

Fruitland Ridge Farms, LLC
Record Number: PLN-2021-17108
Assessor's Parcel Number: 211-341-028

Recommended Planning Commission Action

1. Describe the application as part of the Consent Agenda.
2. Survey the audience for any person who would like to discuss the application.
3. If no one requests discussion, make the following motion to approve the application as a part of the consent agenda:

Adopt the resolution to 1) find that the Planning Commission has considered the Addendum to the adopted Environmental Impact Report for the Commercial Cannabis Land Use Ordinance (CCLUO) as described by Section §15164 of the State CEQA Guidelines, 2) make all of the required findings for approval of the Special Permit and 3) approve the Fruitland Ridge Farms, LLC, Special Permit as recommended by staff subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

Executive Summary: Fruitland Ridge Farms, LLC seeks a Special Permit to allow for 43,560 square feet of mixed light cannabis cultivation in accordance with Humboldt County Code Section 314-55.4 of Chapter 4 of Division I of Title III, Commercial Cannabis Land Use Ordinance (CCLUO). The site is designated as Residential Agriculture (RA5-20) in the Humboldt County 2017 General Plan Update and zoned Unclassified (U). The proposed project will occur in two phases. Phase 1 will include 11,000 square feet of mixed light cannabis cultivation and 32,210 square feet of outdoor full-sun cannabis cultivation. Phase 2 includes transitioning the 32,210 square feet of outdoor full-sun cannabis cultivation to 32,210 square feet of mixed light cannabis cultivation. Ancillary propagation will occur in three (3) greenhouses: one (1) 2,000-square-foot greenhouse and two (2) 1,000- square-foot greenhouses. The applicant anticipates there will be two cultivation cycles occurring annually. Processing such as drying, curing and trimming will occur onsite in a proposed 3,200-square-foot processing building. All processing will occur offsite at a third-party licensed processing facility until the proposed processing building is constructed. The applicant anticipates three (3) employees will be required for operations. Artificial lighting used for processing activities will adhere to shielding and International Dark Sky Association standards as set forth in the CCLUO. Power for the project will be provided by PG&E. Generators will be used for emergency backup purposes only.

Water Resources

Water for irrigation will be provided by a permitted onsite well (Permit No. 20-21-0261). According to a Hydrologic Isolation Report prepared by Lindberg Geologic Consulting, there is a low probability of hydrologic connectivity to surface waters. The report also found that the water producing area is considered hydrologically isolated from any other aquifers in the area. The applicant also completed a drawdown test to determine impacts on adjacent wells. The drawdown test found no difference in the water levels of the monitored well on the adjacent property at the beginning or end of the pump test.

The applicant anticipates 500,000 gallons of water will be required annually for irrigation (approximately 11.5 gallons per square foot per year). Existing water storage totals 40,000 gallons occurring in eight (8) 5,000-gallon tanks.

Biological Resources

According to the California Natural Diversity Database the seacoast ragwort is the only species of concern mapped on the parcel. The applicant submitted a Preliminary Biological Resource Assessment prepared by TransTerra Consulting, LLC dated September 2020 and a subsequent botanical survey was completed and submitted in June of 2022. According to the Assessment

there are low populations of Seacoast ragwort present in California and the species can be found along roadsides. The roadside habitat within the project area may provide suitable habitat but is likely too dry for this species to occur. No evidence of the seacoast ragwort was detected during the field survey.

According to the Humboldt County WebGIS, there is a mapped Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) activity center (HUM0761) approximately 0.71 miles west from the project site and the nearest NSO observation (HUM0774) is located approximately 0.22 miles north of the project site. Marbled murrelet habitat is mapped approximately 1.61 miles west from the project site. According to the Preliminary Biological Resource Assessment the NSO's preferred nesting and roosting habitat include multiple canopy layers, higher species density, larger overstory trees, and live trees with deformities, and wood debris in understory. The subject project is not located on a parcel with dense forested areas. Power for the project will be provided by PG&E and all artificial lighting used for processing activities will adhere to shielding and International Dark Sky Association standards as set forth in the CCLUO. Staff does not believe the proposed project will have an impact on the NSO and Marbled murrelet. The results of the botanical survey indicate that no special status plant species occur on the project site.

Access

The property is accessed via private driveway from Dyerville Loop Road. The applicant submitted a self-certified Road Evaluation Report stating the entire road segment is developed to Category 4 standards (20 feet wide) or better. The applicant submitted a Site Management Plan (SMP) prepared by Green Road Consulting dated November 17, 2020. According to the SMP the site has 1,000 feet of permanent roads leading to the residence and an additional 2,000 feet of seasonal access roads used to access the cultivation sites. The existing roads are stable, with no disturbed areas located near riparian setbacks.

Tribal Consultation

The project is located in the Bear River Band and Sinkyone Aboriginal Ancestral Territories. The project was referred to Northwest Information Center, Bear River Band, and Sinkyone tribe. The Bear River Band recommended the applicant to submit a Cultural Resource Study (CRS). The applicant submitted a CRS prepared by Archaeological Research and Supply Company Dated October 2020. The study concluded there were zero (0) historic or prehistoric era resources located during the survey. No further archaeological work is recommended for the project. Standard Inadvertent Archaeological Discovery Protocol will be implemented during any project construction activities.

Environmental review and Recommendation

Environmental review for this project was conducted and based on the results of that analysis, staff finds that all aspects of the project have been considered in a previously adopted Environmental Impact Report that was adopted for the Commercial Cannabis Land Use Ordinance and has prepared an addendum to this document for consideration by the Planning Commission (See Attachment 2 for more information). Staff recommends that the Planning Commission describe the application as a part of the consent agenda, survey the audience to see if any person would like to discuss the application and, if no one requests discussion, make all the required findings based on the evidence in the record and approve the application subject to the recommended conditions.

Alternatives

Several alternatives may be considered: 1) The Planning Commission could elect to add or delete conditions of approval; 2) The Planning Commission could deny approval of the requested permits if unable to make all of the required findings. Planning Division staff is confident that the required

findings can be made based on the submitted evidence and subject to the recommended conditions of approval. Consequently, planning staff does not recommend further consideration of these alternatives.