

STANISLAUS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

April 16, 2026

STAFF REPORT

USE PERMIT APPLICATION NO. PLN2025-0049
MADRIGAL

**REQUEST: TO PERMIT AN EXISTING FIREWOOD CUTTING OPERATION, ON A 4.52±
ACRE PARCEL, IN THE GENERAL AGRICULTURE (A-2-40) ZONING
DISTRICT**

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Applicant:	Anamiria Madrigal
Property owner:	Miguel Madrigal
Agent:	N/A
Location:	1201 Pauline Avenue, between California Avenue and Maze Boulevard, in the Modesto area.
Section, Township, Range:	35-3-8
Supervisorial District:	District Three (Supervisor Withrow)
Assessor's Parcel:	007-051-029
Referrals:	See Exhibit F Environmental Review Referrals
Area of Parcel(s):	4.52±
Water Supply:	Private well
Sewage Disposal:	Private septic system
General Plan Designation:	Agriculture
Community Plan Designation:	N/A
Existing Zoning:	General Agriculture (A-2-40)
Sphere of Influence:	N/A
Williamson Act Contract No.:	N/A
Environmental Review:	Negative Declaration
Present Land Use:	Single-family dwelling, detached garage, barn, swimming pool, and vacant land.
Surrounding Land Use:	Irrigated cropland and scattered single-family dwellings in all directions; Paradise Elementary School to the west; and State Route 132 to the north.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission approve this request, based on the discussion below and on the whole of the record provided to the County. If the Planning Commission decides to approve the project, Exhibit A provides an overview of the findings and actions required for project approval.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a request to permit an existing firewood cutting operation, on a 4.52± acre parcel, in the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district.

Wood, sourced from orchards in Stanislaus and neighboring counties, is brought on-site once a week via a personal pickup truck (a truck with a gross vehicle weight of less than ten thousand pounds) for cutting, which takes place in a 1.5± acre dirt field on the southern end of the parcel, currently enclosed with corral fencing (see Exhibit B-6- *Site Plan*). Firewood is not stored long-term on-site and is taken to a family-owned property in Ripon shortly after cutting via a personal pickup truck. Wood is cut on-site using manual tools, including firewood splitters and hand-held axes. No other equipment associated with the business is stored on-site. Cut firewood is stacked in piles three feet or less in height. No firewood sales will occur on-site. Sales of firewood to third parties occur off-site at the property in Ripon or at other locations once leaving the project site.

Firewood cutting occurs intermittently seven days a week, from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., with up to a maximum of five employees on-site. Current employees are family members of the property owner. Bathrooms within the existing dwelling will be available for those working on-site as part of the operation. No exterior lighting or signage exists or is proposed. Stormwater drainage will be handled via overland runoff.

Access is proposed to be taken off County-maintained Pauline Avenue via an existing paved driveway and County-maintained California Avenue via a new driveway, with vehicles typically entering from Pauline Avenue and exiting from California Avenue.

The subject application was submitted to correct a code enforcement violation (Code Enforcement Case No. CE22-0518), which is detailed below in the *Issues* section of this report.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The 4.52± acre project site is located at 1201 Pauline Avenue, between California Avenue and Maze Boulevard, in the Modesto area. The parcel is currently developed with an existing single-family dwelling, detached garage, barn, and residential swimming pool. The remainder of the parcel is vacant and has not been farmed for several years.

The project site is surrounded by irrigated cropland and scattered single-family dwellings in all directions, Paradise Elementary School to the west, and State Route 132 to the north.

ISSUES

The following issues have been identified as part of the review of the project:

The subject application was submitted to correct a code enforcement violation (Code Enforcement Case No. CE22-0518) for the operation of a firewood cutting business and private event venue without securing the necessary land use entitlements. The case was opened in August of 2022, and a Notice and Order to Abate was issued in May of 2023. The subject application was submitted in June of 2025. A previous code enforcement case (Code Enforcement Case No. CE21-0391) was opened and closed in September of 2021, related to the use of the site as a

private event venue without securing the necessary land use entitlements. As of April 1, 2026, the Department of Environmental Resources Code Enforcement Division has confirmed that no further events have occurred onsite since January 15, 2025, however, citation fees in the amount of \$2,300.00 are still owed to the County. Condition of Approval No. 13 has been added to the project to require payment of the outstanding citations within 30 days of use permit approval.

The project site is subject to two (2) building code violations for unpermitted construction, the first of which involves a reroof of the existing garage, a remodel of the existing dwelling, and new electrical and plumbing work. A building permit (Building Permit Application No. BLD2021-2558) was submitted in 2021 and issued on December 29, 2022 to permit these modifications, but the permit has not been finalized. The second violation, identified in 2023, involves construction of an unpermitted structure on-site and the conversion of the attic in the existing dwelling to a room. No building permit has been applied for this construction to date. Conditions of Approval No. 11 and 12 have been added to require the final of Building Permit No. BLD 2021-2558 within 30 days of use permit approval and issuance of a building permit to address the remaining issue within three months. The conditions provide an allowance for an extension to the time limit if the Planning Director determines such extension to be warranted.

During the project's Early Consultation Referral period, correspondence was received from the County's Agricultural Commissioner's Office that expressed concerns regarding the type and source of wood that is brought to the site and the potential for movement of agricultural pests. Green waste (i.e. small branches not big enough for firewood, such as green prunings with leaves) presents a higher risk of harboring agricultural pests than wood without green waste. Transportation of green waste could potentially introduce pests into currently uninfested areas, which may necessitate permitting and inspections from the Agricultural Commissioner's Office. Upon clarification that the wood brought to the site consists solely of wood, with no green waste, the Agricultural Commissioner's Office had no further concerns. Transportation of green waste is subject to federal and state quarantine regulations for pest management, but the transportation of wood is not.

While the Stanislaus County Fire Prevention Bureau has not raised any objection to the project as proposed, conditions of approval requiring setbacks for firewood piles and fire access have been added to the project (see Condition of Approval No. 20). The applicant has indicated that firewood will not be stored long-term on-site, however, the length of storage has not been formally defined and would be difficult to enforce. Accordingly, all firewood cutting activities, including wood storing can occur on up to 1.5± acre of the project site subject to a 10-foot setback.

During the processing of this request, staff received a phone call from a parent of a student at Paradise Elementary School, which is located directly to the west of the project site. The parent expressed concerns related to screening of the project site from the school property. The project site shares an existing chain-link fence with the school. Condition of Approval No. 8 requires screening of outside storage from public view by a minimum six-foot-tall screen fence of uniform construction or landscaping as approved by the Planning Director.

Staff also received a phone call from a neighboring property owner located to the southeast expressing support for the project due to its minimal impact on the neighborhood in terms of traffic and noise.

No other issues have been identified as a part of this request.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

The site is currently designated Agriculture in the Stanislaus County General Plan. The agricultural designation recognizes the value and importance of agriculture by acting to preclude incompatible urban development within agricultural areas. This designation establishes agriculture as the primary use in land so designated, but allows dwelling units, limited agriculturally related commercial services, agriculturally related light industrial uses, and other uses which by their unique nature are not compatible with urban uses, provided they do not conflict with the primary use.

Goal One, Objective 1.2 of the General Plan's Agricultural Element encourages vertical integration of agriculture by organizing uses requiring use permits into three tiers based on the type of uses and their relationship to agriculture. Tier One uses include agriculture-related commercial and industrial uses, such as nut hulling and drying, warehouses for storage of grain and other farm produce, and firewood sales and similar agricultural facilities.

To minimize conflicts between agriculture operations and non-agricultural operations, *Buffer and Setback Guidelines* (Appendix A of the Agricultural Element) have been adopted. The purpose of these guidelines is to protect the long-term health of local agriculture by minimizing conflicts resulting from normal agricultural practices as a consequence of new or expanding uses approved in or adjacent to the A-2 (General Agriculture) zoning district. The Guidelines require that any new or expanding use approved by discretionary permit within the A-2 zoning district, or on a parcel adjoining it, must incorporate a minimum 150-foot-wide buffer setback and a six-foot-high fence of uniform construction along the perimeter of the developed area. The purpose of the fencing is to prevent trespassing onto adjacent agricultural lands. Fencing is not required for uses which do not directly establish the potential for increased trespassing onto adjacent agricultural lands. Low people-intensive Tier One and Tier Two uses, which do not serve the general public, shall not be subject to compliance with these guidelines. Based on the requested use consisting of five or fewer people involved in the operation on-site and no customers or other members of the general public expected to visit the site, staff believes the project can be considered low people intensive, thus not subject to the County's Agricultural Buffer requirements. The project was referred to the Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner, who provided a response on December 16, 2025; however, their comments did not raise concerns related to agricultural buffers. The decision-making body (Planning Commission) shall have the ultimate authority to determine if the proposed or expanded use is "low people intensive."

Staff believes that with conditions of approval in place, the project is consistent with the County's General Plan.

ZONING ORDINANCE CONSISTENCY

The site is currently zoned General Agriculture (A-2-40). In accordance with Section 21.20.030(A) of the Stanislaus County Zoning Ordinance, Tier One uses, including firewood sales and similar agricultural facilities, may be allowed when the Planning Commission makes the following findings:

1. The establishment, maintenance and operation of the proposed use or building applied for is consistent with the General Plan and will not, under the circumstances of the particular case, be detrimental to the health, safety and general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the use and that it will not be detrimental or injurious to property and improvements in the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the County.
2. The establishment as proposed will not be substantially detrimental to or in conflict with agricultural use of other property in the vicinity

The cutting and sale of firewood in the A-2 zoning district is permitted by-right when trees are removed from an existing on-site orchard incidental to agricultural production on-site. However, due to the project proposing to cut, stack, and ship wood sourced from off-site orchards in Stanislaus and neighboring counties, a Tier One use permit is required for the proposed use of the site.

Staff believes that the establishment of the use as proposed will not be substantially detrimental to or in conflict with agricultural use of other property in the vicinity. There is no indication that this project, as proposed and conditioned, will be detrimental to the health, safety and general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the use and that it will not be detrimental or injurious to property and improvements in the neighborhood or the general welfare of the County.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the proposed project was circulated to interested parties and responsible agencies for review and comment, and no significant issues were raised (see Exhibit F – *Environmental Review Referrals*).

As discussed in the *Issues* section, correspondence received from the Agricultural Commissioner expressed concerns regarding the type and source of wood that is brought to the site and the potential for movement of agricultural pests. After further clarification from the applicant, the Agricultural Commissioner did not have further concerns as wood brought to the site does not include green waste and would not be subject to federal and state quarantine regulations for pest management.

Accordingly, a Negative Declaration has been prepared for adoption, prior to action on the project (see Exhibit E – *Negative Declaration*). Conditions of Approval reflecting referral responses have also been placed on the project (see Exhibit C – *Conditions of Approval*).

Note: Pursuant to California Fish and Game Code Section 711.4, a filing fee shall be paid for all project applications subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); therefore, the applicant will further be required to pay **\$3,100.75** for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Clerk-Recorder filing fees. The attached Conditions of Approval ensure that this will occur.

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Contact Person: Marcus Ruddicks, Assistant Planner, (209) 525-6330

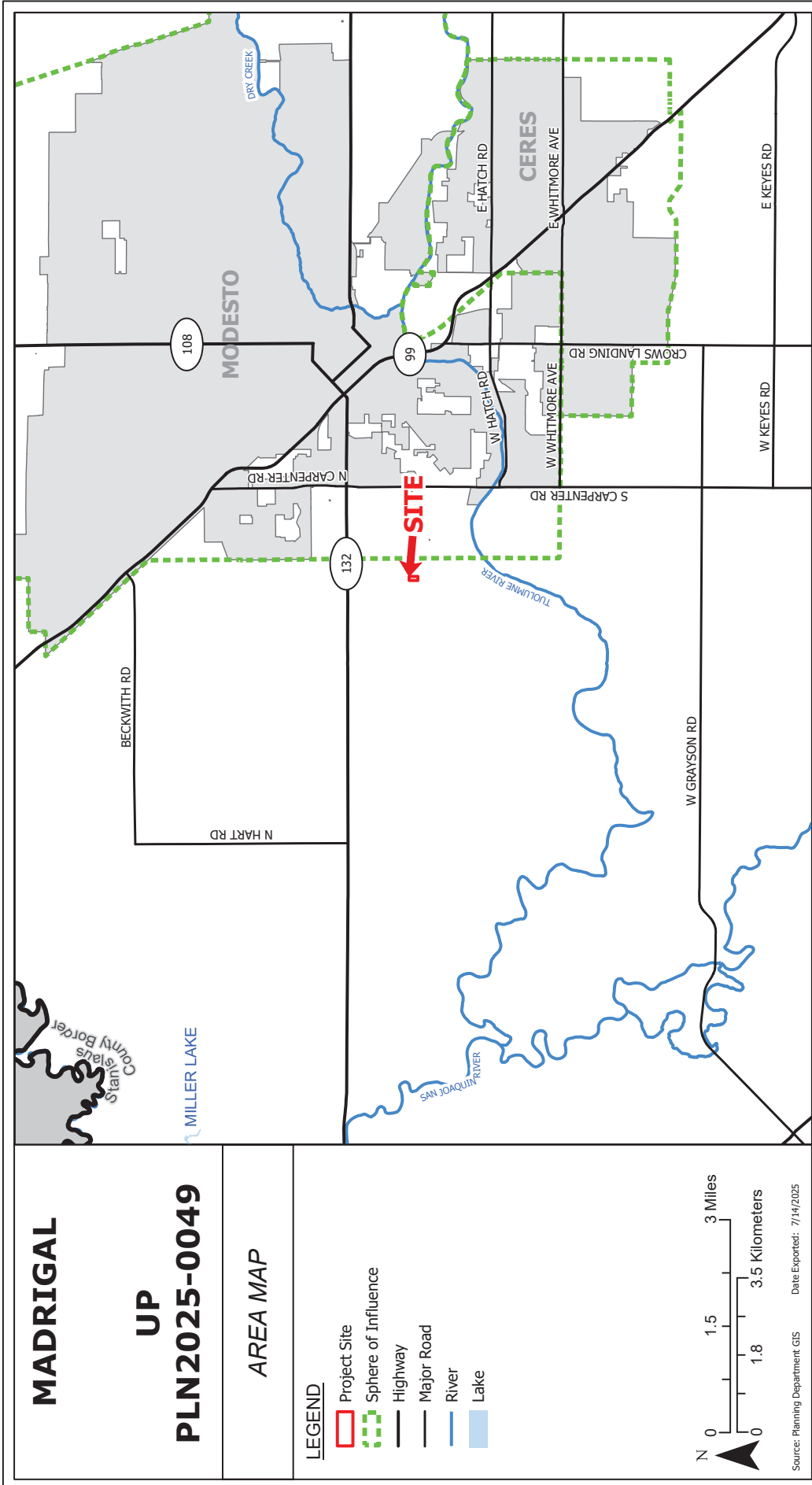
Attachments:

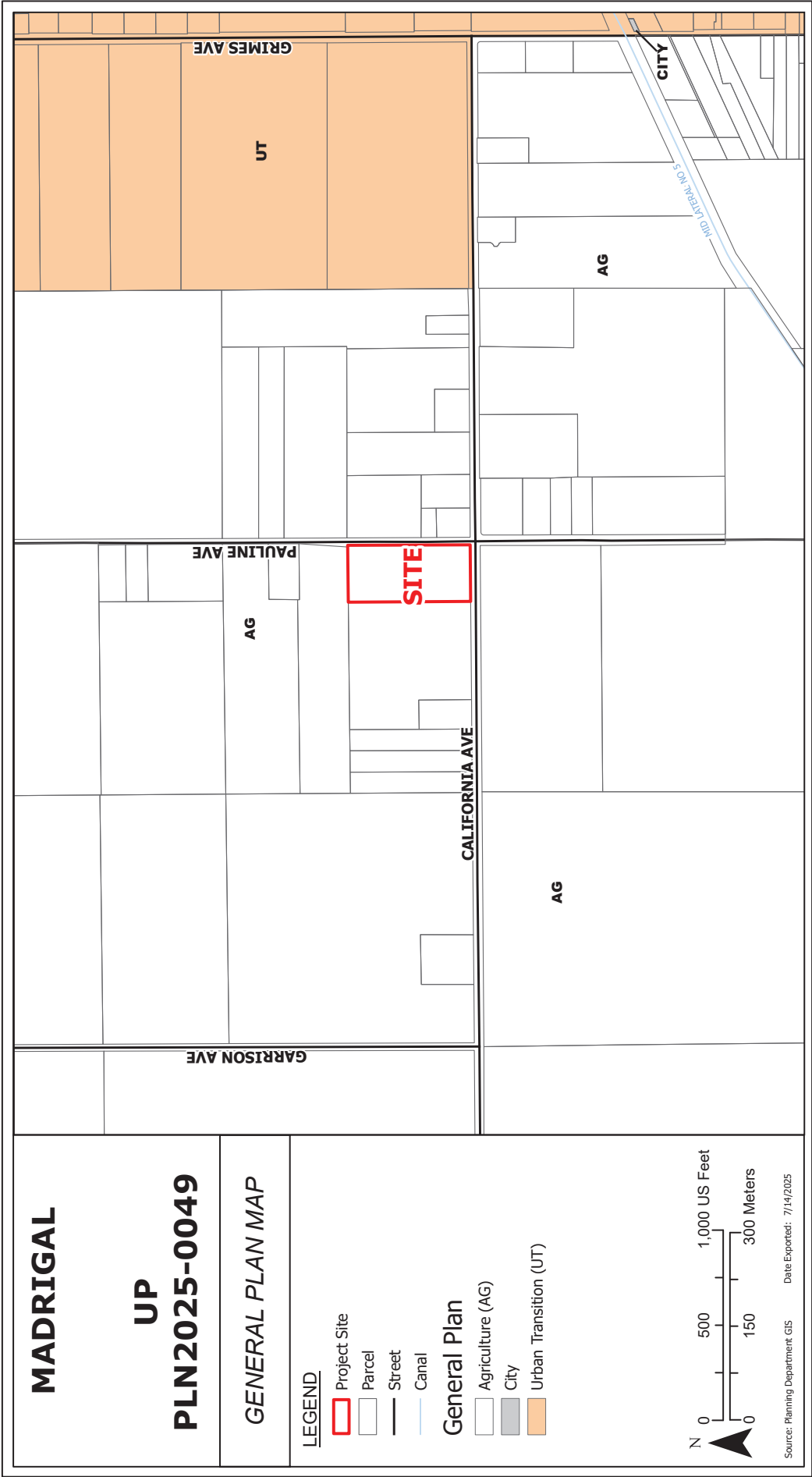
- Exhibit A – Findings and Actions Required for Project Approval
- Exhibit B – Maps and Site Plan
- Exhibit C – Conditions of Approval
- Exhibit D – Initial Study
- Exhibit E – Negative Declaration
- Exhibit F – Environmental Review Referrals
- Exhibit G – Levine Act Disclosure Statement

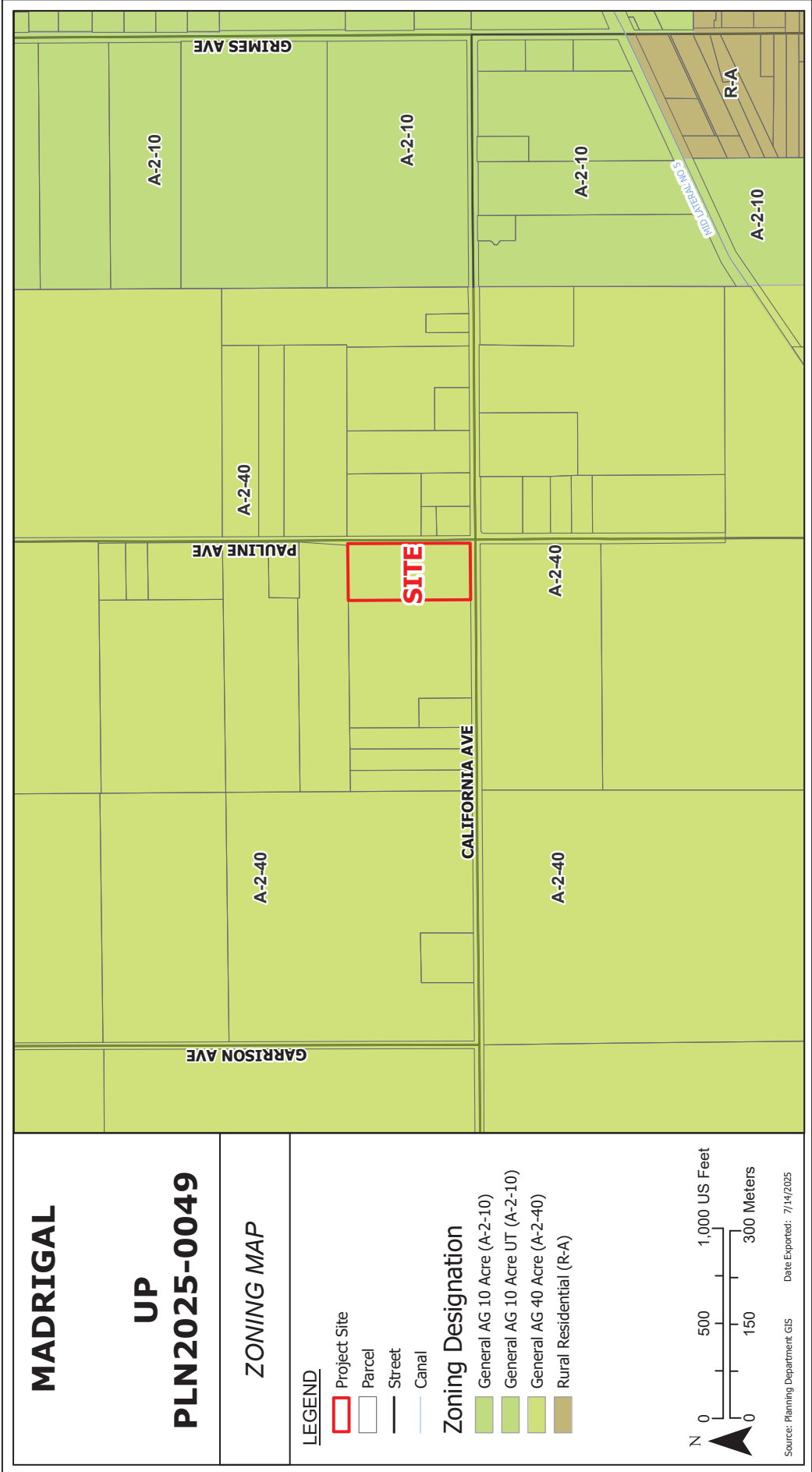
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Findings and Actions Required for Project Approval

1. Adopt the Negative Declaration pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15074(b), by finding that on the basis of the whole record, including the Initial Study and any comments received, that there is no substantial evidence the project will have a significant effect on the environment and that the Negative Declaration reflects Stanislaus County's independent judgment and analysis.
2. Order the filing of a Notice of Determination (NOD) with the Stanislaus County Clerk Recorder's Office pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21152 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15075.
3. Find That:
 - a. The establishment, maintenance, and operation of the proposed use or building applied for is consistent with the General Plan designation of "Agriculture" and will not, under the circumstances of the particular case, be detrimental to the health, safety, and general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the use and that it will not be detrimental or injurious to property and improvements in the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the County.
 - b. The establishment as proposed will not be substantially detrimental to or in conflict with agricultural use of other property in the vicinity.
 - c. That the project will increase activities in and around the project area, and increase demands for roads and services, thereby requiring dedication and improvements.
4. Approve Use Permit Application No. PLN2025-0049 – Madrigal, subject to the attached Conditions of Approval.







MADRIGAL

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PLN2025-0049**

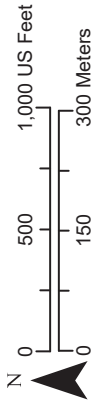
ZONING MAP

LEGEND

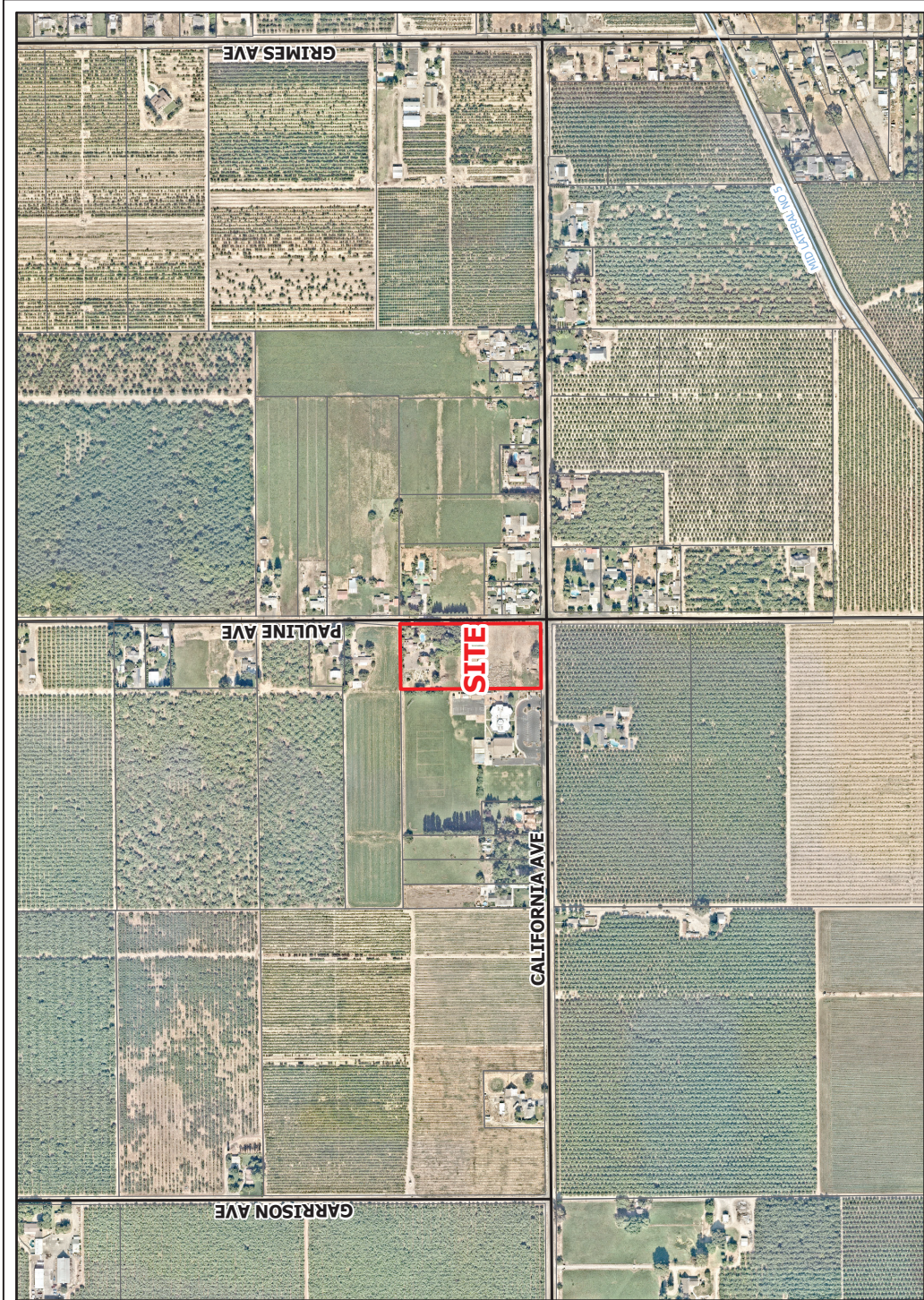
- Project Site
- Parcel
- Street
- Canal

Zoning Designation

- General AG 10 Acre (A-2-10)
- General AG 10 Acre UT (A-2-10)
- General AG 40 Acre (A-2-40)
- Rural Residential (R-A)



Source: Planning Department GIS Date Exported: 7/14/2025



MADRIGAL

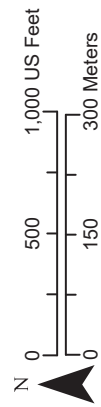
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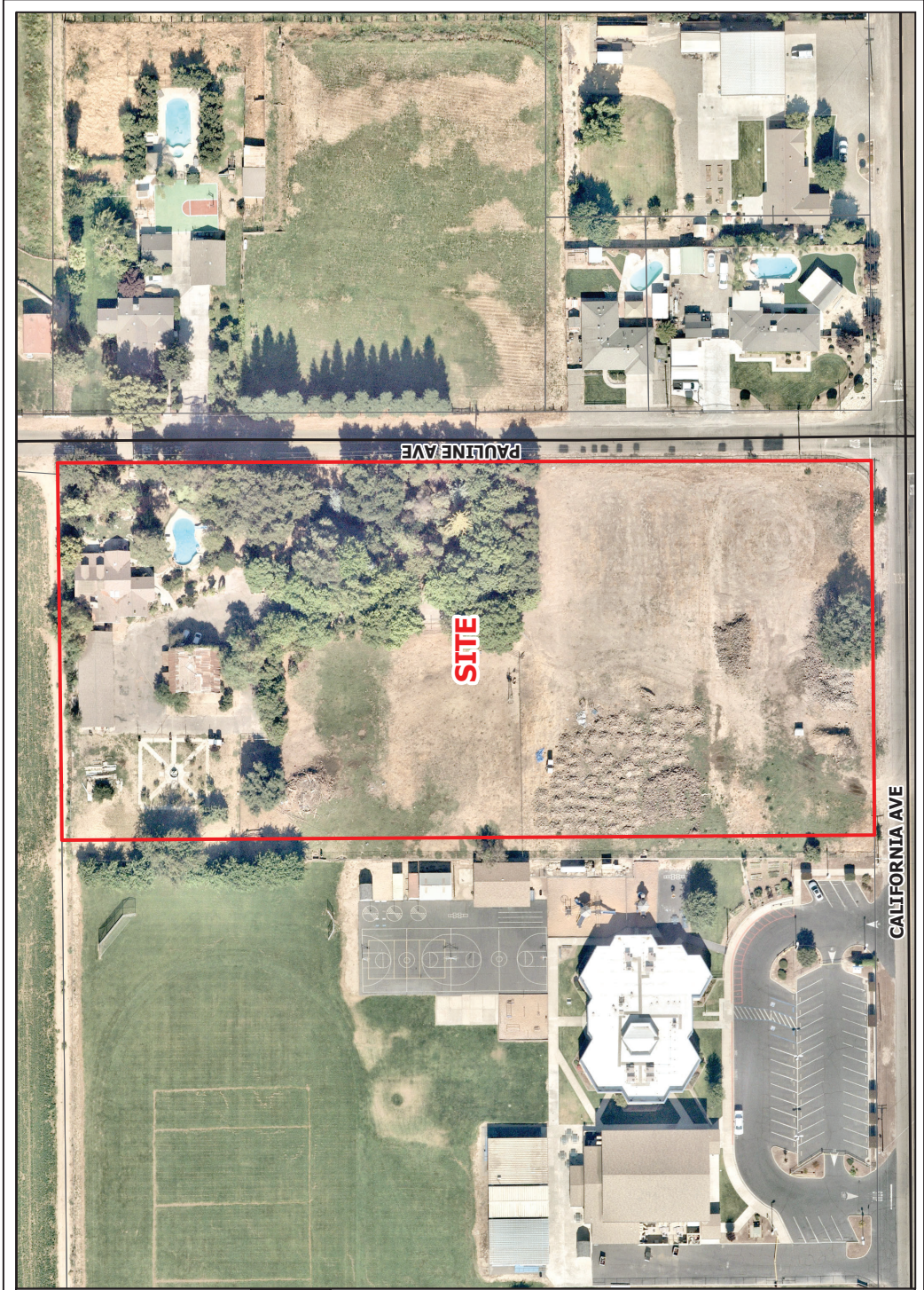
2023 AERIAL AREA MAP

LEGEND

- Project Site
- Parcel
- Street
- Canal



Source: Planning Department GIS Date Exported: 7/14/2025



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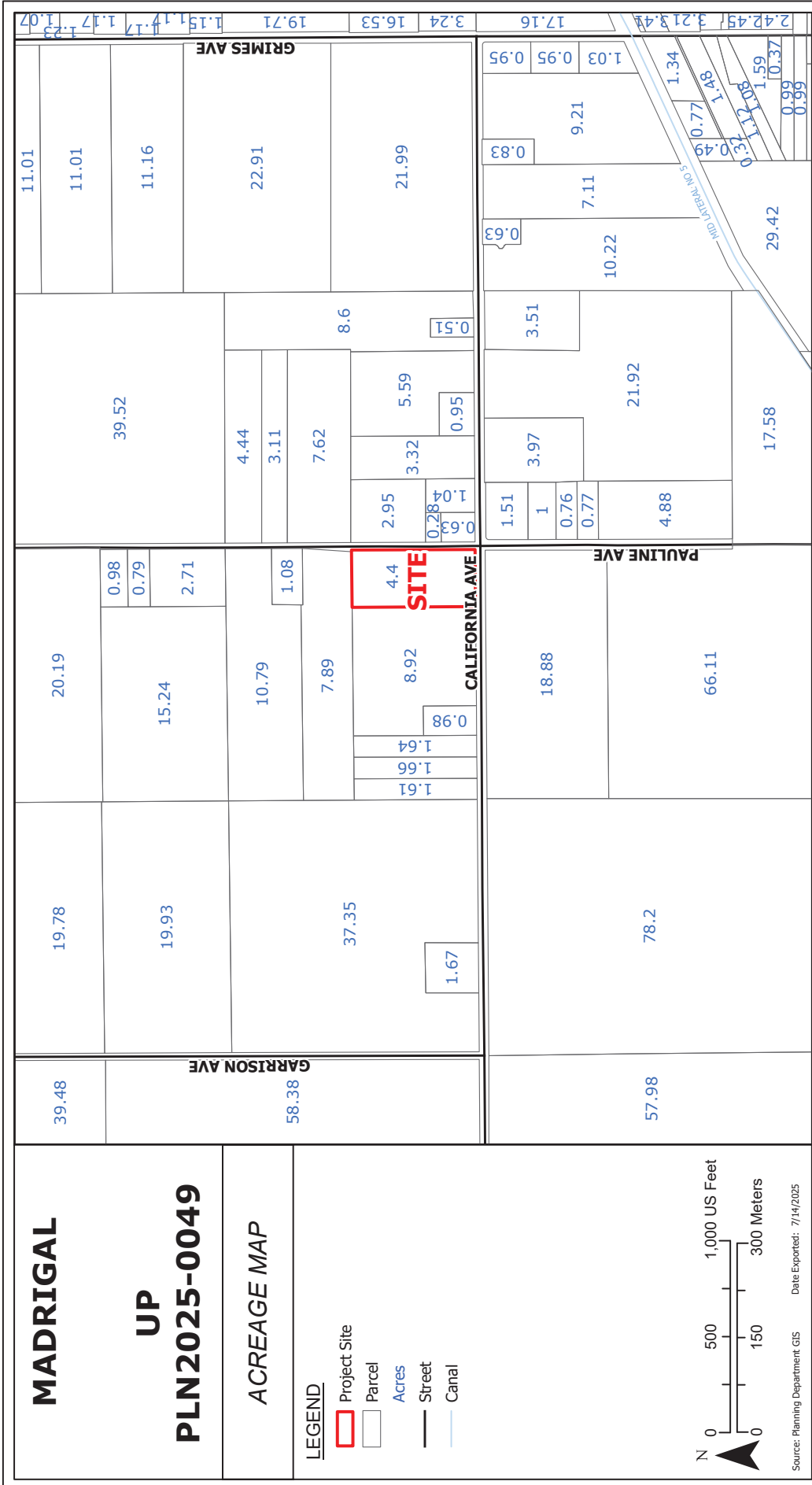
2023 AERIAL SITE MAP

LEGEND

- Project Site
- Parcel
- Street



Source: Planning Department GIS Date Exported: 7/14/2025



7-17-2005

1201 Pauline Ave, Project # PLN 0205-049 Revised

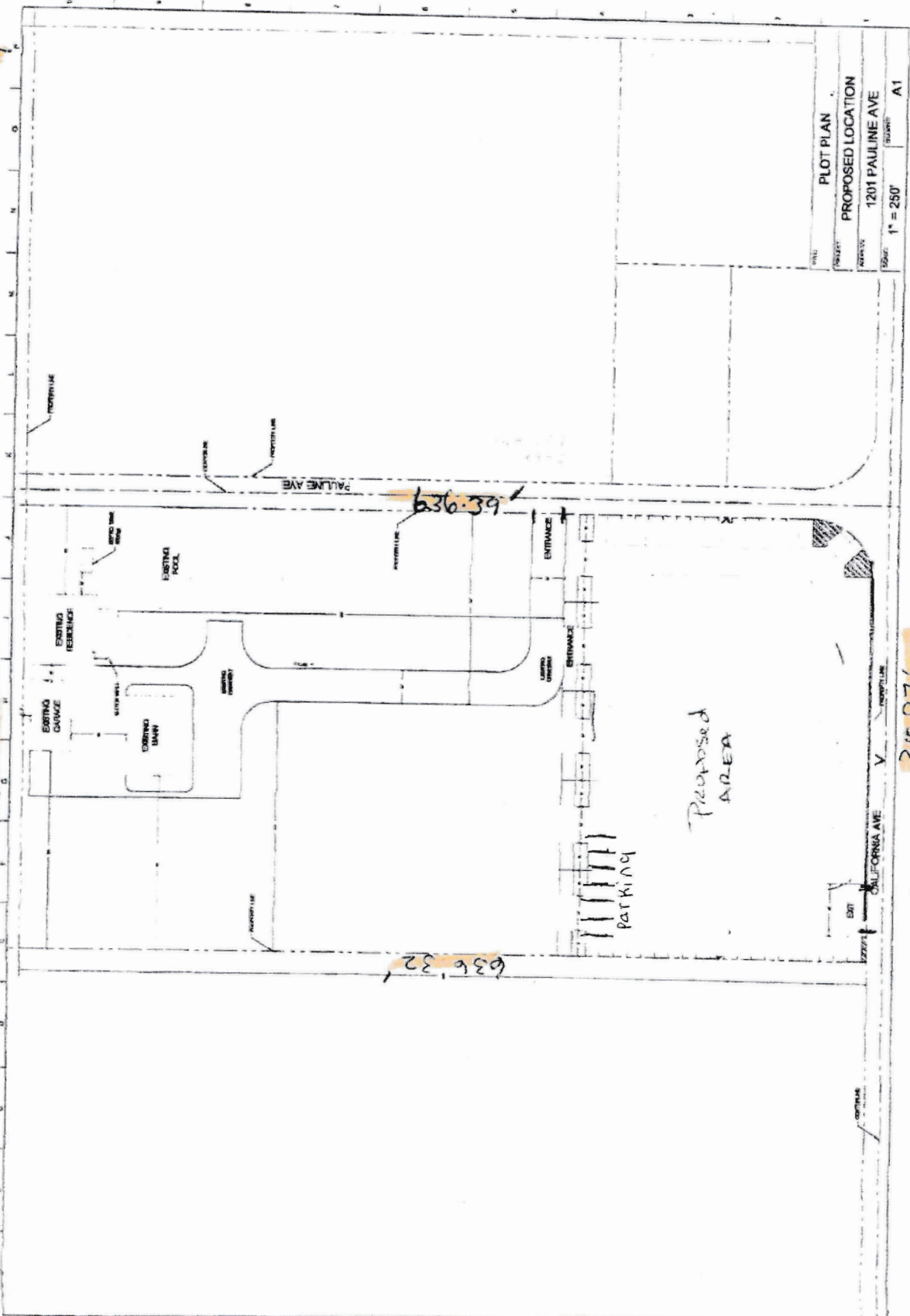
309.93'

636.32'

636.39'

310.97'

24 FT
EXIT



TITLE: PLOT PLAN
 PROJECT: PROPOSED LOCATION
 ADDRESS: 1201 PAULINE AVE
 SCALE: 1" = 250'
 SHEET: A1

NOTE: Approval of this application is valid only if the following conditions are met. This permit shall expire unless activated within 18 months of the date of approval. In order to activate the permit, it must be signed by the applicant and one of the following actions must occur: (a) a valid building permit must be obtained to construct the necessary structures and appurtenances; or, (b) the property must be used for the purpose for which the permit is granted. (Stanislaus County Ordinance 21.104.030)

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

USE PERMIT APPLICATION NO. PLN2025-0049 MADRIGAL

Department of Planning and Community Development

1. Use(s) shall be conducted as described in the application and supporting information (including the plot plan) as approved by the Planning Commission and/or Board of Supervisors and in accordance with other laws and ordinances.
2. Pursuant to Section 711.4 of the California Fish and Game Code, the applicant is required to pay a California Department of Fish and Wildlife fee at the time of filing a "Notice of Determination." Within five (5) days of approval of this project by the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors, the applicant shall submit to the Department of Planning and Community Development a check for **\$3,100.75**, made payable to **Stanislaus County**, for the payment of California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Clerk-Recorder filing fees.

Pursuant to Section 711.4 (e) (3) of the California Fish and Game Code, no project shall be operative, vested, or final, nor shall local government permits for the project be valid, until the filing fees required pursuant to this section are paid.
3. Developer shall pay all Public Facilities Impact Fees and Fire Facilities Fees as adopted by Resolution of the Board of Supervisors. The fees shall be payable at the time of issuance of a building permit for any construction in the development project and shall be based on the rates in effect at the time of building permit issuance.
4. The applicant/owner is required to defend, indemnify, or hold harmless the County, its officers, and employees from any claim, action, or proceedings against the County to set aside the approval of the project which is brought within the applicable statute of limitations. The County shall promptly notify the applicant of any claim, action, or proceeding to set aside the approval and shall cooperate fully in the defense.
5. Any construction resulting from this project shall comply with standardized dust controls adopted by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) and may be subject to additional regulations/permits, as determined by the SJVAPCD.
6. The Department of Planning and Community Development shall record a Notice of Administrative Conditions and Restrictions with the County Recorder's Office within 30

days of project approval. The Notice includes: Conditions of Approval/Development Standards and Schedule; any adopted Mitigation Measures; and a project area map.

7. Should any archeological or human remains be discovered during development, work shall be immediately halted within 150 feet of the find until it can be evaluated by a qualified archaeologist. If the find is determined to be historically or culturally significant, appropriate mitigation measures to protect and preserve the resource shall be formulated and implemented. The Central California Information Center shall be notified if the find is deemed historically or culturally significant.
8. Within three (3) months of project approval, all outside storage and mechanical equipment associated with the business shall be screened from public view, including any public right-of-way and neighboring properties, by a minimum six-foot-tall screen fence of uniform construction or landscaping as approved by the Planning Director.
9. No signage shall be permitted on-site.
10. Woodcutting, storage, and parking associated with the business shall be restricted to the 1.5± acre area designated on the site plan and piles of wood shall not exceed three feet in height. All driveways and traffic areas shall be dust-proofed and maintained in that condition to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning. No sales of firewood shall occur on-site.
11. BLD2021-2558 shall be finalized within 30 days of project approval, unless an additional 30-day extension is granted by the Director of Planning and Community Development or their designee. An extension shall not be granted unless evidence is provided of the following: continued progress with permit submittals; inspections associated with issued permits; or unforeseen or unavoidable condition outside of the applicant's control.
12. Building permits shall be obtained to correct any other building code violations on-site within three (3) months of project approval and finalized within six (6) months of project approval, unless an additional six-month extension is granted by the Director of Planning and Community Development or their designee. An extension shall not be granted unless evidence is provided of the following: continued progress with permit submittals; inspections associated with issued permits; or unforeseen or unavoidable condition outside of the applicant's control.
13. Within 30 days of project approval, any outstanding Code Enforcement citations shall be paid. If confirmation of payment is not received within 30 days, the use permit shall be null and void.

Department of Public Works

14. An Encroachment Permit shall be obtained and finalized for driveway approaches at all points of ingress and egress on the project site and any other work done within the County right of way. All work within the right-of-way shall conform to the current Stanislaus County Public Works Standards and Specifications.
15. The developer will be required to install or pay for the installation of any signs and/or markings, if warranted.

16. Prior to the issuance of any future building or grading permit associated with this use permit, an irrevocable offer of dedication (IOD) is required. Stanislaus County Public Works reserves the right to accept the IOD in the future. In the event of acceptance of the IOD, the removal of any improvements or modifications within the ultimate right of way shall be the responsibility of the current property owner.
 - a. California Ave is classified as a 60-foot local road. The required $\frac{1}{2}$ width of California Ave is 30-feet north of the centerline of the roadway. The existing right of way is 20-feet north of the centerline. The remaining 10-feet north of the centerline shall be dedicated as an Irrevocable Offer of Dedication.
 - b. Pauline Ave is classified as a 60-foot local road. The required $\frac{1}{2}$ width of Pauline Ave is 30-feet east of the centerline of the roadway. The existing right of way is 20-feet east of the centerline. The remaining 10-feet east of the centerline shall be dedicated as an Irrevocable Offer of Dedication.
 - c. At the intersection of California Ave and Pauline Ave, a right-of-way chord is required. The chord shall be consistent with Stanislaus County Public Works Standards and Specifications Detail 3-C1. The chord shall be dedicated as an Irrevocable Offer of Dedication
17. No grading shall be performed without first obtaining a Grading Permit. An application for a Grading Permit shall be submitted to the Building Permits Division prior to the commencement of any grading, clearing, excavating, filling, or other disturbance of natural terrain.
 - a. New Development and re-development projects shall contain all storm drainage on-site.
 - b. Storm drain facilities shall be designed using a 100-year, 24-hour storm. The drainage facility shall be capable of dewatering the 100-year, 24-hour storm within 48 hours. Calculations for the storm drainage capacity and dewatering shall be submitted to the engineer for approval.
 - i. A comprehensive soils report shall be submitted for the proposed project. The soils report shall be prepared, stamped, and signed by a licensed geotechnical engineer experienced in soil. It shall include R-values taken at the site with a map showing the locations and depths of the test samples.
 - ii. A completed Regulated Project Worksheet per the Stanislaus County 2015 Post-Construction Standards Plan shall be submitted.
 - iii. Regulated Project Volume Reduction Calculations, signed and stamped by a registered civil engineer licensed to practice in California, shall be submitted for each drainage management area and must include any control measure(s) that meet the volumetric sizing criteria.

- iv. An Operation and Maintenance Plan and owner-signed and notarized Statement of Responsibility is required for all proposed treatment control measures.
 - c. Dischargers of stormwater associated with construction activity that result in the disturbance of one acre or more of land area shall apply for and obtain coverage under 2022 Construction General Permit.
18. No parking, loading, or unloading of vehicles shall be permitted within the county road right-of-way.

Department of Environmental Resources (DER)- Hazardous Materials Division

19. The applicant shall contact the DER Hazardous Materials Division regarding regulatory requirements for hazardous materials and/or wastes prior to any being brought to the site.

Fire Prevention Bureau

20. Firewood piles stored on-site shall be located a minimum of 10 feet from all property lines. Fire access may also be required.

Agricultural Commissioner

21. Prior to any green waste being brought to the site, the applicant shall contact the Agricultural Commissioner regarding regulatory requirements.

Please note: If Conditions of Approval/Development Standards are amended by the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors, such amendments will be noted in the upper right-hand corner of the Conditions of Approval/Development Standards; new wording is in bold font and deleted wording is in strikethrough.



CEQA INITIAL STUDY

Adapted from CEQA Guidelines APPENDIX G Environmental Checklist Form, Final Text, January 1, 2025

- 1. **Project title:** Use Permit Application No. PLN2025-0049 - Madrigal
- 2. **Lead agency name and address:** Stanislaus County
1010 10th Street, Suite 3400
Modesto, CA 95354
- 3. **Contact person and phone number:** Marcus Ruddicks, Assistant Planner
(209) 525-6330
- 4. **Project location:** 1201 Pauline Avenue, between California Avenue and Maze Boulevard, in the Modesto area (APN: 007-051-029).
- 5. **Project sponsor's name and address:** Anamiria Madrigal
3928 Willow Pond Ct Ceres, CA 95307
- 6. **General Plan designation:** Agriculture
- 7. **Zoning:** General Agriculture (A-2-40)
- 8. **Description of project:**

Request to permit an existing firewood cutting operation, on a 4.52± acre parcel, in the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district. Firewood cutting occurs seven days a week, as needed but not continuously, from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. The parcel is currently developed with an existing single-family dwelling, detached garage, barn, and residential swimming pool. Woodcutting takes place in the open area at the southern end of the parcel, along California Avenue. Three to five family members of the property owner chop firewood on-site. Wood is brought on-site once a week via a personal pickup truck. Wood brought to the site consists of green and dry wood sourced from orchards in Stanislaus and neighboring counties. No green waste is brought to the site for processing. Firewood is not stored long-term on-site and is taken to a family-owned property in Ripon shortly after cutting via a personal pickup truck. Access is proposed to be taken off County-maintained Pauline Avenue via an existing driveway and County-maintained California Avenue via a new driveway, with vehicles entering from Pauline Avenue and exiting from California Avenue. Wood is cut on-site using manual tools including firewood splitters and hand-held axes. No firewood sales will occur on-site. Bathrooms within the existing dwelling will be available for those participating in the woodcutting. The project site is served by an existing well and septic system. The subject application was initiated as a result of a Code Enforcement case (No. CE22-0563) due to operation of the proposed land use without having obtained the necessary land use entitlements.

- 9. **Surrounding land uses and setting:** Irrigated cropland and scattered single-family dwellings in all directions; Paradise Elementary School to the west; State Route 132 to the north; and the City of Modesto to the east
- 10. **Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement.):** Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner's Office
Stanislaus County Department of Public Works
Stanislaus County Fire Prevention Bureau

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

In accordance with SB 18 and AB 52, this project was not referred to the tribes listed with the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) as the project is not a General Plan Amendment and no tribes have requested consultation or project referral noticing.

- 12. Attachments:**

None

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

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

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture & Forestry Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geology / Soils | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology / Water Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use / Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Population / Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities / Service Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |

DETERMINATION: (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

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

Signature on File

 Prepared by Marcus Ruddicks, Assistant Planner

February 13, 2026

 Date

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

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

Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:

- a) **Earlier Analysis Used.** Identify and state where they are available for review.
 - b) **Impacts Adequately Addressed.** Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
 - c) **Mitigation Measures.** For effects that are “Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated,” describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
- 6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). References to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
 - 7) **Supporting Information Sources:** A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
 - 8) This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project’s environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
 - 9) The explanation of each issue should identify:
 - a) the significant criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
 - b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significant.

ISSUES

I. AESTHETICS – Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, could the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?			X	
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?			X	
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?			X	
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?			X	

Discussion: The parcel is currently developed with an existing single-family dwelling, detached garage, barn, and residential swimming pool. Woodcutting takes place in the open area at the southern end of the parcel, along California Avenue. Firewood is not stored long-term on-site and is taken to a family-owned property in Ripon shortly after cutting. Wood is cut on-site using manual tools including firewood splitters and hand-held axes. No other equipment associated with the business is stored on-site. No firewood sales will occur on-site. The site is enclosed with existing corral fencing. No exterior lighting or signage exists or is proposed. Email correspondence with Fire Prevention Bureau staff indicated that if firewood were to be stored long-term on-site, firewood piles would need to meet requirements such as a minimum 10-foot setback from property line and a maximum height of 20-feet.

The only scenic designation in the County is along Interstate 5, which is not near the project site. The site itself is not considered to be a scenic resource or unique scenic vista. Irrigated cropland and scattered single-family dwellings are located in all directions. Paradise Elementary School is located to the west. State Route 132 is located to the north, and the City of Modesto is located to the east. Structures within the surrounding area consist primarily of metal agricultural buildings, and residential and accessory structures with stucco, metal, and wood facades. No adverse impacts to the existing visual character of the site or its surroundings are anticipated.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Email correspondence with Stanislaus County Fire Prevention Bureau, dated January 7, 2026; Stanislaus County Zoning Ordinance; the Stanislaus County General Plan; and Support Documentation¹.

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

Discussion: Approximately 1.94± acres at the northeastern portion of the project site, that has already been developed with a single-family dwelling and detached garage, barn, and residential swimming pool, are classified as “Urban and Built-Up Land” by the California Department of Conservation’s Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. The remaining 2.58± acres of the project site are classified as “Prime Farmland.” The United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS) Web Soil Survey indicates that approximately 70.1 percent of the project site is comprised of Hanford sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes (HdA), which has a California Revised Storie Index Rating of 93. The California Revised Storie Index is a rating system based on soil properties that dictate the potential for soils to be used for irrigated agricultural production in California. The 93 Index rating equates to Grade 1 soils which are considered to be excellent soil to be used for irrigated agriculture. The remaining 29.9 percent of the project site is comprised of Dinuba sandy loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes (DrA), which has a California Revised Storie Index Rating of 86. The 86 Index rating also equates to Grade 1 soils.

Stanislaus County considers land that meets at least one of the following requirements to be prime farmland under the Uniform Rules: parcels comprised of Class 1 or Class 2 soils; parcels comprised of Grade 1 or Grade 2 soils; irrigated pastureland which supports livestock used for the production of food and fiber; and land used for unprocessed agricultural plant production with an annual gross value of not less than eight hundred dollars per-acre. Although the project site does meet the definition of prime farmland under the County’s Uniform Rules, the site presently comprises 2.58± acres of land that is undeveloped with structures. These 2.58± acres are not currently improved with production agriculture and have not been farmed for several years. Pursuant to the County’s Uniform Rules, 10-acres is presumed to be the minimum available

acreage necessary to be economically viable to independently farm. The proposed project will not permanently convert any prime farmland, unique farmland, or farmland of statewide importance to non-agricultural use.

The surrounding area is comprised of irrigated cropland and scattered single-family dwellings in all directions, Paradise Elementary School to the west, State Route 132 to the north, and the City of Modesto to the east.

The project site itself is not enrolled in a Williamson Act Contract; however, the nearest parcels enrolled in a Williamson Act Contract are a 7.8± acre farmed parcel located directly north of the project site and an 18.7± acre farmed parcel located approximately 50± feet to the south across California Avenue. Non-contracted production agriculture exists to the west and east of the project site. Staff believe that the proposed project will not conflict with any agriculturally zoned land or Williamson Act Contracted land in the vicinity.

The project site is zoned General Agriculture (A-2-40). The project is a request to permit an existing firewood cutting operation, on a 4.52± acre parcel, in the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district. The chopping and sale of firewood in the A-2 zoning district is permitted by-right when trees are removed from an existing on-site orchard incidental to agricultural production on-site. However, due to the project proposing to cut, stack, and sell wood sourced from off-site orchards, a Tier One use permit is required for the proposed use of the site.

Buffer and Setback Guidelines are applicable to new or expanding uses approved in or adjacent to the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district and are required to be designed to physically avoid conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural uses. General Plan Amendment No. 2011-01 – Revised Agricultural Buffers was approved by the Board of Supervisors on December 20, 2011, to modify County requirements for buffers on agricultural projects. Low people intensive Tier One and Tier Two Uses which do not serve the general public shall not be subject to compliance with these guidelines; however, conditions of approval consistent with these guidelines may be required as part of the project approval. Based on the requested use consisting of five or fewer people involved in the operation on-site and no customers or other members of the general public expected to visit the site, staff believe the project can be considered low people intensive, thus not subject to the County's Agricultural Buffer requirements. The Planning Commission shall have the ultimate authority to determine if a use is "low people intensive."

The project was referred to the Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, who responded on December 16, 2025, with potential concerns related to the source and type of wood being brought to the site and the potential for movement of agricultural pests. With further correspondence, the applicant clarified that wood brought on-site consists of green wood and dry wood sourced from orchards in Stanislaus and neighboring counties. No green waste is brought to the site for processing. The Agricultural Commissioner's Office did not have further concerns. Transportation of green waste is subject to federal and state quarantine regulations for pest management, but the transport of dead (green or dry) wood is not.

The project site is currently served by the Modesto Irrigation District (MID) for irrigation water. The project was referred to MID, and no response has been received to date.

Based on this information, staff believe that the proposed project will not conflict with any agriculturally zoned land or Williamson Act Contracted land, nor will the project result in the conversion of prime farmland, unique farmland, or farmland of statewide importance. No forest lands or timberland exist in Stanislaus County. Therefore, this project will have no impact to forest land or timberland.

Mitigation: None.

References: Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Survey; application information; Referral Response received from Agricultural Commissioner's Office, dated December 16, 2025; Email correspondence with Agricultural Commissioner's Office, dated January 12, 2026; Stanislaus Soil Survey (1957); California State Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program - Stanislaus County Farmland 2018; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

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

Discussion: The proposed project is located within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin (SJVAB) and, therefore, falls under the jurisdiction of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD). In conjunction with the Stanislaus Council of Governments (StanCOG), the SJVAPCD is responsible for formulating and implementing air pollution control strategies. The SJVAPCD’s most recent air quality plans are the 2007 PM10 (respirable particulate matter) Maintenance Plan, the 2008 PM2.5 (fine particulate matter) Plan, and the 2007 Ozone Plan. These plans establish a comprehensive air pollution control program leading to the attainment of state and federal air quality standards in the SJVAB, which has been classified as “extreme non-attainment” for ozone, “attainment” for respirable particulate matter (PM-10), and “non-attainment” for PM 2.5, as defined by the Federal Clean Air Act.

The primary source of air pollutants generated by this project would be classified as being generated from "mobile" sources. Mobile sources would generally include dust from roads, farming, and automobile exhaust. Mobile sources are generally regulated by the Air Resources Board of the California EPA which sets emissions for vehicles and acts on issues regarding cleaner burning fuels and alternative fuel technologies. As such, the District has addressed most criteria air pollutants through basin wide programs and policies to prevent cumulative deterioration of air quality within the Basin. The project will not substantially increase traffic in the area and thereby impact air quality. The facility will operate seven days a week, as needed but not continuously, from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Three to five family members of the property owner chop firewood on-site. Wood is brought on-site once a week via a personal pickup truck.

Potential impacts on local and regional air quality are anticipated to be less than significant, falling below SJVAPCD thresholds, as a result of the nature of the proposed project and project’s operation after construction. Implementation of the proposed project would fall below the SJVAPCD significance thresholds for both short-term construction and long-term operational emissions, as discussed below. Because construction and operation of the project would not exceed the SJVAPCD significance thresholds, the proposed project would not increase the frequency or severity of existing air quality standards or the interim emission reductions specified in the air plans.

The project was referred to the SJVAPCD, and no response has been received to date. However, the project must comply with Air District regulations, and standard conditions of approval will be added to the project requiring the applicant to consult with the District regarding applicable regulations.

As required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, potential impacts regarding Air Quality should be evaluated using Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). Stanislaus County has currently not adopted any significance thresholds for VMT, and projects are treated on a case-by-case basis for evaluation under CEQA. However, the State of California - Office of Planning and Research (OPR) has issued guidelines regarding VMT significance under CEQA. The CEQA Guidelines identify vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which is the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project, as the most appropriate measure of transportation impacts. According to the same technical advisory from OPR, projects that generate or attract fewer than 110 trips per-day generally may be assumed to cause a less-than significant transportation impact. The proposed project will not exceed the screening criteria for VMT analysis with a total of 12 one-way passenger vehicle trips expected per-day (inbound and outbound trips for five family members accessing the site and one drop off or pick up of firewood). As this is below the District’s threshold of significance for vehicle trips, no significant impacts from vehicle and truck trips to air quality are anticipated.

No construction is proposed; however, should future construction occur as a result of this project, construction activities associated with new development can temporarily increase localized PM10, PM2.5, volatile organic compound (VOC), nitrogen oxides (NOX), sulfur oxides (SOX), and carbon monoxide (CO) concentrations a project’s vicinity. The primary source of construction-related CO, SOX, VOC, and NOX emission is gasoline and diesel-powered, heavy-duty mobile construction equipment. Primary sources of PM10 and PM2.5 emissions are generally clearing and demolition activities, grading operations, construction vehicle traffic on unpaved ground, and wind blowing over exposed surfaces. Future construction activities associated with the proposed project may require use of heavy-duty construction equipment. However, all construction activities would occur in compliance with all SJVAPCD regulations; therefore, construction emissions would be less than significant without mitigation.

The closest sensitive receptor is a school directly to the west (APN 007-051-030). Project activities on-site are not expected to impact this receptor. Additionally, odors are not expected to impact off-site receptors, as no construction is proposed and use of the project site under this request will be for firewood cutting using manual tools including firewood splitters and hand-held axes.

As the project must comply with District regulations, the project’s emissions would be less than significant for all criteria pollutants, would not be inconsistent with any applicable air quality attainment plans, and would result in less than significant impacts to air quality.

Mitigation: None.

References: San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District - Regulation VIII Fugitive Dust/PM-10 Synopsis; www.valleyair.org; and the Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?			X	
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?			X	
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?			X	
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?			X	
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?			X	
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?			X	

Discussion: It does not appear this project will result in impacts to endangered species or habitats, locally designated species, or wildlife dispersal or mitigation corridors. There is no known sensitive or protected species or natural community located on the site. The project is located within the Brush Lake and Salida Quads of the California Natural Diversity Database.

Based on results from the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), there are seven animal species (excluding fish and mollusk species for which there is no feasible or potential habitat on the project site due to the lack of hydrological features) which are state or federally listed, threatened, or identified as species of special concern or a candidate of special concern within the Salida California Natural Diversity Database Quad. These species include Swainson’s hawk, tricolored blackbird, California tiger salamander- central California DPS, Crotch’s bumblebee, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, northwestern pond turtle, and coast horned lizard. There are six animal species (excluding fish and mollusk species for which there is no feasible or potential habitat on the project site due to the lack of hydrological features) which are state or federally listed, threatened, or identified as species of special concern or a candidate of special concern within the Brush Lake California Natural Diversity Database Quad. These species include Swainson’s hawk, tricolored blackbird, burrowing owl, Crotch’s bumblebee, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, and northwestern pond turtle.

Crotch’s bumblebee and valley elderberry longhorn beetle have been spotted within the vicinity of the project site, but both species are presumed extant in the area since 1968 and 1984, respectively, per the database. However, the project site is already disturbed and improved with a single-family dwelling, detached garage, barn, and residential swimming pool, and no rivers, creeks, ponds, or open canals exist on the project site. No construction is proposed as part of the project, and the project shall have no effect on Biological Resources.

An early consultation was referred to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and no response was received. The project will not conflict with a Habitat Conservation Plan, a Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other locally approved conservation plans. Impacts to endangered species or habitats, locally designated species, or wildlife dispersal or mitigation corridors are considered to be less than significant.

Mitigation: None.

References: California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Natural Diversity Database Quad Species List; California Natural Diversity Database, Planning and Community Development GIS, accessed January 28, 2026; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

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

Discussion: It does not appear this project will result in significant impacts to any archaeological or cultural resources. No construction is proposed. However, conditions of approval will be placed on the project, requiring that any future construction activities shall be halted, if any resources are found, until appropriate agencies are contacted, and an archaeological survey is completed.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

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

Discussion: The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Appendix F states that energy consuming equipment and processes, which will be used during construction or operation such as: energy requirements of the project by fuel type and end use, energy conservation equipment and design features, energy supplies that would serve the project, total estimated daily vehicle trips to be generated by the project, and the additional energy consumed per trip by mode, shall be taken into consideration when evaluating energy impacts. Additionally, the project’s compliance with applicable state or local energy legislation, policies, and standards must be considered. The project was also referred to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD), and no response has been received to date.

The project was referred to the Modesto Irrigation District (MID), which serves the project site and surrounding area for electrical service, and no response has been received to date.

Senate Bill 743 (SB743) requires that the transportation impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) evaluate impacts by using Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as a metric. Stanislaus County has currently not adopted any significance thresholds for VMT, and projects are treated on a case-by-case basis. As discussed in Section III – *Air Quality*, these activities would not significantly increase VMT due to the number of vehicle trips not exceeding a total of 110 vehicle trips per-day. The proposed project will generate a low amount of vehicle trips with a total of 12 one-way passenger vehicle trips expected per-day (inbound and outbound trips for five family members accessing the site and one drop off or pick up of firewood).

Vehicles accessing the site will be subject to applicable Air District regulations, including rules and regulations that increase energy efficiency. Accordingly, VMT impacts are anticipated to be less than significant. It does not appear that this project will result in significant impacts to the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. Accordingly, the potential impacts to Energy are considered to be less than significant.

It does not appear that this project will result in significant impacts to the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. Accordingly, the potential impacts to Energy are considered to be less than significant.

Mitigation: None.

References: San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District - Regulation VIII Fugitive Dust/PM-10 Synopsis; www.valleyair.org; Title 16 of County Code; CA Building Code; Governor’s Office of Planning and Research Technical Advisory, December 2018; Stanislaus County Zoning Ordinance (Title 21); Application information; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:			X	
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.			X	
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?			X	
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?			X	
iv) Landslides?			X	
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?			X	
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?			X	
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?			X	
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?			X	
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?			X	

Discussion: The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's Eastern Stanislaus County Soil Survey indicates that approximately 70.1 percent of the project site is comprised of Hanford sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes (HdA), and the remaining 29.9 percent of the project site is comprised of Dinuba sandy loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes (DrA). As contained in Chapter 5 of the General Plan Support Documentation, the areas of the County subject to significant geologic hazard are located in the Diablo Range, west of Interstate 5; however, as per the California Building Code, all of Stanislaus County is located within a geologic hazard zone (Seismic Design Category D, E, or F) and a soils test may be required at building permit application. Results from the soils test will determine if unstable or expansive soils are present. If such soils are present, special engineering of the structure will be required to compensate for the soil deficiency.

No new construction is proposed; however, any future structures resulting from this project will be designed and built according to building standards appropriate to withstand shaking for the area in which they are constructed. Any earth moving is subject to Public Works Standards and Specifications, which consider the potential for erosion and run-off prior to permit approval. Likewise, any addition or expansion of a septic tank or alternative wastewater disposal system would require the approval of the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) through the building permit process, which also takes soil type into consideration within the specific design requirements. The project was referred to DER, who responded with no comments on the project. The project was referred to Public Works, who responded with standard conditions of approval that will be applied to the project such as an encroachment permit needing to be obtained for driveway approaches at all points of ingress and egress on the project site and any other work done within the County right-of-way; no parking, loading, or unloading of vehicles being permitted within the County road right-of-way; that irrevocable offers of dedication be provided prior to the issuance of any building or grading permit; and all storm drainage facilities being designed using a

100-year, 24-hour storm and being capable of dewatering the 100-year, 24-hour storm within 48 hours. DER, Public Works, and the Building Permits Division review and approve any building or grading permit to ensure their standards are met. DER, Public Works and the Building Permit Services Division’s requirements and standards will be triggered under any future request for a building or grading permit associated with the project site.

The project site is not located near an active fault or within a high earthquake zone. Landslides are not likely due to the flat terrain of the area.

Impacts to geology and soils are anticipated to be less than significant.

Mitigation: None.

References: Referral response from the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) Environmental Health Division, dated December 16, 2025; Referral response received from the Department of Public Works, dated January 30, 2026; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

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

Discussion: The principal Greenhouse Gasses (GHGs) are carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), and water vapor (H₂O). CO₂ is the reference gas for climate change because it is the predominant greenhouse gas emitted. To account for the varying warming potential of different GHGs, GHG emissions are often quantified and reported as CO₂ equivalents (CO₂e). In 2006, California passed the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (Assembly Bill [AB] No. 32), which requires the California Air Resources Board (ARB) to design and implement emission limits, regulations, and other measures, such that feasible and cost-effective statewide GHG emissions are reduced to 1990 levels by 2020. Two additional bills, SB 350 and SB32, were passed in 2015 further amending the states Renewables Portfolio Standard (RPS) for electrical generation and amending the reduction targets to 40% of 1990 levels by 2030.

The short-term emissions of GHGs during construction, primarily composed of CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O, would be the result of fuel combustion by construction equipment and motor vehicles. The other primary GHGs (HFCs, PFCs, and SF₆) are typically associated with specific industrial sources and are not expected to be emitted by future construction at this project site. As described above in Section III - *Air Quality*, no new construction is proposed; however, should future construction occur as a result of the project, the use of heavy-duty construction equipment would be very limited; therefore, the emissions of CO₂ from future construction would be less than significant. Any future construction resulting from the project would be required to meet mandatory planning and design, energy efficiency, water efficiency and conservation, material conservation and resources efficiency, and environmental quality measures, of the California Green Building Standards (CALGreen) Code (California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 11) which includes minimum statewide standards to significantly reduce GHG emissions from new construction. Future construction activities associated with this project would be considered less than significant as they are temporary in nature and subject to meeting San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) standards for emissions.

Direct emissions of GHGs from the operation of the proposed project are primarily due to the truck trips to drop off and pick up equipment. As required by California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines section 15064.3, potential impacts regarding Green House Gas Emissions should be evaluated using Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). The calculation of VMT is the number of cars/trucks multiplied by the distance traveled by each car/truck. Total vehicle trips as a result of this project will not exceed 110 trips per-day. As discussed in Section III – *Air Quality*, the proposed project will generate a total of 12 one-way passenger vehicle trips expected per-day (inbound and outbound trips for five family members accessing the site and one drop off or pick up of firewood).

The project was referred to the SJVAPCD, and no response has been received to date. Staff will include a condition of approval on the project requiring that the applicant contact the SJVAPCD and be in compliance with all applicable rules and regulations. Based on project details and the conditions of approval to be placed on the project requiring that the applicant be in compliance with the District’s rules and regulations, GHG emissions are considered to be less than significant for the project.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

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

Discussion: The project is not anticipated to interfere with the Stanislaus County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, which identifies risks posed by disasters and identifies ways to minimize damage from those disasters. The County Department of Environmental Resources (DER) is responsible for overseeing hazardous materials. A referral response from the Hazardous Materials Division of DER indicated that the project is not anticipated to have a significant effect on the environment in terms of hazards and hazardous materials, and requested the applicant contact DER regarding regulatory requirements for hazardous materials and/or wastes. The project was also referred to the Environmental Health Division of DER, who responded with no comments on the project.

Wood brought to the site consists of green and dry wood sourced from orchards in Stanislaus and neighboring counties. No green waste is brought to the site for processing. Firewood is not stored long-term on-site and is taken to a family-owned property in Ripon shortly after cutting. Wood is cut on-site using manual tools including firewood splitters and hand-held axes. No firewood sales will occur on-site.

Pesticide exposure is a risk in areas located in the vicinity of agriculture. Sources of exposure include contaminated groundwater from drift from spray applications. Application of sprays is strictly controlled by the Agricultural Commissioner and can only be accomplished after first obtaining permits. Additionally, agricultural buffers are intended to reduce the risk of spray exposure to surrounding people. The nearest properties in production agriculture with records of pesticide use are a 7.8± acre farmed parcel located directly north of the project site and an 18.7± acre parcel located approximately 50± feet to the south across California Avenue. The project was referred to the Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner, who regulates pesticide use, and no comments have been received to date related to pesticide use in the area. As stated in Section II – *Agricultural and Forest Resources*, General Plan Amendment No. 2011-01 – Revised Agricultural Buffers was approved by the Board of Supervisors on December 20, 2011, to modify County requirements for buffers on agricultural projects. Based on the requested use consisting of five or fewer people involved in the operation on-site and no customers or other members of the general public expected to visit the site, staff believe the project can be considered low people intensive, thus not subject to the County's Agricultural Buffer requirements. The Planning Commission shall have the ultimate authority to determine if a use is "low people intensive."

The project site is not listed on the EnviroStor database managed by the CA Department of Toxic Substances Control or within the vicinity of any airport. The site is located in a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) for fire protection and is served by Woodland Fire Protection District. The project was referred to the Woodland Fire Protection District, and no comments have been received to date. The project was referred to the Stanislaus County Fire Prevention Bureau, and no comments have been received to date. Further correspondence with Fire Prevention Bureau staff indicated that they had no concerns with the project as proposed because firewood will not be stored long-term on-site. If firewood were to be stored long-term on-site, firewood piles would need to meet requirements such as a minimum 10-foot setback from property line and a maximum height of 20-feet.

The project site is not within the vicinity of any airstrip, airport land use plan area, or wildlands. No significant impacts associated with hazards or hazardous materials are anticipated to occur as a result of the proposed project.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application Materials; Referral Response received from Agricultural Commissioner's Office, dated December 16, 2025; Email correspondence with Agricultural Commissioner's Office, dated January 12, 2026; Referral Response received from Department of Environmental Resources (DER) Environmental Health Division, dated December 16, 2025; Referral Response received from Department of Environmental Resources (DER) Hazardous Materials Division, dated December 26, 2025; Email correspondence with Stanislaus County Fire Prevention Bureau, dated January 7, 2026; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

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

Discussion: Areas subject to flooding have been identified in accordance with the Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA). The project site is located in FEMA Flood Zone X, which includes areas determined to be outside the 0.2% annual chance floodplains. All flood zone requirements will be addressed by the Building Permits Division during the building permit process. The project proposes to handle stormwater drainage via overland runoff, and the current absorption patterns of water upon this property will not be altered. The project was referred to the Department of Environmental Resources (DER)'s Groundwater Resources Division and Environmental Health Division, who responded with no comments.

The site is currently served by a private septic system and well. No new wells or septic tanks are proposed as part of this request. Any future wells constructed on-site will be subject to review under the County's Well Permitting Program, which will determine whether a new well will require environmental review. Any potential regulatory requirements regarding applicable County Local Agency Management Program (LAMP) standards and required setbacks can be enforced during the building permit review process. The project was referred to Public Works, who responded with standard conditions of approval that will be applied to the project such as an encroachment permit needing to be obtained for driveway approaches at all points of ingress and egress on the project site and any other work done within the County right-of-way; no parking, loading, or unloading of vehicles being permitted within the County road right-of-way; that irrevocable offers of dedication be provided; and all storm drainage facilities being designed using a 100-year, 24-hour storm and being capable of dewatering the 100-year, 24-hour storm within 48 hours. While no construction is proposed as part of this request, all applicable standards under Public Works and DER will be addressed under the building permit review process for any future building permit obtained for the site.

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), passed in 2014 requires the formation of local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to oversee the development and implementation of Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs), with the ultimate goal of achieving sustainable management of the state's groundwater basins. Stanislaus County is a participating member in five GSA's across four groundwater subbasins, including: the Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater

Subbasin, which covers a portion of Stanislaus County occurring north of the Stanislaus River; commonly referred to as the “northern triangle”; the Modesto Groundwater Subbasin, which covers an area of land located between the Stanislaus and Tuolumne rivers, occurring west of the Sierra Nevada foothills and east of the San Joaquin River; the Turlock Groundwater Subbasin which covers an area of land located between the Tuolumne and Merced rivers, occurring west of the Sierra Nevada Foothills and occurring east of the San Joaquin River; and the Delta-Mendota Groundwater Subbasin which covers an area of land within Stanislaus County located west of the San Joaquin River and east of the basement rock of the Coast Range. Public and private water agencies and user groups within each of the four groundwater subbasins work together as GSAs to implement SGMA. The project site is located in the Modesto Groundwater Subbasin, which is administered by the Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers Groundwater Basin Association GSA. The project was referred to the Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers Groundwater Basin Association GSA, and no comments were received regarding the proposed project.

Stanislaus County adopted a Groundwater Ordinance in November 2014 (Chapter 9.37 of the County Code, hereinafter, the “Ordinance”) that codifies requirements, prohibitions, and exemptions intended to help promote sustainable groundwater extraction in unincorporated areas of the County. The Ordinance prohibits the unsustainable extraction of groundwater and makes issuing permits for new wells, which are not exempt from this prohibition, discretionary. For unincorporated areas covered in an adopted GSP pursuant to SGMA, the County can require holders of permits for wells it reasonably concludes are withdrawing groundwater unsustainably to provide substantial evidence that continued operation of such wells does not constitute unsustainable extraction and has the authority to regulate future groundwater extraction. The site has an existing private well and septic system. There are no additional wells proposed as part of this request.

The project site is currently served by the Modesto Irrigation District (MID) for irrigation water. The project was referred to MID, and no response has been received to date.

The project was referred to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and no response has been received to date.

As a result of the development standards required for this project, impacts associated with drainage, water quality, and runoff are expected to have a less than significant impact.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application materials; Referral Response received from Department of Environmental Resources (DER) Groundwater Resources Division, dated December 5, 2025; Referral Response received from Department of Environmental Resources (DER) Environmental Health Division, dated December 16, 2025; Referral response received from the Department of Public Works, dated January 30, 2026; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?			X	
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?			X	

Discussion: The project site is designated Agriculture by the Stanislaus County General Plan land use diagrams and zoned General Agriculture (A-2-40). The project is a request to permit an existing firewood cutting operation, on a 4.52± acre parcel, in the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district. Firewood cutting occurs seven days a week, as needed but not continuously, from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. The parcel is currently developed with an existing single-family dwelling, detached garage, barn, and residential swimming pool. Woodcutting takes place in the open area at the southern end of the parcel, along California Avenue. Three to five family members of the property owner chop firewood on-site. Wood is brought on-site once a week via a personal pickup truck. Access is proposed to be taken off County-maintained Pauline Avenue via an existing driveway and County-maintained California Avenue via a new driveway, with vehicles entering from Pauline Avenue and exiting from California Avenue.

As discussed in Section II- *Agriculture and Forest Resources*, the chopping and sale of firewood in the A-2 zoning district is permitted by-right when trees are removed from an existing on-site orchard incidental to agricultural production on-site.

However, due to the project proposing to cut, stack, and sell wood sourced from off-site orchards, a use permit is required for this operation as proposed.

The proposed use is considered a Tier One use, which are closely related to agriculture and necessary for a healthy agricultural economy. As allowed under Section 21.020.030(A) of the Stanislaus County Zoning Ordinance, Tier One uses may be allowed when the Planning Commission finds that:

1. The use as proposed will not be substantially detrimental to or in conflict with agricultural use of other property in the vicinity; and
2. The establishment, maintenance, and operation of the proposed use or building applied for is consistent with the General Plan designation of "Agriculture" and will not, under the circumstances of the particular case, be detrimental to the health, safety, and general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the use and that it will not be detrimental or injurious to property and improvements in the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the County.

Based on the specific features and design of this project, it does not appear this project will impact the long-term productive agricultural capability of surrounding contracted lands in the A-2 zoning district. There is no indication this project will result in the removal of adjacent contracted land from agricultural use. With the application of conditions of approval, there is no indication that, under the circumstances of this particular case, the proposed operation will be detrimental to the health, safety, and general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the use or that it will be detrimental or injurious to property and improvements in the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the County.

As Stated in Section II – *Agricultural and Forest Resources*, General Plan Amendment No. 2011-01 – Revised Agricultural Buffers was approved by the Board of Supervisors on December 20, 2011, to modify County requirements for buffers on agricultural projects. Based on the requested use consisting of five or fewer people involved in the operation on-site and no customers or other members of the general public expected to visit the site, staff believe the project can be considered low people intensive, thus not subject to the County’s Agricultural Buffer requirements. The Planning Commission shall have the ultimate authority to determine if a use is “low people intensive.”

The project site is not located within the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) - adopted Sphere of Influence (SOI) or adopted General Plan area of any incorporated cities in Stanislaus County.

The project will not physically divide an established community nor conflict with any habitat conservation plans. This project is not known to conflict with any adopted land use plan, policy, or regulation of any agency with jurisdiction over the project. No significant impacts associated with land use and planning are anticipated to occur as a result of the proposed project.

Mitigation: None.

References: Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

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

Discussion: The location of all commercially viable mineral resources in Stanislaus County has been mapped by the State Division of Mines and Geology in Special Report 173. There are no known significant resources on the site, nor is the project site located in a geological area known to produce resources.

Mitigation: None.

References: Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

XIII. NOISE -- Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?			X	
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?			X	
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?			X	

Discussion: The Stanislaus County General Plan identifies noise levels up to 75 dB Ldn (or CNEL) as the normally acceptable level of noise for industrial and agricultural uses. The Stanislaus County General Plan identifies noise levels for residential or other noise-sensitive land uses of up to 55 hourly Leq, dBA and 75 Lmax, dBA from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and 45 hourly Leq, dBA and 65 Lmax, dBA from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. Pure tone noises, such as music, shall be reduced by five dBA; however, when ambient noise levels exceed the standards, the standards shall be increased to the ambient noise levels. The proposed hours of operation are from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., as needed but not continuously, seven days a week. The nearest sensitive noise receptor is a school directly to the west (APN 007-051-030). Noise impacts associated with on-site activities are not expected to impact this receptor. The site itself is impacted by the noise generated from traffic on Pauline and California Avenues and farming operations in the surrounding area. Noise impacts associated with on-site activities will include firewood cutting using manual tools including firewood splitters and hand-held axes. Such uses should be under the threshold established by the General Plan’s Noise Element and Chapter 10.46 of the County Code – Noise Control. No construction is proposed as part of this request. If future construction occurs, on-site grading and construction resulting from this project may result in a temporary increase in the area’s ambient noise levels; however, noise impacts associated with on-site activities and traffic are not anticipated to exceed the normally acceptable level of noise.

The site is not located within an airport land use plan.

Mitigation: None.

References: Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?			X	
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?			X	

Discussion: The site is not included in the vacant sites inventory for the 2023 Stanislaus County Housing Element, which covers the sixth cycle Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) for the County and will therefore not impact the

County’s ability to meet their RHNA. No population growth will be induced, nor will any existing housing be displaced as a result of this project.

Mitigation: None.

References: Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

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

Discussion: This project was circulated to all applicable school, fire, police, irrigation, and public works departments and districts during the early consultation referral period and no concerns were identified with regard to public services including Woodland Fire Protection District, the Stanislaus County Sheriff’s Office, Paradise Elementary School and Modesto City Schools District, Stanislaus County Public Works Department, and Modesto Irrigation District (MID). Only Public Works responded with comments, which included standard conditions of approval that will be applied to the project such as an encroachment permit needing to be obtained for driveway approaches at all points of ingress and egress on the project site and any other work done within the County right-of-way; no parking, loading, or unloading of vehicles being permitted within the County road right-of-way; that irrevocable offers of dedication be provided prior to the issuance of any building or grading permit; and all storm drainage facilities being designed using a 100-year, 24-hour storm and being capable of dewatering the 100-year, 24-hour storm within 48 hours.

The County has adopted Public Facilities Fees, as well as Fire Facility Fees on behalf of the appropriate fire district, to address impacts to public services. No buildings are proposed as part of this project. However, should any construction occur on the property in the future, all adopted public facility fees will be required to be paid at the time of building permit issuance.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Referral response received from the Department of Public Works, dated January 30, 2026; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

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

Discussion: This project will not increase demands for recreational facilities, as such impacts typically are associated with residential development.

Mitigation: None.

References: Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

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

Discussion: The project is a request to permit an existing firewood cutting operation, on a 4.52± acre parcel, in the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district. Firewood cutting occurs seven days a week, as needed but not continuously, from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. The parcel is currently developed with an existing single-family dwelling, detached garage, barn, and residential swimming pool. Woodcutting takes place in the open area at the southern end of the parcel, along California Avenue. Three to five family members of the property owner chop firewood on-site. Wood is brought on-site once a week via a personal pickup truck and removed shortly after cutting. Access is proposed to be taken off County-maintained Pauline Avenue via an existing driveway and County-maintained California Avenue via a new driveway, with vehicles entering from Pauline Avenue and exiting from California Avenue.

The calculation of VMT is the number of cars/trucks multiplied by the distance traveled by each car/truck. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (a), defines VMT as the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project. A technical advisory on evaluating transportation impacts in CEQA published by the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) in December of 2018 clarified the definition of automobiles as referring to on-road passenger vehicles, specifically cars and light trucks. According to the same OPR technical advisory, many local agencies have developed a screening threshold of VMT to indicate when detailed analysis is needed. Absent substantial evidence indicating that a project would generate a potentially significant level of VMT, or inconsistency with a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) or General Plan, projects that generate or attract fewer than 110 trips per-day generally may be assumed to cause a less than significant transportation impact. The proposed project will generate up to 12 one-way passenger vehicle trips per-day (inbound and outbound trips for five family members accessing the site and one drop off or pick up of firewood). As this is below the screening threshold of significance for vehicle trips, no significant impacts from vehicle trips to transportation are anticipated.

This project was referred to the Department of Public Works and the Woodland Fire Protection District. Public Works responded with standard conditions of approval that will be applied to the project such as an encroachment permit needing to be obtained for driveway approaches at all points of ingress and egress on the project site and any other work done within the County right-of-way; no parking, loading, or unloading of vehicles being permitted within the County road right-of-way; that irrevocable offers of dedication be provided prior to the issuance of any building or grading permit; and all storm drainage facilities being designed using a 100-year, 24-hour storm and being capable of dewatering the 100-year, 24-hour storm within 48 hours.

The proposed project is not anticipated to conflict with any transportation program, plan, ordinance or policy. Transportation impacts associated with the project are considered to be less than significant.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Referral response received from the Department of Public Works, dated January 30, 2026; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California native American tribe, and that is:			X	
i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or			X	
ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set for the in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.			X	

Discussion: It does not appear that this project will result in significant impacts to any archaeological or cultural resources. The project does not include any construction or ground disturbance. In accordance with SB 18 and AB 52, this project was not referred to the tribes listed with the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) as the project is not a General Plan Amendment and no tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area have requested consultation or project referral noticing. The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe has requested consultation on projects within their historic territories, which are generally located in the west side of Stanislaus County. The project site is not located within this area, and referral will not be required. While the site is already developed, if any resources are found during future construction, construction activities would halt until a qualified survey takes place and the appropriate authorities are notified. A condition of approval regarding the discovery of cultural resources during any future construction process will be added to the project.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

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

Discussion: Limitations on providing services have not been identified. The project proposes to utilize an existing private well for water and an existing septic system for wastewater service. The project was referred to the Department of Environmental Resources (DER)'s Environmental Health and Groundwater Resources Divisions, both of which responded with no comments.

The project was referred to Public Works, who responded with standard conditions of approval that will be applied to the project such as an encroachment permit needing to be obtained for driveway approaches at all points of ingress and egress on the project site and any other work done within the County right-of-way; no parking, loading, or unloading of vehicles being permitted within the County road right-of-way; that irrevocable offers of dedication be provided prior to the issuance of any building or grading permit; and all storm drainage facilities being designed using a 100-year, 24-hour storm and being capable of dewatering the 100-year, 24-hour storm within 48 hours.

The project was also referred to DER's Groundwater Resources Division, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB), and no response has been received to date.

The project was referred to the Modesto Irrigation District (MID), which serves the project site and surrounding area for electrical service, and no response has been received to date.

The project is not anticipated to have a significant impact to utilities and service systems.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Referral response from the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) Environmental Health Division, dated December 16, 2025; Referral response received from the Department of Public Works, dated January 30, 2026; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

XX. WILDFIRE – If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?			X	
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?			X	
c) Require the installation of maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?			X	
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?			X	

Discussion: The Stanislaus County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies risks posed by disasters and identifies ways to minimize damage from those disasters. With the Wildfire Hazard Mitigation Activities of this plan in place, impacts to an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan are anticipated to be less than significant. The terrain of the site is relatively flat, and the site has access to County-maintained Pauline Avenue.

The site is located in a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) for fire protection and is served by Woodland Fire Protection District. The project was referred to the Woodland Fire Protection District, and no comments have been received to date. The project was referred to the Stanislaus County Fire Prevention Bureau, and no comments have been received to date. Further correspondence with Fire Prevention Bureau staff indicated that they had no concerns with the project as proposed because firewood will not be stored long-term on-site. If firewood were to be stored long-term on-site, piles would need to meet requirements such as a minimum 10-foot setback from property line and a maximum height of 20-feet.

No construction is proposed; however, any future construction will be subject to building permits and will be reviewed by the County’s Building Permits Division and Fire Prevention Bureau to ensure all State of California Building and Fire Code requirements are met prior to construction.

Wildfire risk and risks associated with postfire land changes are considered to be less than significant.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Email correspondence with Stanislaus County Fire Prevention Bureau, dated January 7, 2026; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE --	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?			X	
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)			X	
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?			X	

Discussion: The project site is designated Agriculture by the Stanislaus County General Plan land use diagrams and zoned General Agriculture (A-2-40).

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service’s Eastern Stanislaus County Soil Survey indicates that approximately 70.1 percent of the project site is comprised of Hanford sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes (HdA), and the remaining 29.9 percent of the project site is comprised of Dinuba sandy loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes (DrA). Approximately 1.94± acres at the northeastern portion of the project site, that has already been developed with a single-family dwelling, detached garage, barn, and residential swimming pool, is classified as “Urban and Built-Up Land” by the California Department of Conservation’s Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. The remaining 2.58± acres of the project site is classified as “Prime Farmland.”

While the site’s soils are classified as prime farmland under the County’s Uniform Rules, the site is not currently improved with production agriculture and has not been farmed for several years. Further, pursuant to the County’s Uniform Rules, 10-acres is presumed to be the minimum available acreage necessary to be economically viable to independently farm. The parcel is not currently enrolled under a Williamson Act Contract. The proposed project will not conflict with any agriculturally zoned land or Williamson Act Contracted land, nor will the project result in the conversion of prime farmland, unique farmland, or farmland of statewide importance.

The proposed project will generate a low amount of vehicle trips with a total of 12 one-way passenger vehicle trips expected per-day (inbound and outbound trips for five family members accessing the site and one drop off or pick up of firewood). Accordingly, no significant impacts from vehicle and truck trips to air quality and transportation are anticipated.

As discussed in Section XI- *Land Use Planning*, within the A-2 zoning district, a Tier One Use Permit must be obtained to operate a firewood cutting operation. As allowed under Section 21.020.030(A) of the Stanislaus County Zoning Ordinance, Tier One uses may be allowed when the Planning Commission finds that:

1. The use as proposed will not be substantially detrimental to or in conflict with agricultural use of other property in the vicinity; and
2. The establishment, maintenance, and operation of the proposed use or building applied for is consistent with the General Plan designation of “Agriculture” and will not, under the circumstances of the particular case, be detrimental to the health, safety, and general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the use and that it

will not be detrimental or injurious to property and improvements in the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the County.

The land surrounding the project site is zoned A-2 and is subject to the permitted uses of the A-2 zoning district. Any use requiring land use entitlements would be subject to further environmental review, application of conditions of approval and necessary mitigation, and discretionary vote by the decision-making body, either the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors.

The project site is not located within the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) - adopted Sphere of Influence (SOI) or adopted General Plan area of any incorporated cities in Stanislaus County.

The project requests to be served by an existing well and septic system; however, no impacts with respect to either have been raised. No construction is proposed as part of the project.

Review of this project has not indicated any features which might significantly impact the environmental quality of the site and/or the surrounding area.

Mitigation: None.

References: Initial Study; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

¹Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation adopted in August 23, 2016, as amended. **Housing Element** adopted on December 9, 2025.



NEGATIVE DECLARATION

NAME OF PROJECT: Use Permit Application No. PLN2025-0049- Madrigal

LOCATION OF PROJECT: 1201 Pauline Avenue, between California Avenue and Maze Boulevard, in the Modesto area (APN 007-051-029).

PROJECT DEVELOPERS: Anamiria Madrigal
3928 Willow Pond Ct.
Ceres, CA 95307

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT: Request to permit an existing firewood cutting operation, on a 4.52± acre parcel, in the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district.

Based upon the Initial Study, dated **February 13, 2026**, the Environmental Coordinator finds as follows:

1. This project does not have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, nor to curtail the diversity of the environment.
2. This project will not have a detrimental effect upon either short-term or long-term environmental goals.
3. This project will not have impacts which are individually limited but cumulatively considerable.
4. This project will not have environmental impacts which will cause substantial adverse effects upon human beings, either directly or indirectly.

The Initial Study and other environmental documents are available for public review at the Department of Planning and Community Development, 1010 10th Street, Suite 3400, Modesto, California.

Initial Study prepared by: Marcus Ruddicks, Assistant Planner

Submit comments to: Stanislaus County
Planning and Community Development Department
1010 10th Street, Suite 3400
Modesto, California 95354

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW REFERRALS

PROJECT: USE PERMIT APPLICATION NO. PLN2025-0049- MADRIGAL

REFERRED TO:	RESPONDED			RESPONSE			MITIGATION MEASURES		CONDITIONS			
	2 WK	30 DAY	PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE	YES	NO	WILL NOT HAVE SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	MAY HAVE SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO COMMENT NON CEQA	YES	NO	YES	NO
CA DEPT OF FISH & WILDLIFE	X	X	X		X							
CA OPR STATE CLEARINGHOUSE	X	X	X		X							
CA RWQCB CENTRAL VALLEY REGION	X	X	X		X							
CITY OF: MODESTO	X				X							
DER GROUNDWATER RESOURCES DIVISION	X	X	X	X				X		X		X
DISPOSAL DIST: TURLOCK SCAVENGER AREA 3	X	X	X		X							
FIRE PROTECTION DIST: WOODLAND	X	X	X		X							
GSA: STANISLAUS AND TULOU MNE RIVERS GROUNDWATER SUBBASIN ASSOCIATION	X	X	X		X							
IRRIGATION DISTRICT: MODESTO	X	X	X		X							
MOSQUITO DISTRICT: EASTSIDE	X	X	X		X							
STAN CO EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES	X	X	X		X							
PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC	X	X	X		X							
SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY APCD	X	X	X	X				X		X		X
SCHOOL DISTRICT 1: PARADISE ELEMENTARY	X	X	X		X							
SCHOOL DISTRICT 2: MODESTO UNION	X	X	X		X							
STAN CO AG COMMISSIONER	X	X	X	X				X		X	X	
STAN CO BUILDING PERMITS DIVISION	X	X	X		X							
STAN CO CEO	X	X	X		X							
STAN CO DER	X	X	X	X				X		X		X
STAN CO FARM BUREAU	X	X	X		X							
STAN CO HAZARDOUS MATERIALS	X	X	X	X		X				X	X	
STAN CO PUBLIC WORKS	X	X	X	X				X		X	X	
STAN CO SHERIFF	X	X	X		X							
STAN CO SUPERVISOR DIST 3: WITHROW	X	X	X		X							
STAN COUNTY COUNSEL	X	X	X		X							
STANISLAUS FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU	X	X	X		X							
STANISLAUS LAFCO	X	X	X		X							
SURROUNDING LAND OWNERS		X	X	X				X		X		X
TELEPHONE COMPANY: AT&T	X	X	X		X							
US FISH & WILDLIFE	X	X	X		X							
STATE OF CA SWRCB DIVISION OF DRINKING WATER DIST. 10	X	X	X		X							

**COUNTY OF STANISLAUS CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION DISCLOSURE FORM
PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Application Number: PLN2025-0049
Application Title: FIRE CUTTING PERMIT
Application Address: 1201 PAULINE AVE, MODESTO, CA 95358
Application APN: 007-051-029

Was a campaign contribution, regardless of the dollar amount, made to any member of a decision-making body involved in making a determination regarding the above application (i.e. Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, Airport Land Use Commission, or Building Code Appeals Board), hereinafter referred to as Member, during the 12-month period preceding the filing of the application, by the applicant, property owner, or, if applicable, any of the applicant's proposed subcontractors or the applicant's agent or lobbyist?

Yes No

If no, please sign and date below.

If yes, please provide the following information:

Applicant's Name: _____

Contributor or Contributor Firm's Name: _____

Contributor or Contributor Firm's Address: _____

Is the Contributor:

The Applicant	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Property Owner	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Subcontractor	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Applicant's Agent/ Lobbyist	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note: Under California law as implemented by the Fair Political Practices Commission, campaign contributions made by the Applicant and the Applicant's agent/lobbyist who is representing the Applicant in this application or solicitation must be aggregated together to determine the total campaign contribution made by the Applicant.

Identify the Member(s) to whom you, the property owner, your subcontractors, and/or agent/lobbyist made campaign contributions during the 12-month period preceding the filing of the application, the name of the contributor, the dates of contribution(s) and dollar amount of the contribution. Each date must include the exact month, day, and year of the contribution.

Name of Member: _____

Name of Contributor: _____

Date(s) of Contribution(s): _____

Amount(s): _____

(Please add an additional sheet(s) to identify additional Member(s) to whom you, the property owner, your subconsultants, and/or agent/lobbyist made campaign contributions)

By signing below, I certify that the statements made herein are true and correct. I also agree to disclose to the County any future contributions made to Member(s) by the applicant, property owner, or, if applicable, any of the applicant's proposed subcontractors or the applicant's agent or lobbyist after the date of signing this disclosure form, and within 12 months following the approval, renewal, or extension of the requested license, permit, or entitlement to use.

3-12-2026
Date

Signature of Applicant MIGUEL MADRIGAL

Print Firm Name if applicable

Print Name of Applicant ANAMIRIA MADRIGAL