

# **EXHIBIT 7**

## **General Plan Policy Consistency Analysis for Board Screening**

## EXHIBIT 7 – GENERAL PLAN POLICY CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS FOR BOARD SCREENING, CASE NO. PL23-0014

The General Plan Amendment Screening Guidelines requires analysis that the proposed change, approving such screening requests for further processing has the potential for conformity with all applicable policies of the General Plan. Staff has selected 12 General Plan *Goals, Policies* for evaluation which are presented below.

### (1) Agricultural Policy AG-1.2:

*“The County shall ensure that discretionary development located on land designated as Agricultural on the General Plan Land Use Diagram and identified as Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance on the State’s Important Farmland Inventory is planned and designed to remove as little land as possible from potential agricultural production and to minimize impacts on topsoil.”*

Staff Analysis of Item (1): The screening requests consists of the redesignation from Agricultural to Open Space and Rezoning from AE-40 ac to OS-40 ac for the identified 10.57 acres and the proposed text amendment. The proposed zoning ordinance text amendment would not specifically allow conversion of farmland. The reclassification from Agricultural to Open Space does have the potential to implicate Policy AG-1.2 due to the after-the-fact approval of the site improvements which removed classified agricultural soils. The total impacts have been estimated to be 10.57 acres of unpermitted removal of agricultural soils. All subsequent projects resulting from the proposed amendment will remain subject to Agricultural Policy AG-1.2 which requires that development be designed to remove as little land as possible from potential agricultural production.

Subsequent projects will be reviewed in conformance with the policies, programs and procedures of the Resource Management Agency Planning Division and all projects proposing conversions of classified farmland will be subject to mitigation requirements and consistency determination. Subsequent action by the applicant would permit a permanent open storage use (Lumber Storage) on ten acres of land designated presently that, if not unlawfully paved, may still be classified as Farmland of Statewide Importance.<sup>1</sup> The area in question has been reclassified multiple times based upon review of several years of mapping data. According to the 1970 Soil Survey (prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service [now the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)]), soils were identified as consisting of Salinas Clay Loam, Sorrento Silty Clay Loam, and Pico Sandy Loam. These three soil types have farmland “Capability Unit” designations of I-1 and IIe-1, which are

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<sup>1</sup> The soil underlying the paved portion of the Hagle property is Sorrento silty clay loam and is comprised of gently sloping soil of the alluvial fans. It has about 60 inches of effective rooting depth and is often used for citrus, field crops and walnuts. It is described as good to very good agricultural soil (Soil Survey, Ventura County, United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, 1970). Based upon the analysis contained in this report, the Hagle property was designated “Farmland of Statewide Importance”. Subsequent to Hagle’s unlawful paving of the property between 1992 and 2005, the Department of Conservation reclassified the land as “developed”. This classification recognizes that the land is no longer available for agriculture, but does not consider whether the land’s alteration was lawfully implemented.

considered to be the most desirable soils (ranked I and II on a scale of I to VIII) for farming due to minimal limitations created by the soil. The Capability Unit I-1 soils (NRCS classification) under the unpermitted fill and pavement extend northward to the agricultural fields across Somis Road. These soils are designated as Prime on the Important Farmlands Inventory (IFI) map. The Capability Unit IIe-1 soils under and adjacent to the unpermitted fill and pavement are designated as Statewide on the 1984 IFI map (this is the earliest available IFI map). Therefore, the unpermitted pavement was placed on Prime and Statewide designated soils. In accordance with General Plan Program AG-O and the Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines (ISAGs), the applicant will be subject to mitigation requirements due to the loss of more than 5 acres of classified Prime/Statewide Important Farmland and will be subject of the establishment of an offsite conservation easement of equal quality at a 1:1 ratio (acres preserved: acres converted).

Approximately 28.61 acres of the subject property (APN: 163-0-010-795) will remain in the Agricultural land use designation. This remaining area contains soils classified as Local Importance and Other Land as designated on the current 2020 Important Farmland Map. The subsequent permit request will be subject to California Environmental Quality Act and General Plan Program AG-O and will require appropriate mitigation for loss of farmland. The proposed text amendment is limited to the Open Space zoning and would “remove as little land as possible from potential agricultural production” and enforcement of significance thresholds within the policies of Ventura County General Plan would minimize “impacts on agricultural topsoil.” Thus, the proposed text amendment and proposed redesignation could be found consistent with the above-described General Plan Farmland Policy AG-1.2.

**(2) Land Use Goal LU-9, Open Space Land use Policy Direction:**

*“To maintain an Open Space designation that:*

- Preserves for the benefit of all county residents the continued wise use of the county's renewable and nonrenewable resources by limiting the encroachment into such areas of uses which would unduly and prematurely hamper or preclude the use or appreciation of such resources;*
- Acknowledges the presence of certain hazardous features which urban development should avoid for public health and safety reasons, as well as for the possible loss of public improvements in these areas and the attendant financial costs to the public;*
- Retains open space lands in a non-urbanized state so as to preserve the maximum number of future land use options;*
- Retains open space lands for outdoor recreational activities, parks, trails and for scenic lands;*
- Defines urban areas by providing contrasting but complementary areas which should be left non-urbanized;*
- Recognizes the intrinsic value of open space lands and not regard such lands as "areas waiting for urbanization”;*

- *Encourages Land Conservation Act (LCA) contracts on farming and grazing and open space lands; and*
- *Supports the productive agricultural activities of Open Space designated lands that are commonly used for agriculture, grazing, and ranching and that are important to the overall economy of Ventura County.*

**(3) Land Use Policy LU-9.2 Preservation of Areas for Public Health and Safety:**

*“The County shall designate areas of land or water which are set aside for public health and safety as Open Space, thereby safeguarding humans and property from certain natural hazards, including, but not limited to, areas which require special management or regulation because of hazardous or special conditions such as earthquake fault zones, unstable soil areas, flood plains, watersheds, areas presenting high fire risks, areas required for the protection of water quality and water reservoirs, and areas required for the protection and enhancement of air quality.”*

**(4) Land Use Policy LU-9.3 Minimal Parcel Size for the Open Space Land Use Designation:**

*“The County shall ensure that the smallest minimum parcel size consistent with the Open Space land use category is 10 acres. The County may require larger minimum parcel sizes based on the zone classification.”*

**(5) Land Use Policy LU-9.4 Minimal Parcel Size for the Open Space Contiguous with Agricultural:**

*“The County shall require Open Space properties contiguous with Agricultural designated land to have a minimal parcel size of 20 acres.”*

**(6) Circulation Transportation and Mobility Policy CTM-4.1 Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT):**

- *The County shall work with Caltrans and Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) to reduce VMT by:*
- *Facilitating the efficient use of existing transportation facilities;*
- *Striving to provide viable modal choices that make driving alone an option rather than a necessity,*
- *Supporting variable work schedules to reduce peak period VMT, and*
- *Providing more direct routes for pedestrians and bicyclists.*

**(7) Circulation Transportation and Mobility Policy CTM-4.2 Alternative Transportation:**

*The County shall encourage bicycling, walking, public transportation, and other forms of alternative transportation to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), traffic congestion, and greenhouse gas emissions.*

**(8) Circulation Transportation and Mobility Policy CTM-6.1 Routine Use of Alternative Transportation Options:**

*The County shall support the integration of emerging technologies that increase the routine use of alternative transportation options to decrease single-passenger automobile travel.*

**(9) Hazards and Safety Policy HAZ-10.6 Transportation Control Measures Programs:**

*The County shall continue to work with the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (VCAPCD) and Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) to develop and implement Transportation Control Measures (TCM) programs consistent with the APCD's Air Quality Management Program (AQMP) to facilitate public transit and alternative transportation modes within the county.*

Staff Analysis of Items 2-9: Wholesale lumber yards, like the primary use presently operated by Hagle Lumber, are only permitted in the Limited Industrial (M2) zone with a Planning Director-approved Conditional Use Permit (NCZO Sec. 8105-5). The purpose of M2 zoning is "to provide suitable areas for the development of a broad range of industrial, and quasi-industrial activities of a light manufacturing, processing or fabrication nature, while providing appropriate safeguards for adjoining industrial sites, nearby nonindustrial properties and the surrounding community" (NCZO §8104-5.2). M2 zoning is consistent with the "Urban" or "Existing Community" General Plan land use designation. Such land use designations are utilized for commercial and industrial land uses and higher density residential development, which is planned for an urban center, or in the case of Existing Communities, are reflective of existing land uses in unincorporated areas which have developed with urban building intensity and urban land uses. The applicant does not propose any further expansion of the Existing/Urban or Industrial/M2.

The applicant is proposing the redesignation of 10.57 acres to Open Space/OS 40 AC. With respect to the compliance with the minimum lots size designation for Open Space/OS-40ac, the proposed land use redesignation would not represent a spot designation of area to Opens Space as the area is contiguous to 222.4 acres designated/zoned Open Space/OS-40 ac. Two APNs abut the project site with the Open Space designation (APN163-0-010-775; 10 Acres and APN 163-0-010-370: 48.48 acres). The subject property is an existing legal unit of land (approximately 42.23 acres in area) and the applicant proposes a split designation of 3.05 acres designated Industrial Existing Community (M2), 10.57 acres designated Open Space (OS-40 ac), and 28.61 acres designated Agricultural (AE-40 ac). No division of land is proposed by the applicant. Accordingly, the subject redesignation/rezone could be found consistent with the above identified policies.

The proposed amendment to the text of the Ordinance Code could also be found consistent with the policies of the Open Space zoning. The proposed text amendment would permit Lumber storage as permissible subject to approval of a CUP in the OS zone. The proposed land use will be in line with other open space/storage uses permissible in the OS classification under NCZO Section 8105-4 such as Firewood Operations, and Open Storage Use Related to a Use Requiring a PD Permit or CUP.

Under the specified circumstances, the proposed amendment would permit the storage of Lumber products when conducted in connection with a permitted lumber processing operation on contiguous M2 zone property subject to limitations included in the proposed text amendment for NCZO Section 8107-51.2 Limitations. The proposed text change could represent a reasonable continuation of open space compatible land uses subject to the development standards proposed by the applicant while recognizing the unique transportation opportunity of the adjacent rail line.

The unincorporated area of the County has limited areas designated and zoned for industrial use adjacent to an active regional rail network. Such areas are largely limited to Somis, Saticoy and Piru. Although a railroad is located adjacent to industrial land in Saticoy, this land is composed of small parcels that are already developed with multiple uses and would not be available for use as a wholesale lumber yard at the operational scale proposed by the applicant. The subject property benefits from this proximity to the rail network of receiving cargo deliveries from a Union Pacific Railroad spur located on site. Per the applicant's justification letter (see Exhibit 4), deliveries by railcar offset approximately 1,690 Metric Tons of CO2 equivalent for the year, supporting the County's Climate Action Plan, Air Quality Policies, Circulation Element and implementation of the Housing Element. The proposed continued use of the property for the storage of stock/product to support the principal lumber wholesale operation could ultimately further Ventura County policies which encourage the use of alternate transportation methods, and the reduction of Vehicle Miles Traveled and greenhouse gas emissions.

**(10) Land Use Policy LU-5.1 General Plan Land Use Amendments:**

*When reviewing proposed General Plan amendments to modify or change land use designations or the General Plan Land Use Diagram, the County shall consider if the proposal:*

*Staff Analysis of Item 10:*

- (a) Maintains consistency with the General Plan Vision, Guiding Principles, and relevant goals, and policies;*
- (b) Maintains consistency with the Guidelines for Orderly Development;*

Staff Analysis of Item (a) & (b): The proposed project advances the Vision and Guiding Principles of the Ventura County General Plan, in particular the language related to the commitment to collaboration with residents and businesses to ensure social and economic vitality. The requested changes further Guiding Principles related to Hazards and Safety as the proposed change could allow for readily available building materials enhancing our resilience for natural disaster recovery thereby mitigating impacts from wildland fires. The requested change also furthers the Economic Vitality and Climate Change and Resilience principles as the applicant has indicated that the use of the rail spur would allow for the reduction of greenhouse gases while fostering economic growth in the form supporting local construction trades.

The request could be found consistent with the Guidelines for Orderly Development which is analyzed further below. The request is located with an Area of Interest where no City Exists, the Las Posas subarea.

*(c) Minimizes the creation of a land use that is inconsistent with the policies, land uses, or development standards of surrounding parcels;*

Staff Analysis of Item (c): The staff has preliminary determined potential consistency with the new land use (Lumber Storage) in Open Space designation based in part on the reclassification of relatively small site (10.57 acres).

*(d) Enhances compatibility with existing or planned uses in the area;*

Staff Analysis of Item (d): The proposed redesignation could be found consistent with Agricultural uses occurring in the Community of Somis and Open Space uses occurring along the Arroyo Las Posas (Calleguas Creek). Staff contends that the proposed storage use, connected to an existing wholesale lumber yard, could be found consistent with the Open Space classification and would not introduce incompatible activities to areas which will remain Agricultural. The proposed change is further enhanced with the presence of the rail spur, which could reduce vehicle miles traveled via deliveries by rail line.

*(e) Addresses new physical, social, or economic factors that are relevant and were not present at the time of the General Plan adoption;*

Staff Analysis of Item (e): With respect to the factors necessitating the change, the applicant has provided their own justification for the proposed change. Of note, the applicant states that changes to building standards in the State, necessitate storage of fire rated lumber as well as economic changes warranting additional storage of stock.

*(f) Reduces the potential for undesired, growth-inducing precedent;*

Staff Analysis of Item (f): The change from Agricultural to Open Space would not result in undesirable growth inducing potential. The site is physically separated from the larger agricultural tracts by Arroyo Las Posas (Calleguas Creek) and the existing Industrial land uses. The proposed change would serve an existing land use with the limited development of an open storage use. Further, the proposed text amendment for the new land use and proposed development standards could reduce growth inducement such as rail spur siting requirements, the prioritization of delivery of stock by rail and an overall use limitation of 15 acres.

*(g) Demonstrates appropriate infrastructure and services are available, or amendment is conditioned on requirement to provide or appropriately fund needed infrastructure and services; and*

Staff Analysis of Item (g): Existing infrastructure and services such as the existing public roads utilities and an existing rail spur would be available to serve the proposed change.

*(h) Demonstrates acceptable effect on the fiscal health of the County.*

Staff Analysis of Item (h): As discussed above, the proposed project has no direct impact upon the fiscal health of the County. However, indirectly this land use would support the building industry of our local industries and housing production, specifically, including rebuilding from a natural disaster.

Staff also identified the following General Policies supportive of the proposed change:

**(11) Economic Vitality Policy EV-4.2 Green Economy:**

*The County shall support the development of industries and businesses that promote and enhance environmental sustainability, greenhouse gas reductions, decarbonization, climate change adaptation, resiliency, and renewable energy generation, storage, and transmission, including solar power, wind power, wave energy and other appropriate renewable sources. The County shall promote the efforts of existing businesses that meet green business criteria; job training in green building techniques and regenerative farming; and strive to build green technologies into and decarbonize existing government buildings and facilities.*

**(12) Economic Vitality Policy EV-4.3:**

*Sustainable Business Development: The County shall encourage the development and expansion of businesses that advance social equity, environmental quality, and economic sustainability, as well as capitalize on key industry strengths. Economic sustainability includes planning and preparation for disaster response and long-term resiliency of businesses and economic assets in the county.*

Staff Analysis of Items 11-12: As discussed above, the goal of the requested change is to ultimately permit the storage of additional stock (defined as lumber) for an existing wholesale lumber yard. The language of the text change would specifically limit storage to 15 acres, require the presence of a rail spur and the prioritization delivery by rail for stock. The applicant has supported their request with a written justification which shows a reduction of greenhouse gases for deliveries by rail. Staff also maintains that the request furthers the County's General Plan policies related to resiliency and economic vitality. The availability of more stock (raw and finished lumber goods) and materials supporting the construction trade ensures readiness for emergencies (i.e. wildland fires, earthquake) as residents and businesses would have local access to increased source for building materials if wider scale reconstruction is necessary. Additionally, tying the development of lumber storage to the presence of a rail spur and delivery by rail would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled, and thereby, could be found consistent with the policies related to sustainable building practices (i.e., the proposed request will consume less non-

renewable resources like fuel), promoting the green economy, and sustainable business development.