

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

CENTRAL COAST AREA OFFICE

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HEARING IMPAIRED: (415) 904-5200



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RECORD PACKET COPY

March 18, 1998

TO: Commissioners and Interested Persons

FROM: Tami Grove, District Director
Charles Lester, District Manager
Steve Monowitz, Coastal Planner

SUBJECT: CITY OF WATSONVILLE: LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM MAJOR AMENDMENT NO. 1-98. For public hearing and Commission action at its meeting of April 7-10, 1998, to be held at the Hyatt Regency - Long Beach, 200 South Pine Avenue, Long Beach.

SYNOPSIS

The purpose of the proposed amendment is to expand the types of public recreational land uses allowed in the northwest corner of the City's coastal zone by the Implementation Plan of the Watsonville certified Local Coastal Program (LCP). This amendment is being pursued by the City in order to accommodate the development of a golf driving range on a portion of this City owned property, referred to as "Area A" by the LCP, which is also within the Watsonville airport overflight area (please see Exhibits 1-3).

Currently, the Land Use Plan (LUP) component of the LCP allows Agriculture and Public Open Space Recreational Use as a permitted use in Area A. The land uses allowed by the Implementation Plan (IP) for this area, however, are limited to Open Space, Pastures and native grasses, and animals/agriculture. The City of Watsonville is proposing to add Public Recreation Facilities to the list of principal permitted uses within Area A contained in Section 9-5.703 of the IP.

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Commission staff recommends that the Commission **approve** the proposed amendment **with modifications** that clarify the types of land uses allowed in the planning area affected by this amendment. The additional land use category (Public Parks) that would be incorporated within the IP by the modified amendment is consistent with the LUP land use designation for this site (Agriculture and Public Open Space Recreational Use). Other standards contained in the LCP that remain unchanged by the proposed amendment ensure that development of the additional land uses allowed by this amendment will comply with LCP and Coastal Act requirements.

ANALYSIS CRITERIA

The relationship between the Coastal Act and a local government's Local Coastal Program (LCP) can be described as a three-tiered hierarchy with the Coastal Act setting generally broad statewide policies. The Land Use Plan (LUP) portion of the LCP incorporates and refines Coastal Act policies for the local jurisdiction, giving local guidance as to the kinds, locations, and intensities of coastal development. The Implementation Plan (IP), or zoning, portion of an LCP typically sets out the various zone districts and site regulations which are the final refinement specifying how coastal development is to proceed on a particular parcel. The IP must be consistent with and adequate to carry out the policies of the LUP and the LUP must be consistent with the Coastal Act. In order to approve the City's proposed change to the certified IP, the Commission must find that the change is consistent with, and adequate to carry out the certified LUP.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For further information about this report or the amendment process, please contact Steve Monowitz or Charles Lester, Coastal Commission, 725 Front Street, Suite 300, Santa Cruz, CA 95060; Tel. (408) 427-4863.

EXHIBITS

1. Regional Location
 2. LCP Planning Areas
 3. Golf driving range proposal
 4. City staff report for LCP Amendment/golf driving range project
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I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

A. DENIAL OF IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AMENDMENT # 1-98 AS SUBMITTED

MOTION I:

"I move that the Commission reject amendment # 1-98 to the City of Watsonville Implementation Plan as submitted by the City."

Staff recommends a **YES** vote which would deny the amendment as submitted. Only an affirmative (yes) vote on the motion by a majority of the Commissioners present can result in rejection of the amendment as submitted, as recommended by Commission staff.

RESOLUTION I:

The Commission hereby rejects amendment # 1-98 to the Implementation Plan of the City of Watsonville as submitted for the specific reasons discussed in the recommended findings on the grounds that, as submitted, the amendment does not conform with, and is inadequate to carry out the certified Land use Plan. There are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse impact which the approval of the amendment would have on the environment.

B. APPROVAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AMENDMENT # 1-98 IF MODIFIED AS SUGGESTED

MOTION II:

"I move that the Commission certify amendment # 1-98 to the City of Watsonville Implementation Plan if it is modified as suggested."

Staff recommends a **YES** vote. An affirmative vote by a majority of the Commissioners present is needed to pass the motion.

RESOLUTION II:

The Commission hereby certifies amendment # 1-98 to the Implementation Plan of the City of Watsonville as modified, for the specific reasons discussed in the following findings, on the grounds that, as modified, the amendment conforms with and is adequate to carry out the certified Land Use Plan; and, approval of the amendment as modified will not cause significant adverse environmental effects for which feasible mitigation measures have not been employed consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act.

II. SUGGESTED MODIFICATIONS

Commission staff recommend that the Commission adopt the following suggested modifications to the amendment submittal. Deletions to the amendment submittal are shown by ~~strikethroughs~~, additions by underlines.

Chapter 9-5 of the Watsonville Municipal Code and Section 9-5.703 of the Watsonville Local Coastal Program Implementation Plan shall be amended to include ~~GLU 84~~ GLU 81 in Zone A as follows:

Sec. 9-5.703. Principal Permitted Uses. All principal permitted uses shall be subject to an Administrative Use Permit issued through the public hearing process by the Zoning Administrator.

- (a) Zone A
~~GLU 84~~ Public Recreation Facilities
~~GLU 81~~ Public Parks
~~GLU 86~~ Open Lands

GLU 93	Pasture and native grasses
GLU 94	Animals, agriculture

The remainder of Section 9-5.703 (parts (b)-(e)) remains unchanged by the amendment proposal and suggested modifications.

III. RECOMMENDED FINDINGS

The Commission finds and declares the following for amendment # 1-98:

A. Amendment Description:

As previously noted, the City of Watsonville is pursuing this amendment to accommodate the development of a golf driving range on a portion of LCP Area A. This portion of the City's coastal zone is comprised of a \pm 15 acre parcel known as the Burgstrom Property, and is located in the northwest corner of the City, west of Highway One, at 101 Ranport Road (please see Exhibits 1, 2, and 3). The City acquired this parcel through a grant from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), to prevent development that would conflict with Watsonville Municipal Airport operations (the Watsonville Municipal Airport is east of this parcel, across Highway One). Environmental constraints associated with this planning area include:

- the property is within the runway clear zone of the Watsonville Municipal airport. Land uses within the airport clear zone must be approved by the FAA to avoid interference with aviation. This requirement restricts, among other things, the height of development, the use of lighting, and prohibits development that would result in large population concentrations;
- the western and northern portions of the parcel contain steep slopes and woodland habitat;
- beyond the steep wooded slopes on the parcel's west and northern sides are riparian and wetland habitats; and,
- although a 1997 biotic assessment of the site found no rare, endangered, or special-status plants or animals, it was identified that the grassland portion of the site may contain suitable habitat for the federally endangered Santa Cruz tar plant.

Currently, the City leases a 2.7 acre portion of the site to the "Mighty Mulch" composting operation, and the remainder is vacant open space. To the south of the site, in LCP Area B, the development of a 100 unit motel and nconference center was previously approved by the City (this project has yet to be constructed, and the City approved Coastal Development Permit for this project may have expired). To the south and west of Area A is a non-permitted landfill site within the jurisdiction of Santa Cruz County that has been purchased by the City of Watsonville, which is pursuing remediation of this site. Beyond the landfill site is farmland. Immediately to the west of the site is a sloped woodland area, and beyond that is more farmland. North of the site is more sloped woodland area, and beyond that a riparian corridor and wetlands. To the east of the site is Ranport Road and then Highway One.

The land use designations for this site (and all coastal zone areas within the City) contained in the certified IP are based upon land use classifications from a Land Use Classification Manual; each land use identified by the IP has a General Land Use (GLU) classification associated with it. Currently, principally permitted land uses within Area A of the Watsonville LCP, pursuant to Section 9-5.703. of the IP, are limited to:

GLU 86	Open lands
GLU 93	Pasture and native grasses
GLU 94	Animals, agriculture

As provided by the Land Use Classification Manual used by the City, each GLU classification includes Detailed Land Use classifications that provide more specificity regarding the types of land uses allowed under each GLU. For example, the Detailed Land Use (DLU) classifications under GLU 86 (Open lands), are:

DLU 861	Game preserves, public
DLU 861	Wild preserves, publicly owned
DLU 8611	Wildlife preserves, fish farms, privately owned

Currently, the development of a golf driving range is not allowed under the existing implementation plan, because such facilities are not identified as a Detailed Land Use covered by GLU 86 as illustrated above. To solve this problem, the City has proposed to add GLU 84 (Public Recreation Facilities) to IP Section 9-5.703, which lists the principally permitted uses for Area A. Unfortunately, neither golf driving ranges or golf courses are included as a Detailed Land Use under this GLU. The Detailed Land Use classifications that are included within the proposed new GLU 84 (Public recreation facilities) are limited to:

DLU 841	Baseball park, public
DLU 841	Stadia, public
DLU 842	Fair Grounds
DLU 843	Zoo
DLU 844	Ice skating rink, public
DLU 844	Skating rink, public
DLU 8441	Tennis courts, public
DLU 845	Arboretum, botanical garden
DLU 845	Botanical gardens
DLU 846	Aviaries, apiaries

Although golf driving ranges are not specifically listed by the Land Use Classification Manual used by the City, public golf courses (DLU 816) are listed under the General Land Use category of Public parks (GLU 81). In addition, golf courses operated for a fee (DLU 856) are listed under the General Land Use classification of Commercial recreation facilities (GLU 85), and golf courses run by non-profit clubs (DLU 871) are listed under a General Land Use classification of private, non-profit facilities (GLU 87).

To accommodate the City's stated intent of constructing and operating a golf driving range on the site, the Commission staff is recommending that the proposed addition of

GLU 84 (Public recreation facilities) to Section 9-5.703 be modified to GLU 81 (public parks). Detailed land Uses allowed under GLU 81 include:

DLU 811	Tot lots
DLU 812	Playgrounds, not associated with schools
DLU 813	Athletic fields, public
DLU 8134	Little League ballfields
DLU 814	Parks, neighborhood
DLU 815	Parks, urban
DLU 816	Golf, courses, public
DLU 817	Swimming pools, public
DLU 818	Parks, metropolitan and regional
DLU 819	State parks

This modification will also address potential inconsistencies between the land uses allowed under GLU 84 and the land use designations for Area established by the certified LUP, as discussed in more detail below.

B. Analysis of Proposed Change:

The standard of review for proposed amendment to certified Implementation Plans is the amendment's consistency with, and ability to carry out, the certified Land Use Plan. LCP Area A, which is the subject of the proposed amendment, is designated by the LUP (Section III.A.1.) for Agriculture and Public open-space recreational uses. Thus, the City's desire to amend the IP to accommodate a golf driving range on a portion of Area A appears to be generally consistent with the LUP's designation of this site for public open-space recreational uses.

More specific aspects of the certified LUP applicable to the Commission's review of the proposed IP amendment include LUP performance standards for new development in Area A, and LUP policies affecting all areas of the Watsonville Coastal Zone. These include:

LUP Section II.A.2. which states:

Lands suitable for agricultural use shall not be converted to non-agricultural uses unless (1) continued or renewed agricultural use is not feasible, or (2) such development would serve to concentrate development consistent with Policy 1.

LUP Section II.B., which provides:

New development shall be sited and designed to protect views of scenic coastal areas (including the wetlands of the Watsonville Slough complex and associated riparian areas), to minimize the alteration of natural landforms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and where feasible to restore and enhance the visual quality of visually degraded areas; all utilities in new development shall be placed underground, and hillsides shall be reforested where feasible and compatible with view preservation.

Section II.D.2., which requires:

Environmentally sensitive habitat areas (including but not limited to those mapped in Fig. 2) shall be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values, and only uses dependent upon such resources shall be allowed within such areas.

Section II.D.3., which states:

Development of areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas (including but limited to those mapped in Fig. 2) shall be sited and designed so as to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade or be incompatible with the continuance of such habitat areas. Specific setback distances are given in Section II.

Section II.D.4., which provides:

- (a) The biological productivity of coastal streams and wetlands shall be maintained, where feasible, by minimizing adverse effects of waste water discharges and entrainment, encouraging waste water reclamation, maintaining natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian streams, and minimizing alteration of natural streams.
- (b) Development shall be designed to conserve water to the greatest practical extent, so as to minimize both the occurrence of overdrafts from the Pajaro Valley Groundwater Basin and the amounts of runoff and sanitary waste which need to be controlled to protect coastal wetlands.
- (c) Runoff from all impervious surfaces and from all areas subject to vehicular traffic shall be collected and disposed of in a way which does not result in soil erosion or degradation of water quality. Drainage systems shall be designed to accommodate runoff from at least a 25-year storm. (Proposed sedimentation, erosion and runoff standards are presented in Appendix D.)

LUP Section III.A.2, which establish the following performance standards for new development in LCP Area A:

- a. Riparian habitat must be kept in a natural state.
- b. Minimum Lot: 10 acres
- c. Maximum Impervious Surface: 50% of lot area. Exclude riparian habitat from lot area to calculate impervious surface allowed.
- d. Minimum Setback from Riparian Habitat: 50 feet
- e. Maximum slope of Developed Portion of Lot (Before Grading): 15 feet in any 100 foot interval.
- f. Approved erosion control measures must be utilized during construction. No excavation or grading shall be permitted during the months of October through March.
- g. Any structures within the jurisdiction of an FAA clear zone must have prior approval of the Federal Aviation Administration.

The above policies represent the specific standards that will be applied to any new development proposals within LCP Area A during coastal development permit review. These existing policies, which will remain unchanged by the proposed amendment, will ensure that new development in this location will take place consistent with LCP and Coastal Act requirements. In reviewing the proposed amendment to the IP, the Commission must ensure that the additional land uses proposed by this amendment can be developed consistent with these LUP requirements.

With respect to the City's intent to construct a golf driving range, the City has conducted a review of this proposal's consistency with LCP requirements (City staff report attached as Exhibit 4). Regarding the priority for Agricultural use established by the LCP, the City has found that the site is not viable for agriculture because the productivity of the soil type (Pinto Loam with Capability Rating 111e-3) is limited due to high erosion potential and slow permeability. This area has, however, been successfully grazed in the past. Nevertheless, the minor development associated with the project (a 1,200 square foot portable building and a 35 space gravel parking lot) will not preclude future agricultural use of the site, and is therefore not considered a permanent conversion of agricultural land. The relatively small investment required for this project, and the fact that all development associated with the project can be easily removed, preserves the ability to restore agricultural operations on this site. In addition, the proposed driving range use is not inconsistent with the agriculture and public open space recreational use LUP designation previously certified by the Coastal Commission.

To address the habitat protection policies contained in the LUP, the driving range project will be set back at least 100 feet from the riparian habitat area identified by the LCP (a minimum setback distance of 50 feet is required by the LCP for any project in LCP Area A). As part of the City's environmental review of this project, a mitigation measure was established to address the potential occurrence of the federally endangered Santa Cruz tarplant on the site, which requires that the owner of the site conduct annual monitoring and take all measures necessary to prevent the disturbance of any tarplants that may be found.

With respect to visual resource protection requirements of the LUP, the City's environmental review of the driving range project has identified that portions of the fencing and netting associated with this project will be visible from State Highway One. In addition, site lighting for nighttime use is expected to have a visual impact on Highway One motorists and aviationists using the Watsonville Municipal Airport at night. Mitigation measures established by the City to reduce this impact to a less than significant level include: requiring that all project lighting be designed to ensure that no direct light/glare is visible from State Route 1 or from any flight path above the project site; limiting building materials and signage to those that are made of natural-colored materials that blend well into the landscape; and, requiring that lighting for the signage be low-intensity and indirect.

Finally, the golf driving range project has been determined by the City to be consistent with Watsonville Airport Approach and Clear Plan, which allows low-intensity uses within specific height limitations. The City will be responsible for obtaining any approvals required from the FAA for this project.

It is important to note that it is the LCP amendment, rather than the golf driving range project itself, that is the subject of this analysis. The Commission must confirm that the additional land uses allowed by this amendment, which include, but are not limited to the proposed golf driving range, are consistent with the certified LUP. Both the driving range project and any other project proposed on this site in the future will be subject to the issuance of a coastal development permit which is dependent upon the project's consistency with the applicable requirements of the certified LCP. If a proposed project is within 100 feet of a wetland, the coastal development permit decision made by the City of Watsonville on the project will be appealable to the Coastal Commission.

While the driving range project is not in front of the Commission at this point in time, the above discussion is helpful in analyzing how one of the additional land uses that would be allowed by the amendment conforms with the certified LUP. Although a preliminary review of the proposed driving range project, with the mitigation measures established by the City, appears to be generally consistent with LUP requirements, it is clear that other land uses that would be added by the amendment, as submitted by the City, may be inconsistent with the LUP designation of the site for agricultural and public open space recreational uses, as well as with LUP requirements protecting agricultural, visual, and sensitive habitat resources.

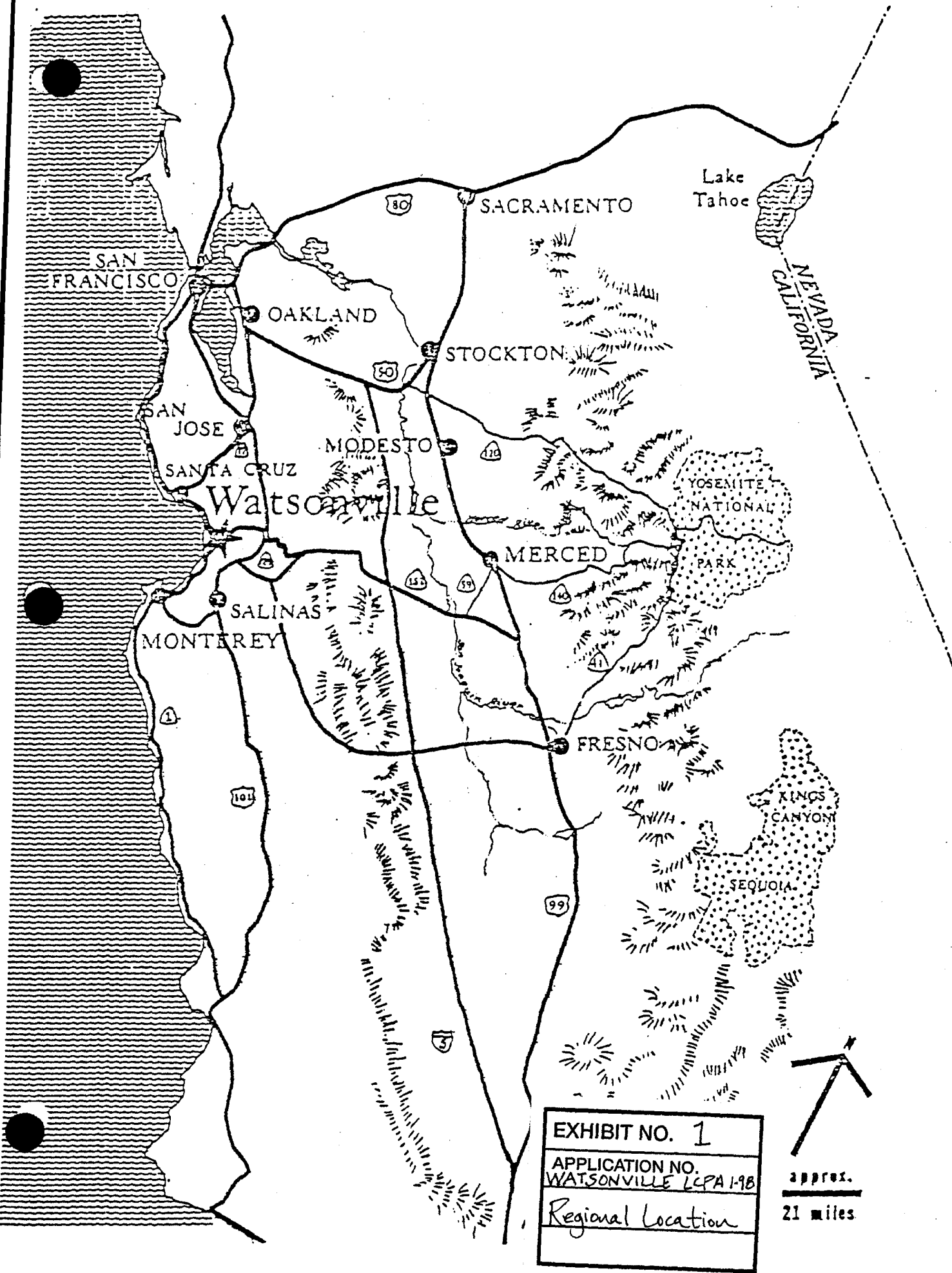
As proposed by the City, the subject amendment would allow for the development of the following Detailed Land Uses under the General Land Use classification of Public Recreation Facilities: public baseball fields and tennis courts; public stadiums; fair grounds; skating rinks; zoos; and botanical gardens. Besides the fact that this will not accommodate the City's desire to develop a golf driving range on LCP Area A, some of these additional uses are high-intensity uses that could involve the construction of large scale structures (e.g., public stadiums), contrary to the Agriculture and Public **Open Space** Recreational Use designation for the site established by the LUP. In addition, these uses may conflict with LUP requirements to comply with FAA requirements and to protect public views, sensitive habitats, and agricultural viability.

The suggested modification necessary to accommodate the City's intent to develop a golf driving range will also limit the land uses that would be allowed in Area A under the amended IP. As modified, the amendment would add the following to the list of principally permitted land uses in Area A provided by the IP: playgrounds, parks, athletic fields, public golf courses, and public swimming pools. These outdoor recreational uses are more in-line with the public open-space recreational use designation provided by the certified LUP. Therefore, only as modified can the amendment be found to be consistent with, and adequate to carry out, the certified LUP.

C. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):

The Coastal Commission's review and development process for LCPs and LCP amendments has been certified by the Secretary of Resources as being the functional equivalent of the environmental review required by CEQA. CEQA requires that alternatives to the proposed action be reviewed and considered for their potential impact on the environment, and that the least damaging feasible alternative be pursued.

On December 9, 1997, the City of Watsonville approved a negative declaration for the amendment finding that, with the proposed mitigation measures, the change would not result in harm to the environment. However, as detailed above, the Coastal Commission has identified elements of the proposed amendments that raise concern regarding potential adverse environmental impacts associated with the additional land uses that would be allowed by the amendment as submitted. Therefore, the Commission has suggested modifications to the amendment which represent a feasible less environmentally damaging alternative to the amendment submitted by the City. With these modifications, approval of the amendment will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act.



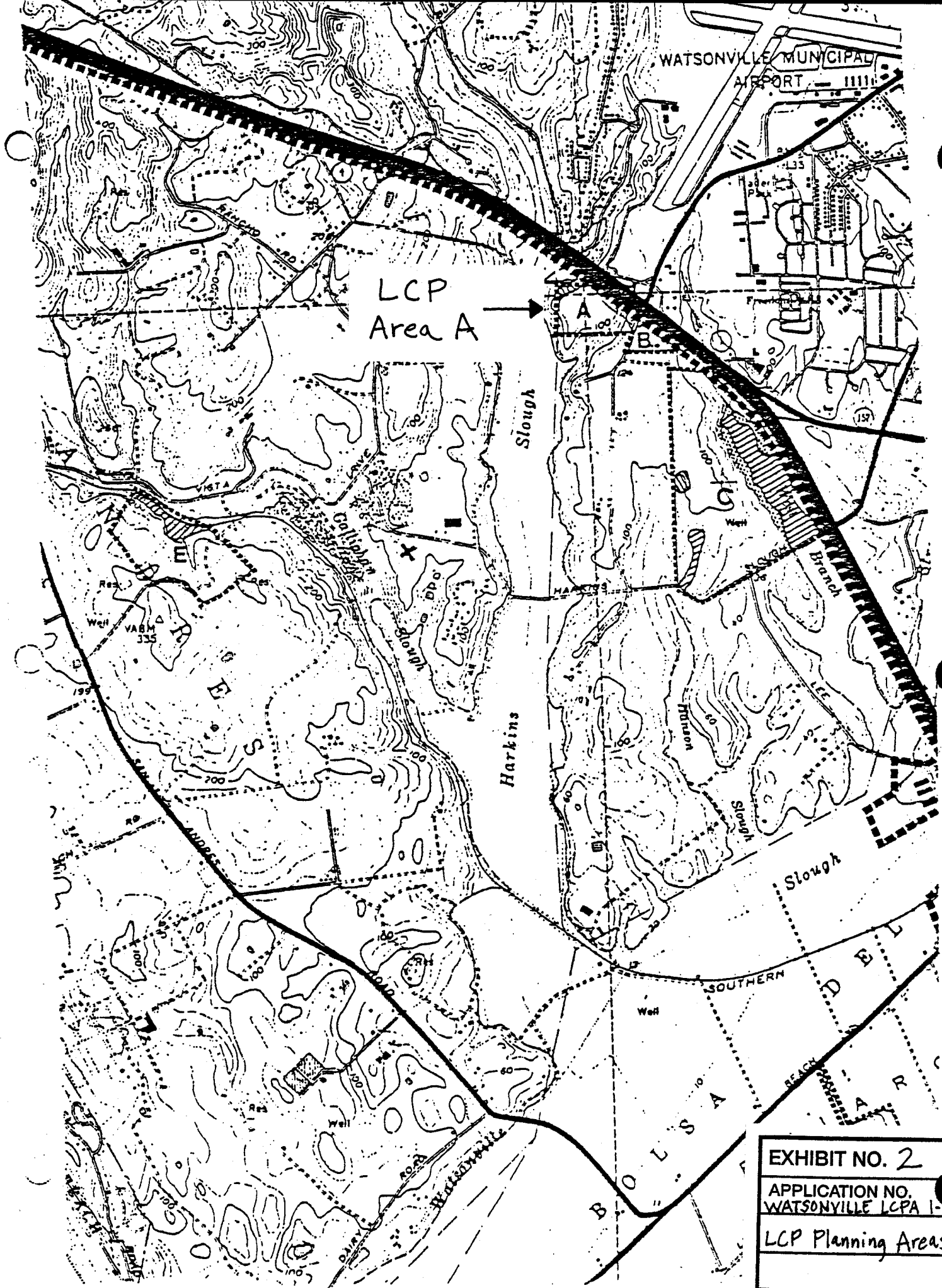
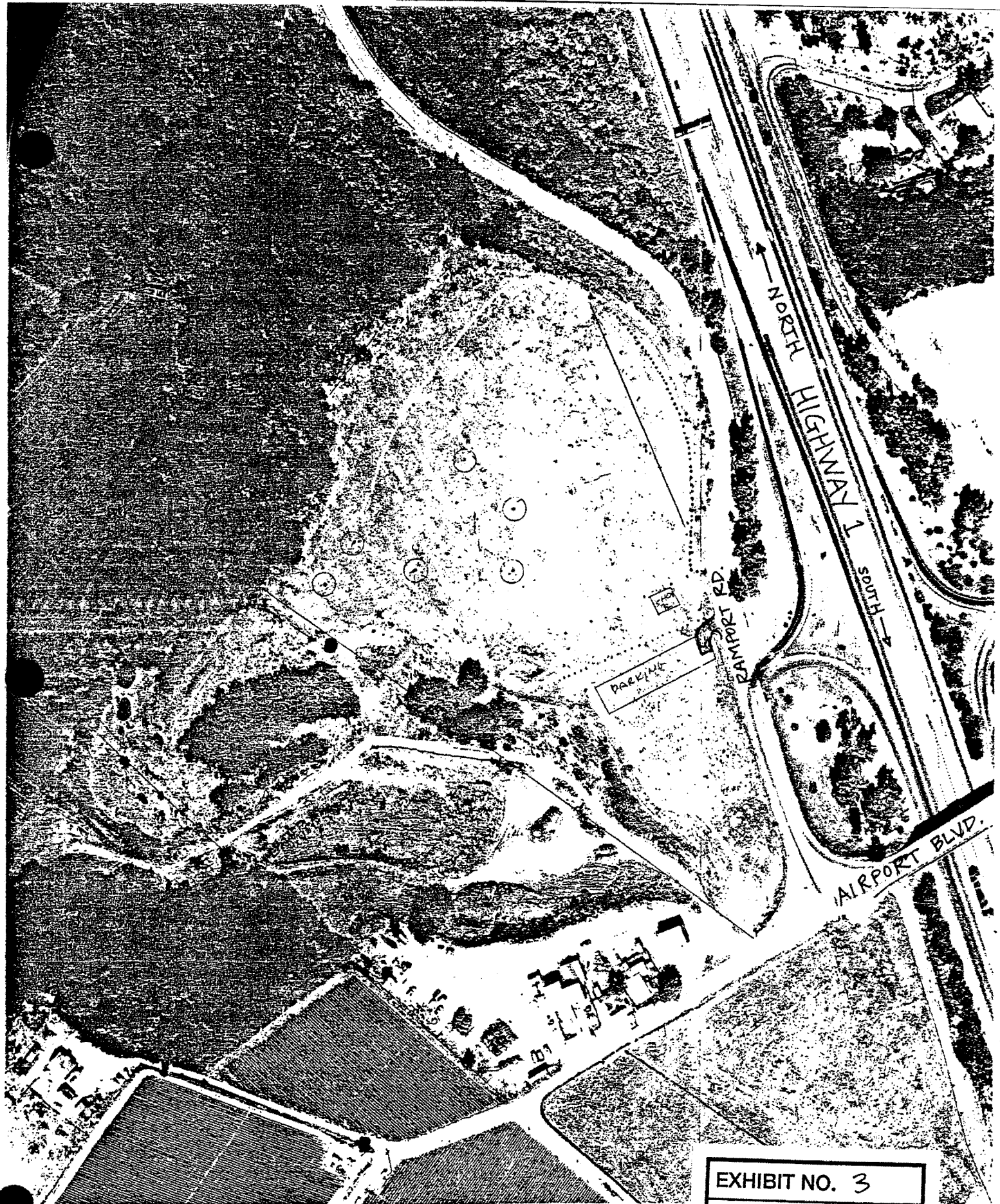


EXHIBIT NO. 2

APPLICATION NO.
WATSONVILLE LCPA 1-10

LCP Planning Areas



Chain Link Fence
 Poles with Netting
 Yardage Markers
 Driving Position

0

Scale: 1 inch = 100 feet
 1/4" = 25 feet
 1/8" = 12.5 feet

ATTACHMENT 1

EXHIBIT NO. 3

APPLICATION NO.
 WATSONVILLE LCRA 1-98

Golf Driving Range

Proposal

RECEIVED

CITY COUNCIL # 6.2(0.)
Endorsed for presentation
to the City Council

DEC 08 1997

CM
City Manager

MEMORANDUM

CALIFORNIA
COASTAL COMMISSION
CENTRAL COAST AREA

DATE: November 17, 1997

TO: Carlos J. Palacios, Interim City Manager

FROM: David S. Williams, Community Development Director *DU*

SUBJECT: TEXT AMENDMENT TO TITLE 9, CHAPTER 5 OF THE WATSONVILLE
MUNICIPAL CODE TA-4-97 AND SPECIAL USE PERMIT (COASTAL) U-
59-97 FOR GOLF DRIVING RANGE PROJECT LOCATED AT 101
RANPORT ROAD, APN 018-351-04

AGENDA ITEM: December 9, 1997

City Council

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt:

1. Negative Declaration with Mitigations (resolution);
2. Text Amendment to Title 9, Chapter 5 of the Watsonville Municipal Code (Coastal Zone Implementation Plan) to specify GLU 84, Public Recreation Facilities, as a permitted use in the CZ-A zoning district (ordinance); and
3. Special Use Permit (Coastal) allowing development of a golf driving range at 101 Ranport Road (resolution).

BACKGROUND:

At its November 3, 1997 meeting, the Watsonville Planning Commission recommended that City Council amend the Local Coastal Program and approve a golf driving range at 101 Ranport Road (see Attachment 1 for Planning Commission staff report). The City Council action involves a text amendment to Title 9, Chapter 5 of the Municipal Code.

DISCUSSION:

The Community Development Department received five comment letters during the review period for the Negative Declaration, and three of these letters did not contain substantive comments (see Attachment 2). Letters from the California Coastal Commission and Caltrans, however, contained substantive comments about the proposed project.

The California Coastal Commission letter raised six issues: 1) LCP amendment, 2) extension of utilities, 3) agricultural viability, 4) biological resources, 5) visual resources, and 6) archeological resources.

EXHIBIT NO. 4

APPLICATION NO.
WATSONVILLE LCPA 1-9B

City Staff Report

LCP Amendment: With regard to the LCP amendment, the concern was a general land use code (GLU) be specified in the proposed amendment. Staff has addressed this concern by specifying GLU 84, Public Recreation Facilities, as the permitted use to be amended into the Coastal Zone Implementation Plan.

Utilities: With regard to utilities, the main concern was with the extension of utilities to the site and the feasibility of using chemical toilets over the long term, should a septic system prove infeasible. The only public utility to be extended to the site is electrical power via power lines on Ranport Road. Water will be supplied to the site via a small pipeline transporting water from a well on an adjacent City-owned site. Sewer will be handled by permanent, enclosed chemical toilets or by a septic system. The latter option requires a permit from the County of Santa Cruz. The extension of public sewer and water utilities is not being considered for this project.

Agricultural Viability: With regard to agricultural viability, the main concern of the California Coastal Commission was the continued viability of the site for cattle grazing. Staff has clarified that the project involves no permanent foundation or paving and would, therefore, allow the site to be reused for cattle grazing should a need for that use arise in the future. According to an agricultural assessment of the project site prepared by Mr. Ronald H. Tyler, Agriculturalist, in July 1996, the project site is not viable agricultural property. This is because the type of soil found on the site (Pinto Loam with Capability Rating IIIe-3) is severely limited due to high erosion potential and slow permeability.

Biological Impacts: With regard to biological impacts, the main concern was more specifically in the mitigation requiring ongoing monitoring of the site for the Santa Cruz Tarplant. According to a biotic assessment of the project site prepared by Mr. Randall Morgan, in February 1997, the project site contains no rare, endangered, or special-status plants or animals. The grassland portion of the project site may, however, contain suitable habitat for the Santa Cruz Tarplant. There is no record of this species occurring on the site. Staff has included a mitigation requiring the owner of the site to monitor the site at appropriate times of the year, and should the Santa Cruz Tarplant be discovered on the site as a result of this monitoring effort, to take all necessary measures to protect the plant from disruption. Given that there is no Santa Cruz Tarplant on the site, staff feels the existing mitigation language is sufficient.

Visual Impacts: With regard to visual impacts, the main concern is with nighttime lighting. The project site is located in the vicinity of State Route 1, which is designated as a scenic corridor in this area. The site is visible from an approximately 300-foot section of northbound State Route 1 from the Airport Boulevard overpass extending north (assuming an average speed of 60 miles per hour, this equates to approximately 3.4 seconds of visibility). In this area, significant portions of the site, including the part of the site where the building and parking lot will be located, are visible. Visual impacts will be mitigated with a combination of screening vegetation and color and lighting control. The project applicant will conduct additional investigation to determine the more precise effects of nighttime lighting at the site, and this information will be presented to the California Coastal Commission as part of the Local Coastal Program amendment application.

Watsonville LCPA 1-98
Exhibit 4, p. 2

Archeological Resources: With regard to archeological resources, the concern expressed in the California Coastal Commission letter involved a new mitigation measure insuring that archeological resources will be protected should they be found during project construction. Staff has included this mitigation as part of the conditions of approval for the project.

Caltrans expressed three concerns about the project. First, they are concerned about the proposed location of the parking lot entrance and suggest aligning the entrance to be directly across from the existing off ramp. Second, they expressed concerns about the proposed lighting system and provide guidelines describing the type of lighting permissible in the area. Finally, they remind the City that encroachment permits are necessary for any work to be conducted in Caltrans' right-of-way. In a telephone conversation between the project applicant and Caltrans on November 20, 1997, Caltrans agreed to allow the proposed project entrance to remain as proposed, provided the matter was reviewed in 12 months to ensure no problems have been created by the project. Staff has added a new condition of approval (Condition No. 13) to address this issue. The project applicant has agreed to address all other issues raised by Caltrans in its comment letter.

PLANNING ANALYSIS:

The Golf Driving Range Project is consistent with Local Coastal Program Policy II, Policies Affecting All Areas; Local Coastal Program Policy III.A, Policies Affecting Specific Areas (Area A); and General Plan Goal 8.1, Community Needs.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Staff expects the financial impact of the Golf Driving Range to be positive for the Watsonville Municipal Airport which will derive a small income from the operation. This income will be offset in part by ongoing operation and maintenance costs associated with the use.

ALTERNATIVES:

Reasonable alternatives to the staff recommendation include:

1. Decline to approve the project, or
2. Approve the project with additional conditions

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Planning Commission staff report
2. Letters from Coastal Commission and Caltrans

c: City Attorney

Watsonville LCPA 1-98
Exhibit 4, p.3

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 28, 1997

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: David S. Williams, Interim Community Development Administrator *ds*

SUBJECT: LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM AMENDMENT AND SPECIAL USE PERMIT (COASTAL) FOR GOLF DRIVING RANGE PROJECT LOCATED AT 101 RANPORT ROAD, APN 018-351-04

AGENDA ITEM: November 3, 1997 Planning Commission

BASIC PROJECT DATA

APPLICATION NO. GPA-04-97, U-59-97

APN: 18-351-04

GENERAL PLAN: Coastal Zone

ZONING: CZ-A

SCOPE OF PROJECT: Amendment of Coastal Zone Implementation Plan (Local Coastal Program) to add "public open space recreation use" as a permitted use in the CZ-A zoning district; adoption of a Negative Declaration with Mitigations; issuance of Special Use Permit (Coastal).

LOCATION: 101 Ranport Road (Airport Boulevard at Ranport Road)

EXISTING LAND USE: Mighty Mulch/Vacant

PROPOSED LAND USE: Golf Driving Range

PROPERTY OWNER: City of Watsonville

APPLICANT: City of Watsonville

ADDRESS: PO Box 50000
Watsonville, CA

ADDRESS: PO Box 50000,
Watsonville, CA

ACTION(S)/APPROVAL(S) BEING SOUGHT: Local Coast Plan Amendment to make Coastal Zone Implementation Plan consistent with Coastal Zone Land Use Plan; Negative Declaration with Mitigations; Special Use Permit (Coastal)

CEQA STATUS: Negative Declaration with Mitigations

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council adoption of the Local Coastal Program Amendment and Negative Declaration with Mitigations and approval of Special Use Permit (Coastal).

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

Proposal:

The City of Watsonville has applied for a Local Coastal Plan Amendment and a Special Use Permit (Coastal) to allow for the development of a golf driving range on six acres of City-owned property located at 101 Ranport Road. The property is in the Coastal Zone and in the Airport Clear Zone.

Procedure:

Staff is processing a Local Coastal Program amendment, Negative Declaration with Mitigations, and Special Use Permit (Coastal) concurrently.

After action by the Planning Commission, this item goes to the City Council for action. Should the City Council choose to approve the project, the proposed Local Coastal Program amendment will be forwarded to the California Coastal Commission for approval. The Coastal Commission staff will review the application and set the matter for public hearing within 60 days. The Local Coastal Program amendment will take effect immediately upon approval by the California Coastal Commission. Should the California Coastal Commission condition the approval beyond the conditions imposed by the City of Watsonville, the Special Use Permit (Coastal) will have to be reconsidered by Planning Commission and City Council.

Project Characteristics:

The driving range will consist of a 400-foot driving position line with distance markers at 75 yards, 100 yards, 150 yards, 175 yards, and 200 yards. Each distance marker position will be irrigated to a radius of approximately 50 feet. The driving position line will be irrigated to allow hitting from natural turf, although one-half of the driving position line will be closed at any given time to allow for turf regrowth. The remainder of the site will be left in its natural state.

The driving range will be screened with 20-foot range netting on each side out to 100 yards, 10-foot netting out to 150 yards, and six-foot netting for the remaining perimeter of the driving range. Six-foot-high chain link fence will be installed along Ranport Road and along the parking lot to separate the lot from the driving range.

Ancillary facilities include a 35-space parking lot (12,600 square foot) constructed of crushed rock and a 1,200 square foot woodframe building to be used for office, shop, bathroom, and vending activities. Lighting for the site includes lighting of the driving range to allow for night play and lighting for the parking lot and walkways.

Water for the site will come from a domestic well located on the adjacent property (also owned by the City of Watsonville). Initially, the site will be served by chemical toilets, one of which will be accessible to those with disabilities. Eventually, the site will be served with a septic system and flush toilets.

The existing Mighty Mulch operation which currently is located on this parcel will be relocated to the southern end of the property, and a new entrance for Mighty Mulch will be constructed off Airport Boulevard.

General Plan, Local Coastal Program, and Zoning:

The General Plan Land Use designation for the site is "Coastal Zone." The site is zoned Coastal Zone - A (CZ-A). The Local Coastal Program consists of two parts--the Coastal Zone Land Use Plan and the Coastal Zone Implementation Program. The proposed use is consistent with the Local Coastal Land Use Plan, which calls for low-intensity open space recreational uses consistent with airport operations. The use is inconsistent with the Local Coastal Implementation Program, which does not specify the proposed use as a permitted use.

The proposed use is consistent with the Watsonville Municipal Airport Master Plan and runway clear zone requirements.

Site and Surrounding Uses:

The project site is located on Ranport Road approximately 500 feet north of the intersection of Ranport Road and Airport Boulevard and lies directly in the runway clear zone of the Watsonville Municipal Airport, which is east of the site across State Route 1 (see Attachment 1). Access to the site will be off Ranport Road at the existing entrance to Mighty Mulch, and access to Mighty Mulch will be changed to Airport Boulevard.

Immediately to the south of the site and on the same parcel is the Mighty Mulch operation. Further south and beyond the Mighty Mulch operation is a future site of a new motel. To the south and west of the site is a non-permitted landfill site, which the City of Watsonville is currently working to close. Beyond the landfill site is farmland. Immediately west of the site is a sloped woodland area, and beyond that there is more farmland. North of the project site is more sloped woodland area and beyond that wetlands.

Impact Fees: The project is subject to the payment of all applicable impact fees.

Environmental Review:

The Community Development Department prepared a draft Negative Declaration with Mitigations based on an initial study and circulated this document for public review on September 18, 1997. Comments are due on November 3, 1997. Comment letters will be introduced into the record on November 3, 1997.

The Initial Study identified issues in the categories of biological resources and aesthetics. With regard to biological issues, the Local Coastal Program identifies the possible presence of Santa Cruz Tarplant as an issue to be explored in the development of this site. According to an biotic assessment of the project site prepared by Mr. Randall Morgan, in February 1997, the project site contains no rare, endangered, or special-status plants or animals. The grassland portion of the project site may, however, contain suitable habitat for the Santa Cruz tarplant. There is no record of this species occurring on the site. The owner of the site shall each year monitor the site at appropriate times, and should the Santa Cruz tarplant be

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discovered on the site as a result of this monitoring effort, all necessary measures shall be taken to protect the plant from disruption.

With regard to aesthetic issues, the project site is located in the vicinity of State Route 1, which is designated as a scenic corridor in this area. The site is visible from a approximately 300-foot section of northbound State Route 1 from the Airport Boulevard overpass extending north (assuming an average speed of 60 miles per hour, this equates to approximately 3.4 seconds of visibility). In this area, significant portions of the site, including the part of the site where the building and parking lot will be located, are visible. Visual impacts will be mitigated with a combination of screening vegetation and color and lighting control.

The Initial Study also discussed agricultural viability and concluded that the project had less than significant impacts in this assessment category. According to an agricultural assessment of the project site prepared by Mr. Ronald H. Tyler, Agriculturalist, in July 1996, the project site is not viable agricultural property. This is because the type of soil found on the site (Pinto Loam with Capability Rating Ille-3) is severely limited due to high erosion potential and slow permeability.

ACTION

Public Hearing - Accept public testimony

Environmental Review - Adopt Resolution recommending adoption of Negative Declaration with Mitigations

Local Coastal Plan Amendment - Adopt Resolution recommending City Council adoption

Special Use Permit (Coastal) - Adopt Resolution recommending City Council approval

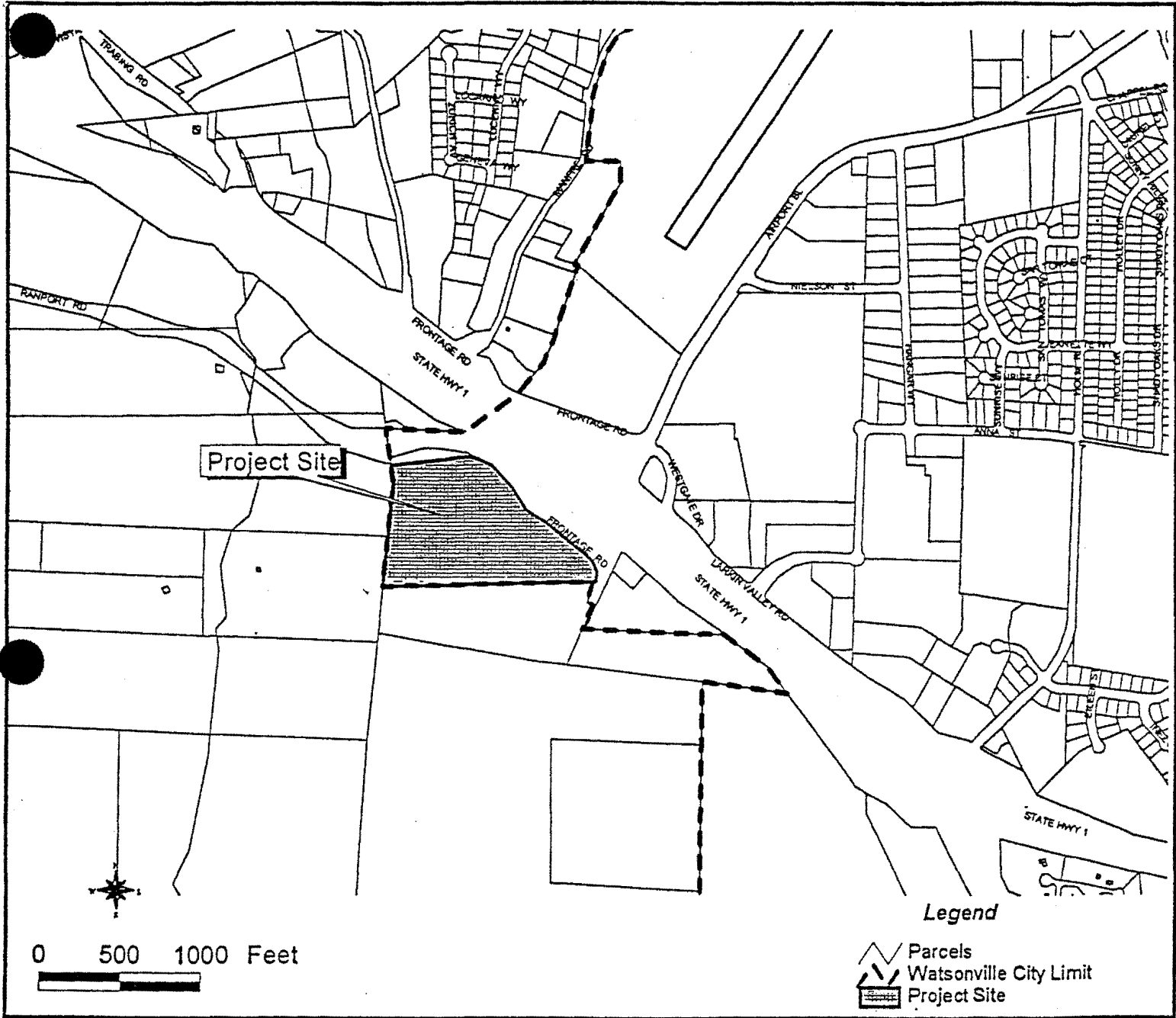
ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Vicinity and Site Map

c: City Attorney

Watsonville LCPA 98
Exhibit 4, p. 7

Site and Vicinity Map



Project: GOLF DRIVING RANGE

Applicant: City of Watsonville

APN: 018-351-04

GPA-4-97 ; U-59-97 ; E1-31-97.

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CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

CENTRAL COAST AREA OFFICE
725 FRONT STREET, SUITE 300
SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
(408) 427-4863
HEARING IMPAIRED: (415) 904-5200



November 3, 1997

Martin Carver
Senior Planner
City of Watsonville
P.O. Box 50000
Watsonville, CA 95077-5000

RE: Negative Declaration for the Burgstrom Driving Range Project

Dear Mr. Carver:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above referenced document. The proposed project entails the establishment and operation of golf driving range on a portion of the City owned property at 101 Ranport Road (APN 18-341-04) in the City of Watsonville, referred to as "Area A" by the Watsonville certified Local Coastal Program (LCP), which is located west of Highway One and within the Watsonville Municipal Airport runway clear zone.

According to the Negative Declaration, the driving range consists of a 400 foot driving position line with 6 distance markers between 75 and 200 yards of the driving line. Irrigation to establish turf areas will take place only along the driving line and within a 50 foot radius around each distance marker. Other elements of the project include: a 35 space (12,600 square foot) gravel parking lot; a 1,200 square foot woodframe building to be used for office, shop, bathroom, and vending activities; 20 foot high netting along both sides of the range for the first 100 yards, 10 foot netting to 150 yards, and six foot netting for the remaining perimeter; a six foot high chain link fence along Ranport Road and the parking lot; night lighting; and, walkways. Water for the site will be provided from a domestic well located at the adjacent City owned property, and wastewater will be handled with chemical toilets, with the potential for future development of a septic system. The existing Mighty Mulch composting facility will continue on another portion of the site, with a new entrance to be established along Airport Road.

Coastal issues raised by the project include: the need for an amendment to the Implementation Plan (IP) component of the City of Watsonville certified Local Coastal Program (LCP) to allow for the proposed use; extension of utilities; the agricultural viability of the project site; potential impacts to biological and visual resources; and the potential presence of archaeological resources. These issues are addressed in more detail below.

1. LCP Amendment

The proposed project is located in a rural coastal zone area of the City, designated for agriculture and open space by the LCP. The Negative Declaration correctly identifies that a LCP Amendment is necessary in order to accommodate the proposed use. While the certified Land Use Plan (LUP) identifies "public open-space recreational use" as a permitted use at the project site, the certified Implementation Plan (IP) specifies that only those uses allowed under General Land Use classification 86 (open lands) are allowed; these uses are limited to gan

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preserves, wildlife preserves, and forest preserves. In other words, only the IP needs to be amended.

The Negative Declaration does not, however, indicate what land use classification will be added to the list of permitted uses contained in the IP to accommodate the proposed project. Without this information, the Commission staff is unable to evaluate the potential environmental affects associated with the LCP amendment. Identification of the specific land use(s) proposed to be incorporated into the IP, accompanied by an analysis of the environmental impacts associated with the additional land use(s) (including any land use other than the proposed driving range that would be allowable under this change), will be required as part of the LCP Amendment submittal.

With respect to the timing of the Coastal Development Permit for the project in relation the processing of the required LCP Amendment, it will be necessary for the amendment to become effective before final approval of the coastal permit.

2. Extension of Utilities

The proposed project requires the extension of electric lines along Ranport Road, and the installation of water lines to deliver water from a well on an adjacent property. The distance and alignment of these utility extensions are not described by the Negative Declaration. For wastewater, the project proposes to utilize chemical (portable) toilets initially, with the potential installation of a septic system in the future, subject to Santa Cruz County approval. The ability of the site to support a septic system has not been determined.

Policy II.A.1. of the LUP states: "New development shall be located within, contiguous with, or in close proximity to existing developed areas able to accommodate it and minimize energy consumption and vehicle miles traveled. However, visitor serving facilities that can not be feasibly located in existing developed areas may be located at selected points of attraction for visitors." In contrast to LCP Area B south of the site, the extension of public services is not expressly allowed by the LCP.

The Commission staff recommend that the City identify the specific extent of utility extensions required to serve the proposed use, evaluate any additional development opportunities that could be facilitated by this extension, and incorporate this information within an analysis of project conformance with the aforementioned policy. The City should also analyze whether or not chemical toilets will be adequate over the long-term operation of the driving range should a septic system prove to be unfeasible.

3. Agricultural Viability

Policy II.A.2. of the LUP prohibits the conversion of land suitable for agricultural use to non-agricultural use unless continued or renewed agricultural use is not feasible, or such development would serve to concentrate development. According to the LUP, this site was previously used for cattle grazing.

The Negative Declaration states that an agricultural assessment of the site conducted in July, 1996, indicated that the site is not viable agricultural property because the type of soil found on

the site (Pinto Loam with Capability Rating IIIe-3) is severely limited due to high erosion potential and slow permeability. It is unclear if this assessment analyzed the viability of continued cattle grazing as an agricultural use.

The Commission staff therefore request that the City evaluate the feasibility of renewed agricultural use of the site, including grazing. It is recognized, however, that the proposed project would not preclude opportunities for future agricultural use of the site because very little of the site will be covered by structural development. Nevertheless, to ensure that renewed agricultural use of the site remains feasible, the City could consider a mitigation measure or condition of approval that would require removal of the parking lot and any foundation established for the shop upon termination or abandonment of the driving range project.

4. Potential Impacts to Biological Resources

The project site contains a riparian corridor, is adjacent to Harkins Slough wetlands, and has the potential to support the endangered Santa Cruz tarplant. It does not appear that the proposed project will impact the riparian habitat area or the adjacent wetland area, because the limited development associated with the project will all take place on the upper areas of the parcel, at a safe distance away from riparian and wetland habitats. Compliance with the required 50 foot setback from the riparian habitat (IP, Section 9-5.705) should, however, be documented by the Negative Declaration and include any utility extension (i.e., water and electric) required for the project. In addition, any potential impacts to sensitive habitat areas or the water quality of adjacent riparian and wetland areas posed by the use of chemical fertilizers or pesticides for limited turf areas should be analyzed and mitigated.

Potential impacts to the Santa Cruz tarplant is the primary biologic issue raised by the project. Although no tarplants have been identified on the site, the Negative Declaration appropriately includes a mitigation measure to address, on a yearly basis, the potential future occurrence of this rare species. The Commission staff would recommend, however, that this mitigation measure be revised to incorporate the specific requirements for tarplant protection contained in Section 9-5.705 of the Watsonville certified IP. This includes: specifying the time of year a field search would be conducted; requiring that the survey be performed by a qualified botanist (as opposed to the owner of the site); providing for the evaluation of the field survey report by the Department of Fish and Game; and prescribing the measures that will be implemented to protect any areas determined to support this plant species.

5. Potential Impacts to Visual Resources

In recognition of the potential impacts to visual resources posed by the project, the Negative Declaration requires: screening vegetation for the proposed building and parking lot; use of natural colored fencing and netting that blend into the surrounding landscape; preventing direct light or glare from being visible from State Route 1 or from overhead flight paths; and restricting signs to natural colored materials with low-intensity, indirect lighting.

The commission staff support the proposed mitigation measures, but are unsure that they will adequately address the project's impacts on scenic resources. This is due to the fact that the Negative Declaration does not identify the extent of lighting that will be necessary to operate the driving range after sunset, or evaluate the impact of this lighting on the environment. We

recommend that the City analyze this issue, and if necessary, consider restricting the operation to daylight hours. Please refer to page 26 of the certified IP, which sets forth visual resource protection requirements for coastal zone areas of the City, and recommends the use of native live oak for screening purposes.

6. Archaeological Resources

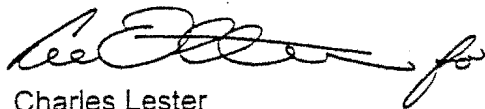
The potential for archaeological resources to be uncovered as a result of the project has not been addressed by the Negative Declaration. The Watsonville certified IP requires that every coastal development permit be conditioned to require mitigation measures in the event that archaeological or paleontological materials are encountered.

In summary, the Commission staff request that the City of Watsonville analyze, in more detail, the following issues raised by the proposed project: the specific land use category that will be added to the Implementation Plan to accommodate the project, and the implications of this change; the length and alignment of the utility extensions required to serve the project, any associated growth inducing or environmental impacts, and whether or not such an extension is allowed under the current LCP; the viability of continued cattle grazing on the project site, and measures to ensure that the project will not preclude future agricultural use; more specific measures to prevent potential impacts to the Santa Cruz tarplant; and, the environmental impacts associated with night lighting. We also recommend that the City condition the project with the archaeological mitigation requirements specified by the certified Implementation Plan.

These comments are based on the limited information and the schematic plan included in the Negative Declaration. The Negative Declaration does not provide information regarding any changes to the existing Mighty Mulch operation that may be necessary to accommodate the proposed driving range (other than the revised entrance), nor does it describe the relationship of this project to the planned remediation of the adjacent dumpsite. As a result, the Commission staff may have additional comments as these project reviews progress.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. If you have any questions, or wish to discuss the project further, please contact me, or staff analyst Steve Monowitz, at (408) 427-4863.

Sincerely,



Charles Lester
District Manager
Central Coast Area Office

cc: State Clearinghouse
Bruce Elliot, Department of Fish and Game
Santa Cruz County Planning Department

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Exhibit 4, p.12

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

50 HIGUERA STREET
SANTA JUAN, CALIFORNIA 92080-1111
TELEPHONE: (805) 549-3111
TDD (805) 549-3229

November 6, 1997

5-SC-1-3.18
Burgstrom Driving Range
Negative Declaration

Martin Carver
Senior Planner
City of Watsonville
P.O. Box 50000
Watsonville, CA 95077-5000

Dear Mr. Carver:

Caltrans District 5 staff has completed its review of the above-referenced document. The initial study does not provide enough information to give detailed comments. Caltrans would like to see some rough traffic counts indicating the number of vehicles that would access the parking lot during peak hours. Furthermore, what are the cumulative impacts from this development with regard to traffic? What is the current zoning on the adjacent parcels and are there any plans for additional development in this vicinity. Given the information submitted, the following comments were generated as a result of the review:

1. Left-turns into the parking lot may block traffic exiting from the south bound State Route 1 off ramp. Staff recommends relocating the proposed parking lot entrance directly across from the existing off ramps or increasing the off set between the ramps and the proposed parking lot driveway.
2. Since the proposed parking lot is adjacent to SR 1, Caltrans may have concerns with the type of lighting system that is constructed. Attached is section 21466.5. of the California State Vehicle Code describing what type of lighting is permissible under California State Law.
3. An encroachment permit must be obtained before any work can be conducted within the Caltrans right-of-way. This includes any drainage culverts that would connect to Caltrans' drainage system. Please be advised that prior to obtaining an encroachment permit, you are required to have design plans reviewed by this office accompanied by an approved environmental document. Biological and archaeological surveys must specifically address impacts in the state right-of-way. Should you have any further questions regarding encroachment permits, please contact Steve Senet, Permits Engineer, at (805) 549-3152.

I hope this letter gives your agency a better understanding of Caltrans concerns with this project. Please contact me at (805) 549-3131 if you have questions. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Charles Larwood
District 5
Intergovernmental Review Coordinator

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