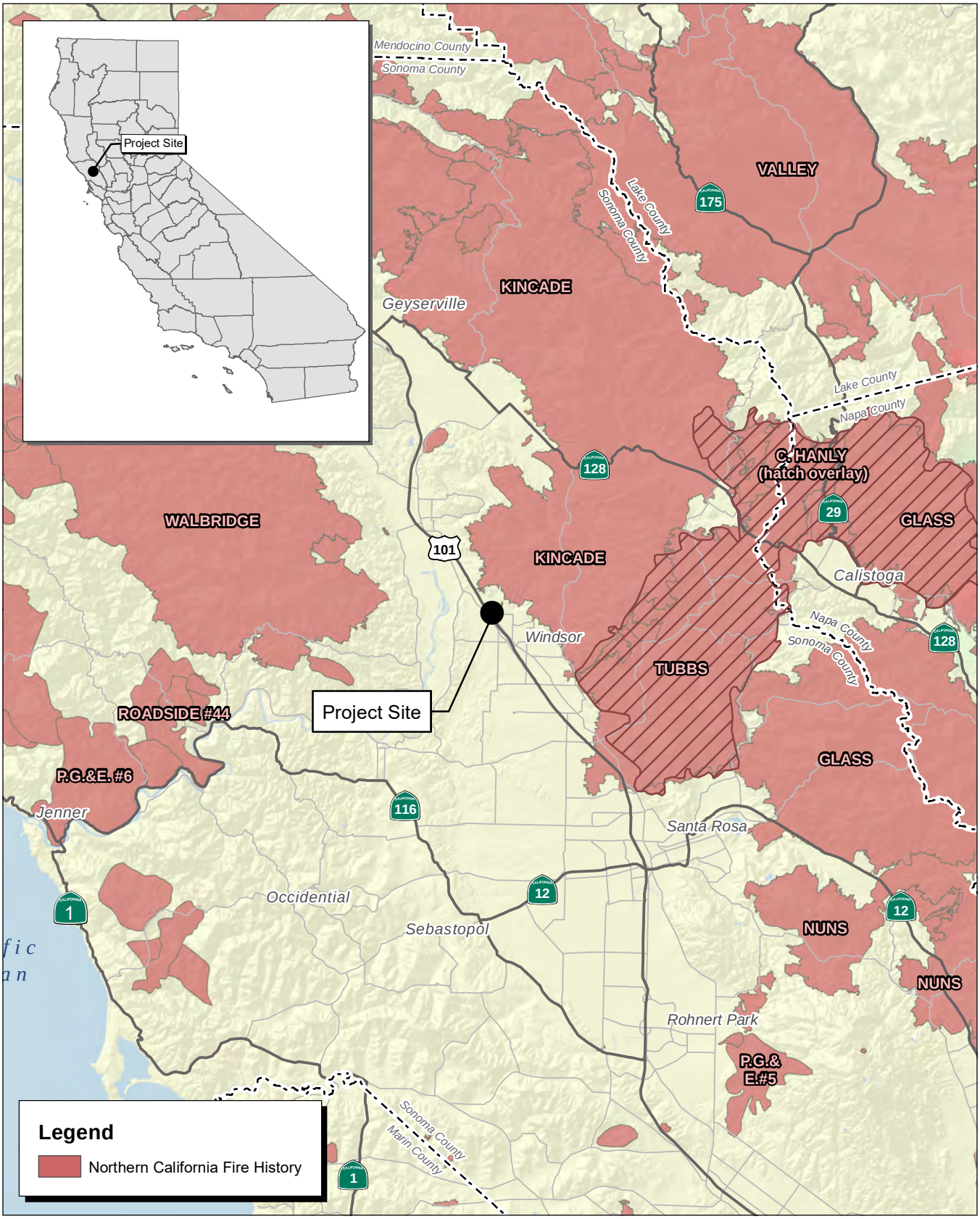
[24] California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). Roblar Fire. Website: https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents/2022/6/27/roblar-fire. Accessed February 10, 2025.

[25] Atagi. C. The Press Democrat. 2022. Fatal Roblar Fire moved quickly, 'looked hot,' neighbor says. Website: https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/fatal-roblar-fire-moved-quickly-looked-hot-neighbor-says/. Accessed February 10, 2025.

[26] California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). 2024. Point Fire. Website: https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents/2024/6/16/point-fire/updates/e14cac15-00ab-4086-b546-e1361bd17611. Accessed February 2, 2025.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Callahan, M. The Press Democrat. 2024. Sheriff's Office: Point Fire evacuations lifted, residents advised to use caution as they return. Website: https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/point-fire-sonoma-evacuations/. Accessed February 2, 2025.



Source: Census 2000 Data, The California Spatial Information Library (CaSIL). CAL FIRE, USDA Forest Service.

5 2.5 0 5
Miles

Exhibit 6
Recent Wildfires in Northern California

Wildfire Response

In California, responsibility for wildfire prevention and suppression is shared by federal, State, and local agencies. Federal agencies are responsible for federal lands in Federal Responsibility Areas (FRAs). The State of California has determined that some non-federal lands in unincorporated areas with watershed value are of Statewide interest and has classified those lands as SRAs, which are managed by CAL FIRE. All incorporated areas and other unincorporated lands are classified as LRAs. The project site is within an LRA (see Exhibit 4 and Exhibit 5).

Fire protection services in the Town are provided by Sonoma County Fire District, which has two fire stations in the Town. The closest station to the project site is Sonoma County Fire District Station 3, approximately 1.6 miles south of the project site at 8600 Windsor Road. Station 1, also serving as the Sonoma County Fire District Headquarters, is approximately 2 miles southeast of the project site at 8200 Old Redwood Highway. The Sonoma County Sheriff's Office is contracted by the Town to provide law enforcement services to the Town. Under this contract, the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office would be responsible for executing evacuations.

The Town utilizes Facebook and Nextdoor (both internet communication platforms) to release important information to the community including evacuation alerts. Although the Town also currently uses Nixle, an internet communication platform, the Town will be retiring its account on July 1, 2025. However, Windsor Police Department will retain Nixle as an alerting tool. In addition, Sonoma County uses SoCo Alert to disseminate messages regarding the safety, property, or welfare of Sonoma County residents. Local fire and law enforcement agencies may also use Nixel to disseminate public safety messages.

The Town, in coordination with Sonoma County Emergency Management, Sonoma County Fire District, Sonoma County Sheriff's Office, and other local agencies in the County, has made significant improvements in emergency preparedness, response, and communications since the wildfires that occurred in 2017. Such improvements include use of the aforementioned communication platforms; development of internal preparedness procedures and practices as part of the Sonoma County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazards Mitigation Plan and the Sonoma County Emergency Operations Plan (both discussed under Regulatory Framework, below); establishment of a publicly available web page on how to prepare for and what to do in the event of an emergency;[29] development and publication of evacuation maps (as discussed under Evacuation Routes, below); adoption of more stringent building code requirements (as discussed under Town of Windsor Municipal Code, below); and establishment of a neighborhood-focused COPE program.[30]

[29] Town of Windsor. 2023. Emergency Preparedness & Resources. Website: https://www.townofwindsor.com/1116/Emergency-Preparedness. Accessed January 28, 2025.

[30] Town of Windsor. 2023. Windsor COPE. Website: https://www.townofwindsor.com/1293/COPE-of-Windsor. Accessed August 19, 2023.

Evacuation Routes

U.S. Highway 101 (US-101) and Old Redwood Highway are the main north–south routes out of Town during evacuations.[31,32] As required by the State of California, the recently adopted 2040 General Plan PHS Element, Figure PHS-3 (Evacuation Routes) identifies additional evacuation routes, including Windsor River Road, Starr Road, Windsor Road, Hembree Lane, Brooks Road, Arata Lane, Los Amigos Road, and Shiloh Road, which are suitable for localized evacuations. Evacuation Zone Maps compiled by the Windsor Police Department and The Town of Windsor Climate Resilience Plan split the Town into four Evacuation Zone Areas. The project site is located in Zone WI-B, Subzone WI-B01. Per the Town's Evacuation Map Lookup Tool, Zone WI-B would use Arata Lane to Los Amigos Road, US-101, and Old Redwood Highway to evacuate to the north; Arata Lane to Hembree Lane[33] to Old Redwood Highway and US-101 to the south; and Arata Lane to Old Redwood Highway to Windsor River Road to the west. It is reasonable to assume that evacuation of the project site would primarily use Arata Lane to Old Redwood Highway to US-101.[34,35] Actual evacuation route may vary depending on the location of the threat causing the need for evacuation.

Arata Lane forms the southern boundary of the project site and US-101 is approximately 840 feet to the west; however, there are no US-101 on-ramps from Arata Lane. Instead, traffic is required to travel west of US-101 to Old Redwood Highway. From the Old Redwood Highway/Arata Lane intersection, a southbound US-101 on-ramp is located approximately 2,100 feet to the north. Access to a northbound US-101 on-ramp requires traffic to turn south from the Old Redwood Highway/Arata Lane intersection and then left on Windsor River Road, a distance of approximately 1.4 miles.

Construction of a US-101 and Arata Lane northbound on-ramp is planned by the Town and is included in the Town's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Fiscal Years (FY) 2023–2028; design of the northbound ramp is expected to occur in FY 2026–2027.[36] Development, such as the proposed project, contributes to funding these improvements via payment of traffic impact fees. Construction of the Los Amigos Road extension is needed before construction of the on-ramp can begin. Until such construction takes place, the proposed project would include partial extension of Los Amigos Road from its intersection with Arata Lane to the project site's north end (Exhibit 2). While the project site would have two points of ingress and egress, only the Arata Lane entrance could be considered an emergency access point since both points of access return to Arata Lane. Timing for construction of the new US-101 on-ramp and further extension of Los Amigos Road is dependent on funding sources and is unknown at this time.

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[31] Town of Windsor. 2021. Town of Windsor Emergency Evacuation Zones/Sub-Zones. May 2021.

[32] Town of Windsor. 2023. 2040 General Plan Public Health and Safety Element. August 16.

[33] The southern route of evacuation for the Zone may vary depending on the location of the threat causing the need for evacuation.

[34] Town of Windsor. Emergency Preparedness and Resources. Website: https://www.townofwindsor.ca.gov/1116/Emergency-Preparedness-Resources. Accessed April 15, 2025.

[35] Town of Windsor. 2022. Climate Resilience Plan. February. Website: https://windsorready.com/summary. Accessed January 28, 2025.

[36] Town of Windsor. 2023. Capital Improvement Plan FY2023-2028, June 21. Website:https://www.townofwindsor.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/28313/Capital-Improvement-Projects-FY-2023-2028. Accessed April 15, 2025.

Regulatory Framework

Federal

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires a State-level mitigation plan as a condition of disaster assistance. There are two different levels of State disaster plans: Standard and Enhanced. States that develop an approved Enhanced State Plan can increase the amount of funding available through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. The Act also established new requirements for local mitigation plans.

National Fire Plan

The National Fire Plan was developed in August 2000, following a historic wildfire season. Its intent is to establish plans for active response to severe wildfires and their impacts on communities while ensuring sufficient firefighting capacity. The plan addresses firefighting, rehabilitation, hazardous fuels reduction, community assistance, and accountability.

State

California Board of Forestry

The Board of Forestry maintains fire safe road regulations as part of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations. This includes requirements for road width, surface treatments, grade, radius, turnarounds, turnouts, structures, driveways, and gate entrances. These regulations are intended to ensure safe access for emergency wildland fire equipment and civilian evacuation.

California Fire and Building Codes (2022)

On September 20, 2005, the California Building Standards Commission approved the Office of the State Fire Marshal's emergency regulations amending the California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 2, known as the CBC.[37] The California Fire Code (Fire Code), is Part 9 of California Code of Regulations Title 24, and it includes provisions for ignition-resistant construction standards in Fire Hazard Severity Zones. It establishes the minimum requirements consistent with nationally recognized best practices to safeguard public health, safety, and general welfare from the hazards of fire, explosion, or dangerous conditions in new and existing buildings, structures, and premises and to provide safety and assistance to firefighters and emergency responders during emergency operations. The Fire Code is the primary means for authorizing and enforcing procedures and mechanisms to ensure the safe handling and storage of any substance that may pose a threat to public health and safety. The Fire Code regulates the use, handling, and storage requirements for hazardous materials at fixed facilities. The Fire Code and the CBC use a hazard classification system to determine what protective measures are required to protect property and life from fire hazards. These measures may include construction standards, separations from property lines, and specialized equipment. To ensure that these safety measures are met, the Fire

[37] California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). 2023. Wildland Hazards and Building Codes. Website: https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/code-development-and-analysis/wildland-hazards-and-building-codes. Accessed January 30, 2025.

Code employs a permit system based on hazard classification. The provisions of the Fire Code apply to the construction, alternation, movement, enlargement, replacement, repair, equipment, use and occupancy, location, maintenance, removal, and demolition of every building or structure or appurtenances connected or attached to such building structures throughout California.

California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 9, Chapter 7 of the Fire Code addresses fire-resistance-rated construction; CBC (Part 2), Chapter 7A addresses materials and construction methods for exterior wildfire exposure. Fire Code Chapter 8 addresses fire-related interior finishes; Chapter 9 addresses fire protection systems; and Chapter 10 addresses fire-related means of egress, including fire apparatus access road width requirements.

Per Section 701A.3.2 of Title 24, Part 2, new buildings located in any FHSZ within an SRA, any Very High FHSZ within in LRA, or any WUI Fire Area as designated by the enforcing agency for which an application for a building permit is submitted must comply. The section establishes minimum standards for materials and material assemblies and provides a reasonable level of exterior wildfire exposure protection for buildings located in such designated areas. Such standards include the use of ignition-resistant and non-combustible materials, specific roofing configurations, and ventilation coverings.

Prior to building permit final approval, Fire Code Section 4906 also contains existing regulations for vegetation and fuel management to maintain clearances around all structures. These requirements establish minimum standards to protect buildings located in all FHSZs within SRAs and WUI Fire Areas. The Fire Code includes provisions for ignition-resistant construction standards for new buildings.

The California Fire Plan

The Strategic Fire Plan (Fire Plan) for California is the State's road map for reducing the risk of wildfire. The most recent version of the Fire Plan was finalized in August 2018 and directs each CAL FIRE unit to revise and update its locally specific Fire Management Plan (Management Plan).[38] Management Plans assess the fire situation within each of the 21 CAL FIRE units and six contract counties and address wildfire protection areas, initial attack success, assets and infrastructure at risk, pre-fire management strategies, and accountability within their geographical boundaries.

California Office of Emergency Services

The California Office of Emergency Services (Cal/OES) prepares the State of California Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP). The SHMP identifies hazard risks and includes a vulnerability analysis and a hazard mitigation strategy. The SHMP is federally required under the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 for the State to receive federal disaster assistance funding.

[38] California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). 2018. 2018 Strategic Plan for California. State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection. August.

State Emergency Plan

The foundation of California's emergency planning and response is a Statewide mutual aid system, which is designed to ensure that adequate resources, facilities, and other support are provided to jurisdictions whenever their own resources prove to be inadequate to cope with an emergency situation.

The California Disaster and Civil Defense Master Mutual Aid Agreement (California Government Code §§ 8555–8561) requires signatories to the agreement to prepare operational plans to use within their jurisdiction and outside their area. These operational plans include fire and non-fire emergencies related to natural, technological, and war contingencies. The State of California, all State agencies, all political subdivisions, and all fire districts signed this agreement in 1950.

Section 8568 of the California Government Code, the California Emergency Services Act (Act), states that "the State Emergency Plan shall be in effect in each political subdivision of the State, and the governing body of each political subdivision shall take action as may be necessary to carry out the provisions thereof." The Act provides the basic authorities for conducting emergency operations following the proclamations of emergencies by the Governor or appropriate local authority, such as a City Manager. The provisions of the Act are further reflected and expanded on by appropriate local emergency ordinances. The Act describes the function and operations of government at all levels during extraordinary emergencies, including war.

All local emergency plans are extensions of the State of California Emergency Plan. The State Emergency Plan conforms to the requirements of California's SEMS, which is the system required by Government Code 8607(a) for managing emergencies involving multiple jurisdictions and agencies.[39] The SEMS incorporates the functions and principles of the Incident Command System (ICS), the Master Mutual Aid Agreement, existing mutual aid systems, the operational area concept, and multi-agency or inter-agency coordination. Local governments must use the SEMS to be eligible for funding of their response-related personnel costs under State disaster assistance programs. The SEMS consists of five organizational levels that are activated as necessary, including: field response, local government, operational area, regional, and State. Cal/OES divides the State into several mutual aid regions. The Town is within Mutual Aid Region II, which includes Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Sonoma, Lake, Napa, Marin, Solano, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Alameda, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Benito, and Monterey counties.[40]

California Public Resources Code

The California Public Resources Code includes fire safety regulations that restrict the use of equipment that may produce a spark, flame, or fire; require the use of spark arrestors[41] on construction equipment that use an internal combustion engine; specify requirements for the safe use of gasoline-powered tools

[39] California Office of Emergency Services (Cal/OES). 2010. Regulations for the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS). California Emergency Management Agency.

[40] California Office of Emergency Services (Cal/OES). 2023. Coastal Region Operational Area Assignments. June.

[41] A spark arrester is any device that prevents the emission of flammable debris from a combustion source (i.e., fireplaces, internal combustion engines, and wood-burning stoves).

in fire hazard areas; and stipulate fire suppression equipment that must be provided on-site for various types of work in fire-prone areas.

These regulations include the following:

- Earthmoving and portable equipment with internal combustion engines would be equipped with a spark arrester to reduce the potential for igniting a wildland fire (PRC § 4442);
- Appropriate fire suppression equipment would be maintained during the highest fire danger period—from April 1 to December 1 (PRC § 4428);
- On days when a burning permit is required, flammable materials would be removed to a distance of 10 feet from any equipment that could produce a spark, fire, or flame, and the construction contractor would maintain the appropriate fire suppression equipment (PRC § 4427); and
- On days when a burning permit is required, portable tools powered by gasoline-fueled internal combustion engines would not be used within 25 feet of any flammable materials (PRC § 4431).

Government Code Sections 65302 and 65305.5, Senate Bill 1241 (Kehoe) of 2012

Senate Bill (SB) 124 requires cities and counties to address fire risk in SRAs and Very High FHSZs in the safety element of their general plans. The bill also amended CEQA to direct amendments to the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Environmental Checklist to include questions related to fire hazard impacts for projects located in or near lands classified as SRAs and Very High FHSZs. In adopting these Guidelines amendments, the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) recognized that, generally, low-density leapfrog development may create higher wildfire risks than high-density infill development.

California Public Utilities Commission General Order 166

General Order 166 Standard 1.E requires investor-owned utilities (IOUs) with overhead electric facilities located in the High Fire Threat District to develop a Wildfire Mitigation Plan which describes measures that the electric utility will implement to mitigate the threat of powerline fires generally. Additionally, this standard requires that IOUs outline a plan to mitigate powerline fires when wind conditions exceed the structural design standards of the line during Red Flag Warning in a high fire threat area. Wildfire Mitigation Plans created by IOUs are required to identify specific parts of the utility's service territory where the conditions described above may occur simultaneously. Standard 11 requires that utilities report annually to the CPUC regarding compliance with General Order 166.[42]

Regional

Association of Bay Area Governments Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP) for the San Francisco Bay Area was updated in 2010, in partnership with the Bay Conservation

[42] California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). 2021. General Order Number 166. Adopted July 23, 1998. Revised May 20, 2021.

and Development Commission, to include the Adapting to Rising Tides Program, which supports local governments in the regional plan for existing and future hazards of climate change. This detailed 5-year plan identifies potential natural and human-made hazards, assesses their potential risks, and includes mitigation methods to reduce risks. The potential hazards identified in the plan include earthquakes and liquefaction, wildfires, floods, drought, solar storms, dam or levee failure, disease outbreak, freezes, wind, heat, thunder and lightning storms, siltation, tornadoes, hazardous materials, slope failure and mudflows, and other hazards. Similarly, mitigation measures include hazard event planning, emergency preparedness coordination, education, facility upgrades, and monitoring actions.

Local

Sonoma County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Town is included in the Sonoma County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (Sonoma County MJHMP), which incorporates wildfire hazard mitigation principles and practices into the routine government activities and functions of the County. The Sonoma County MJHMP recommends specific actions that are designed to protect people and community assets from losses to those hazards that pose the greatest risk. Mitigation activities identified in the Sonoma County MJHMP related to wildfire include fuel reduction and vegetation management, creation of defensible spaces, enhancement of building codes, use of fire-resistant materials, and increased education efforts.[43]

The Town participated in the Sonoma County MJHMP, including the adoption of Windsor's Annex to the MJHMP, which identifies effective and feasible actions to reduce the risks posed by potential natural hazards. With inclusion of the Town's Annex, the MJHMP functions as the Town's local hazard mitigation plan. The Sonoma County MJHMP assesses various risks from hazards such as drought, earthquakes, flood, and wildfire; lists mitigation actions; and describes the process of implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the plan. Wildfire is identified as a high threat that is likely to increase as climate change is exacerbated.

Sonoma County Emergency Operations Plan

The Sonoma County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) is intended to facilitate coordination between agencies and jurisdictions within Sonoma County prior to, during, and after disasters, including wildfire. The EOP outlines the specific actions that will be carried out when an emergency exceeds or has the potential to exceed the capacity of a single agency or jurisdiction to respond. The EOP identifies the project site's wildfire hazard index primarily as Low relative hazard to Very Low relative hazard. Minor areas of the project site are as identified as Moderate relative hazard. Areas to the north and northwest are identified as Very Low relative hazard, while areas to the east, south, and west are designated in a manner similar to the project site.

Town of Windsor Emergency Operations Plan

The purpose of the Town of Windsor EOP is to ensure the most effective, efficient, and economical allocation of resources for the maximum benefit and protection of the Town in times of emergency. The

[43] Sonoma County. 2021. Sonoma County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. October. Website: https://permitsonoma.org/longrangeplans/adoptedlong-rangeplans/hazardmitigation. Accessed January 30, 2025.

objective of this plan is to incorporate and coordinate all the personnel and facilities of the Town, the Town's emergency services partners Windsor Police Department and Sonoma County Fire District, and associated agencies and organizations, into an efficient organization capable of responding to the whole community during any emergency. The Town's EOP is an extension of the Sonoma County EOP and the State of California Emergency Plan.

Town of Windsor Climate Resilience Plan

The Town's Climate Resilience Plan identifies and quantifies the Town's potential climate change risks and vulnerabilities. The Climate Resilience Plan also identifies resilience strategies that resonate with the community and can be implemented in the coming years to reduce climate-related risks. The Climate Resilience Plan guides current and future decision-makers in protecting the natural and built environment, residents and visitors, the economic vibrancy of the community, and the overall quality of life within Windsor. Wildfire is identified as a risk within the Town. To address wildfire risks, the Climate Resilience Plan includes goals to enhance vegetation management and defensible space efforts, expand home hardening, and cultivate wildfire-adapted landscape practices. The Climate Resilience Plan also includes a goal to enhance community evacuation planning and evacuation, in accordance with the findings and recommendations for evacuation routes from the Windsor Police Department[44]

Town of Windsor 2040 General Plan

The 2040 General Plan includes goals and policies that convey the Town's long-term vision and guide local decision-making to reach that vision. Goal PHS-1 of the 2040 General Plan PHS Element and associated policies are related to emergency response and preparedness, including emergency vehicle access, and Goal PHS-4 of the 2040 General Plan PHS Element and associated policies are related to fire hazards.

Goal PHS-1 **Emergency Response and Preparedness.** Maintain a high level of emergency preparedness to respond to natural or human-caused disasters.

Policy PHS-1.3 **Emergency Vehicle Access.** The Town shall require adequate primary and alternative access for emergency vehicles be provided to all new developments and be maintained for existing development.

Goal PHS-4 **Fire Hazards.** Minimize the risks to lives and properties due to wildland fire hazards through education and an understanding of the natural environment.

Policy PHS-4.1 **Fire Protection Design for New Development.** New development adjacent to heavily grassed and semi-arid hillsides shall be designed to minimize fire hazards to life and property, including the use of fire preventive site design (i.e., defensible space), landscaping and building materials, and fire suppression techniques.

[44] Town of Windsor. Emergency Preparedness and Resources. Website: https://www.townofwindsor.ca.gov/1116/Emergency-Preparedness-Resources. Accessed April 15, 2025.

Policy PHS-4.16 **Establish Firebreaks.** Establish firebreaks around subdivisions in the North of Arata area and Jensen Lane area. These firebreaks shall also serve as roadways and access points in the event of an emergency and provide adequate access for fire and emergency vehicles and equipment.

Policy PHS-4.2 **County Fire Hazard Reduction Programs.** In areas beyond the Town limits designated as a High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone by CAL FIRE or in the wildland urban interface, the Town shall encourage the County to undertake or continue programs to minimize fuel buildup around residences and other occupied structures. Such programs should include the establishment and maintenance of a fuel break between fire risk areas and urbanized areas.

Policy PHS-4.3 **Fire Suppression Requirements.** The Town shall require additional mitigation for development projects unable to satisfy minimum fire flow requirements.

Policy PHS-4.4 **Fire Interjurisdictional Coordination.** The Town shall encourage the County to incorporate any measures provided by the fire protection service providers as conditions of project approval for projects in unincorporated areas located within a Moderate, High, or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone or in the wildland urban interface.

Policy PHS-4.5 **State Responsibility Lands.** The Town shall generally avoid inclusion of lands within the State Responsibility Area in its Sphere of Influence, since annexation of these areas requires the Fire District to assume responsibility for wildland fire protection.

Policy PHS-4.6 **Project Review for Proposals in Fire Hazard Areas.** The Town shall require that fire hazards be identified during project review by comparing the project site against the fire hazard maps prepared by CAL FIRE. Project sites that lie within the Moderate, High, or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones or in the wildland urban interface areas shall be subject to design modifications and conditions to minimize potential exposure to wildland fire and to allow adequate response, including rapid access by emergency responders and sufficient capacity for evacuation.

Policy PHS-4.7 **Weed Abatement.** The Town shall continue to support the Fire District’s efforts to maintain and implement a Weed Abatement program to prevent fire hazards created by vegetative growth.

Policy PHS-4.9 **Priority Undergrounding**. Prioritize undergrounding of utilities along emergency access and evacuation routes to make them more reliable and to minimize hazards from fallen power lines.

Town of Windsor Municipal Code

The California Fire Code and Appendices was adopted into the Municipal Code under Title VI, Fire Prevention and Protection, Chapter 1, Article 2. The Town adopted the most recent 2022 California Fire Code under Ordinance No. 2022-369 on December 21, 2022. The California Fire Code is discussed under State Regulations. Section 4903 of the California Fire Code calls for a fire protection plan that addresses water supply, access, building ignition and fire-resistance factors, fire protection systems and equipment, defensible space, and vegetation management for any new residential building within a WUI Fire Area. The property owner shall record a covenant, in a form satisfactory to county counsel, which ensures that the approved plan will be implemented and maintained. Under Municipal Code Section 7.2.317 Section 702A, the entire Town is classified as a Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone. (Exhibit 4); thus, the Town's Building Code requiring use of fire-resistant materials and construction methods applies to all properties in Town, regardless of location. As such, compliance with Public Resources Code, Article 2 (Prohibited Activities), including the use of fire suppression equipment (PRC § 4228) and limitations on use of gas-powered tools (PRC § 4331), is required. Additionally, Municipal Code Sections 7-2-400 through 7-2-424 require new projects to incorporate exterior design features such as ignition-resistant construction materials, roofing, exterior coverings, venting, decking, porches and sealing of any gaps around doors, windows, eaves and vents. Municipal Code Section 16-6-300 requires new projects to pay project impact fees to ensure sufficient fire protection services. Furthermore, as stated above, California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 9, Chapter 7A addresses materials and construction methods for exterior wildfire exposure. Confirmation of the proposed project's compliance with Chapter 7A is provided in Attachment A to this memorandum.

As a part of Ordinance No. 2022-369, among other updates, the Town amended the Municipal Code to repeal and replace Title VII, Building and Housing Code. Title VII includes numerous provisions related to residential development and recognizes the creation of the Division of Fire Protection for Sonoma County Fire District (Section 7-2-308 Section 701A.1 to Section 7-2-321-Section 710A.3) that is responsible for implementation and enforcement of fire-related requirements in the Municipal Code. Additionally, the Town requires compliance with the 2022 California Residential Code and Fire Code Section 4905.4 related to requirements for WUI Fire Areas.

Methodology and Thresholds of Significance

This evaluation focuses on whether the proposed project would result in changes to the physical environment that would cause or exacerbate adverse effects related to wildfires and whether the proposed project would be placed in a location susceptible to wildfire or post-wildfire conditions. The evaluation also includes a determination of whether the changes to the physical environment caused by the proposed project would impair or interfere with emergency response plans, expose people to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire, expose people/structures to downslope flooding or landslides, or include the installation or maintenance of infrastructure that may exacerbate fire risk.

Although the proposed project is not located in or near SRAs or lands classified as Very High FHSZ, for purposes of this analysis, the questions in the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Environmental Checklist are

used as a framework to determine whether wildfire impacts would be considered significant from implementation of the proposed project.[45] The following criteria are from Section 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, powerlines 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?

In addition to the above criteria, this analysis includes the following CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Environmental Checklist questions related to wildfire hazard from Section IX, Hazards and Hazardous Materials:

> a) Impair implementation of, or physically interfere with, an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?
>
> b) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?

Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This section discusses potential impacts associated with the development of the proposed project and provides mitigation measures where appropriate.

Emergency Response/Evacuation Plan Consistency

Impact WILD-1: The proposed project would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

Impact Analysis

Consistent with guidance provided in CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, a significant impact would occur if the proposed project were located in or near SRA lands or lands classified as Very High FHSZ and if construction or operation of the proposed project would substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

[45] Office of Attorney General. 2022. Best Practices for Analyzing and Mitigating Wildfire Impacts of Development Projects under the California Environmental Quality Act. October.

The project site is located within an LRA, not an SRA. The project site is not located in a Very High or High FHSZ as designated by CAL FIRE and the State Fire Marshall. It is noted that, as indicated by Section 7-2-416 of the Municipal Code, the entire Town shall be considered as a Moderate FHSZ for the purposes of implementing additional regulations per the Fire Code.

The proposed project is subject to the Sonoma County MJHMP (which includes the Town's Annex) and EOP, as well as the Town's EOP.[46] Construction and operation activities related to the proposed project would not conflict with policies or goals of these plans. These plans are generally applicable and do not identify any specific actions or considerations directly for the project site. The proposed project would comply with general guidance provided by these plans, including those for emergency response and general hazard mitigation measures, through conformance with the requirements of the California Building Standards Code (specifically Chapter 7A as stated in Attachment A) and the 2040 Town of Windsor General Plan's Public and Safety Element).

As shown on Exhibit 3, US-101 and Old Redwood Highway are two main north–south routes utilized by the Town during evacuations and are identified within the local Evacuation Zone maps provided by the Windsor Police Department.[47] Construction traffic would utilize these roads and Arata Lane to access the project site. Construction traffic would be temporary and would not be expected to significantly block traffic, as construction would be completed in one phase and would involve only minor off-site improvements to Arata Lane, as shown in Sheet TM5 of the Tentative Map for the proposed project. The project would not impact the use of emergency evacuation routes through the modification of existing roadways (either through elimination, reduction in width, or blockage).

Operational traffic would contribute to vehicle trips on these roads and other roads identified as emergency evacuation routes by the Windsor Police Department, as shown in the Town's Evacuation Map Lookup Tool for the WI-B evacuation zone.[48] An impact could occur related to the physical interference with an emergency evacuation plan if a project's additional traffic would significantly delay or inhibit overall evacuation of an area. The proposed project's is relatively small and vehicular traffic associated with it would not significantly delay an emergency evacuation because evacuation notices are typically given with as much notice as possible and prevent, to the extent feasible, evacuation trips from all occurring at once.

The 2040 General Plan anticipated buildout within the Town's Urban Growth Boundary, as well as transportation infrastructure improvements to which the proposed project would contribute, including the installation of two travel lanes, a parking lane, a buffered bicycle lane, and a contiguous sidewalk as well as planter, curb, and gutter improvements along the Los Amigos Road extension. While the proposed project would increase the number of people in the area, it would also contribute to the Town's transportation infrastructure through payment of traffic impact fees and the construction of a partial

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[46] Town of Windsor. 2024. Emergency Operations Plan. Website: https://www.townofwindsor.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/30400/2024-Town-of-Windsor-Emergency-Operations-Plan-. Accessed April 15, 2025.

[47] Town of Windsor. Emergency Preparedness and Resources. Website: https://www.townofwindsor.ca.gov/1116/Emergency-Preparedness-Resources. Accessed April 15, 2025.

[48] Town of Windsor. Emergency Preparedness and Resources. Website: https://www.townofwindsor.ca.gov/1116/Emergency-Preparedness-Resources. Accessed April 15, 2025.

extension of the Los Amigos Road extension. Future completion of the Los Amigos Road extension will facilitate construction of the US-101 and Arata Lane northbound on-ramp, which would benefit local traffic circulation and lead to improved evacuation efficiency by providing closer US-101 access.

As stated above, the project site would include two ingress and egress points. However, only the one on Arata Lane would be considered as an emergency access point, as the one on the proposed extension of Los Amigos Road also leads to Arata Lane and therefore does not provide an alternate emergency route. The proposed project was reviewed by the Town's Fire Marshal to ensure adequate emergency access in accordance with applicable federal, State, and local regulations. The proposed project would slightly exceed the Fire Marshal's requirements of a 1:30 ratio regarding access points by providing one emergency access point on Arata Lane for the proposed project's 32 units, as illustrated on Exhibit 2.

The applicant is coordinating with Town staff to secure Fire Marshall approval for an exception that would allow one point of access for 32 units. This request is based on the following factors, as shown in the applicant's Project Statement,[49] provided as Attachment B to this memorandum:

- The project site can be accessed via Arata Lane from the west where the proposed private street intersects with Arata Lane at the southern end of the project site.
- The project site can be accessed from the east via Arata Lane or from the south via Los Amigos Road where the proposed private street intersects with the Los Amigos Road extension at the north end of the project site.
- No more than 32 units would be served by the private street as there is no possibility that the proposed private street could be extended to adjacent properties.

As previously mentioned, the project site would be accessible from multiple directions via adjacent roadways, including Arata Lane from the east and west and Los Amigos Road from the south. The proposed project is also accessible to multiple evacuation routes, as delineated in Figure PHS-3 of the 2040 General Plan[50] (see Exhibit 3), which would be accessible via the non-emergency access point on Los Amigos Road as well as via the emergency access point on Arata Lane. Furthermore, all utilities would be installed underground in accordance with 2040 General Plan Policy PHS-4.9, Priority Undergrounding, which would minimize hazards from fallen power lines along evacuation and emergency access routes. In addition, no more than 32 units would be served by the proposed project's private street as there is no possibility that the proposed private street could be extended to adjacent properties. Furthermore, the proposed project would pay applicable fire impact fees in accordance with Section 16-6-300 of the Municipal Code to ensure sufficient fire protection services. Therefore, the proposed project would conform to the objectives of 2040 General Plan Goal PHS-1, Emergency Response and Preparedness, specifically 2040 General Plan Policy PHS-1.3, Emergency Vehicle Access, as well as the objectives of 2040 General Plan Goal PHS-4, Fire Hazards.

[49] Los Amigos Cottages. 2024. Los Amigos Cottages, SB 330 Builders Remedy Application, Windsor CA, Project Statement. November.

[50] Town of Windsor. 2023. 2040 General Plan Public Health and Safety Element. August 16.

Furthermore, the proposed project would benefit from the anticipated relocation of Los Amigos Road north of Arata Lane, thereby allowing for the construction of a US-101 northbound on-ramp from Arata Lane. This on-ramp is part of the Town's CIP and would enhance circulation and increase evacuation routes in the project's direct vicinity.

Overall, with approval of the Fire Marshal for one emergency access point and because the proposed project is not within an SRA; is not classified as a Very High or High FHSZ by CAL FIRE and the State Fire Marshall; would not interfere with applicable emergency response plans; would not substantially impair emergency evacuation plans; would contribute to increased roadway circulation in the project vicinity; and would be consistent with the CBC, impacts would be less than significant in this regard and no mitigation is necessary.

Construction of up to 30 units and the associated off-site roadway improvements (on Arata Lane and the Los Amigos Road extension) would have less than significant impacts related to emergency access. However, development of the 31st and 32nd residential units would exceed the emergency access to residential unit ratio of 1:30 and, therefore, would have potentially significant impacts. Implementation of Mitigation Measure (MM) WILD-1 would ensure that no more than 30 residential units would be constructed at the project site prior to receipt of the Fire Marshal's approval of an exception to the 1:30 emergency access to residential unit ratio. The Fire Marshal's exception would be based on a conclusion that the proposed project's two ingress-egress access routes sufficiently serve as emergency access for the 32 units (see Attachment B). With the implementation of MM WILD-1, impacts would be less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Potentially significant impact (for the 31st and 32nd residential units only).

Mitigation Measures

MM WILD-1 Prior to issuance of the building permit for the 31st residential unit, the applicant shall obtain, and submit to the Town of Windsor, Fire Marshal approval of an exception to the 1:30 emergency access route ratio requirement based on the following factors:

- The project site can be accessed via Arata Lane from the west, where the proposed private street intersects with Arata Lane at the southern end of the project site.
- The project site can be accessed from the east via Arata Lane or from the south via Los Amigos Road where the proposed private street intersects with the Los Amigos Road extension at the north end of the project site.
- No more than 32 units would be served by the private street as there is no possibility that the proposed private street could be extended to adjacent properties.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Expose Project Occupants to Pollutant Concentrations from Wildfire

Impact WILD-2: The proposed project would not, 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.

Impact Analysis

Consistent with guidance provided in CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G, a significant impact would occur if the proposed project were located in or near SRA lands or lands classified as Very High FHSZ and contained specific conditions that would exacerbate wildfire risks, including exposure to wildfire-related pollutants or uncontrolled spread of a wildfire.

The project site is not located in an SRA or a Very High or High FHSZ as designated by CAL FIRE and the State Fire Marshal. It is located within a Moderate FHSZ in an LRA (see Exhibit 4). As indicated by Section 7-2-416 of the Municipal Code, the entire Town shall be considered as a Moderate FHSZ. The purpose of the Town self-designating as Moderate FHSZ is to require the implementation of additional fire protection measures per the State Fire Code.

The project site is relatively flat. The proposed project would maintain the existing topography and would not include new or more pronounced slopes. Because of the lack of slopes on and adjacent to the project site, slope would not be expected to present significant risks related to the spread of wildfire.

Prevailing winds in the vicinity of Windsor are generally from the northwest to the southeast and occur at approximately 10 mph.[51] The project site is not located within an area, nor does it include a feature, that experiences significantly different prevailing winds with the potential to exacerbate wildfire-related risk.

The Town and project site are occasionally subject to reduced air quality as a result of wildfire in the surrounding areas. However, the project site is not located in an area where such impacts are situationally increased, nor would the introduction of the proposed project increase the potential for such occurrences. Furthermore, in the event of on-site fire, the project site would not contain any features that would produce quantities or qualities of air pollutants that are substantially beyond what an average residential development would be expected to produce, as the proposed project would be required to incorporate ignition-resistant design features designed to reduce burn potential and fire spread consistent with the Town Building Code and California Public Resources Code, and therefore, would not increase potential project impacts. In addition, the following project design features described above (see Proposed Project), would further reduce fire risk: compliance with building code standards, project construction would utilize specific materials and equipment, and fencing materials would be fire safe.

Construction of the proposed project would use equipment with combustion engines and other activities which are known to create fires. However, applicable regulations, including the California Public Resources Code, would require that construction equipment use spark arrestors and appropriate fire suppression equipment be maintained on-site. Furthermore, the proposed project would comply with

[51] National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). 2023. U.S. Wind Climatology. May 2023. Website: https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/monitoring/wind/. Accessed January 28, 2025.

regulations for development in Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zones as outlined by the CBC and adopted by 2023 Municipal Code Sections 7-2-400 through 7-2-424, including, but not limited to, ignition-resistant construction materials, roofing, vents, exterior coverings, windows, doors, and decking.

The proposed project would increase the population on a non-urbanized site approximately 0.5 mile from forested woodland to the north and east, where the risk of wildfire is greater than in urban areas where fuels are less abundant. As demonstrated by recent wildfires in Sonoma County, areas on the outer edges of urban development are often susceptible to wildfires due to their proximity to abundant wildfire fuels. Vegetation on the project site consists of trees, shrubs, and grasses. The site is surrounded by pastures and vineyards, with hillsides of oak woodland and savanna further north and east. The land to the south of the project site is developed with single-family residences, and lands west of US-101 are a mix of commercial and residential uses. As a part of project implementation, as noted on the updated Landscaping Plan (April 2025) for Zone 0, ground cover in private yards would be non-vegetative, trees and shrubs within 5 feet of any structure would be maintained at a minimum of 5 feet apart, and all new landscaping would incorporate only firewise plants, approved by the Sonoma County Fire District and the California Fire Safe Council. Implementation of these project features would reduce potential for on-site vegetative fuels and fire spread. Furthermore, lands surrounding the project site may act as buffers in the event of a wildfire. Agricultural lands are often irrigated and managed, reducing the available fuel load and providing terrain on which fire suppression efforts can be implemented. Urban lands with denser development have reduced vegetative fuel loads as compared to the hillsides in the vicinity of the project site. Urban street networks provide emergency response access. Overall, the land uses surrounding the project site provide opportunities for fuel breaks and firefighting efforts in the form of existing and proposed roadways (Arata Lane and the proposed Los Amigos Road partial extension). Specifically, Arata Lane at the southern project site boundary would serve as emergency access and fuel breaks, as would Los Amigos Road at the northern and eastern portion of the site, which would be constructed as part of the project. Fire sprinklers would be required in on-site residences pursuant to the Municipal Code. The proposed project would also be required to comply with California Fire Code Section 701A.3 as adopted by the Town. As such, the proposed project would be constructed with appropriate materials and methods for the construction of roofing, exterior coverings, venting, decking, porches and sealing of any gaps around doors, windows, eaves, and vents(see Attachment A). Also, in accordance with the California Fire Code as adopted and amended by the Town of Windsor, the proposed project would be required to provide sufficient fire hydrants and demonstrate the availability of sufficient fire hydrant water (fire flow).

In conclusion, the project site does not contain specific conditions or features that would exacerbate wildfire risks, including exposure to wildfire-related pollutants or uncontrolled spread of a wildfire, nor would the proposed project introduce such conditions or features during construction or operation. Impacts would be less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Infrastructure That Exacerbates Fire Risk

Impact WILD-3: The proposed project would not require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, powerlines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment.

Impact Analysis

Consistent with guidance provided in CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G, a significant impact would occur if the proposed project were located in or near SRA lands or lands classified as Very High FHSZ, and would include a component that may exacerbate fire risk or require a component to reduce fire risk that would result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment.

The project site is not located in an SRA or a Very High or High FHSZ, as designated by CAL FIRE and the State Fire Marshal. It is located within a Moderate FHSZ in an LRA (see Exhibit 4). As indicated by Section 7-2-416 of the Municipal Code, the entire Town shall be considered as a Moderate FHSZ.

Construction activities may temporarily increase fire risk due to equipment use and other construction actions on the project site that could be ignition sources. However, compulsory compliance with applicable construction equipment regulations regarding the use of spark arrestors and fire suppression equipment, including compliance with Section 6-2-1003 of the Town's Municipal Code, would reduce construction-related risks. Implementation of regular construction site watering consistent with the proposed project's Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) BMPs would also reduce risks associated with wildfire caused by unintentional equipment sparks during grading. Standard construction BMPs, including stipulated by the California Public Resources Code, Article 2 such as the relocation of flammable materials on burn permit days (Section 4227); the use of fire suppression equipment (Section 42228); the avoidance of gas-powered tools on burn permit days (Section 4331); and the use spark arrestors (Section 4442) would also support the suppression of fire sources and guide appropriate response should fire occur during construction activities (see Attachment A). Furthermore, as described above (see Proposed Project), the proposed project would incorporate the following project design features that would further reduce fire risk: compliance with building code standards, project construction would utilize specific materials and equipment, and fencing materials would be fire safe. As such, exacerbation of wildfire risk during construction would be less than significant.

The proposed project does not require the installation or maintenance of infrastructure specifically for the purposes of reducing wildfire risk. The proposed project would include on-site infrastructure including roads, fire hydrants, and utilities similar to the adjacent urban development. The installation and maintenance of such would be completed in a typical manner and would not exhibit unusual characteristics that would exacerbate fire risk or create additional temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment. The proposed project would not require the installation of new aboveground powerline infrastructure and therefore would not exacerbate fire risk on that basis. Any new utilities that would be required would be built underground in accordance with 2040 General Plan Policy PHS-4.9 and the

Municipal Code, which prioritizes the undergrounding of utilities. Furthermore, the electric utility provider serving the project site would be required to develop and implement a Wildfire Mitigation Plan, per CPUC General Order 166, which describes measures that the electric utility will implement to mitigate the threat of powerline fires generally.

Proposed on-site residences would be constructed to current fire and building codes and safety standards which support reduced fire risk. In addition, the proposed project would abide by construction regulations outlined in California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 9, Chapter 7A (see Attachment A). These regulations include safety measures to minimize the threat of fire, including construction of exterior walls with non-combustible or ignition-resistant material from the surface of the ground to the roof system and sealing any gaps around doors, windows, eaves, and vents to prevent intrusion by flame or embers.

Fire sprinklers would be required in residences pursuant to the Municipal Code, which adopts the California Fire Code. The California Fire Code also calls for the preparation of a fire protection plan in Section 4903. The Board of Forestry, via California Code of Regulations Title 14, sets forth the minimum development standards for emergency access, fuel modification, setback, signage, and water supply, which help prevent loss of structures and life by reducing wildfire hazards. The codes and regulations would reduce the risk of loss, injury, or death from wildfire. This evidence, combined with the reduced fuel load on surrounding urban and agricultural land, indicate that the project site has a lower potential for wildfire risk as compared to surrounding areas.

Overall, because development of the proposed project does not include any features that would exacerbate wildfire risk and would implement design features and applicable regulations that would reduce wildfire risk, impacts would be less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Flooding and Landslide Hazards Due to Post-fire Slope Instability/Drainage Changes

Impact WILD-4:	**The proposed project would not 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.**

Impact Analysis

Consistent with guidance provided in CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G, a significant impact would occur if the proposed project were located in or near SRA lands or lands classified as Very High FHSZ and in an area susceptible to downstream flooding or landslide post-fire event.

The project site is not located in an SRA or a Very High or High FHSZ as designated by CAL FIRE and the State Fire Marshal. It is located within a Moderate FHSZ in an LRA (see Exhibit 4). As indicated by Section 7-2-416 of the Municipal Code, the entire Town shall be considered as a Moderate FHSZ. The purpose of the Town self-designating as Moderate FHSZ is to require the implementation of additional fire protection measures per the State Fire Code.

In areas with steep slopes, vegetation and associated root systems act as a support structure for the soil and slopes while preventing significant erosion. Post-fire slope instability occurs when a fire burns an area with steep slopes and destroys the vegetation. During subsequent rain events, stormwater scours the hillsides and removes topsoil. Without topsoil or mature vegetation, slopes become unstable, which results in risks to human life and property.

During construction and operation, on-site stormwater would be managed in accordance with local, regional, and State regulations to ensure that off-site flow of stormwaters would not increase from current levels. The project site is generally flat and is not located in close proximity to areas of significant slope. The project site is not located in a flood zone.[52] The project site's flat grade, distance from any hillside, and adequate drainage would prevent exposure of people or residences to downslope landslides and flooding. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Emergency Response and Evacuation

Impact HAZ-5:	**The proposed project would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.**

Impact Analysis

Similar to CEQA Appendix G Checklist Section XX, Wildfire, Impact(a) (as previously discussed under Impact WILD-1), a significant impact would occur if construction or operation of the proposed project would substantially impair implementation of, or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. As discussed under Impact WILD-1, the project site is subject to the Sonoma County MJHMP and EOP. Construction and operation activities related to the proposed project would not conflict with policies or goals of these plans. These plans are generally applicable and do not

[52] Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). 2016. Flood Map Service Center. Website: https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search?AddressQuery=arata%20lane%2C%20windsor%2C%20ca. Accessed January 28, 2025.

identify any specific actions or considerations directly for the project site. The proposed project would comply with general guidance provided by the plans.

As discussed in Impact WILD-1, the proposed project would have two ingress and egress points, but only one would be considered an emergency access point, which would not comply with the Town's Fire Code requirement for two access points for single-family development with more than 30 units. Impact WILD-1 discussion further lists the reasons why one emergency access point for the proposed project is sufficient. With Fire Marshal approval of one emergency access point for the proposed project, impacts would be less than significant. However, considering Fire Marshal approval may not be secured, impacts related to emergency evacuation could be potentially significant. MM WILD-1 would ensure that no more than 30 residential units would be constructed at the project site without Fire Marshal approval of a single emergency access point. With implementation of MM WILD-1, impacts would be less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Potentially significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

Implement MM WILD-1.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Wildland Fires

Impact HAZ-6:	**The proposed project would not expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.**

Impact Analysis

Consistent with guidance provided in CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, a significant impact would occur if construction or operation of the proposed project would expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. As discussed under Impact WILD-2 and -3, the proposed project would not exacerbate wildfire risk, thereby exposing occupants to wildfire-related pollutants, and would not include infrastructure that exacerbates fire risk. The project site is not located in a High or Very High FHSZ as designated by CAL FIRE; it is noted that the Town has adopted the designation of Moderate FHSZ for the purposes of implementing additional regulations per the State Fire Code.

Areas surrounding the project site consist of rural single-family homes and undeveloped/pastureland to the east and north, a church to the west, and single-family homes to the south, across Arata Lane, with more dense residential development further south and southeast of the project site. As discussed above (Impact WILD-2), agricultural lands are often irrigated and managed, reducing the available fuel load and providing terrain on which fire suppression efforts can be implemented. Urban lands with denser development (exceeding 16 dwelling units per acre) have reduced vegetative fuel load as compared to the hillsides in the vicinity of the project site. Urban street networks, including the Town's evacuation routes as illustrated in the 2040 General Plan PHS Element Figure PHS-3, provide sufficient emergency

response access. In addition, as detailed under Impact WILD-1, the proposed project design provides adequate emergency access via the emergency vehicle access point on Arata Lane to serve the project's proposed 32 units. Furthermore, the project site provides adequate evacuation egress across its two access points, by the non-emergency Los Amigos Road access point as well as the emergency access point on Arata Lane. Furthermore, Arata Lane at the southern project site boundary and the anticipated realigned portion of Los Amigos Road at the northeast portion of the site could all serve as fire breaks.

Considering how far embers can travel (depending on conditions), ember cast and potentially resulting spot fires are possible in the project area in the event of a wildland fire. However, the proposed project would include design features that would reduce the risk of fire. It would be required by the Municipal Code to implement fire-resistance factors, such as fire protection systems and equipment, defensible space, and vegetation management, as would for all future construction which will require review and submittal of building permit applications to the Town for review and approval to ensure compliance with applicable fire-related standards and code requirements. In accordance with the CBC (which was adopted by the Town), the proposed project would use ignition-resistant construction materials, roofing, vents, exterior coverings, windows, doors, and decking in accordance with 2040 Municipal Code Sections 7-2-400 through 7-2-424. Project design, as noted within the updated Landscaping Plan (April 2025), would include vegetation and landscaping feature that would reduce fire risk, including a Zone 0, or a buffer of 5 feet between vegetation, wood fences, gates, or ornamental landscaping and residences or other structures, intended to slow or stop the spread of wildfire while providing increased protection for residences from embers, direct flame contact, and radiant heat. These measures would also incorporate the use of fire-resistant vegetation for proposed and all new landscaping, as approved by the Sonoma County Fire District and the California Fire Safety Council, and would require the avoidance of combustible materials within 6 feet of a structure or deck. Lots with limited side yard area would have no vegetative landscaping but would be landscaped with non-plant materials such as gravel. These include Lots 4-18 and 20-23. Note that of these lots with limited side yard areas, Lots 4, 13, 14, and 18 would have opposite side yards adjacent to public streets, private streets, or private driveway, and those side yards may be landscaped with vegetation. Compliance with the Town's requirements and the requirements set forth in the CBC, as well as implementation of these design features, would reduce fire risk.

The project site does not include and is not located adjacent to or near areas of significant slope, prevailing winds, or vegetation fuel load. This evidence, combined with the distance to High FHSZs, surrounding urban and agricultural land, and the design features discussed above, indicate that the proposed project would not have a significant wildfire risk. As previously discussed, the proposed project would include several features that would ensure the reduction of wildfire risk on-site and comply with applicable construction fire risk regulations, including, but not limited to fire-resistant vegetation; 5-foot buffers between residences and vegetation and other combustible features; and compliance with California Code of Regulations Title 24 Part 9, Chapter 7a, Materials and Construction Methods for Exterior Wildfire Exposure, as stated in Attachment A. In addition, consistent with the California Fire Code as adopted by the Town of Windsor, the proposed project would be required to meet minimum fire flow requirements for residential structures, thereby ensuring sufficient water for firefighting purposes. For these reasons, the proposed project would not be exposed to undue wildland fire risks. Impacts would be less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

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Attachment A:

Clarifications and Supplemental Information

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CLARIFICATIONS AND SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION
FROM ARATA PROPERTIES, LLC
FOR THE LOS AMIGOS COTTAGES DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION
MAY 23, 2025

The Los Amigos Cottages development application was submitted to the Town on December 7, 2023, and determined to be complete on May 1, 2024. Over the course of its review of the development application, the Town has asked that the applicant clarify several aspects of the project. The purpose of this statement is to provide clarifications and/or supplemental information on application materials submitted as part of the Los Amigos Cottages development application in response to the items identified by the Town below.

Item 1: Clarification on Landscaping Materials. At the request of Town Staff, the following clarification is provided on landscaping materials to be utilized by the project to address potential risks associated with wildfire. The project proposes to utilize the following landscaping materials and methods.

- Ground Cover. To reduce the spread of wildfire due to ember casting, mulch and similar ground cover products are prohibited within five feet of all structures. Alternative ground cover materials include, but are not limited to, lava rock, river rock, gravel, decomposed granite or other materials approved by the Fire Marshal. The use of "gorilla fur" type groundcover is prohibited in all areas.

- Vegetation Adjacent to Structures. Trees and shrubs located within five feet of any structure shall be planted and maintained at a minimum distance of five feet apart.

- Allowed Plant Materials. New landscaping shall incorporate only the fire-wise plant materials approved by the Sonoma County Fire District and the California Fire Safe Council. The planting of juniper and manzanita will be prohibited.

- Fire Safe Fencing Materials. To prevent the spread of fire between parcels and structures, fences and walls attached to a structure or deck shall be made of noncombustible materials within six feet of the connection to the structure. Fire Safe Fencing Materials. Firesafe fencing materials include Steel privacy fencing, hogwire, hardiboard, and fire-resistant wood grain vinyl.

An updated Landscape Plan with specific notes reflecting these materials was submitted to the Town on April 3, 2025.

Item 2: Confirmation of Compliance with Building Code Chapter 7A and Public Resources Code Article 2 Standards for Construction. At the request of Town Staff, the applicant confirms that future building permit plans for construction of new homes within the project area will utilize appropriate materials and methods in accordance with applicable requirements of Chapter 7A of the Town's Building Code, including those addressing roofing, exterior coverings, venting, decking, porches and sealing of any gaps around doors, windows, eaves, and vents to prevent intrusion by flame or embers.

During project construction, the project will comply with applicable requirements of Public Resources Code, Article 2 (Prohibited Activities), including but not limited to, the following: Section 4227 (location of flammable materials on burn permit days); Section 4228 (fire suppression equipment); Section 4331 (use of gas-powered tools on burn permit days); and Section 4442 (spark arrestor required).

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Attachment B:

Project Statement

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PROJECT STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Arata Properties, LLC is pleased to present The Los Amigos Cottages – SB 330 Builders Remedy Project, a new community of charming cottage homes located at 263 Arata Lane, near the northwest corner of Arata Lane and the future realigned Los Amigos Road that will be constructed by the Qual Acres project. The Los Amigos Cottages - SB 330 Builders Remedy Project proposes to subdivide the subject 2.72 acre site into 32 residential lots, comprised of twenty six (26) detached single-family homes and six (6) "duet" single-family attached homes. All six (6) of the proposed duet units and one of the detached units (22% of the total units in the Project) will be designated for-sale units for lower income households, exceeding the Town's inclusionary requirements. The project is a "housing development project" under the Housing Crisis Act ("SB 330") and the Housing Accountability Act ("HAA"), and housing "for very low, low-, or moderate-income households" under the HAA. See Gov. Code §§ 65589.5(h)(2) and (3); and see also §§ 65905.5(b)(3); 65913.10(b)(2); 65941.1(a); 66300(a)(6).

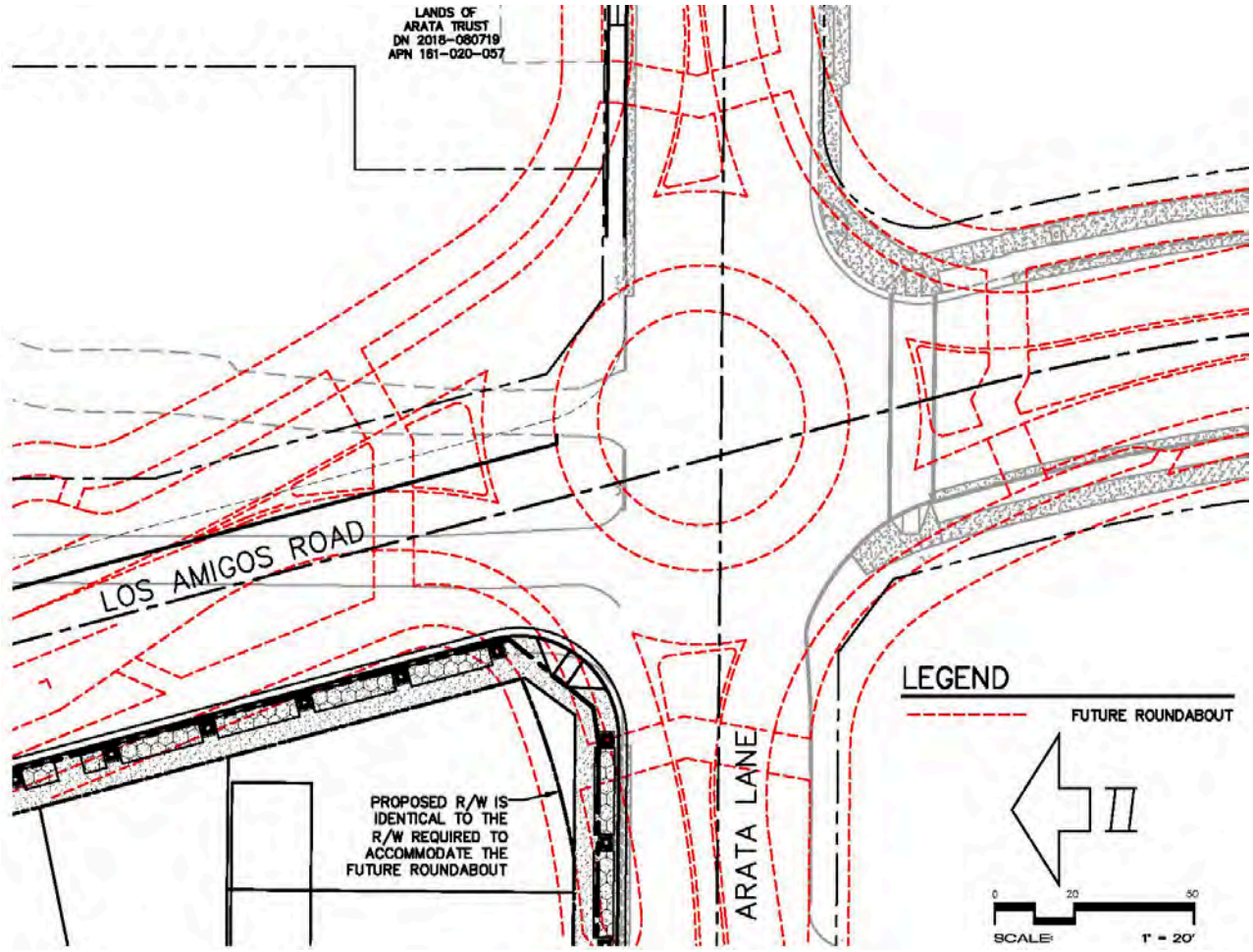
SB 330 and Housing Accountability Act "Builder's Remedy"

The HAA prohibits actions by local jurisdictions that reject or make infeasible housing developments that contribute to regional housing needs without making certain findings regarding the economic, social and environmental effects of the action. Additionally, as a development project that is "housing for very low, low- or moderate-income households" as defined by the HAA, the Project is therefore entitled to the benefits provided by the HAA under Government Code Section 65589.5, subdivision (d), which limit the bases to lawfully disapprove or impose conditions of approval that render the Project infeasible, to either finding (a) specific, adverse public health or safety impacts, (b) non-compliance with specific state or federal law, or (c) that the land is zoned for agriculture or resource preservation and surrounded by such uses or no adequate water or wastewater facilities. Furthermore, under the HAA (Gov. Code § 65589.5(h)(5) and (o)), once a housing development project complies with the SB 330 Preliminary Application requirements at Government Code Section 65941.1(a), with some exceptions not relevant here, the Project is subsequently subject only to the ordinances, policies, and standard adopted and in effect when the 65941.1(a) preliminary application information was submitted.

On August 10, 2023, Project Applicant submitted an SB 330 Preliminary Application and associated fee to the Town and obtained vested rights to develop a housing development project in accordance with the applicable ordinances, policies and standards in effect when the SB 330 Preliminary Application was submitted, including the Town's Housing Element compliance status. As of submittal of the Project's SB 330 Preliminary Application on August 10, 2023, the Town's Housing Element was out of substantial compliance with State Housing Element Law. Accordingly, the Town may not rely on Government Code Section 65589.5, subdivision (d)(5), to lawfully disapprove or conditionally approve the Project. Specifically, under the HAA, the Town may not disapprove or conditionally approve a housing development project "for very low, low-, or moderate-income households" because the project is inconsistent with the Town's zoning ordinance and general plan land use designation.

As required by SB 330 Government Section 65941.1(d), on December 7, 2023, Project Applicant submitted the application for development of the Project addressing all of the information identified by the Town as required to process this development application consistent with Government Code Sections 65940, 65941 and 65941.5. On January 5, 2024, the Town issued an Application Incomplete Letter. On March 28, 2024, Project Applicant provided a response to the Town's application incomplete determination and a supplemental submittal. On May 1, 2024, the Town

Arata Lane and Los Amigos Road. This design accommodation is based on the Town's current roundabout design plan.



Emergency Vehicle Access Points
The applicant requests consideration of allowing 32 units to be served from a single point of access (Arata Lane). Factors in support of this request include:

- The site can be accessed via Arata Lane from the west where the proposed private street intersects with Arata Lane at the southern end of the project site.

- The site can be accessed from the east via Arata Lane or from the south via Los Amigos Road where the proposed private street intersects with the Los Amigos Road extension at the north end of the project site.

- No more than 32 units will be served from the private street as there is no possibility that the proposed private street can be extended to adjacent properties.

Extension Project Specific Infrastructure:
Project specific infrastructure and circulation improvements are expected with the construction of the Los Amigos Cottages project. The infrastructure and circulation improvements within the development will be constructed as a single phase.