

**RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
OF THE COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT**

Resolution Number: 24-

Record Number: PLN-11066-CUP

Assessor's Parcel Number: 221-011-021

Resolution by the Planning Commission of the County of Humboldt certifying compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and conditionally approves the Mattole Valley Farms Business Support Services LLC, Conditional Use and Special Permits request.

WHEREAS, Mattole Valley Farms Business Support Services LLC, provided an application and evidence in support of approving a Conditional Use Permit for 18,300 square feet existing outdoor commercial cultivation with an 1,800 square foot nursery space; and

WHEREAS, the County Planning Division, the lead agency, prepared an Addendum to the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) prepared for the Commercial Medical Marijuana Land Use Ordinance (CMMLUO) adopted by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors on January 26, 2016. The proposed project does not present substantial changes that would require major revisions to the previous Mitigated Negative Declaration. No new information of substantial importance that was not known and could not be known at the time was presented as described by §15162(c) of CEQA Guidelines; and

WHEREAS, the Humboldt County Planning Commission held a duly-noticed public hearing on May 2, 2024, and reviewed, considered, and discussed the application for a Conditional Use Permit and reviewed and considered all evidence and testimony presented at the hearing.

Now, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission makes all the following findings:

- 1. FINDING:** **Project Description:** A Conditional Use Permit for 18,300 square feet existing outdoor commercial cultivation with 1,800 square feet of nursery space. Estimated annual irrigation water usage is 200,000 gallons. Rainwater catchment will provide 11,000 gallons and a point of diversion will provide 190,000 gallons. Water storage is 71,000 gallons of existing tanks, with an additional 130,000 gallons proposed for a total of 201,000 gallons of storage. Power is provided by solar with no generator. Drying and curing will occur onsite and additional processing such as trimming will occur offsite. The project includes a Special Permit for the point of diversion.

EVIDENCE: a) Project File: PLN-11066-CUP

2. FINDING:

CEQA. The requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act have been complied with. The Humboldt County Planning Commission has considered the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Commercial Medical Marijuana Land Use Ordinance (CMMLUO) and the addendum to the MND prepared for this project.

EVIDENCE:

- a) Addendum prepared for the proposed project.
- b) The proposed project does not present substantial changes that would require major revisions to the previous MND. No new information of substantial importance that was not known and could not be known at the time was presented as described by §15162(c) of CEQA Guidelines.
- c) A Biological Resource Assessment found that no rare threatened or endangered animals or plants are present within 1,000 feet of the Cultivation Area. There are no documented Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) activity centers within the 1.3 miles of the cultivation site. No significant ground disturbance is proposed under the project. A Botanical Survey concluded that no special status plants were present in cultivation areas.

As proposed and conditioned, the project is consistent with CMMLUO mitigation measures and will not negatively impact NSO or other sensitive species.

- d) The cultivation of cannabis will not result in the net conversion of timberland. A Less Than Three Acre Conversion Mitigation Plan was prepared in May 2021 by Hohman and Associates Forestry Consultants, which concluded that a total of 1.53 acres of timber conversion occurred on the project site; however, all conversion occurred prior to CMMLUO environmental baseline date of January 1, 2016. Fourteen recommendations were included in the Report for items identified as conflicting with the Forest Practice Rules or have the potential to cause environmental damage. The project is conditioned to implement all remaining corrective actions identified in the Less Than Three Acre Conversion Mitigation Plan. No additional tree removal is proposed or authorized by this permit.
- e) A Cultural Resources Investigation noted three prehistoric isolated chert flakes but concluded that the proposed project will not result in any adverse changes to historical or archaeological resources.

Project conditions include inadvertent discoveries protocol, which has been included as an ongoing condition of approval.

- f) Road Evaluations concluded the road is functionally equivalent to category 4.

FINDINGS FOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT AND SPECIAL PERMITS

3. FINDING: The proposed development is in conformance with the County General Plan, Open Space Plan, and the Open Space Action Program.

EVIDENCE: a) General agriculture is a use type permitted in the Agriculture General (AG) land use designation. The proposed cannabis cultivation, an agricultural product, is within land planned and zoned for agricultural purposes, consistent with the use of Open Space land for managed production of resources. The use of an agricultural parcel for commercial agriculture is consistent with the Open Space Plan and Open Space Action Program. Therefore, the project is consistent with and complimentary to the Open Space Plan and its Open Space Action Program.

4. FINDING: The proposed development is consistent with the purposes of the existing Agriculture Exclusive (AE) zone in which the site is located. The subject parcel is also split-zoned Timberland Production (TPZ). However, existing and proposed development is located outside of the TPZ-portion of the subject parcel.

EVIDENCE: a) The Agriculture Exclusive (AE) zone is intended to be applied in fertile areas in which agriculture is and should be the desirable predominant use and in which the protection of this use from encroachment from incompatible uses is essential to the general welfare.

b) All general agricultural uses are principally permitted in the AE zone.

c) Humboldt County Code section 314-55.4.8.2.2 allows cultivation of up to 43,560 square feet of existing outdoor cannabis and up to 22,000 square feet of existing mixed-light cannabis on a parcel over 1 acre subject to approval of a Conditional Use Permit and a determination that the cultivation was in existence prior to January 1, 2016. The application for 18,300 square feet of mixed-light

cultivation on an 85.68-acre parcel is consistent with this and with the cultivation area verification prepared by the County.

5. FINDING:

The proposed development is consistent with the requirements of the CMMLUO Provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.

EVIDENCE:

- a) The CMMLUO allows existing cannabis cultivation to be permitted in areas zoned AE (HCC 314-55.4.8.2.2).
- b) The parcel was created in compliance with all applicable state and local subdivision regulations, as it was created in its current configuration by a lot line adjustment, as described in the Notice of Lot Line Adjustment and Certificate of Subdivision Compliance (Record No. 1993-34868), recorded December 6, 1993.
- c) Irrigation water will be sourced from an existing point of diversion from an unnamed Class II tributary of Salmon Creek. A rain catchment system will capture between 13,000 and 42,000 gallons of water per year to reduce reliance on the point of diversion. Existing available water storage is 118,500 gallons in a series of tanks, with an additional 82,500 gallons proposed, for a total of 201,000 gallons of onsite water storage.

The project includes a right to divert 0.6-acre feet from an unnamed stream, Certificate H100760. The water rights allow withdrawals from November 1 to March 31. The water right allows the withdrawal of 195,511 gallons.

The rainwater catchment system has the potential to capture approximately 42,000 gallons per year, based on average rainfall amounts for the project area and catchment area. The operations plan states that a minimum of 10,000 gallons of rainwater will be collected annually.

- d) Road Evaluation Reports were prepared by Steven Luu (SL Consulting Services, Inc.) in July 2021 for a 2.35-mile segment of Salmon Creek Road (from the transition from asphalt to gravel) to the property line of APN 221-071-043 (at the end of Salmon Creek Road and start of the private driveway) and for a 1.5-mile segment of the private road to the subject property. The Reports indicated the road segments are developed to the equivalent of a road Category 4 standard and are functionally appropriate for the expected traffic.

A secondary Road Evaluation was conducted by Chapman Engineering in February from the junction with State Highway 101, exit 653 to the project parcel that is accessed from Salmon Creek Road. The Report concludes the existing road is adequate for all anticipated traffic at peak operations.

Per comments received from the Department of Public Works, Land Use Division in February 2018, any existing or proposed driveways that will serve as access for the proposed project that connect to a County-maintained road shall be improved to current standards for a commercial driveway and that private road intersections onto the County road shall be maintained in accordance with County Code section 341-1 (Sight Visibility Ordinance), which have been included as conditions of approval.

- e) The slope of the land where cannabis will be cultivated is less than 15%.
- f) A Less Than Three Acre Conversion Mitigation Plan was prepared in May 2021 by Hohman and Associates Forestry Consultants, which concluded that a total of 1.53 acres of timber conversion occurred on the project site; however, all conversion occurred prior to CMMLUO environmental baseline date of January 1, 2016. Fourteen (14) recommendations were included in the Report for items identified as conflicting with the Forest Practice Rules or have the potential to cause environmental damage. The project is conditioned to implement all remaining corrective actions identified in the Less Than Three Acre Conversion Mitigation Plan. No additional tree removal is proposed or authorized by this permit.
- g) The location of the cultivation complies with all setbacks required in Section 314-55.4.11.d. It is more than 30 from any property line, more than 300 feet from any off-site residence, more than 600 feet from any school, church, public park or Tribal Cultural Resource.

6. FINDING:

The cultivation of 18,300 square feet of cannabis and the conditions under which it may be operated or maintained will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare or materially injurious to properties or improvements in the vicinity.

- EVIDENCE:**
- a) The site is located on road that has been certified by a licensed engineer to safely accommodate the amount of traffic generated by the proposed cannabis cultivation.
 - b) The site is in a rural part of the County where the typical parcel size is over 40 acres and many of the land holdings are very large. The proposed cannabis will not be in a location where there is an established neighborhood or other sensitive receptor such as a school, church, park or other use which may be sensitive to cannabis cultivation. Approving cultivation on this site and the other sites which have been approved or are in the application process will not change the character of the area due to the large parcel sized in the area.
 - c) The location of the proposed cannabis cultivation is more than 300 feet from the nearest off-site residence.
 - d) Irrigation water will come from an existing point of diversion from an unnamed Class II tributary from Salmon Creek and a proposed gutter rainwater catchment system. Rainwater catchment tanks are installed and will reduce the reliance of the point of diversion by 13,000 to 42,000 gallons per year.

As a current water right is in place for the project, Certificate H10076. The water right is for 195,511 gallons per year to be diverted from November 1 to March 31. All storage tanks are placed outside of all required SMA buffers.

- e) Power is provided by photovoltaic panels and a battery storage system. No generator is proposed.
- f) Provisions have been made in the applicant's proposal to protect water quality and thus runoff to adjacent property and infiltration of water to groundwater resources will not be affected.

7. FINDING:

The proposed development does not reduce the residential density for any parcel below that utilized by the Department of Housing and Community Development in determining compliance with housing element law.

- EVIDENCE:**
- a) The parcel was not included in the housing inventory of Humboldt County's 2019 Housing Element but does have the potential to support one housing unit. The approval of cannabis cultivation on

this parcel will not conflict with the ability for a residence to be constructed on this parcel.

8. FINDING:

Approval of this project is consistent with Humboldt County Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 18-43 which established a limit on the number of permits and acres which may be approved in each of the County's Planning Watersheds.

EVIDENCE:

- a) The project site is in the South Fork Eel Planning Watershed, which under Resolution 18-43 is limited to 730 permits and 251 acres of cultivation. With the approval of this project the total approved permits in this Planning Watershed would be 181 permits and the total approved acres would be 58.25 acres of cultivation.

DECISION

NOW, THEREFORE, based on the above findings and evidence, the Humboldt County Planning Commission does hereby:

- Adopt the findings set forth in this resolution; and
- Conditionally approves the Conditional Use and Special Permits for Mattole Valley Farms Business Support Services LLC, based upon the Findings and Evidence and subject to the conditions of approval attached hereto as Attachment 1 and incorporated herein by reference; and

Adopted after review and consideration of all the evidence on **May 2, 2024**.

The motion was made by COMMISSIONER _____ and second by COMMISSIONER _____ and the following vote:

AYES: COMMISSIONERS:

NOES: COMMISSIONERS:

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS:

ABSTAIN: COMMISSIONERS:

DECISION:

I, John Ford, Secretary to the Planning Commission of the County of Humboldt, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct record of the action taken on the above-entitled matter by said Commission at a meeting held on the date noted above.

John Ford, Director
Planning and Building Department