



# COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 6/4/2026

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File #: 26-581

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**To:** Planning Commission

**From:** Planning and Building Department

**Agenda Section:** Public Hearing

**SUBJECT:**

Sandy Toes Conditional Use Permit and Special Permit  
Assessor Parcel Number: 401-341-003  
Record Number: PLN-2026-19508  
Samoa Area

A Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a short-term rental located within a Tsunami Hazard Zone of the Humboldt Bay Area Plan, pursuant to Section 313-61.05.6.3 of Humboldt County code. A Special Permit is also required due to Neighborhood Concentration pursuant to Section 313.61.05.10.6.2. The parcel is developed with a single-family residence currently used as a two-bedroom short-term rental. The site is served with community water and sewer provided by the Peninsula Community Services District.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That the Planning Commission:

1. Adopt the resolution (Attachment 1), which does the following:
  - a. Finds the project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15270 (projects that are disapproved); and
  - b. Denies the exception to the Neighborhood Concentrations standards for short-term rentals specified in Section 313.61.05.10.6.2; and
  - c. Denies the Oceanview Conditional Use Permit and Special Permit.

**DISCUSSION:**

**Project Location:**

The project site is located in the Samoa area, on the west side of Murphy Avenue, approximately 150 feet northwest of the intersection of Murphy Avenue and Pacific Court, on the property known as 35

Murphy Avenue.

**Present General Plan Land Use Designations:**

Residential Low Density (RL). Humboldt Bay Area Plan (HBAP). Slope Stability: Relatively Stable (0).

**Present Zoning:**

Residential Single Family with Design Review and Planned Unit Development Combining Zones (RS/D,P).

**Environmental Review:**

The project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15270 (projects that are disapproved).

**State Appeal Status:**

Project does not involve a Coastal Development Permit and is therefore not appealable to the Coastal Commission.

**Major Concerns:**

Neighborhood Concentration of short-term rentals.

**Monitoring Required:**

None.

**Executive Summary:**

A Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a whole dwelling unit short-term rental within the Tsunami Hazard Zone of the Humboldt Bay Area Plan pursuant to Section 313-61.05.6.3 of the Humboldt County Code. In addition, a Special Permit (SP) pursuant to Section 313.61.05.10.6.2 due to Neighborhood Concentration. Pursuant to this section a short-term rental is not allowed if another short-term rental is within 600 feet, measured from the center of the dwelling used for the short-term rental and/or if over ten percent of the dwellings on the access road are short-term rentals. Exceptions to these standards may be permitted with a Special Permit. There are seven short-term rentals within the 600-foot radius of the subject parcel that are either approved, pre-existing (operating prior to the October 26, 2023, baseline established in the ordinance), or are in the permitting process. This is the only short-term rental along the access road of Murphy Avenue, which consists of 4 houses, and the ordinance allows one dwelling for roads with less than ten (10) dwellings.

**Land Use and Zoning:**

The subject property is within the Humboldt Bay Area Plan (HBAP) and has a land use designation of Residential Low Density (RL) and zone classification of Residential Single Family with a Design Review and Planned Unit Development Combining Zone (RS/D,P). The RL designation is used for areas suitable for residential use where urban services are available or are anticipated to be available.

Principal uses in the RS zone include residential single detached dwellings. The existing residence was built in 1905 and has been remodeled and updated.

**Neighborhood Concentration of Short-Term Rentals:**

The requirements for short-term rentals for parcels with a density of one or more units per acre include the standard that multiple short-term rentals shall not be within a 600-foot radius (measured from the center of the dwelling). Exceptions to this standard is allowed with a Special Permit in order for the decision-maker to consider whether granting an exception would be detrimental to the community. The required findings to approve an exception to this standard is that 1) The short-term rental would not result in significant adverse effects on the health, safety, and welfare of the community and 2) The short-term rental would not result in significant adverse effects on the quality of the neighborhood.

In this case, there are seven short-term rental applications within a 600-foot radius (see Figure 1) of the subject application which includes one short-term rental that was already approved 12/2025, five that are pre-existing short-term rentals (operating prior to the October 26, 2023, baseline established in the ordinance) and one that is a new application. Planning staff believe Neighborhood Concentration of short-term rentals within the community of Samoa is excessive and are grounds for denial of the subject project.

According to the US Census data from 2024, the Samoa Community has approximately 88 residential dwellings, and there are 9 approved or pending applications for short-term rentals within the entire community. To date, there have been two approved short-term rental applications, both of which are outside of the Tsunami Hazard Area and only require an Administrative Permit. There are seven pending additional applications for short-term rentals that have been submitted within the Tsunami Hazard Area and therefore require a Conditional Use Permit pursuant to Section 313-61.05.6.3. Of these seven applications, five are for short-term rentals that were pre-existing to the Short-Term Rental Ordinance inside the Coastal Zone (prior to October 26, 2023). Two of the applications are for new short-term rentals under the Ordinance that require both a Conditional Use Permit for being in the Tsunami Hazard Area and a Special Permit due to Neighborhood Concentration of short-term rentals. If all nine of these proposed short-term rentals were approved, 10.2 percent of the existing residential units in the Samoa Community would be short-term rentals. The Samoa Community has traditionally been an area that is more affordable for local residents. According to Zillow, in the last 2 years the median sales price of homes within the Samoa Community is approximately \$370,000. This is in comparison to the median sales price of homes in the Eureka area (zip code 95501) which was approximately \$400,000 and the Arcata area (zip code 95521) which was approximately \$450,000. The concern with Neighborhood Concentration is that housing units for local residents will be lost and short-term rentals will drive out affordable housing, converting communities primarily into vacation communities that are unavailable for local workers and residents. The loss of affordable housing and changing the character of the community would adversely impact the welfare of the community and the quality of the neighborhood.

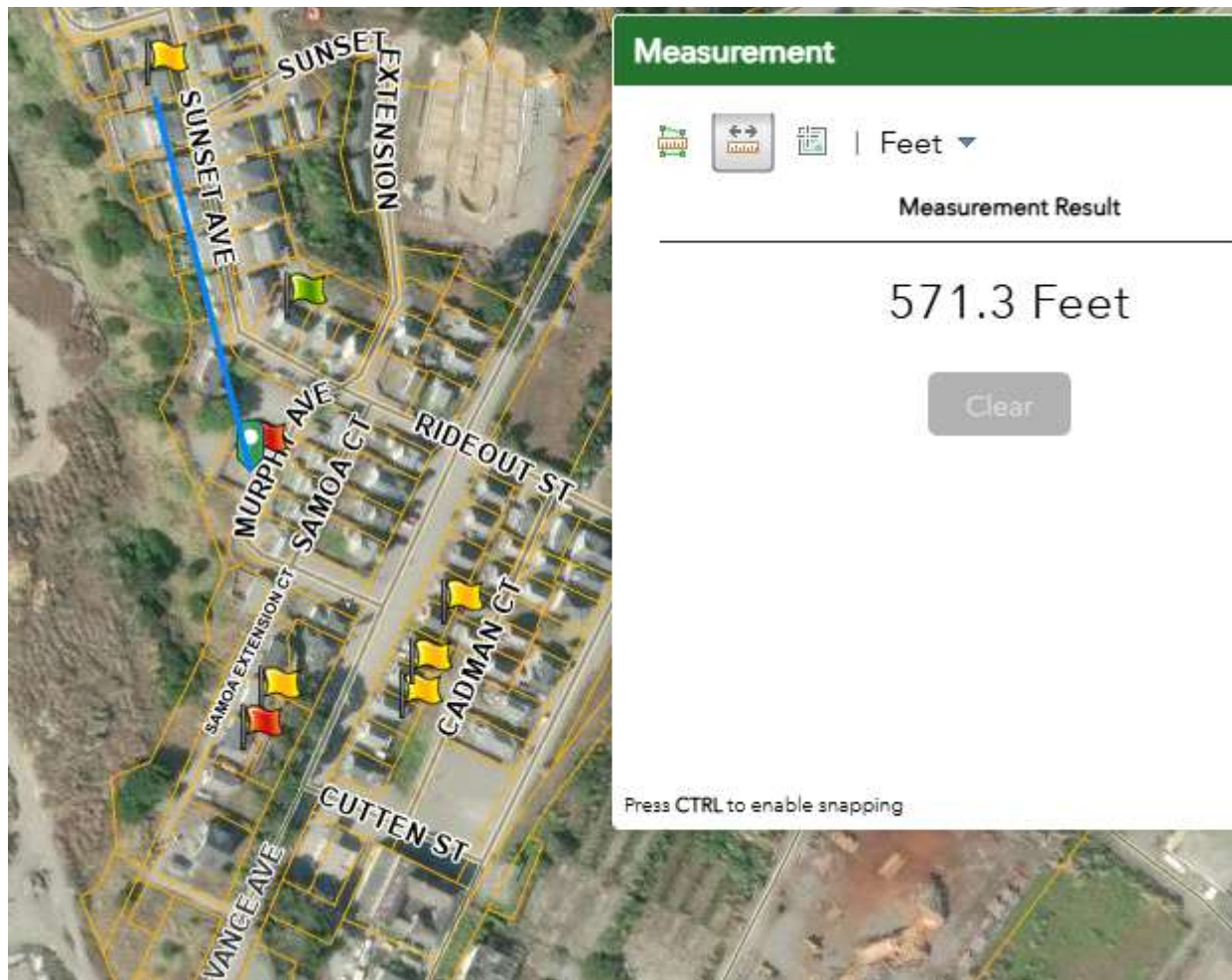


Figure 1: Short-term rental applications and neighborhood concentration within 600 feet. Green Flag= approved, Yellow Flag= Existing (prior to October 26, 2023), Red Flag= New Application

**Tsunami Concerns:**

The proposed project is within a mapped Tsunami Hazard Area. 100-year tsunami run-up elevations were analyzed and determined at specific latitudes within Technical Report H-78-26 from the US Army Corps of Engineers. The subject parcel is at latitude 40 degrees and 48 minutes, and according to Plate 15 in the Technical Report, new development must be at or more than 10.5 feet above sea level to be outside of the 100-year tsunami run-up elevation. According to the Humboldt County GIS Bay Contours (LiDAR), the subject parcel has elevations between 36 feet and 37 feet above sea level. While this restriction does not technically apply to the subject project, as no new development is proposed, the location of the property relative to the 100-year run-up area is relevant from a hazard and risk perspective and analysis is required pursuant to Section 313-61.05.6.3 of the Short-Term Rental Ordinance. Evacuation route signs are clearly posted in this area and areas outside of the Hazard Zone are nearby, approximately 100 feet to the southwest (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: Mapped Tsunami Hazard Area and evacuation area.

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 3).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Planning staff recommend that the Sandy Toes Conditional Use Permit and Special Permit project be denied based on Neighborhood Concentration restrictions within the Short-Term Rental Ordinance. The Neighborhood Concentration standards were developed to prevent conversion of neighborhoods into vacation communities and there is already evidence that Samoa is at risk of this occurring. Additionally, approval of this exception may set a precedent for additional short-term rentals to be approved in Samoa. Staff recommend that the Planning Commission find the project exempt from environmental review pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15270 (projects that are disapproved).

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Planning Commission could elect to approve the Sandy Toes short-term rental application, in which case the application should be continued to a future hearing to allow staff time to prepare a resolution with the findings for approval. The project would be exempt from environmental review pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Existing Facilities).

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution

A. Site Plan

2. Location Map
3. Referral Agency Comments and Recommendations
4. Email Comments from Applicant/Agent

Applicant/ Agent

Humboldt Retreats  
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Eureka, CA 95501

Owners

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