



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 9/4/2025

File #: 25-1075

To: Planning Commission

From: Planning and Building Department

Agenda Section: Consent

SUBJECT:

Orick Community Services District CDP Extension and Modification
Assessor Parcel Numbers (APN) 519-311-027-000, 520-031-024-000
Record No.: PLN-2024-19051
Prairie Creek area

A two-year extension to a previously approved Coastal Development Permit (CDP), Conditional Use Permit (CUP), and Special Permits (SP) for Orick Community Services District. The project proposes to replace an existing leaking 100,000-gallon redwood water tank with a new 100,000-gallon, welded steel tank with a concrete foundation. A PG&E power pole upslope of the tank would be replaced with a taller pole and a 40-foot-tall communications tower would be constructed at the water tank. The applicant is also proposing a modification to the approved permits. The proposed modification includes a different alignment of the overhead powerline and installation of one additional PG&E power pole; tree removal is proposed to provide PG&E required fire clearance from the overhead electrical facilities.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Planning Commission:

1. Adopt the resolution (Attachment 1), which does the following:
 - a. Finds that Orick Community Services District, as the lead agency under CEQA, found the project categorically exempt from CEQA per Sections 15301, 15302, 15303, and 15304 of CEQA Guidelines, and as a Responsible Agency, agrees with the lead agency's finding; and
 - b. Makes all required findings for approval of the extension and modification to the Coastal Development Permit, Conditional Use Permit, and Special Permits; and
 - c. Approves the Orick Community Services District Coastal Development Permit,

Conditional Use Permit, and Special Permits extension and modification as recommended by staff and subject to the recommended conditions of approval (Attachment 1A).

DISCUSSION:

Project Location: The project is located in the Prairie Creek area, on the South side of Old State Highway, approximately 0.5 miles South from the intersection of State Highway 101 and Old State Highway, on the property known as 388 Old State Highway.

Present General Plan Land Use Designation: Rural Residential North Coast Coastal Plan; Density Unidentified; Slope Stability: Moderate Instability (2)

Present Zoning: Residential Agriculture (RA-5Y2.5M/E,D)

Environmental Review: Orick Community Services District is the lead agency under CEQA. Orick Community Services District found the project categorically exempt from CEQA per Sections 15301, 15302, 15303, and 15304 of CEQA Guidelines and the County of Humboldt as a responsible agency under CEQA agrees with the finding.

State Appeal: The project is appealable to the California Coastal Commission.

Major Concerns: None

Monitoring Required:

Restoration Monitoring.

Executive Summary: A two-year extension and a modification to a previously approved Coastal Development Permit (CDP), Conditional Use Permit (CUP), and Special Permit (SP) for Orick Community Services District. The original permit included a General Plan Conformance Review, which does not expire. The project proposes to replace an existing leaking 100,000-gallon redwood water tank with a new 100,000-gallon, welded steel tank with a concrete foundation. The existing tank would be demolished and removed from the site, and the new tank would be installed in the same footprint as the existing tank. Electrical equipment, supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) and an overflow pipe would be installed, and three valves adjacent to the tank will be replaced. A PG&E power pole upslope of the tank would be replaced with a taller pole to provide adequate clearance for the power lines, and a 40-foot-tall communications tower would be constructed at the water tank. Special Permits are required for Design Review and for an exception to the height standard of the Rural Residential Agriculture zoning district as the proposed PG&E power pole and 40-foot-tall communications tower will exceed the maximum height requirements of the zone.

The applicant is also proposing a modification to the approved permits. The proposed modification

includes a different alignment of the overhead powerline and installation of one additional 45-foot tall PG&E power pole; tree removal is proposed to provide PG&E required fire clearance from the overhead electrical facilities.

The proposed project also includes work at the district office on Swan Road including new electrical equipment and a 20-foot-tall communications tower to support the SCADA system. A 90 KW emergency generator would be acquired and housed in a new cargo container outside the district office. Four distribution valves are inoperable and would be replaced. Two valves are located at 120779 Highway 101, and the other two are located at 121390 Highway 101. A Caltrans encroachment permit would be required to replace the valves. The four inoperable valves and the work proposed at the district office are outside the Coastal Zone, however the zoning of the parcels require design review. The replacement valves are under the roadway and will result in no visual impacts.

Biological Resources: The property is located within the Elk Coastal Habitat combining zone, which requires supplemental findings and consultation with CDFW. Tree removal is proposed as part of the project modification, and per the CNDDDB the project site is within a mapped occurrence of Oregon coast paintbrush. The occurrence accuracy is 3/5 mile (the recorded occurrence is within a mapped circle 3/5 of a mile in radius, exact location unknown), and it is noted field work is needed. The CNDDDB notes the occurrence was found approximately 2 miles southwest of Orick, at the north end of freshwater lagoon on a slope above the beach. The parcel is approximately 1,800 feet from the nearest beach and 3,200 feet from the lagoon at the closest points. The project was referred to CDFW, who indicated they had no major concerns provided tree removal occurred outside the nesting bird season, or nesting bird surveys were conducted if tree removal occurred during the nesting bird season. CDFW recommendations have been included in the recommended conditions of approval.

Design Review: The project has been previously reviewed by the Orick Design Review Committee, who recommended approval of the project. The original project included tank replacement, the replacement and addition of associated ancillary infrastructure, new electrical equipment, generator storage, and a 20-foot-tall communications tower to support the SCADA system at the district office. The modifications proposed include a new power pole and tree removal to provide PG&E required fire clearance from the overhead electrical facilities. The Orick Design Review Committee primarily reviews new structures or structural alterations for design consistency and had previously commented that the project was outside their scope. The proposed modifications are similar in nature to the original approved project (utilities and vegetation management) and per referral responses is similarly outside the scope of the Orick Design Review Committee. No significant visual impacts are anticipated.

The extension is appropriate because the development has not changed from that for which the permit was granted, with the exception of the requested modification which would be approved along with the extension, and the findings made when the permit was granted can still be made.

There have been no changes to the zoning or general plan policies that apply to the property, nor any changes to any of the referral agencies requirements other than that for which the modification is being granted for.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The project was referred to responsible agencies and all responding agencies have either responded with no comment or recommended approval or conditional approval. (Attachment 5)

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Planning Commission could elect to add or delete conditions of approval. The Planning Commission could deny approval if unable to make all the required findings. Staff has concluded the required findings in support of the proposal can be made. Consequently, staff does not recommend further consideration of these alternatives.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution
 - A. Conditions of Approval
 - B. Site Plan
2. Notice of Exemption
3. Applicant's Evidence in Support of the Required Findings
4. Referral Agency Comments and Recommendations

Applicant:

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