



Legislation Text

File #: 20-453, Version: 1

STAFF REPORT

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Scott DeLeon, Interim Community Development Director
Tocarra Thomas, Deputy Community Development Director
Mark Roberts, Principal Planner
Prepared by: Victor Fernandez, Assistant Planner

DATE: April 23, 2020

SUBJECT: Benmore South LLC
Major Use Permit Application, UP 19-28; Commercial Cannabis Cultivation; Early Activation, EA 19-57 and Categorical Exemption, CE 19-75. APNs: 007-001-30, 007-001-31, 007-001-39, 007-002-10.

Supervisor District 4

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Vicinity Map
2. Existing and Proposed Plans
3. Property Management Plan
4. Agency Comments
5. Proposed Conditions of Approval

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The applicant is requesting approval of a Major Use Permit for the Commercial Cannabis Cultivation (A-Type 3 Outdoor License), which includes the planting, growing, harvesting, drying, curing, grading, trimming, and/or any combination of those activities, including processing. The proposed use will occur within an existing disturb area once used for a vineyard. An A - Type 3 license allows up to 43,560 square feet of Cannabis Canopy which is defined as the designated area(s) at a licensed premises, except nurseries, that will contain mature plants at any point in time.

The applicant proposes the Collocation of Permits and Clustering, which is defined as Multiple Cultivation permits allowed on a single parcel provided that each permit meets the minimum acreage requirement and all other development standards. Clustering a cultivation site across multiple contiguous parcels may be permitted when all of the following criteria are met (Article 27, Section 27.11, subsection (at)):

1. All parcels must qualify for a commercial cannabis cultivation permit independently,
2. Title interest on all parcels shall be held under the same identical ownership.
3. All required cultivation setbacks shall be maintained from exterior property lines and the cultivation site may be permitted to cross contiguous property lines,
4. A deed of restriction prohibiting commercial cannabis cultivation shall be recorded on each parcel where density has been transferred.

The proposed project consists of combining the acreage of parcels: 007-001-30, 007-001-31, 007-001-39 and 007-002-10 which totals approximately 313 acres. However, cultivation will take place on parcels 007-001-31 and 007-001-39.

Benmore Valley Ranch is accessed by a private gravel road, Benmore Valley Road, which spans to approximately 2.2 miles from State Highway 175 to the Ranch entrance.

The cannabis cultivation would take place within a fenced in area approximately 21.64 acres (942,638.4 square feet)

acres in size, with the proposed canopy area of 15 acres (653,400 square feet). The applicant proposes the following:

- Cannabis cultivation to be in-ground using existing soil with mixed amendments.
- Twenty (20) 2,000 square foot cold frame greenhouses assembled on grade (will be used for immature plants and curing of harvested plants).
- Mixing tanks (plastic totes, 250 gallon) for making compost tea (liquid soil amendment or fertilizers)
- Waterproof storage shed/Conex container or similar for storage of chemicals and hand tools.
- Electricity will be supplied by the existing PG&E service.
- Portable restrooms with hand washing stations, and trash enclosures within fenced cultivation area.

The fence would be approximately six (6) feet height, and constructed with heavy gaged wire with gate access. There would be a minimum of two (2) security cameras (solar powered) at opposite ends of the fence to ensure the Cannabis Cultivation Area would be completely monitored 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The proposed security system is able to be accessed remotely.

According to the applicant there would be approximately a minimum of eight (8) employees and up to 24 employees at peak shift (*the number of employees and/or shifts may vary depending on time of year, crop production/amount of work*). The hours of operation would be Monday through Saturday from 9:00AM to 7:00PM and Sunday from 12:00pm to 5:00pm. There would be approximately 1-2 deliveries and/or one 1-2 pickups per day (*the numbers of delivers/pickups may vary depending on time of year, materials needed, etc.*). According to the applicant there is approximately 24 parking spaces proposed. The parking spaces are located adjacent and/or in front of the Cannabis Cultivation Area.

The project is using an existing irrigation system (previously used for a vineyard) which uses water from the South Lake Reservoir located on the property. The water is gravity feed from the lake, to storage tanks (5,000 to 10,000 gallon tanks) and then pumped to the site using a horsepower electric pumps and distributed through existing underground irrigation tubing.

On January 10th, 2020, the applicant submitted documentation to the Community Development Department requesting that Major Use Permits (UP 19-02; UP 19-03; UP 19-04) be withdrawn and consolidated with Major Use Permit (UP 19-28).

On February 19, 2020 the applicant was issued Early Activation, **EA 19-57** of the use for Commercial Cannabis Cultivation.

Staff Recommends approval of Major Use Permit, **UP 19-28**.

Sample Motions:

Categorical Exemption

I move that the Planning Commission find that the **Major Use Permit (UP 19-28)** applied for by **Benmore South LLC** on property located at **3621, 3561, 3470 and 3680 Benmore Valley Road, Lakeport**, further described as **APNs: 007-001-30, 007-001-31, 007-001-39 and 007-002-10** is exempt from CEQA because it falls within Categorical Exemption Class 4 (15304), based on the findings set forth in Staff Report dated **April 23, 2020**.

Major Use Permit (UP 19-28)

I move that the Planning Commission find that the **Major Use Permit (UP 19-28)** applied for by **Benmore South LLC** on property located at **3621, 3561, 3470 and 3680 Benmore Valley Road, Lakeport**, further described as **APNs: 007-001-30, 007-001-31, 007-001-39 and 007-002-10** does meet the requirements of Section 51.4 and Article 27, Section 1 [i,ii (g),i(ii)] of the Lake County Zoning Ordinance and the Major Use Permit be granted subject to the conditions and with the findings listed in the staff report dated **April 23, 2020**.

NOTE: *The applicant or any interested person is reminded that the Zoning Ordinance provides for a seven (7) calendar day appeal period. If there is a disagreement with the Planning Commission, an appeal to the Board of Supervisors may be filed. The appropriate forms and applicable fee must be submitted prior to 5:00 p.m. on or before the seventh calendar day following the Commission's final determination*