



June 24, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

RE: (U_2020-0004) RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

On June 10, 2021, the Zoning Administrator of Mendocino County held a hearing to consider a Minor Use Permit (U_2020-0004) to allow the conversion of an existing 30-room motel into a 21-unit affordable housing project located at 16580 North Highway 101 near Willits. Prior to the public hearing, a comment letter was received that touched on several aspects of the project related to potential environmental impacts. It was noted that the completed project documents were not available to the public prior to the hearing, thus necessitating a continuation until June 24, 2021.

The issues raised can be summarized as follows:

- Noise – The project is located along Highway 101 and within the vicinity of Harris Quarry, an active mining operation.
- Seismic – The site is located within a Seismic Study Combining District (SS).
- General Plan – Compatibility with the Mendocino County General Plan is discussed.
- Deed Restriction
- Water Supply
- CEQA Determination

Noise

The Applicant has submitted information related to design-based solutions to potential noise impacts; including a preliminary landscape plan that utilizes plantings as natural buffers and enhancing an existing berm that bifurcates the highway from the project site (photo attached).

In addition to robust landscaping, the Applicant notes that the design style of the project itself, with the front of the buildings facing each other and the rear of one faced toward the highway to protect the interior plaza, was envisioned to minimize noise generated from the highway. Proposed rehabilitation upgrades include all new exterior siding, interior insulation, new doors, and upgraded windows, which likely will result in decreasing the interior noise levels.

The Applicant also references the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the neighboring Harris Quarry Use Permit and states, "...a 'noise monitoring survey was made by Illingworth and Rodkin, Inc. to quantify ambient noise levels at receivers near the quarry.' One of those receivers was located at 'the motel north of Harris Quarry' and 'The median noise level at this location generally ranged from 50-55 dBA during the day and from 46-50 dBA during the night.' These levels are well within limits set by the General Plan of the County for residential areas, but we also have a number of measures to mitigate the ambient noise at the project site."

The Harris Quarry Draft EIR, Section 4.5, pages 226-241, discusses the analysis provided for determining the potential environmental impacts related to the mining operation, but does also include specific references to the current project site, as it is located within 1,000 feet of the mining parcel. Table 4.5-5 (EIR) lists the motel site as experiencing "No Impact" as a result of either the existing conditions that include proximity to Highway 101 or as result of the quarry operation as analyzed in the EIR referenced.

Additionally, the former motel and current project site is one of the locations of ambient noise measurements (Figure 4.5-1 of the EIR) utilized in the analysis, which found that the mining project would

have a *less than significant impact* to sensitive receptors, including and specifically the motel site.

Mendocino County General Plan Table 3-J and Table 3-K list the Exterior Noise Level Standards and Noise Compatibility Guidelines, respectively, for all uses. The existing conditions fall within the 'Completely Compatible' designation and do not exceed dBA's listed for residential standards for both tables. Therefore, it can be stated that the noise impacts for the current proposal are in compliance with County requirements.

Seismic

From the Staff report, "The subject site is located within a Seismic Study (SS) Combining District, which is governed per MCC Chapter 20.144 and Chapter 7.5, Division 2 of the California Public Resources Code. Subsection 2621.6(a)(2) of this Code defines what constitutes a project under the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act. The current proposal is defined as a project under this Code, and is subject to the provisions therein. The project requirements delineated by the SS Combining District and the PRC are administered by the Mendocino County Building Services Department and are echoed in project conditions of approval."

The site is designated as a "Special Study Zone' per the Alquist-Priolo Act and Mendocino County Zoning Code Chapter 20.144 and is located on the Maacama Fault, per Figure 3-12 of the General Plan.

General Plan Policy DE-233 states, "Require that structures for human habitation and occupancy, including residential, commercial and industrial uses, incorporate engineering and design measures which reduce risk to life in areas subject to excessive ground shaking and liquefaction during an earthquake.

Action Item DE-233.1: Continue to administer the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act which defines and mitigates impacts relating to surface fault-rupture hazards."

As mentioned in the Staff Report, the administration and execution of the Alquist-Priolo Act and subsequent determinations regarding seismic and structural assessments are the purview of the Building Department and are based upon submitted materials related to building permits and specific construction activities. The project, as it is currently proposed, is requesting an entitlement to change the use of the site, which is an allowable request under the governing documents for the County, specifically the General Plan and Zoning Code. As enumerated in the Staff Report, this allowable use is also subject to Conditions, to include satisfying all applicable Building Division and/or Code requirements.

General Plan

The Staff Report contained a thorough analysis of the project's conformance with the General Plan. As mentioned in the Noise section of this memo, the project meets the General Plan standards for residential development.

Deed Restriction

Condition of Approval #16 states, "*The Applicant shall develop a monitoring mechanism to the satisfaction of County Counsel and the Director of Planning and Building Services that will ensure continued affordability of all low-income units for 30 years or a longer period of time if required by the construction or any associated lender with the project. This may include recordation of a deed restriction against the property to ensure continued affordability of the units. TIMING: Prior to issuance of the Final Inspection on Building Permits related to this permit.*"

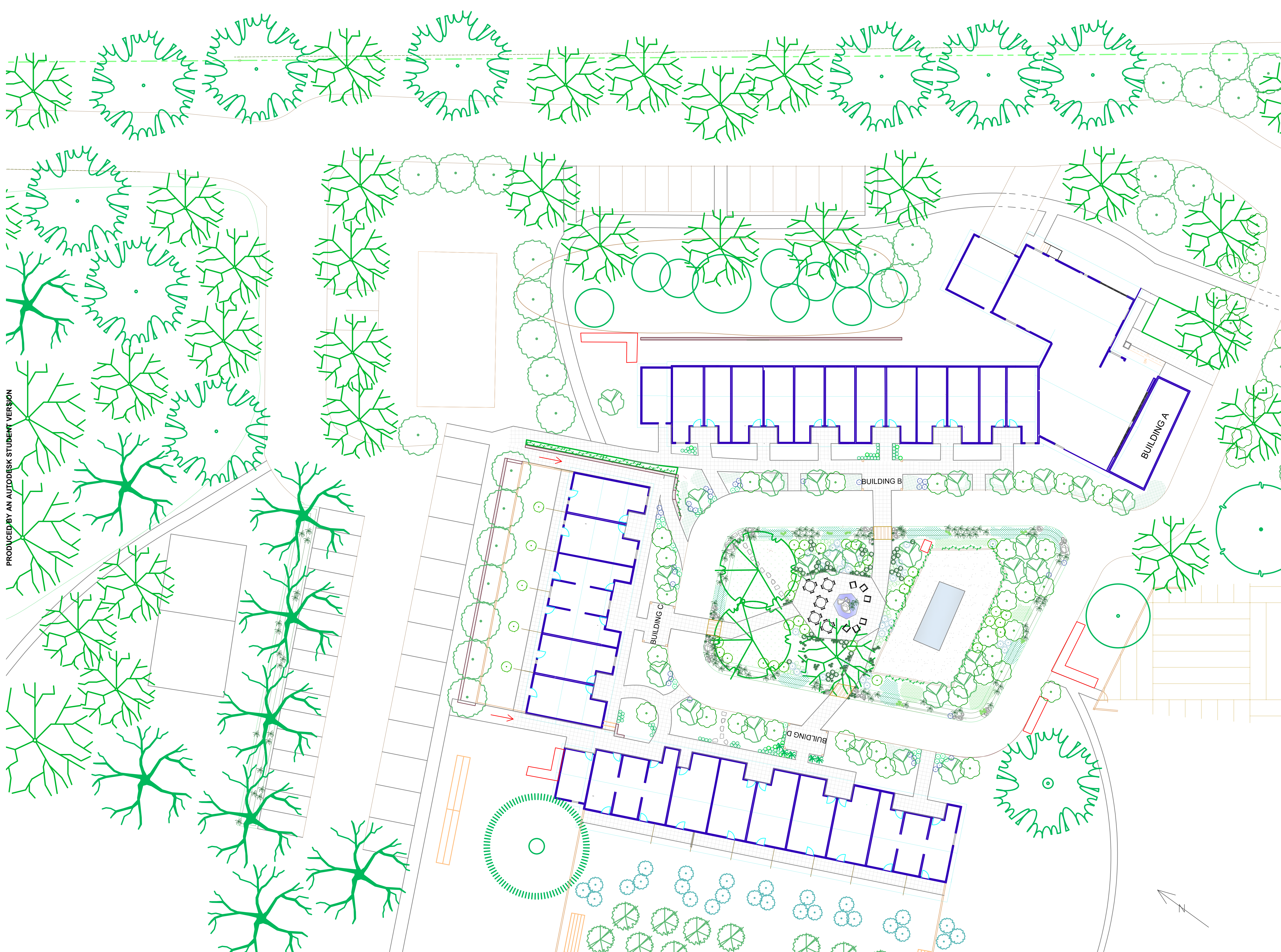
Water Supply

Attached is a letter from the Manager of the Ridgewood Water System in support of the adequacy of the existing water supply and confident in the expansion that may be required.

CEQA

The key consideration of the Existing Facilities (15301) Exemption is whether or not the project involves 'negligible or no expansion' of use. The buildings involved in the project are existing structures, and will not result in an expansion of more than 50% of the floor area. Therefore, it can be stated that the 'expansion' of use constitutes a 'negligible' expansion.





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The Ridge Project

16580 HWY 101

Site Plan

Drawn by:

ALD

Date:

08/05/20

Scale:

1/32" = 1'

June 22, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

RE: White Deer Lodge Water System at the Ridge

Since the ridge property's original development, its water has been supplied by Ridgewood Water System (#2300708) via a spring source on Ridgewood Ranch. The ridge property water system (known as White Deer Lodge Water System #2300788) is currently a transient water system that includes a 100,000-gallon galvanized steel storage tank with a 2 inch main line feeding the distribution system.

Since 2011 and even earlier there have been efforts to develop more sources to supplement the source provided by Ridgewood Water System. There are currently 2 new wells that are different stages of development, one on the east side of Black Bart Road and another on the old Highway 101 just south of Harris Quarry. Both have been pump tested at 6.5 GPM and 7 GPM respectively and I am currently awaiting the results of sampling done during those tests to determine treatment needs.

Regards,

Joe Swearengin
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