



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 4/17/2025

File #: 25-542

To: Planning Commission

From: Planning and Building Department

Agenda Section: Consent

SUBJECT:

Matthew Puckett Conditional Use Permit Modification
Assessor Parcel Numbers: 210-051-059
Record Number: PLN-2020-16889
Bridgeville area

A Modification to an approved Conditional Use Permit (PLN-10269-CUP) for the inclusion of a two-story, 6,120-square-foot (60'x102') metal building to be used as a nursery and drying/storage area. The approved Conditional Use Permit was for one-acre of outdoor cannabis cultivation. The Modification will also convert the outdoor cultivation to light deprivation with hoop houses. While proposed at 5,000 square feet for the nursery, the nursery is conditioned to consist of no more than 4,356 square feet to start plants which is 10% of their approved 43,560 square feet of outdoor and mixed light cultivation (PLN-10269-CUP). Processing will continue to take place at a licensed third-party facility. PG&E provides power to the site.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Planning Commission:

1. Adopt the resolution (Attachment 1), which does the following:
2. Finds project exempt from environmental review pursuant to section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines; and
3. Finds the proposed project Modification complies with the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance; and
4. Approves Conditional Use Permit Modification subject to the conditions of approval (Attachment 1A).

DISCUSSION:

Project Location: The project is in the Bridgeville area, on the east side of State Highway 36, approximately 1.14 miles east from the intersection of State Highway 36 and Little Larabee Creek Road, on the property known as 32801 State Highway 36.

Present Plan Land Use Designations: Residential Agriculture (RA40), Density: 40 acres per unit, 2017 General Plan, Slope Stability: High Instability (3)

Present Zoning: Forestry Recreation (FR), Minimum building site area is 40 acres (B-5(40))

Environmental Review: The project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section: 15301 - Existing Facilities.

State Appeal Status: Project is located outside the Coastal Zone and is therefore NOT appealable to the California Coastal Commission.

Major Issues: None

Executive Summary:

A Modification to an approved Conditional Use Permit. The approved Conditional Use Permit was for one-acre of outdoor cannabis cultivation. The Modification to the approved project is for a 6,120 square foot building that was constructed prior to approval. The two-story building will be used as a nursery on the first floor and as drying/ storage on the second floor. Processing will take place at a licensed third-party processing facility. Power for the project is provided by PG&E. Water for the site is provided by two water wells which supply 22,500 gallons of water which is stored in hard tanks. With an additional 10,000 gallons for emergency fire suppression. Security for the property consists of security fencing, automated security gated access, cameras, motion sensor perimeter lighting, and two residents living onsite to oversee the operations. The nursery will comprise 4,356 square feet (sf) and be used to start plants for approximately 20 days before being moved into greenhouses.

The original project was approved by the Planning Commission on March 4, 2016. The modification is required as the proposed changes to the project do not meet the requirements for a Minor Deviation to the Plot Plan due to the project footprint location differing from what was originally approved. All conditions of approval from the original project approval (PLN-10269-CUP) shall continue to apply (**Condition of Approval #1**), in addition to all conditions included in Attachment 1 of this Staff Report specific to the requested Modification.

Water Resources:

Estimated annual water usage with the nursery is 120,000 gallons per year. Water for the site is provided by two wells which supply 22,500 of water storage with an additional 10,000 gallons of water for fire suppression for emergency purposes.

PLN-10269-CUP was approved for 583,440 gallons for irrigation. Inspections include examination of the waterlogs for cultivation which detail a usage amount of 105,350 gallons for 2023 and 113,100 gallons for 2024, which is far below what was estimated in the review and approval of the original permit. Therefore, the increased water usage for this modification will have no impact. The lower amount of irrigation water needed is due to careful management and drip irrigation.

Biological Resources:

Per review of California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) in March of 2025, the nearest Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) observation area is 0.68 miles Northwest from the structure. Noise levels measured at 100 feet or edge of habitat, whichever is closer, shall be measured at or below 50 decibels. Conditions of Approval item C2 requires the applicant to adhere to noise and light attenuation measures, refrain from using synthetic netting, ensure refuse is contained in wildlife proof storage, and refrain from using anticoagulant rodenticides to further protect wildlife. As proposed and conditioned, the project is consistent with CMMLUO performance standards and CDFW guidance and will not negatively impact NSO or other sensitive species.

Energy:

The project currently utilizes energy provided by PG&E. Applicant must adhere to noise and light attenuation measures (**Condition A4**).

Access:

The subject parcel takes access from Upper Larabee Valley Road which is a private road and is developed to Category 4 road standards.

Geological Suitability:

The project parcel is mapped in the County GIS as High Instability. The existing structure is in an area that has been graded. No new grading is proposed to implement the project. After the fact grading permits are required for grading that was done previously without permits (**Condition A4**).

Timber Conversion:

Per Humboldt County Web GIS, there was no timber conversion on the property. While imagery may indicate otherwise, it was merely trimming of tree canopy that was covering the area the structure was placed.

Security and Safety:

The structure will be locked and access to the site is gated.

Tribal Consultation:

A Cultural Resource Investigation Report was conducted in August 2016. The report determined that

seven isolated chert flake artifacts were noted but not recoded because these artifacts do not appear to be part of an archaeological deposit and are not temporally or behaviorally diagnostic. These artifacts were approximately 380 feet away from the subject area. The standard inadvertent discovery protocol has been added as an ongoing condition of approval (**Informational Note 2**).

Environmental Review:

The change to light deprivation and the nursery and drying structure is exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section: 15301 - Existing facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on a review of Planning Division reference sources, Planning staff believes that the applicant has submitted evidence in support of making all of the required findings for approval of the Conditional Use Permit Modification.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Planning Commission could elect to add or delete conditions of approval. The Planning Commission could elect not to approve the project, or to require the applicant to submit further evidence, or modify the project. Modifications may cause potentially significant impacts, additional CEQA analysis and findings may be required. These alternatives could be implemented if the Commission is unable to make all of the required findings. Planning Division staff has stated that the required findings in support of the proposal have been made. Consequently, Planning staff does not recommend further consideration of either alternative.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution
 - A. Conditions of Approval
 - B. Operations Plan
 - C. Modification Site Plan
2. PC Staff Report October 5, 2017
 - A. Approved Site Plan

APPLICANT AND OWNER INFORMATION:

Applicant

Platinum Hills Ranch
Attn: Matthew Puckett
PO Box 714
Fortuna, CA 95540

File #: 25-542

Owner

Matthew M. Puckett
PO Box 714
Fortuna, CA 95540

Agent

None

Please contact Derek Wiles, Planner, at 707-268-3727 or by email at dwiles@co.humboldt.ca.us, if you have any questions about the scheduled item.