

# Appeal of PLP24-0012

Villa Vanto Farm – 4485 D Street, Petaluma



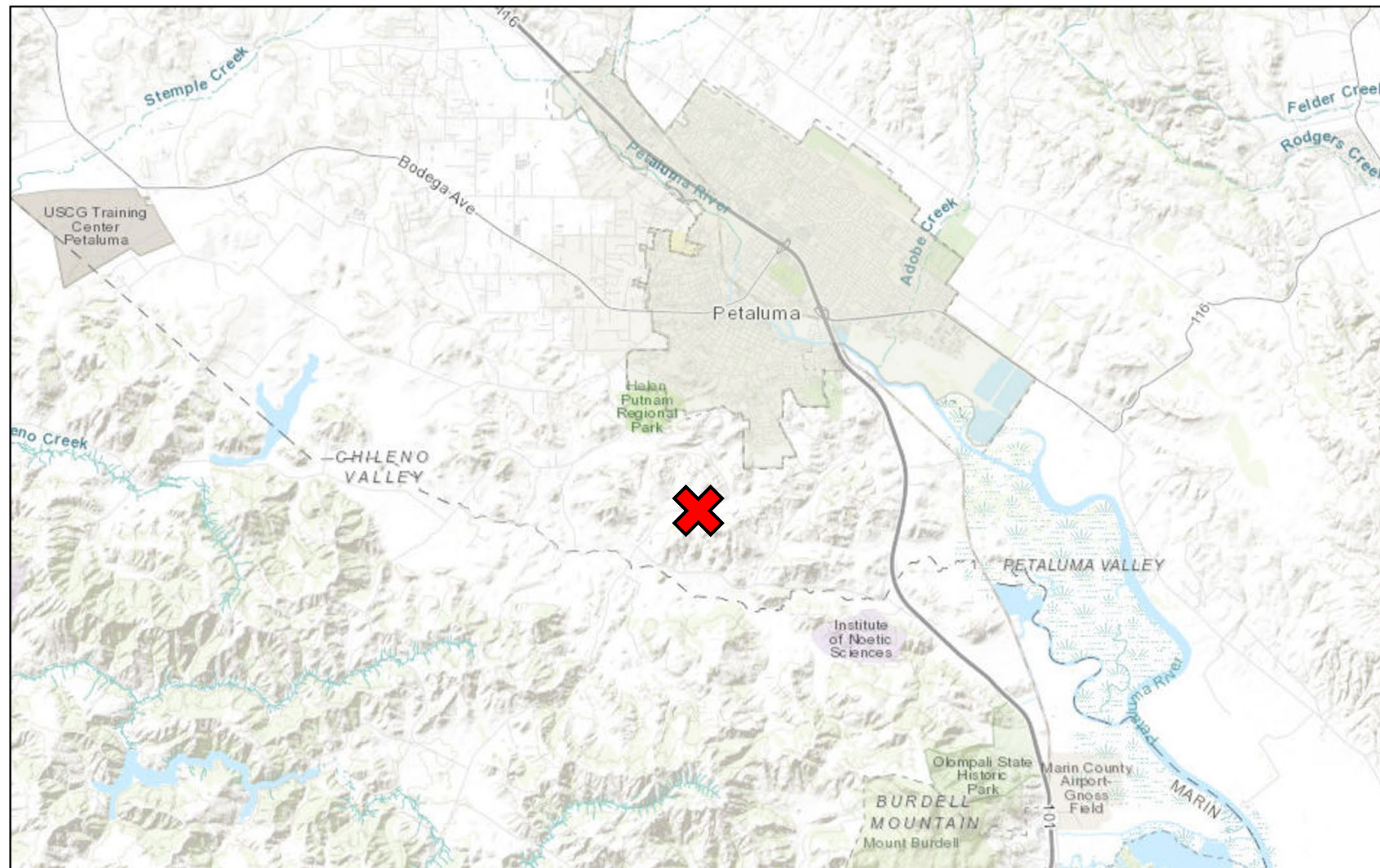
Board of Supervisors

October 14, 2025

Joshua Miranda  
Project Planner

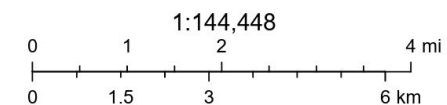


# Vicinity Map



2/27/2025, 9:58:07 AM

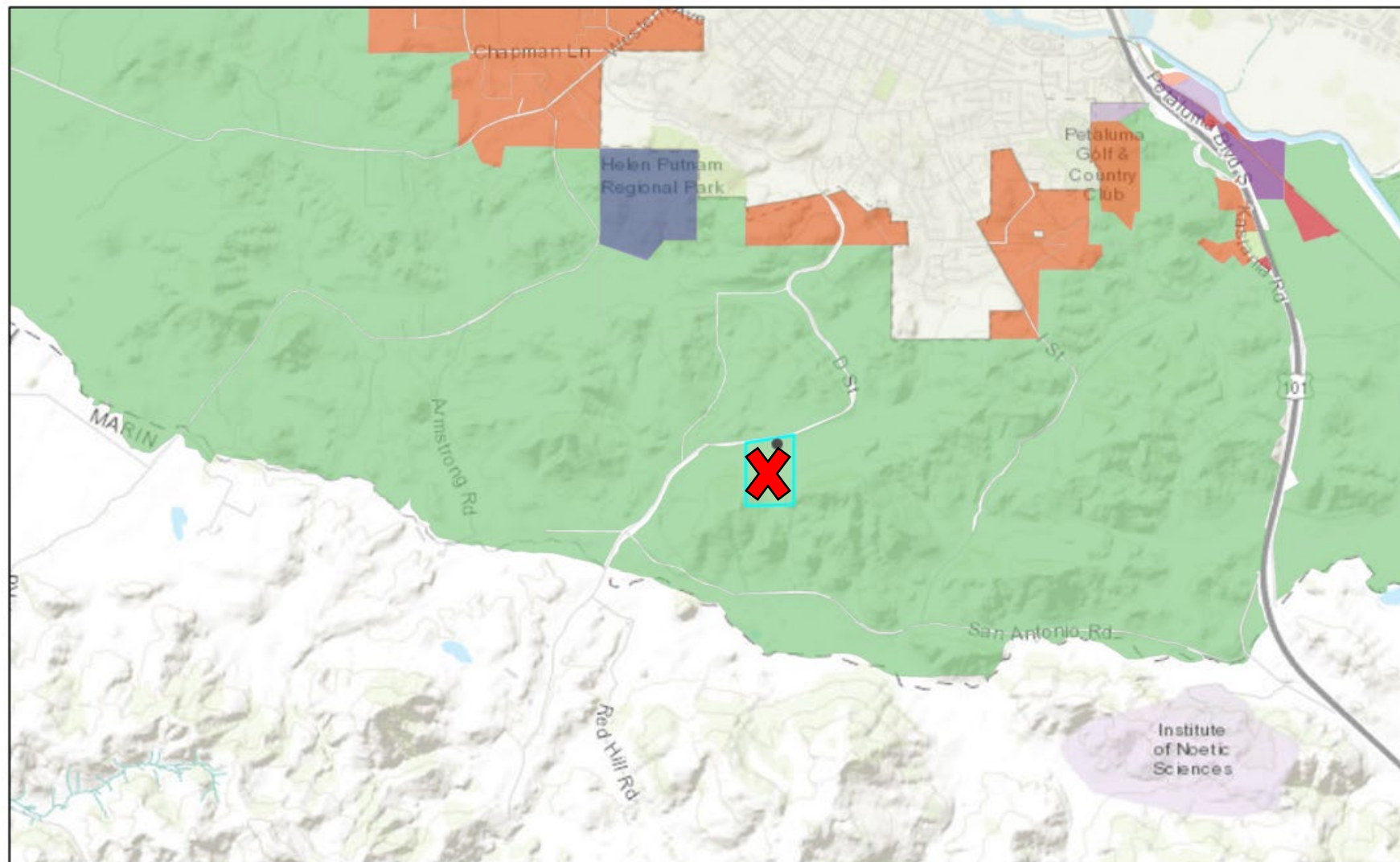
City Limit





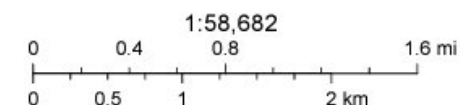


# General Plan Land Use & Zoning



1/20/2025, 5:21:24 PM

City Limit	GI - General Industrial	LI - Limited Industrial
Land Use	LC - Limited Commercial	PQP - Public/Quasi Public
DA - Diverse Agriculture	LEA - Land Extensive Agriculture	RR - Rural Residential
GC - General Commercial		



County of Marin, Sonoma County, Bureau of Land Management, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, USGS, METI/NASA, NGA, EPA, USDA

Permit Sonoma



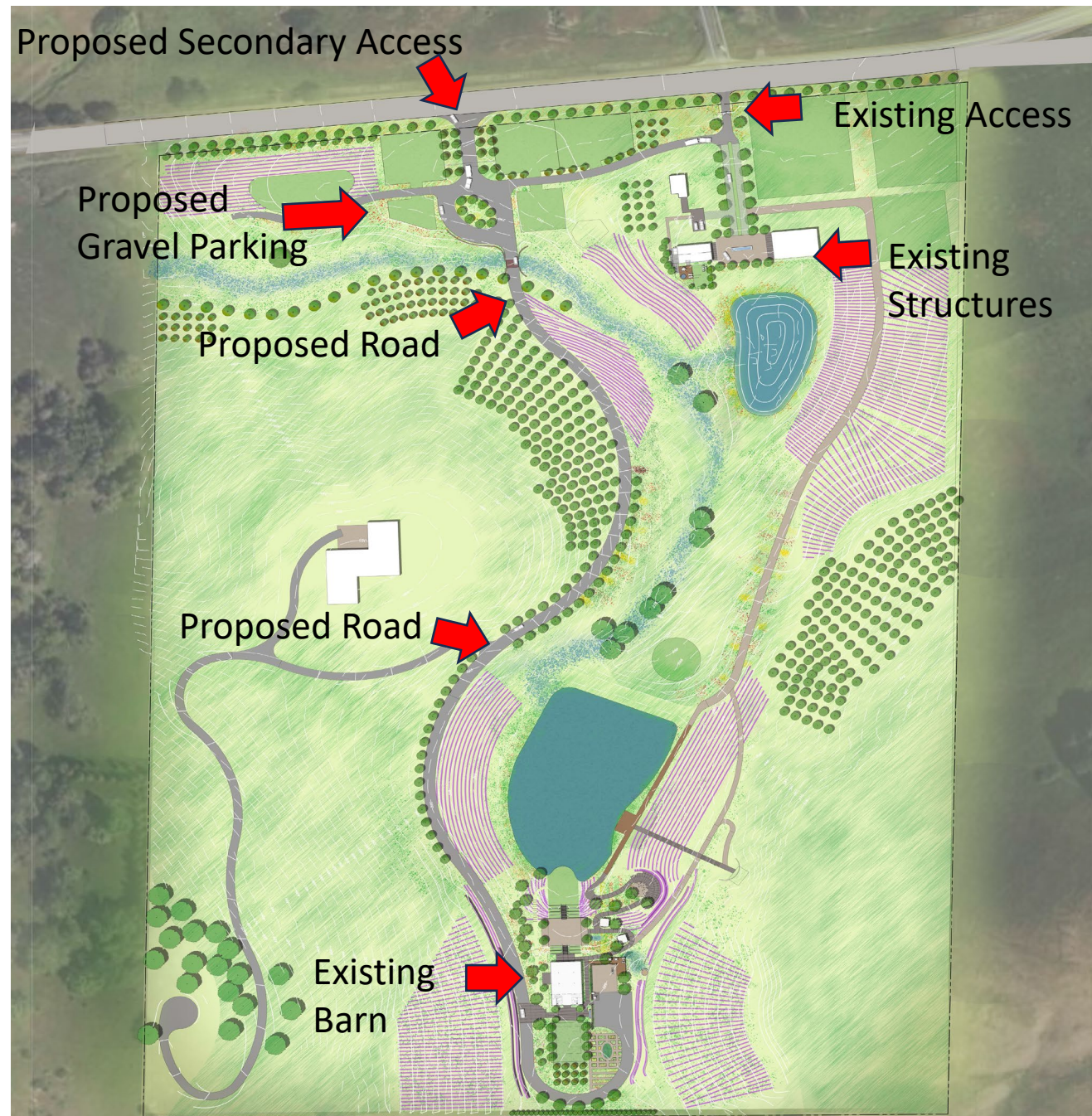


# Background

- December 20, 2002 - Land Conservation (Williamson Act) contract for non-prime agricultural uses records.
- In 2021 and 2022, Permit Sonoma's Code Enforcement Division addressed complaints and violations on the property.
- December 12, 2024, and January 23, 2025 - Public hearings scheduled.









# BZA Hearing – Action taken

- Mitigated Negative Declaration Adopted
- Planning project for a Use Permit and two Zoning Permits approved on a 4-0-1-0 vote with conditions





# Approved Project Description

Request to allow agricultural support and visitor serving uses in an existing 5,020 square foot barn, including:

- 1) a Zoning Permit to allow a 215 square foot farm retail sales facility, operating with 2 employees, open to the public by appointment only from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM, seven days a week







# Approved Project Description

Request to allow agricultural support and visitor serving uses in an existing 5,020 square foot barn, including:

2) a Zoning Permit to allow a 3,575 square foot small-scale agricultural processing facility to process lavender grown onsite into various products including essential oils, and hydrosol, and perfumes, operating daily with up to 4 employees from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM







# Approved Project Description

Request to allow agricultural support and visitor serving uses in an existing 5,020 square foot barn, including:

3) a Use Permit to allow 12 annual agricultural promotional events ranging in size from 50 – 200 attendees, between the hours of 11:00 AM and 10:00 PM, All events catered food and no outdoor amplified music.

Number of Approved Events (12 total)	Number of Approved Attendees Per Event
3 events	50
3 events	100
3 events	150
3 events	200





# BZA Decision Appealed

Appellant raised concerns related to:

- 1) The scale and purpose of the agricultural promotional events
- 2) Williamson Act Contract Violations
- 3) Enforcement Concerns
- 4) Precedence related to other use permits.





# BZA Decision Appealed

The scale and purpose of the agricultural promotional events

- Staff finds the project is consistent with Agricultural Resource Element of the Sonoma County General Plan, specifically, Policies AR-1a, AR-5b, AR-5g, AR-6a, AR-6d and AR-6f.
- 86% or ~ 49 acres of the 56-acre property will be devoted to agricultural production







# BZA Decision Appealed

## Williamson Act Contract Violations

- The Project, if approved, would allow the landowner to legalize unpermitted structural modifications, unpermitted events; and cure potential issues with non-compliance with the Williamson Act Contract





# BZA Decision Appealed

## Enforcement Concerns

- BZA reduced the number of allowed events and types of event activities and added several conditions of approval to address concerns of Use Permit enforcement





# BZA Decision Appealed

## Precedence related to other use permits.

- Sonoma County has a long history of permitting agricultural promotional events at local farms and wineries.
- In 2023, the Board of Supervisors adopted a Winery Events Ordinance which includes criteria for agricultural promotional events held at wineries and wine tasting rooms
- Villa Vanto Farms agricultural promotional events request can be considered equivalent to uses described in the Winery Events Ordinance







# California Environmental Quality Act

- Staff has been prepared Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the project.
- A 30-day circulation period is being provided which began on July 5, 2024, and concluded on August 5, 2024.
- The IS/MND did not find potential environmental impacts that could not be mitigated to a less-than-significant level.
- After circulation staff revised the MND to respond to responsible agency comments revised during the public review period.
- Revision are non substantive, and recirculation is not required under CEQA guideline section 15073.5(b).





# Staff Recommendation

Permit Sonoma recommends that the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors deny the appeal, adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and uphold the BZA Planning Project Approval subject to the Conditions of Approval

- Deny the appeal and uphold the BZA decision with revised conditions
- Continue the project to a future hearing date with direction on additional information or project adjustments to be provided.
- Uphold the appeal and deny the project with justification for denial (staff to return with amended resolution for final action)



# Questions





# Water Use

## Well #1

- 93,500 gallons/year (Lavender Farming) + 24,000 gallons/year (Lavender Processing) + 45,780 gallons/year (Events) + 246,324 gallons/year (Landscaping) + 19,747 gallons/year (olive orchard) + 146,633 gallons/year (secondary housing) = **575,984 gallons or 1.77 acre-feet/year = Total Annual Project Water Use**

## Well #2

- 19,747 gallons/year (Sheep) + 146,633 gallons/year (Existing Domestic Water Use) = **166,380 gallons/year or 0.51 acre-feet/yr = Additional Site Water Use**

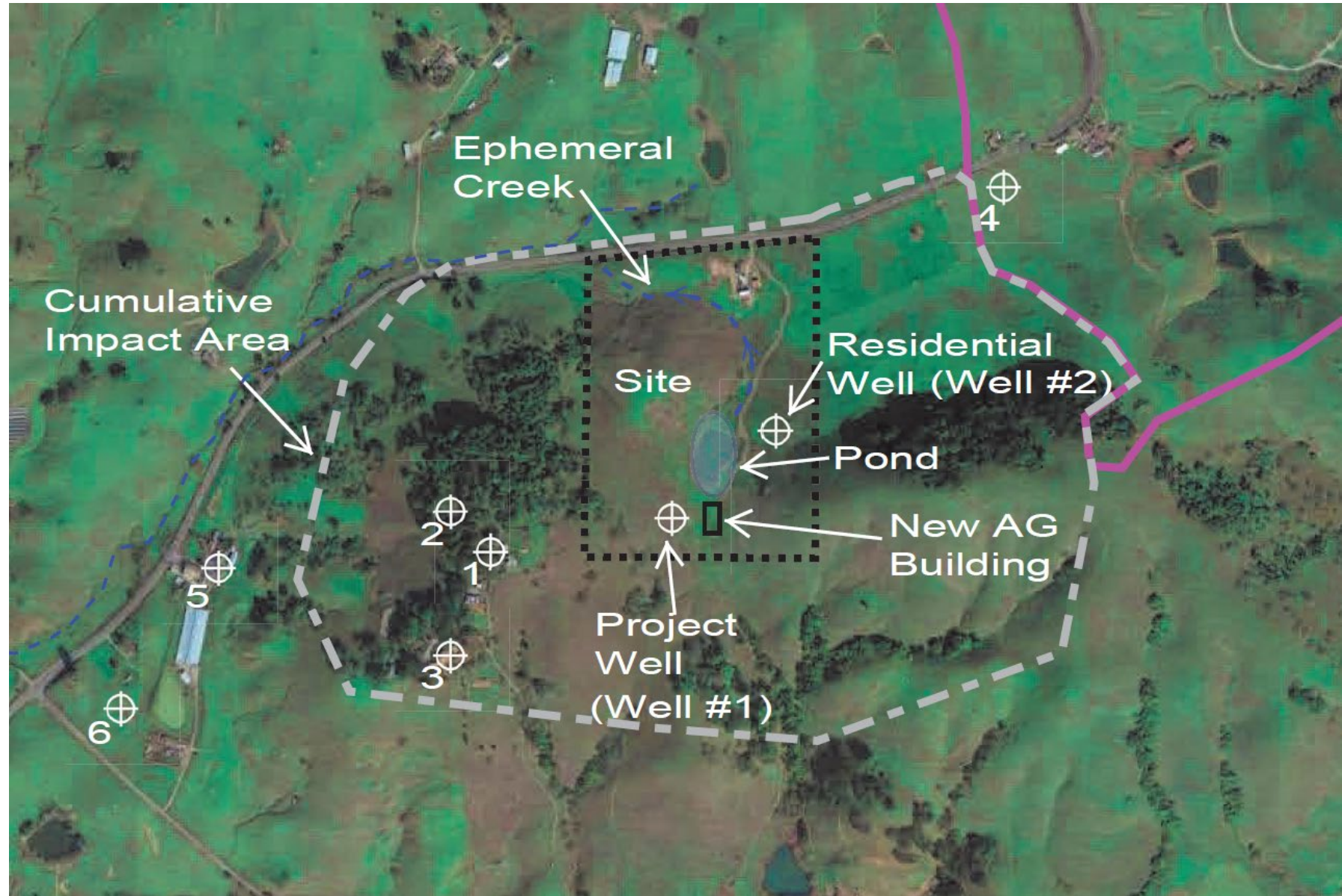
## Total Well #1 & #2

- 575,984 gallons (project water use) + 166,380 gallons/year (additional Site water use) = **742,364 gallons year or 2.28 acre-feet/year = Total Site Water Use**





# Water Use





# AG Land Dedication

Land Use	Existing or Proposed	Contract Use Category	Approximate Acreage
Sheep Grazing, 76 head	Proposed	Ag Production	32.08
Fenced grazing pasture	Existing	Ag Production	2.42
Lavender Crop	Proposed	Ag Production	8.42
Olive Trees	Proposed	Ag Production	5.88
Agricultural Barn, Corrals	Existing	Ag Accessory	0.10
Primary Dwelling (future ag employee dwelling), Landscaping, Driveway	Existing	Compatible Use	0.15
Future Primary Dwelling, associated uses	Proposed	Compatible Use	0.25
Processing Barn, Landscaping, Gravel Parking Area	Existing	Compatible Use	1.5
Unimproved Event Parking	Proposed	Compatible Use	0.5
Secondary Access Road, Bridge	Proposed	Undesignated	1.5
Access Road	Existing	Undesignated	0.5
Pond, riparian and forested areas	Existing	Undesignated	3.46
Totals			
Total Ag Production Uses			48.8
Total Ag Accessory Uses			0.10
Total Compatible Uses			2.4
Total Undesignated Uses			5.46





# Petaluma Dairy Belt Area Plan

- The primary priority shall be to preserve and enhance the agricultural resources and protect the agricultural industry found in this study area;
- Preserve the area's scenic beauty;
- Accommodate a variety of rural life styles;
- Encourage the development of an adequate transportation network which will accommodate proposed development and projected travel needs, and which will facilitate movement of agricultural products to the market place.







# LEA Zoning Development Standards

Standard	Ordinance	Existing Condition	Proposed Project
Lot Area	1.5 acres	56.76 acres	No change
Land Use	Land Extensive Agriculture (LEA)	Residential, agricultural uses	Agricultural Processing, Farm Retail, Agricultural Promotional Events
Residential Density	60 acres per dwelling unit	One dwelling unit	Potential for one future primary dwelling and conversion of existing dwelling to agricultural housing.
Front Setback	55' Street Centerline; 30' Front Property Line	All structures over 55' Street Centerline and over 30' from Front Property line	No Change
Side Setback	10'	All structures over 10' from interior sides	No Change
Rear Setback	20'	All structures over 20' from rear setback	No Change
Height	35' non-agricultural structures; 50' agricultural structures	All structures under 35' in height	No Change
Lot Coverage %	85,000 sq ft or 5% whichever is greater	62,290.8 square feet, or 2.86%	No Change
Parking Spaces	<p>Farm Retail: 1 space per 200 sq ft of sales area</p> <p>Small Scale Agricultural Processing: No specific requirement; standard condition is 1 space per employee.</p> <p>Events: No specific requirement; standard condition is 1 space per 2.5 guests; and one space per employee</p>	Unmarked gravel parking lot accommodating 10+ vehicles	<p>10 paved parking spaces, 150 unimproved parking spaces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farm Retail - 3 spaces</li> <li>Ag Processing – 4 spaces</li> <li>Events – 107 spaces needed (80 guest parking spaces and 27 employee parking spaces needed for largest event)</li> </ul>





# General Plan Consistency

**Policies AR-4a** - site devoted to agriculture production, processing, related support uses and visitor serving uses

**Policy AR-1a** – encourages promotional and marketing activities for County grown and processed products

**Policies AR-6a, AR-6d** – only processes and sells products grown in Sonoma County and visitor serving uses are secondary and incidental

**Policies AR-6f, AR-5g** - would not constitute detrimental concentration of visitor serving uses





# Zoning Code Consistency

- **Sec 26-18-140, 26-88-215** - allows for farm retail with a Zoning Permit and adherence to applicable standards.
- **Sec 26-18-040, 26-88-210** - allows for Small Scale Ag Processing with a Zoning Permit and adherence to applicable standards.
- **Sec 26-06-030(C), 26-18-260** – allows director determination that the proposed use is equivalent to a conditionally permitted use, this proposed use is being treated akin to Winery Events.
- LEA Development Standards, ADU Exclusion Zone, Oak Woodland, Scenic Corridor, and Valley Oak Habitat





# Williamson Act Consistency

- 40- Acre Minimum Parcel Size for a Non-Prime (Type II) Land Conservation Contract
- 50% of parcel devoted to qualifying agricultural uses
- Meet Minimum Income Requirements of \$2,000 gross total Income Per farm operation and \$2.50 gross income per acre of production.







# Forecasted Annual Agricultural Production

Product	Unit	Farm Annual
<b>Lavender:</b>		
Oil (English)	5 ml	5,670
Oil (Intermedia)	5 ml	47,250
Hydrosol	4 Oz	6,400
Sachets	.5 LB	1,250
Bundles	Each	15,000
Bath salts	32 Oz Jar	5,000
<b>Honey</b>	8 Oz	200
<b>Villa Vanto Signature Scent</b>	1 Oz	400
<b>Olive Oil Grown &amp; distilled onsite:</b>		
- Rosemary olive oil	16.9 Oz	11,361
- Sweet basil olive oil	16.9 Oz	11,361
<b>Organic Grass Fed Lamb Meat</b>	1 LB	3,000





# Landscaping Plans

## PLANT LIST

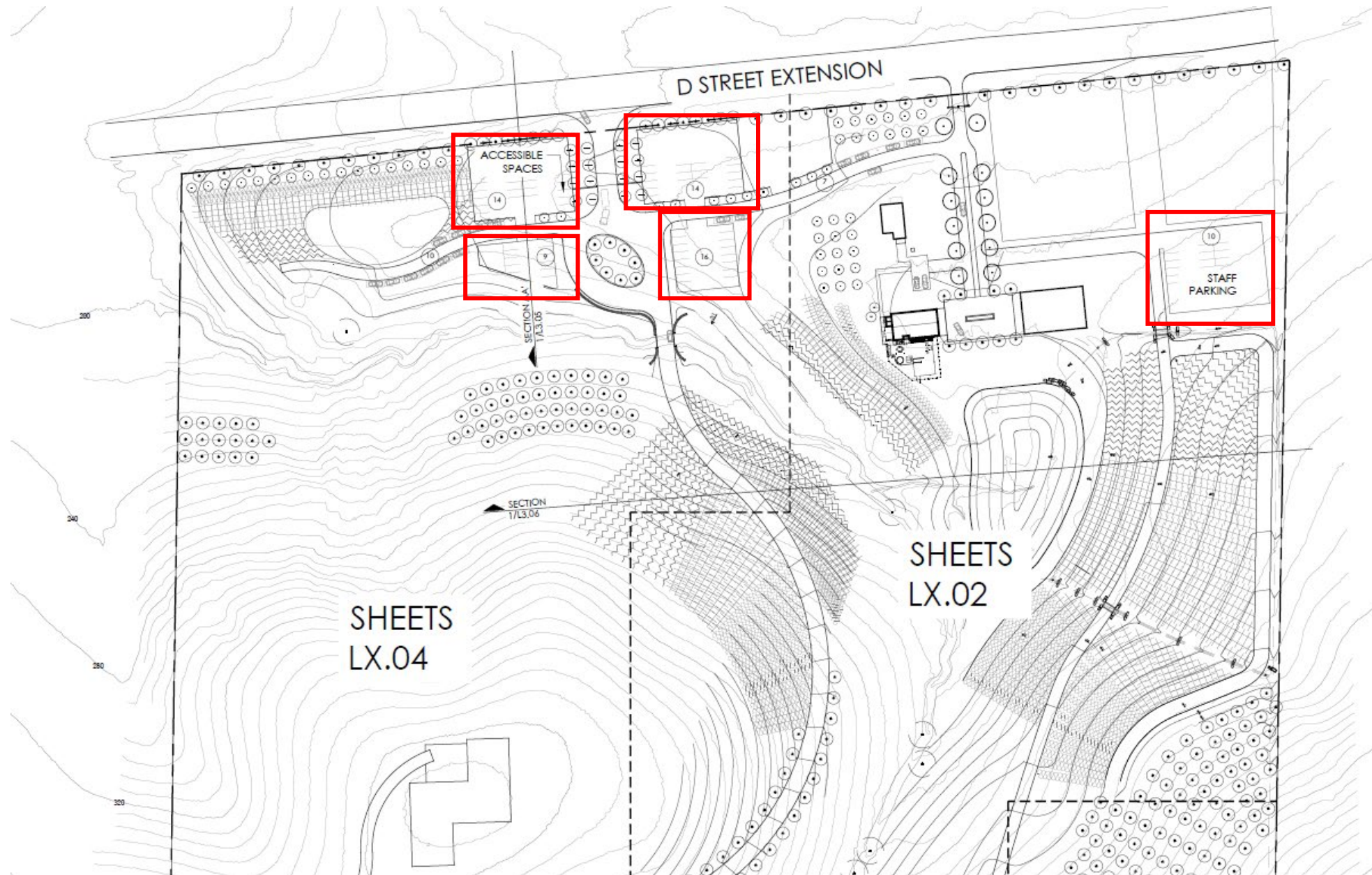
	SYMBOL	COUNT	COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	SIZE & REMARKS
TREES					
		318	Olive Tree	<i>Olea europaea</i>	10' ht.
		15	Coastal Live Oak	<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>	12' ht
		6	Pacific Madrone	<i>Arbutus menziesii</i>	11' ht.
			Fruit Orchard		
SHRUBS / PERENNIALS					
		28	Victoria California Lilac	<i>Ceanothus thyrsiflorus</i> 'Victoria'	5 gal.
			Lavandula x intermedia 'Grosso'		1 gal.
			Lavandula angustifolia 'Folgate'		1 gal.
			Lavandula x intermedia 'Super'		1 gal.
			Lavandula x intermedia 'White Grosso'		1 gal.
			Herb garden and seasonal crop		
			Edible and Fragrance Flowering		
GROUND COVER, GRASSES AND VINES					
			Micro Clover		
		Seed Mix 1	California Meadow Barley ( <i>Stipa pulchra</i> )- 15% Trifolium willdenovii (Tomcat Clover)- 25% Common Yarrow ( <i>Achillea millefolium</i> )- 10% California Poppy ( <i>Eschscholzia californica</i> )- 10% Acmispon heermannii (Woolly Lotus)- 10% Festuca idahoensis (Idaho Fescue)- 15% Stipa pulchra (Purple Needle Grass)- 15%		Hydroseed







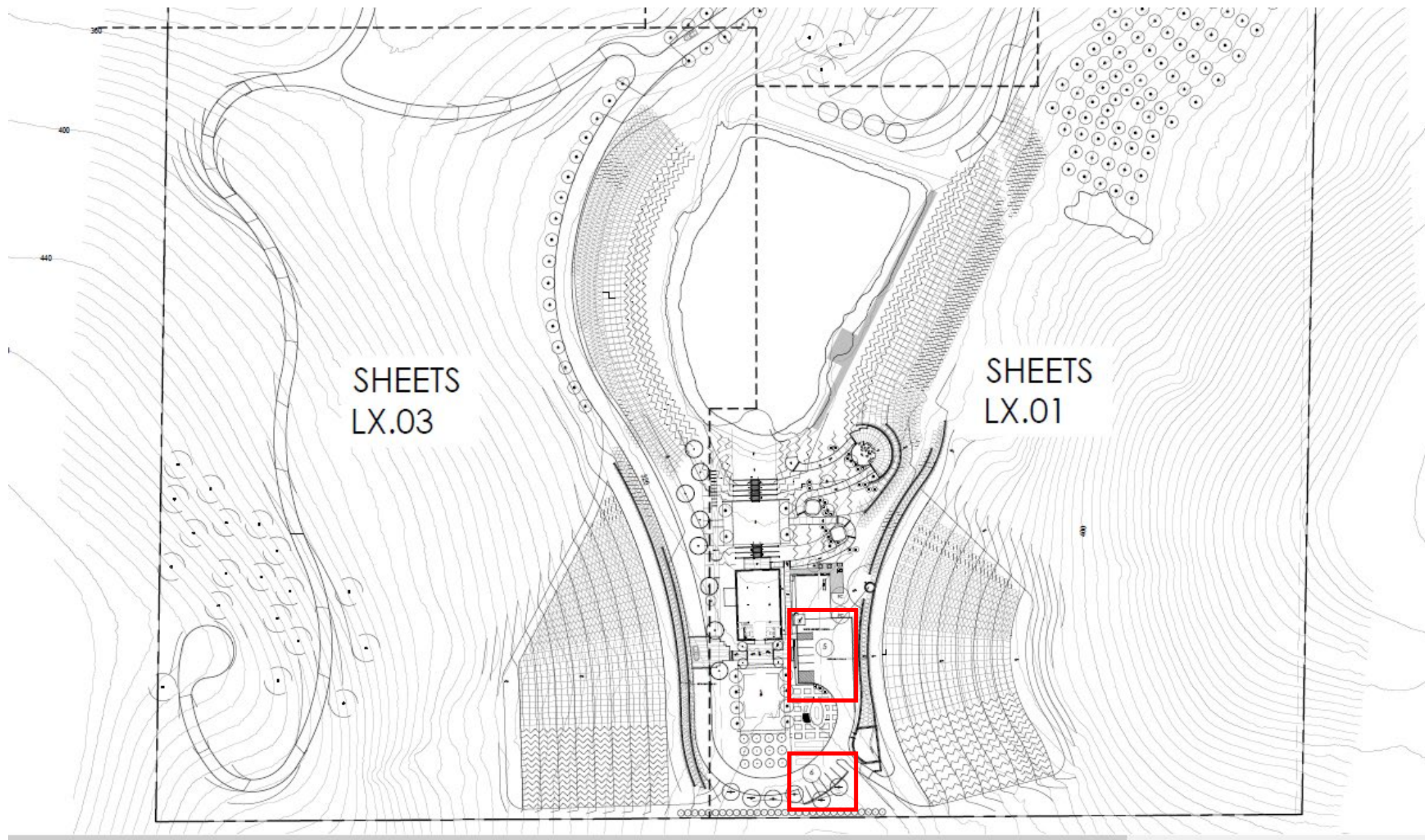
# Revised Parking Plan





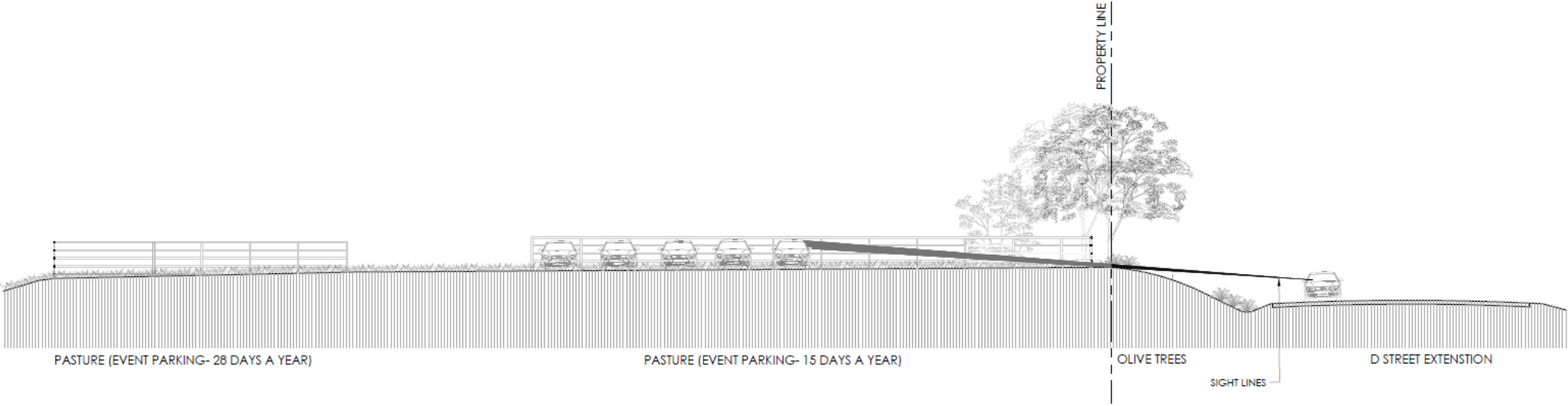


# Revised Parking Plan





# Parking Sight Lines



1 SECTION  
SCALE: 1"= 10'-0"

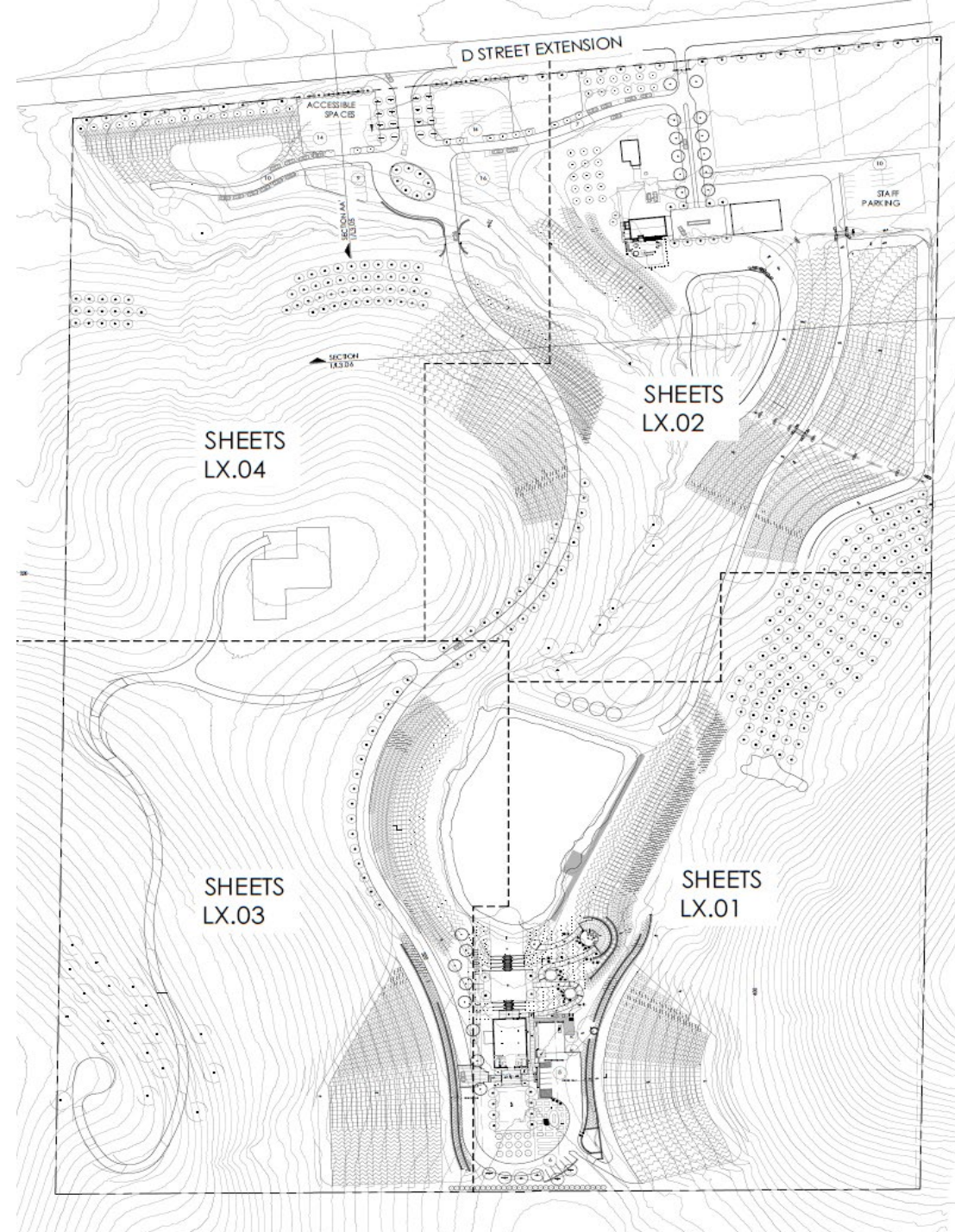






## PLANT LIST

	SYMBOL	COUNT	COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	SIZE & REMARKS
TREES					
	⊙	318	Olive Tree	<i>Olea europaea</i>	10' ht.
	•	15	Coastal Live Oak	<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>	12' ht
	+	6	Pacific Madrone	<i>Arbutus menziesii</i>	11' ht.
	⊙ — ⊙		Fruit Orchard		
SHRUBS / PERENNIALS					
	⊙	28	Victoria California Lilac	<i>Ceanothus thyrsiflorus</i> 'Victoria'	5 gal.
	~~~~~		<i>Lavandula x intermedia</i> 'Grosso'		1 gal.
	+++++		<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i> 'Folgate'		1 gal.
	~~~~~		<i>Lavandula x intermedia</i> 'Super'		1 gal.
	.....		<i>Lavandula x intermedia</i> 'White Grosso'		1 gal.
			Herb garden and seasonal crop		
			Edible and Fragrance Flowering		
GROUND COVER, GRASSES AND VINES					
	•••••		Micro Clover		
	•••••	Seed Mix 1	California Meadow Barley ( <i>Stipa pulchra</i> )- 15% Trifolium willdenovii (Tomcat Clover)- 25% Common Yarrow ( <i>Achillea millefolium</i> )- 10% California Poppy ( <i>Eschscholzia californica</i> )- 10% Acmispon heermannii (Woolly Lotus)- 10% Festuca idahoensis (Idaho Fescue)- 15% Stipa pulchra (Purple Needle Grass)- 15%		Hydroseed





Proposed Secondary Access

Proposed Gravel Parking

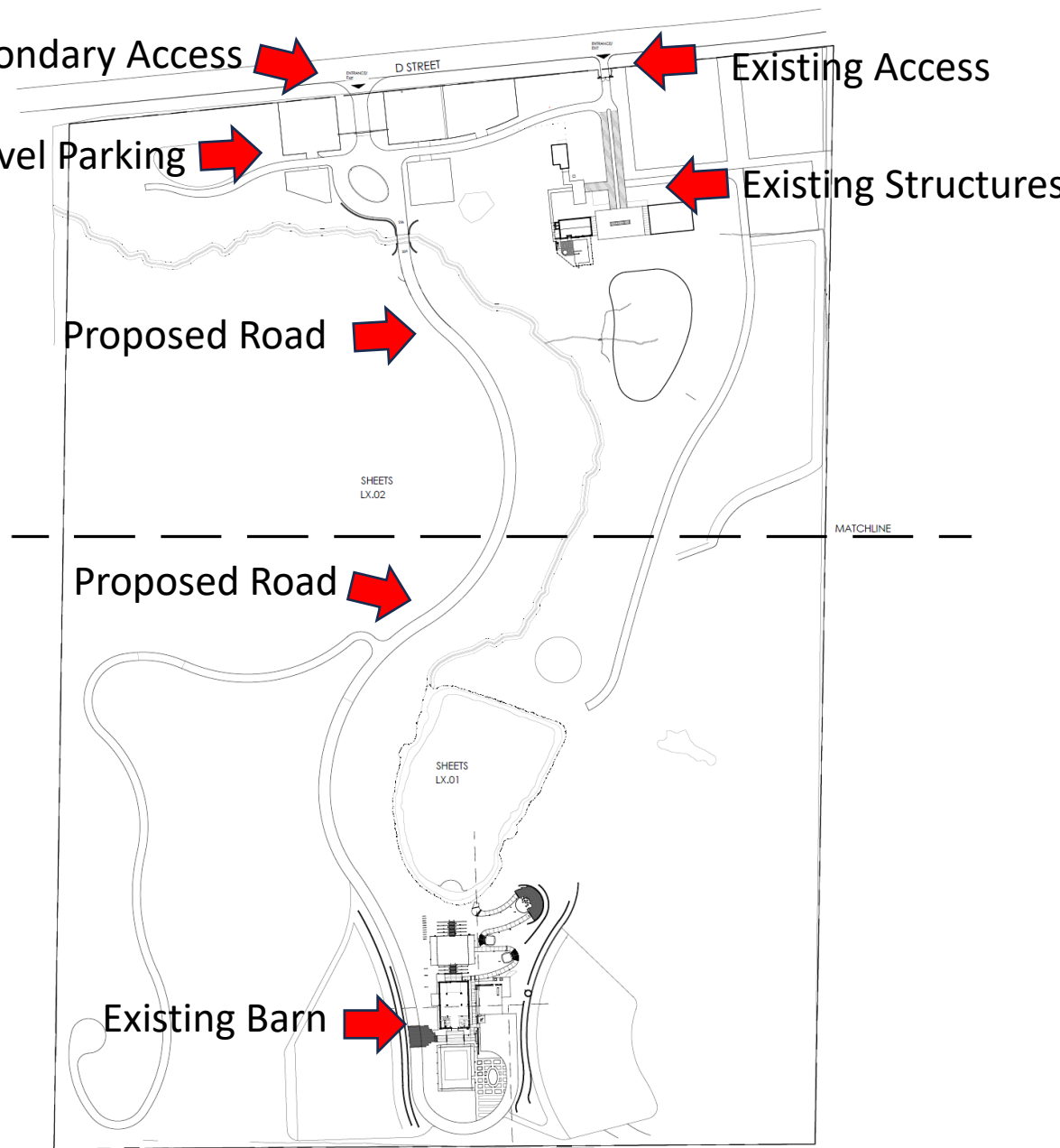
Proposed Road

Proposed Road

Existing Barn

Existing Access

Existing Structures





# Public Comment

- Comments of Opposition: Granting the use permit, illegal conversion of onsite structures, existing neighborhood compatibility issues, Use Permit compliance monitoring, Williamson Act consistency issues, incompatibility with LEA Land Use, and incompatibility with LEA Zoning, agricultural viability, parking and fire risks, nature and frequency of events, noise pollution, environmental impact of access road.
- Comments of Support: Innovative agricultural practice, identifying new methods of land stewardship, producing an alternative to grapes and wine production, and maintaining Sonoma County as an agricultural center.

