



Staff Report to the Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission

Application Number: **10-0030**

Applicant: Steven Graves and Associates
Owner: Lewis Nathan A & Debra A Trustees
APN: 049-121-23

Date: July 19, 2012
Agenda Item #: 6
Time: 1:30 p.m.

Project Description: Proposal to divide a 17.6 acre parcel into two parcels of 4.18 and 13.39 gross acres. Requires a Minor Land Division, a commercial agricultural viability determination, and a Riparian Exception to replace a culvert within a riparian corridor.

Location: Property located on the south side of Larkin Valley Road about 1.5 miles west of Buena Vista Drive (711 Larkin Valley Road).

Permits Required: Minor Land Division with a commercial agricultural viability determination.

Staff Recommendation:

- Acceptance of the attached Agricultural Viability Report prepared for application #10-0030.

Exhibits

- | | |
|--|---|
| A. Project plans | D. Map: Agricultural Resource Land within ¼ Mile of Parcel Boundaries |
| B. Assessor's, Location, Zoning, and General Plan maps | E. Map: General Plan Designations within ¼ Mile of Parcel Boundaries |
| C. Agricultural Viability Study, prepared by Steven Graves & Associates, dated August 2011 | F. Map: County Maintained Roads within ½ Mile of Parcel Boundaries |

Parcel Information

Parcel Size:	17.6 acres (as per project plans)
Existing Land Use - Parcel:	Residential
Existing Land Use - Surrounding:	Residential
Project Access:	Larkin Valley Road
Planning Area:	Aptos Hills
Land Use Designation:	AG & R-R (Agriculture & Rural Residential)
Zone District:	A (Agriculture)
Supervisory District:	2 nd District (District Supervisor: Pirie)

Within Coastal Zone: ___ Inside X Outside
Appealable to Calif. Coastal Comm. ___ Yes X No

Services Information

Inside Urban/Rural Services Line: ___ Yes X No
Water Supply: Private well
Sewage Disposal: Septic
Fire District: Cal Fire
Drainage District: None

Required Review by the Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission

The proposed project is to divide an existing 17.6 acre parcel into two parcels of 4.18 gross acres (Parcel A) and 13.39 gross acres (Parcel B). Parcel A would consist of the front portion of the parcel and would take access from Larkin Valley Road. Parcel A is currently developed with a single family dwelling and a detached garage. Parcel B would consist of the rear portion of the parcel and would take access from Big Tree Lane. Parcel B is currently vacant. With the deduction of the riparian corridor, vehicular rights of way, the areas within the FEMA designated 100-year flood zone, and areas of 50% slope, the resulting net developable acres per parcel is equal to 2.81 acres on Parcel A and 12.09 acres on Parcel B.

The County General Plan designates the front portion of the parcel as Agriculture (AG) and the rear portion of the parcel as Rural Residential (R-R). The parcel is not designated as a Type 1, Type 2, or Type 3 Agricultural Resource in the County General Plan. The entire parcel has an implementing zone district of Agriculture (A).

County Code Section 16.50.085 (Protection of noncommercial agricultural land) requires that divisions of land which are designated as Agriculture (AG) in the County General Plan, but which are not designated as Type 1, Type 2, or Type 3 commercial agricultural land, maintain a minimum parcel size of ten (10) to forty (40) acres. The Code provides an exception to this requirement to allow for parcels to be created within the 2.5 to twenty (20) acre range with confirmation from the Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission (APAC) that such land is not viable for a commercial agricultural use.

The proposal is to allow for two parcels to be created within the 2.5 to 20 (twenty) acre range, therefore, an agricultural viability determination is required by your Commission. Subsequent to an action by your Commission, an initial study will be prepared to analyze the environmental impacts of the land division and the Minor Land Division will be acted on by the Planning Commission.

Analysis and Discussion

The applicant submitted the attached Agricultural Viability Study (Exhibit C) to facilitate a Minor Land Division on APN 049-121-23. The viability study is required to address the proposed non-agricultural uses on the front portion of the property which is designated as Agriculture (AG) in the County General Plan (Exhibit B).

The viability study submitted by the applicant asserts that there are no known records of commercial agricultural use or activity on the portion of the property designated as AG in the County General Plan. Historical photos of the parcel dating back to 1948 show orchards on the upper portion of the parcel and show that the agricultural use ceased in the 1960's. However, the upper portion of the parcel is designated as Rural Residential (R-R) and is not subject to the County's agricultural viability determination requirements. Based on a review of aerial photos, it does not appear that there has been a historic agricultural use on the lower portion of the property with the AG designation.

The study concludes that the lower portion of the site is not suitable for a commercial agricultural use given that soils within the agriculturally designated area of the site are limited to soils which have a "severely limited" capability rating for cultivation, and that any flat, potentially farmable land is fragmented by a drainage swale and associated moderate steep slopes associated with the swale, which crosses the parcel.

Consistency with County Code Section 16.50.085

County Code Section 16.50.085 specifies that land divisions may be permitted to minimum parcel sizes in the range of 2.5 to twenty net developable acres unless the following conditions exist:

- The parcel is surrounded to the extent of fifty (50) percent or more by lands within ¼ mile of the subject property designated in the General Plan as Agricultural Resource (commercial agricultural land) and/or Mountain Residential.

There is only one parcel located within ¼ mile of the subject property which is designated as an Agricultural Resource in the County General Plan and there is no land designated as Mountain Residential within ¼ mile of the subject property. (See Exhibit's D and E.)

- All proposed building sites are not within ½ mile of a County maintained through road; and

Both building sites are located within ½ mile of Larkin Valley Road, which is a County maintained through road. (See Exhibit F.)

- Adequate buffering cannot be provided between any proposed non-agricultural use and adjacent commercial uses.

It appears that the closest commercial agricultural use is located over 1600 feet to the north east; therefore, no buffering is required.

Consistency with General Plan Policy 5.13.21

General Plan Policy 5.13.21 requires that the applicant provide an economic feasibility evaluation which contains an analysis of the gross revenue from agricultural products grown in the area for the last five years, an analysis of the operational expenses associated with agricultural products grown in the area for the last five years, and an identification of the geographic area used in the analysis.

The study provided by the applicant defines the project area as the Larkin Valley Corridor from Mar Monte Avenue to Buena Vista Drive. It appears that the only commercial agricultural activities in the area are located over 1600 feet north east of the subject parcel on a parcel which is the only parcel within ½ mile radius of the project site that is zoned as CA and designated as an Agricultural Resource in County General Plan. According to the aerial photos provided by the County's Geographic Information Services (GIS) system, it does not appear that commercial agricultural farming existed within the project area in 2007, and more recent aerial photos provided by Google Earth also do not reveal commercial agricultural uses on any of the parcels within the project area, with the exception of the above noted CA zoned parcel. It appears that the majority of the surrounding parcels are developed with single family dwellings and/or utilized as public or private horse keeping and equestrian facilities.

Given the lack of recent farming within the project area, the applicant was not able to provide gross revenue figures or an analysis of operational expenses for the last 5 years as required per the General Plan Policy 5.13.21.

Recommendation

- Staff recommends that your commission accept the attached Agricultural Viability Report, as prepared for application #10-0030.

Supplementary reports and information referred to in this report are on file and available for viewing at the Santa Cruz County Planning Department, and are hereby made a part of the administrative record for the proposed project.

The County Code and General Plan, as well as hearing agendas and additional information are available online at: www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us

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Report Reviewed By: Ken Hart
Principal Planner
Development Review

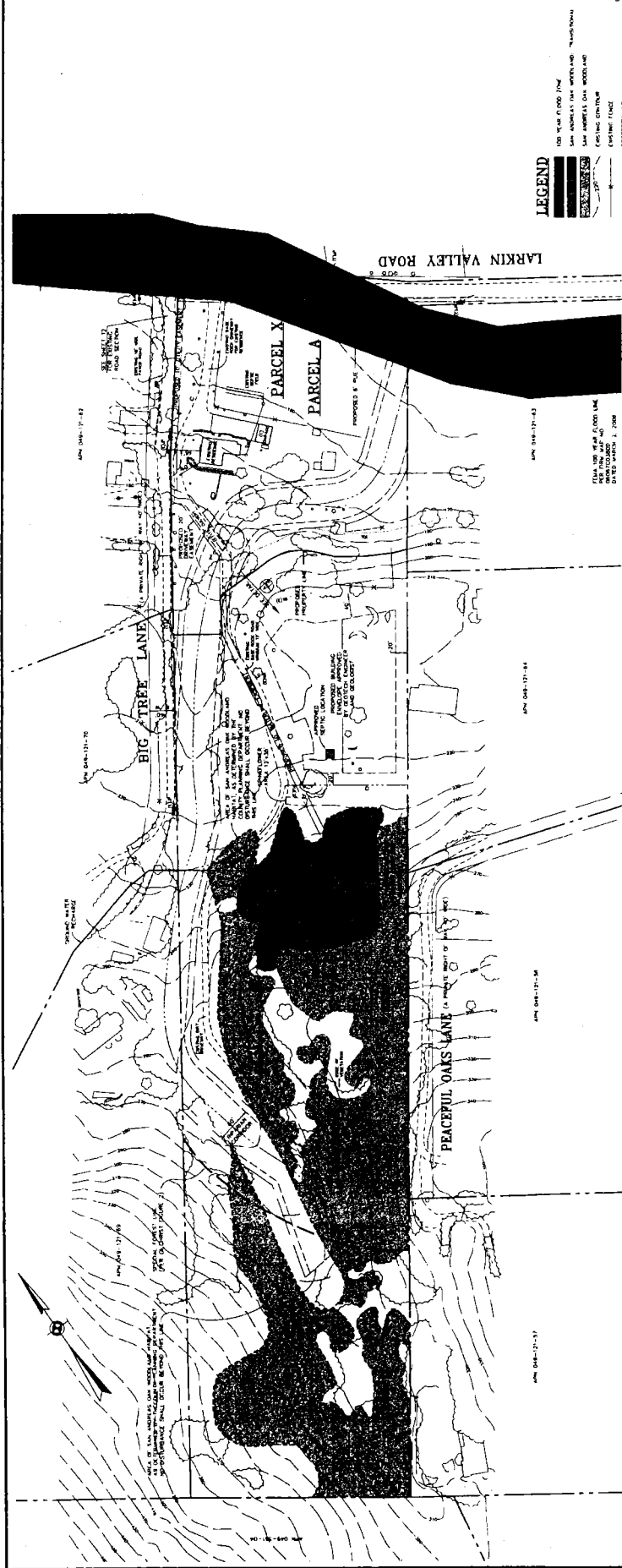
Please note: This approval shall expire on the same date as any subsequent approved discretionary permit(s). Failure to exercise the subsequent discretionary permit approval will void this approval unless there are special circumstances as determined by the Planning Director.

Approval Date: _____

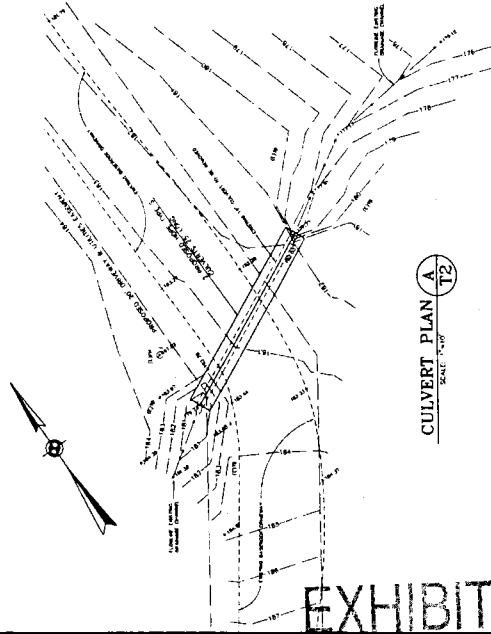
Effective Date: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Appeals: Any property owner, or other person aggrieved, or any other person whose interests are adversely affected by any act or determination of the Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission under the provisions of County Code Chapter 16.50, may appeal the act or determination to the Board of Supervisors in accordance with chapter 18.10 of the Santa Cruz County Code.



RESOURCES & CONSTRAINTS MAP



UTILITY NOTES

THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD CO. has announced that it will be offering 100,000 shares of common stock at \$10 per share. The offering is being made through the National City Bank of New York and the First National City Bank of New York. The shares will be available to the public on or about June 1, 1934. The company has a total capitalization of \$1,000,000,000 and a total assets of \$1,000,000,000. The company is a public utility and is engaged in the operation of a railroad system in the United States. The company has a long and successful record of operation and is a leading company in its industry. The offering of common stock is a part of the company's plan to raise additional capital for the expansion of its operations. The company expects that the offering will be successful and that it will be able to raise the full amount of the offering.

NET DEVELOPABLE CALCULATIONS

	ACRES	REPAIRS COMPLETED	ACRES OF REAT	QUALITY #/M BATCH/TON	100 W/ TREAT CLOSED ZONE	% OF OZONE	NET
PARTIAL A	4.18 ACRES	102 ACRES	0.10 ACRES	0.00 ACRES	0.43 ACRES	0.01 ACRES	2.8 ACRES
PARTIAL B	13.39 ACRES	102 ACRES	0.00 ACRES	0.00 ACRES	0.00 ACRES	0.00 ACRES	12.00 ACRES
PARTIAL C	1.71 ACRES	2.21 ACRES	0.10 ACRES	0.00 ACRES	0.43 ACRES	0.10 ACRES	14.00 ACRES
TOTAL	19.28 ACRES	221 ACRES	0.20 ACRES	0.00 ACRES	0.86 ACRES	0.11 ACRES	26.80 ACRES

FOR TAX PURPOSES ONLY

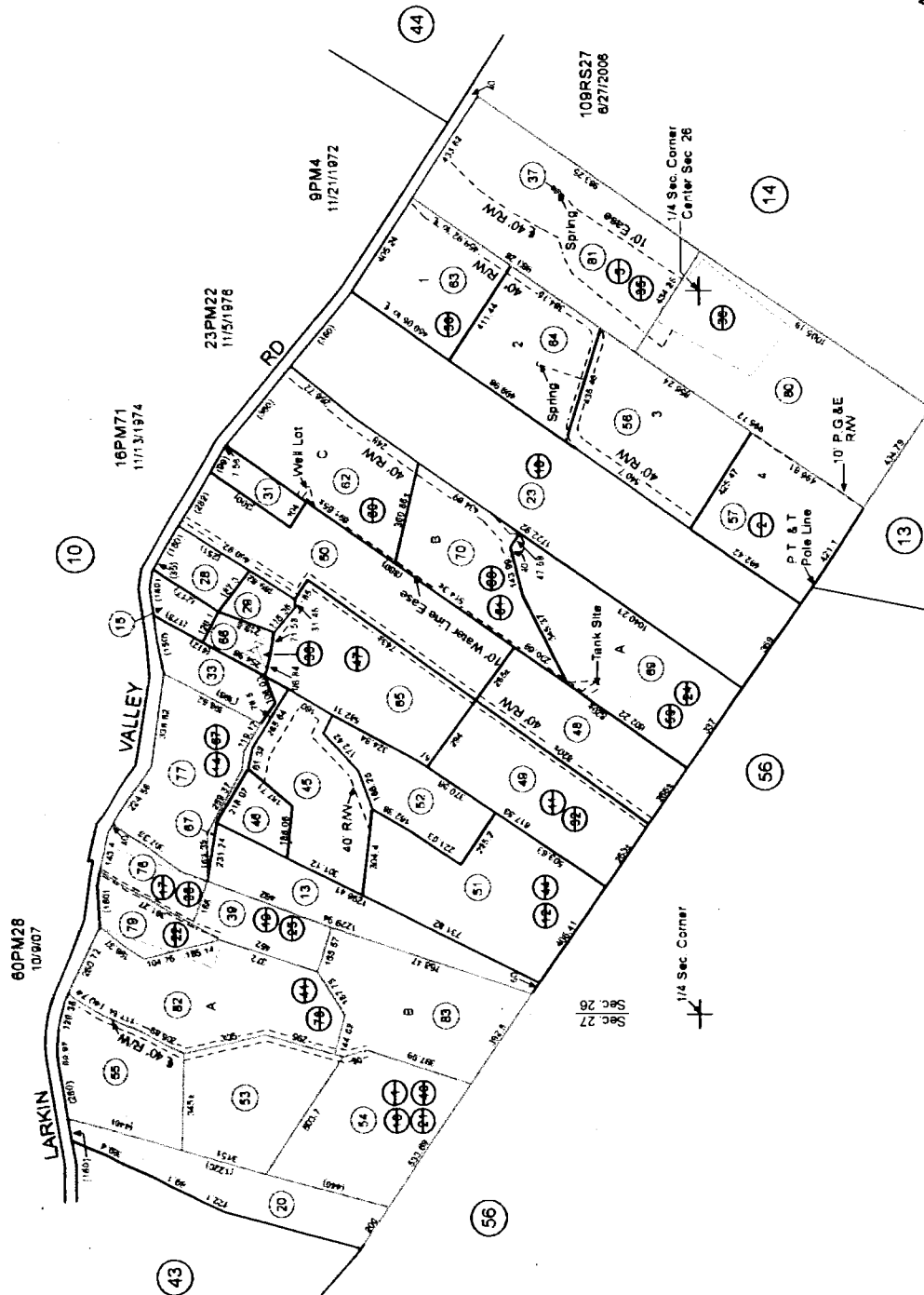
THE ASSessor MAKES NO GUARANTEE AS TO MAP ACCURACY FOR ANY LIABILITY FOR OTHER USER. NOT TO BE REPRODUCED. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. © COPYRIGHT SANTA CRUZ COUNTY ASSESSOR 2000

SAN ANDREAS RANCHO

W. 1/2 SEC. 26 & E. 1/2 SEC. 27, T.11S., R.1E., M.D.B. & M.

Tax Area Code
69-284

49-12



Note - Assessor's Parcel & Block Numbers Shown in Circles.

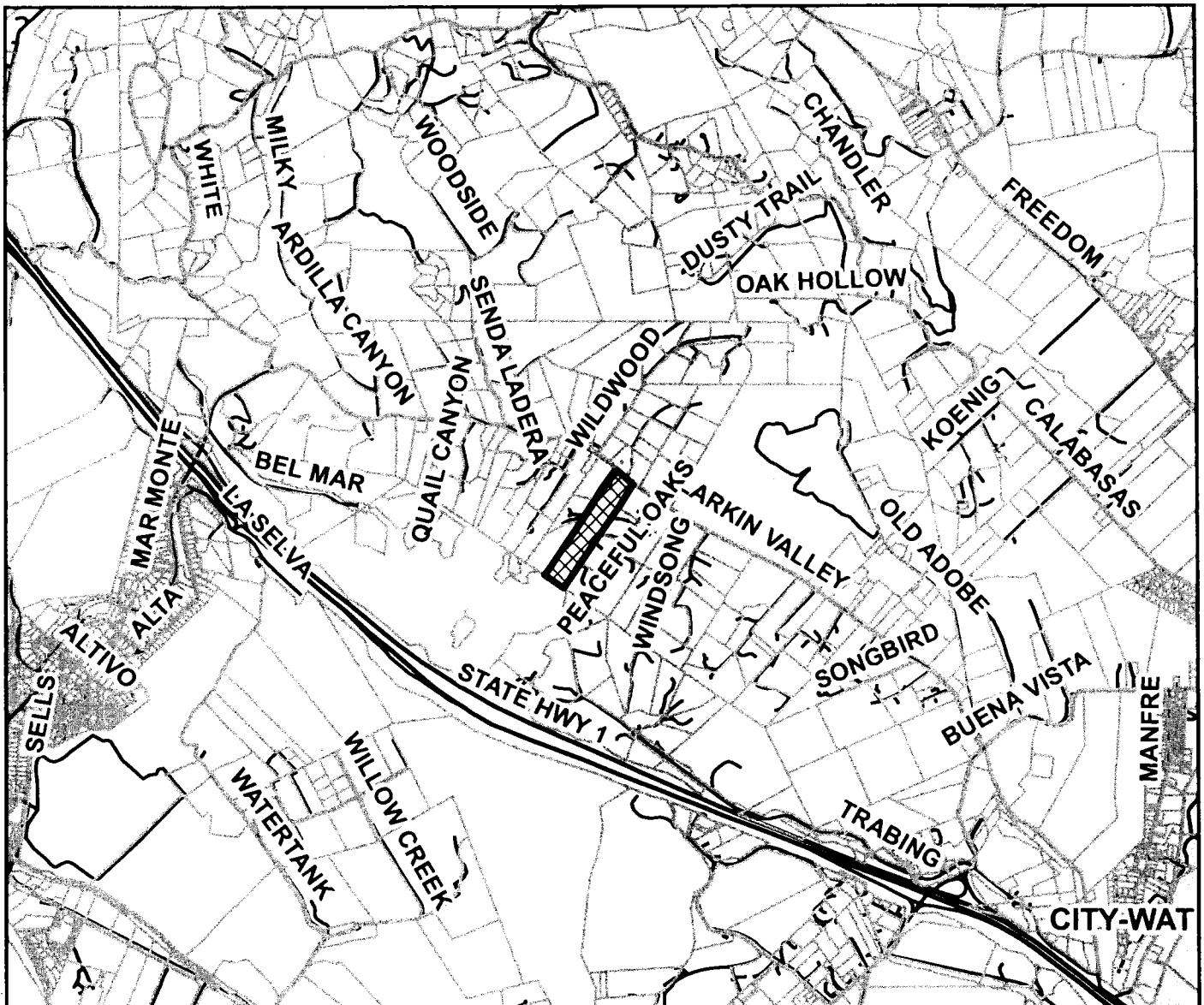
Assessor's Map No. 49-12
County of Santa Cruz, Calif.
April 2000

Electronically redrawn 4/21/00 KSA
Rev 4/21/00 KSA (Per to Pg 50)
Rev 1/4/02 mm (C.A.)
Rev 1/22/03 CB (Add 4 St. names)
Rev 10/12/04 mm (4-004408, 9 & 10, LBA 1-78 & 77)
Rev 8/20/06 mm (4-004532, LBA 1-80 & 81)
Rev 7/20/07 W (109RS27)
Rev 11/11/07 CB (60PM28, Sp 1-82 & 83)






EXHIBIT B

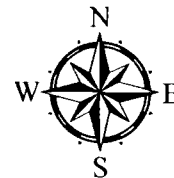


Location Map



LEGEND

-  APN: 049-121-23
-  Assessors Parcels
-  Streets
-  State Highways
-  WATSONVILLE

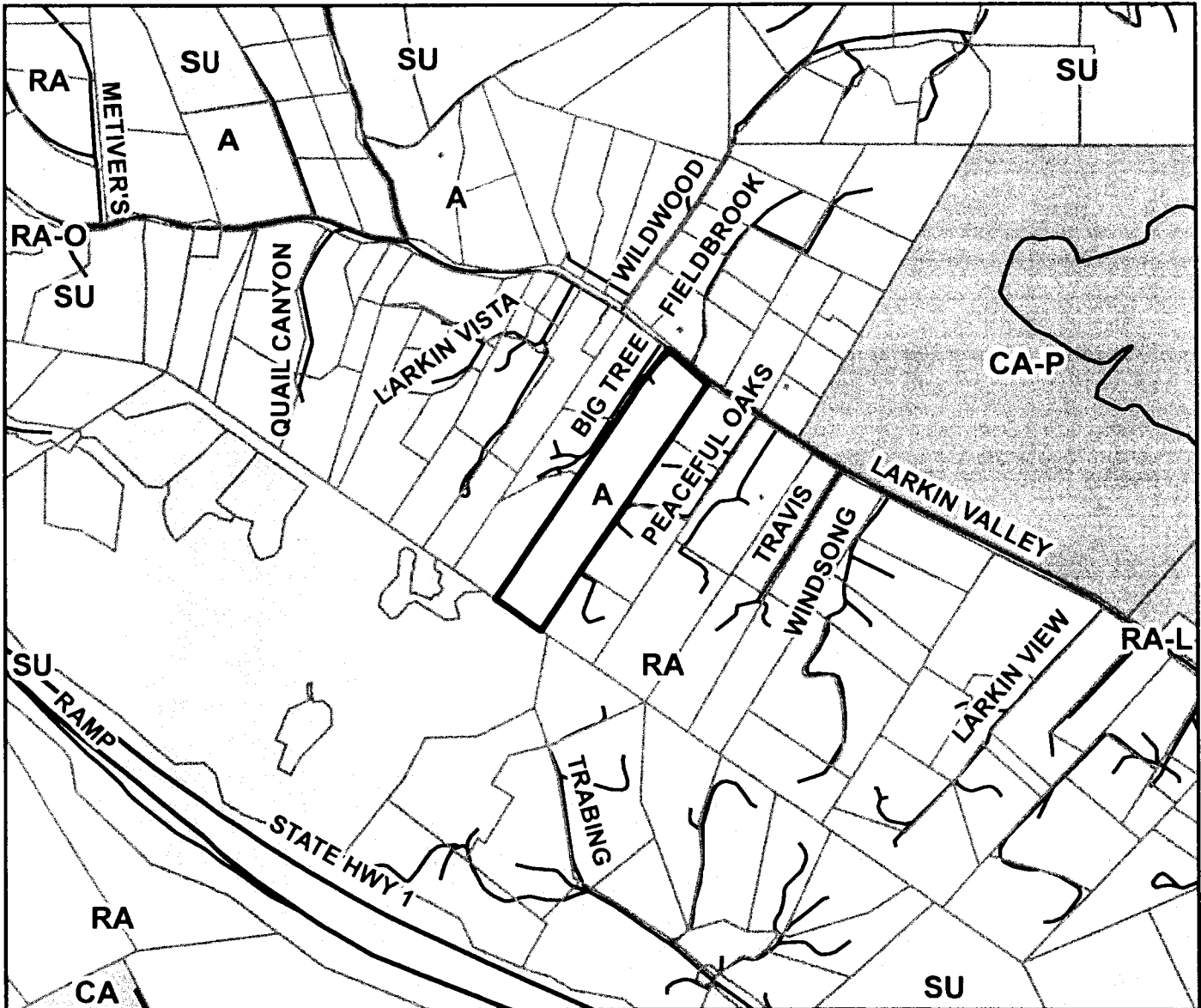


Map Created by
County of Santa Cruz
Planning Department
February 2010









EXHIBIT B

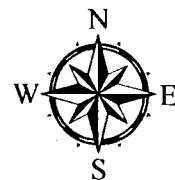


Zoning Map



LEGEND

-  APN: 049-121-23
-  Assessors Parcels
-  Streets
-  State Highways
-  AGRICULTURE
-  AGRICULTURE COMMERCIAL
-  AGRICULTURE RESIDENTIAL
-  SPECIAL USE

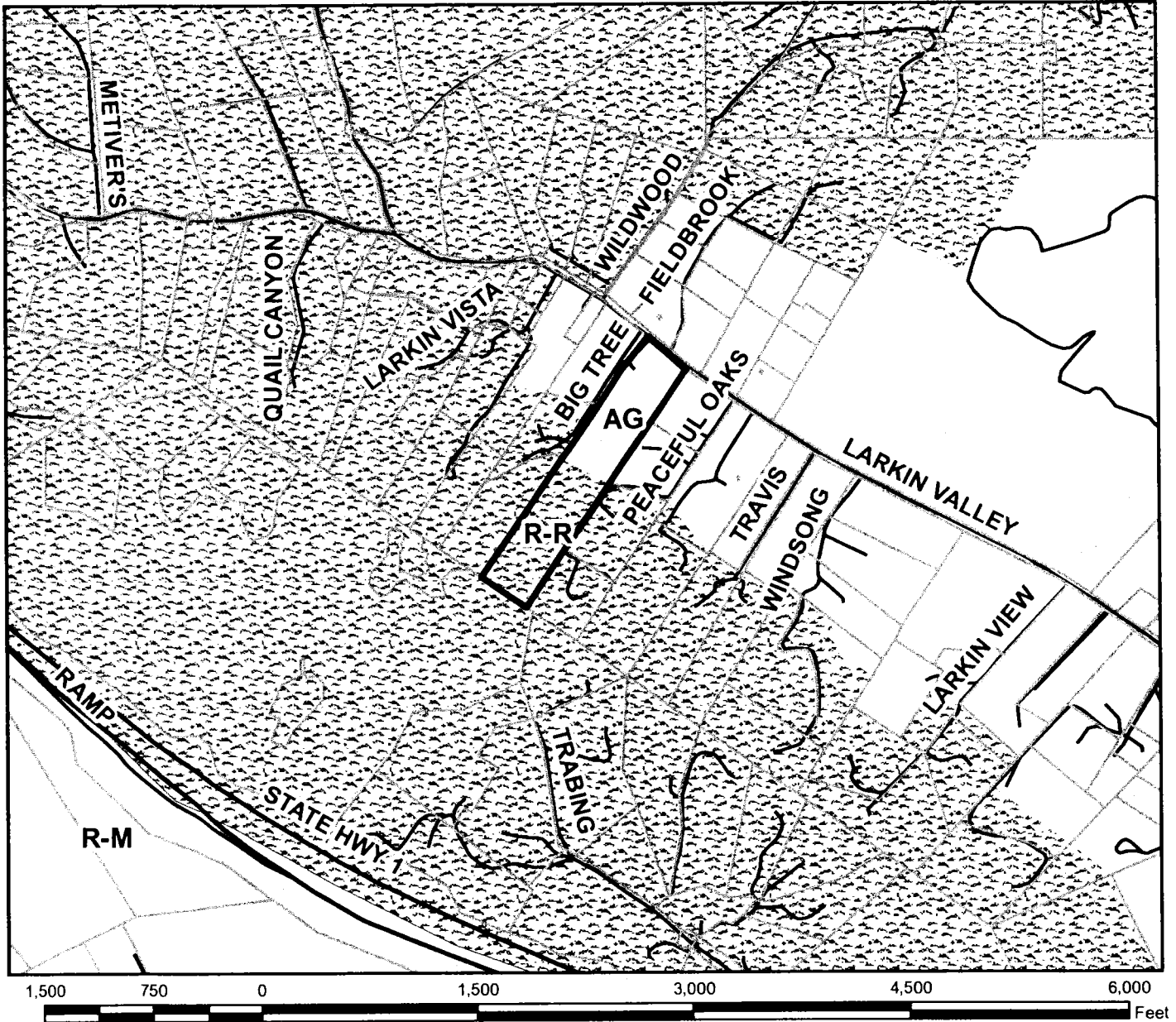


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February 2010








EXHIBIT B

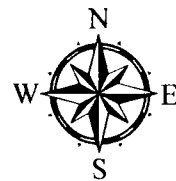


General Plan Designation Map



LEGEND

-  APN: 049-121-23
-  Assessors Parcels
-  Streets
-  State Highways
-  Agriculture
-  Residential-Rural
-  Residential-Mountain



Map Created by
County of Santa Cruz
Planning Department
February 2010

EXHIBIT B

AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY STUDY
LANDS OF LEWIS – LARKIN VALLEY ROAD, WATSONVILLE
August 2011 (UPDATED)

This agricultural viability study has been prepared pursuant to Santa Cruz County General Plan Policy 5.13.21 - Determining Agricultural Viability, and is intended to address the agricultural viability of the Lewis property located at 711 Larkin Valley Road in Watsonville (APN 049-121-23). The property is 17.6± acres in size and is currently proposed for a 2-lot Minor Land Division. The primary purpose of this study is to provide background information regarding the viability of the subject property for commercially viable agriculture and to assist the County Agricultural Policy Commission in its determination of agricultural viability.

This study is organized to address and provide information regarding the following considerations with respect to Agricultural Viability.

- Current Use of Property and Proposed Future Uses of Land Designated as Non-Commercial Agriculture.
- Historical Agricultural Uses on Property and Adjacent Parcels.
- County General Plan and Zoning Maps, Surrounding Parcel Sizes and Land Uses.
- Soil Characteristics of Subject Parcel and Surrounding Parcels.
- General Suitability for Commercially Viable Land.
- Consistency with General Plan Policy 5.13.21.

Site Location and Project Description

The subject parcel is approximately 1.4 miles northwest of Watsonville along Larkin Valley Road. As shown on the attached 2-lot minor land division tentative map, all three parcels will have access off of Larkin Valley Road. The existing house which fronts on Larkin Valley Road will encompass Parcel A. Parcel B will access Larkin Valley Road via Big Tree lane and a private 12' wide driveway which runs along the south east boundary. The property slopes up from Larkin Valley Road with a drainage channel transversing it approximately 400' into the property. The upper portion of the property is sparsely covered with stands of Coast Live Oak. The site currently contains an older residence, a detached garage and a well house.

The proposed minor land division would divide the 17.6-acre parcel into two parcels as shown on the attached tentative map. Parcel A would be 4.18 acres gross, Parcel B would be approximately 13.39 acres gross. As currently

designated under the Santa Cruz General Plan, the front portion of the property, 8.6 acres, is designated as Agricultural.

Current Use of Property and Proposed Future Uses of Land Designated as Non-Commercial Agriculture

There are no agricultural uses occurring on the property, nor is there any sign of recent agricultural activities on the site or on adjacent parcels. The portion of the property designated as Agricultural is moderately sloped, characterized by sandy and/or clay soils, and has a drainage channel running through the middle of it.

Historical Agricultural Uses on Property and Adjacent Parcels

There are no known records of any commercial agricultural uses or activity that has ever taken place on the portion of the property designated as Agricultural or on any of the adjacent Agricultural parcels. In 1974, a 20-year, non-agricultural open space easement was recorded on the property. This easement lasted 20 years and expired in 1994, it was not renewed. The open space easement allowed for agricultural uses if so desired by the owner, but in this case, the easement was used for tax purposes.

It should be noted that historical photos dating back to 1948 show the entire property cleared and the upper portion of the site used as orchards (see Attached Exhibit A). As shown in the series of photos it was not evident until the 1975 photos that the upper areas of the site had begun to revegetate with native vegetation. It is anticipated the orchard use ceased in the late 1960's.

County General Plan and Zoning Maps, Surrounding Parcel Sizes and Land Uses.

Exhibit B contains the General Plan and Zoning Maps showing the parcel and adjacent uses. Per the County General Plan land use map, parcels in the 1/4 - mile range around the subject property range in size from 2 to 15 acres in size. The subject property is surrounded on all sides by residential land, with more than 50% of the properties designated as Rural Residential. Residential parcels to the north and west of the site typically range in size from 1 to 15 acres. Properties to the east typically range in size from 2 to 20+ acres and vary between residential and agricultural uses. Residential properties to the south typically range in size from 5 to 20+ acres.

Soil Characteristics of Subject Parcel and Surrounding Parcels.

Attachment 1 contains a map of site soils as determined by the project geologist, County geologist and County Environmental Health Services (map is from a ground water recharge report by EHS). As shown, the site soils in the Agriculture designated area is comprised of #105 - Baywood Sandy Loam (2-15% slope) - capability IVe irrigated, VIe non-irrigated; #125 - Danville Loam (15-30%

slope) capability IIIe irrigated and non-irrigated, and #135 – Elkhorn Sandy Loam, (15%-30% slope) – capability VIe irrigated and IVe non-irrigated

The soil survey defines the capability classes of the subject property soils as follows:

- Class III soils have severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants, or that require special conservation practices, or both.
- Class IV soils have very severe limitations that reduce both the choice of plants, or that require very careful management or both.
- Class V soils have are not likely to erode but have other limitations, impractical to remove, that limit their use.
- Class VI soils have severe limitations that make them generally unsuitable for cultivation.

It is apparent from the site soils that severe limitations for farming exist.

General Suitability for Commercially Viable Land.

The site is not viable for commercial agriculture due to poor soils, moderately steep slope conditions along the drainage swale that crosses the property, and the parcel is east facing and thus gets minimal afternoon sun. In addition, since the lower portion of the property is fragmented due to existing roads, the drainage channel and the location of the home site, there are only two small, separated areas of undeveloped land that remain. On the lower northeast portion of the property, there is an area approximately 1.2 acres in size, and further up the property along the eastern boundary, there is an area of approximately 2.4 acres. These factors combined with the lack of any historical evidence that the Agriculturally designated portion of the property has ever been viable for commercial agricultural uses concludes that this parcel is not suitable for any commercial agricultural uses. Exhibit C contains a letter from former Agricultural Commissioner Richard Nutter agreeing with this determination.

Consistency with General Plan Policy 5.13.21

a. Analysis of Gross Revenues. Per the attached areawide aerial photo and zoning map (see Attachment 2), there are no active agricultural activities in the project area defined (area outlined in Red) as the Larkin Valley corridor from Mar Monte Avenue to Buena Vista Drive. This area contains two north-south running ridgelines. The project site is on the western side of the valley and therefore would have less sun exposure than the eastern side. The only nearby agricultural activities are along Old Adobe Road. Per the attached map, this parcel and other agricultural areas to the east are not located within the Larkin Valley Corridor and are more characterized by flatter lands already designated as CA – Commercial Agriculture. These parcels also contain soils which are not found in the project area, and are more suitable for farming. Since there are no activities in the project area, we cannot provide gross revenue figures.

b. Similar to the response in a. above, we cannot provide an analysis of operational expenses since there are no active agricultural parcels in the area.

c. Geographical area. The areawide aerial photo and zoning map clearly shows that there are no active agricultural uses in the Larkin Valley Corridor that we have defined as a reasonable project area consisting of similar weather patterns, topography and soil types. The primary uses in this area are residential and equestrian in nature.

Summary and Conclusion

The proposed land division would subdivide the property into two parcels 4.18 and 13.39 acres in size. Parcel A use would not change and Parcel B would be developed as residential uses with a single family residence. This proposed use would appear to be appropriate for the project site. The neighboring parcels which are designated as Agricultural are also being used as residential and thus there will not be any need to place buffers along the property boundaries. A determination of non-viability would apply only to this site and would have no impact on the viability or allowed uses on adjacent parcels.

It appears that the findings for non-viability can be made based upon the following:

- It appears that the entire parcel has never been commercially farmed and that the vast majority of the site is not suitable for commercial farming.
- Site soils range from Class III to Class VI, which have very severe limitations for farming.
- The parcel lacks a viable farmable area. Approximately 3.6 acres of unimproved land segmented into two areas exist within the Ag area.
- All proposed building sites are within 1/2 mile of a County maintained road (Larkin Valley Road).
- Less than 50% of the land within 1/4 mile of the subject parcel is designated as Agricultural and/or Mountain Residential; no active farming is occurring adjacent to or nearby the site.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – Soils Map

Attachment 2 – Project Study Area

Exhibit A – Historical Photos

Exhibit B – General Plan and Zoning Maps

Exhibit C – Letter from Richard Nutter, Retired Agricultural Commissioner



Exhibit A
Historical Photos

1948
Lewis

1948 Lewis



EXHIBIT C

1956 Lewis

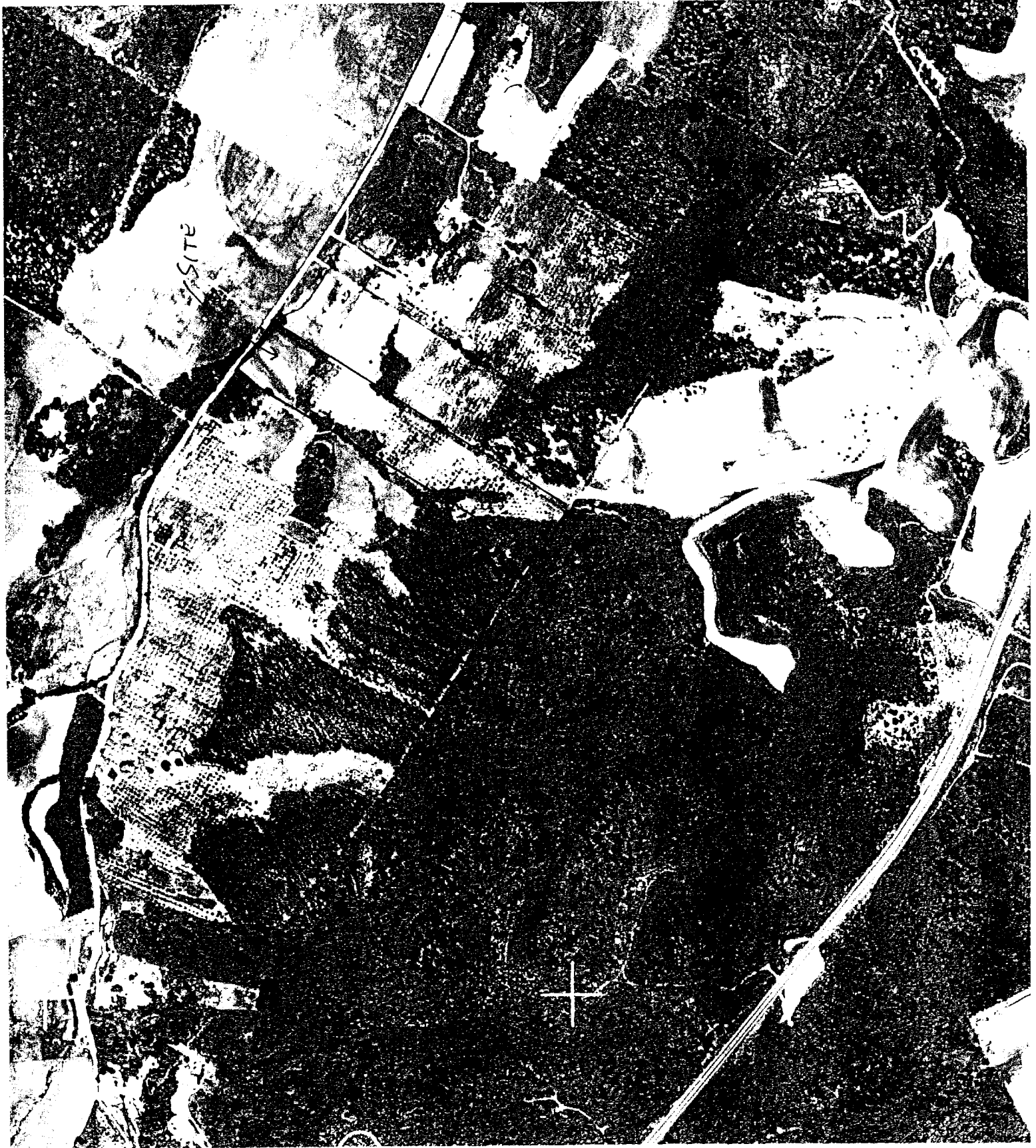


EXHIBIT C .

1963 Lewis



EXHIBIT C

1975 Lewis

SITE

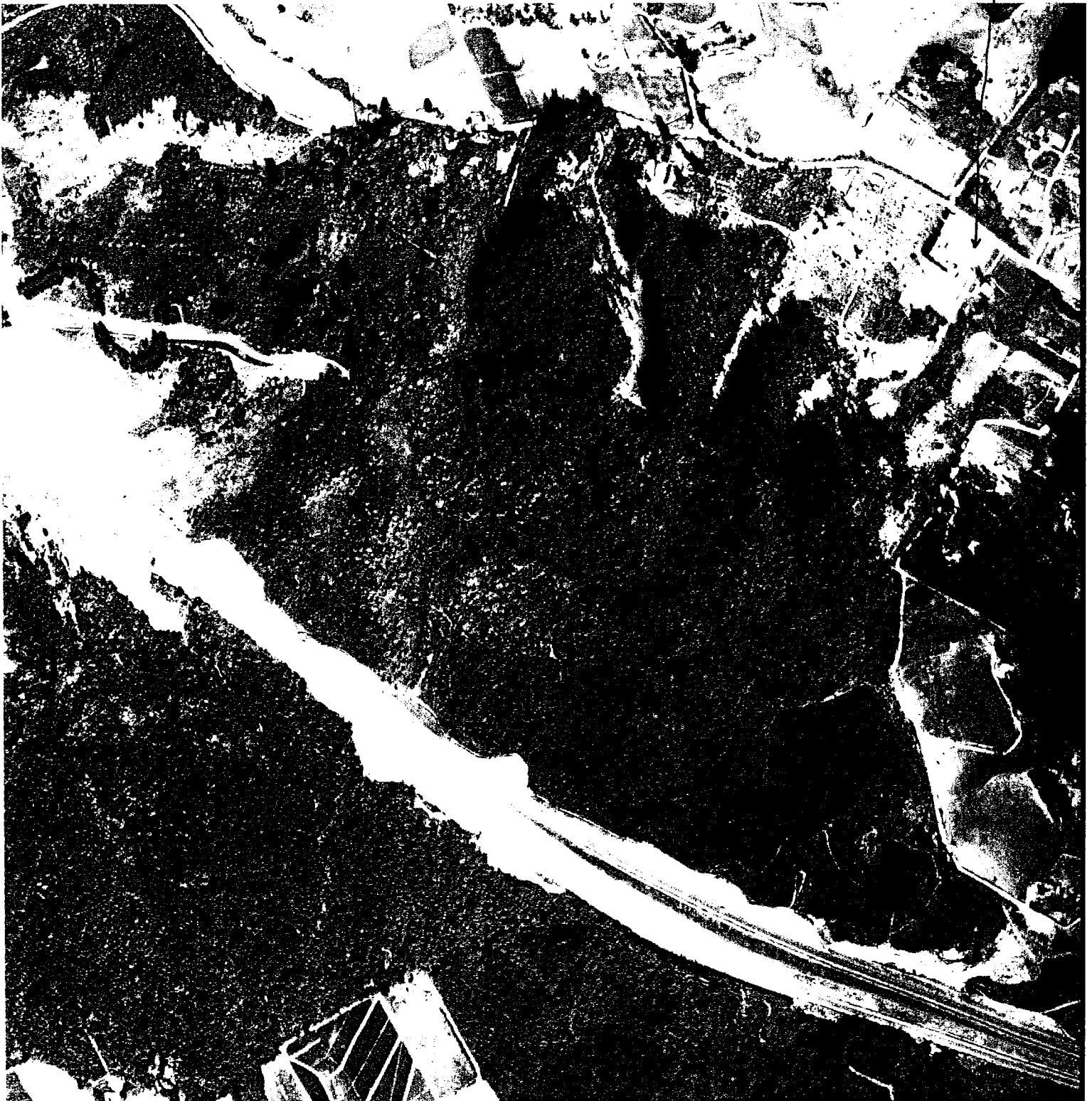


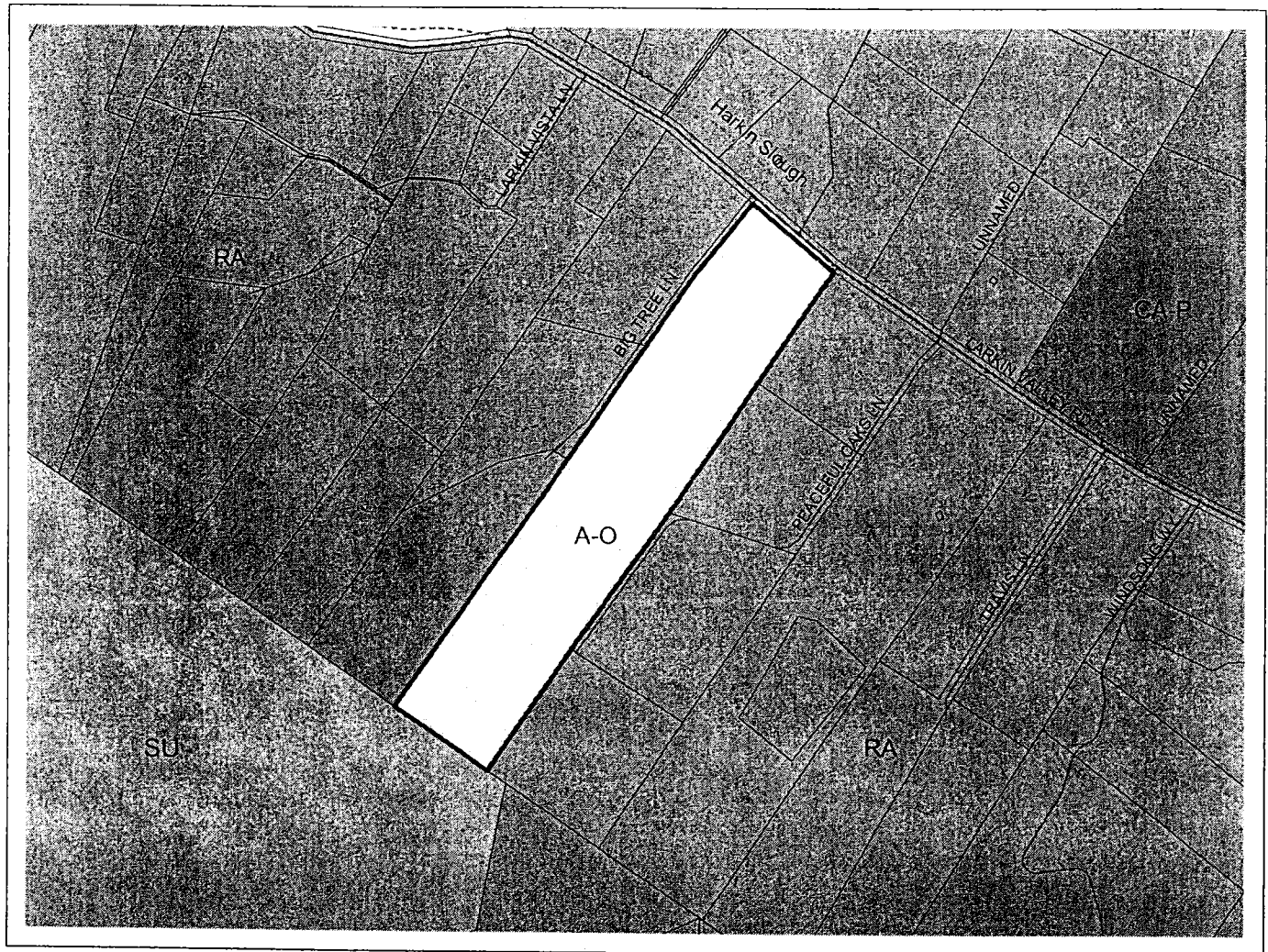
EXHIBIT C

Exhibit B

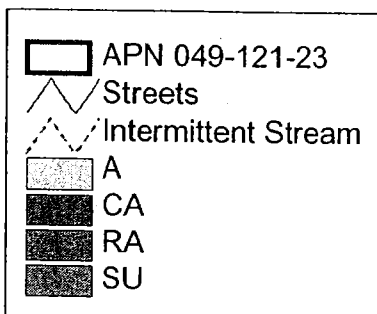
General Plan and Zoning Maps



Zoning Map



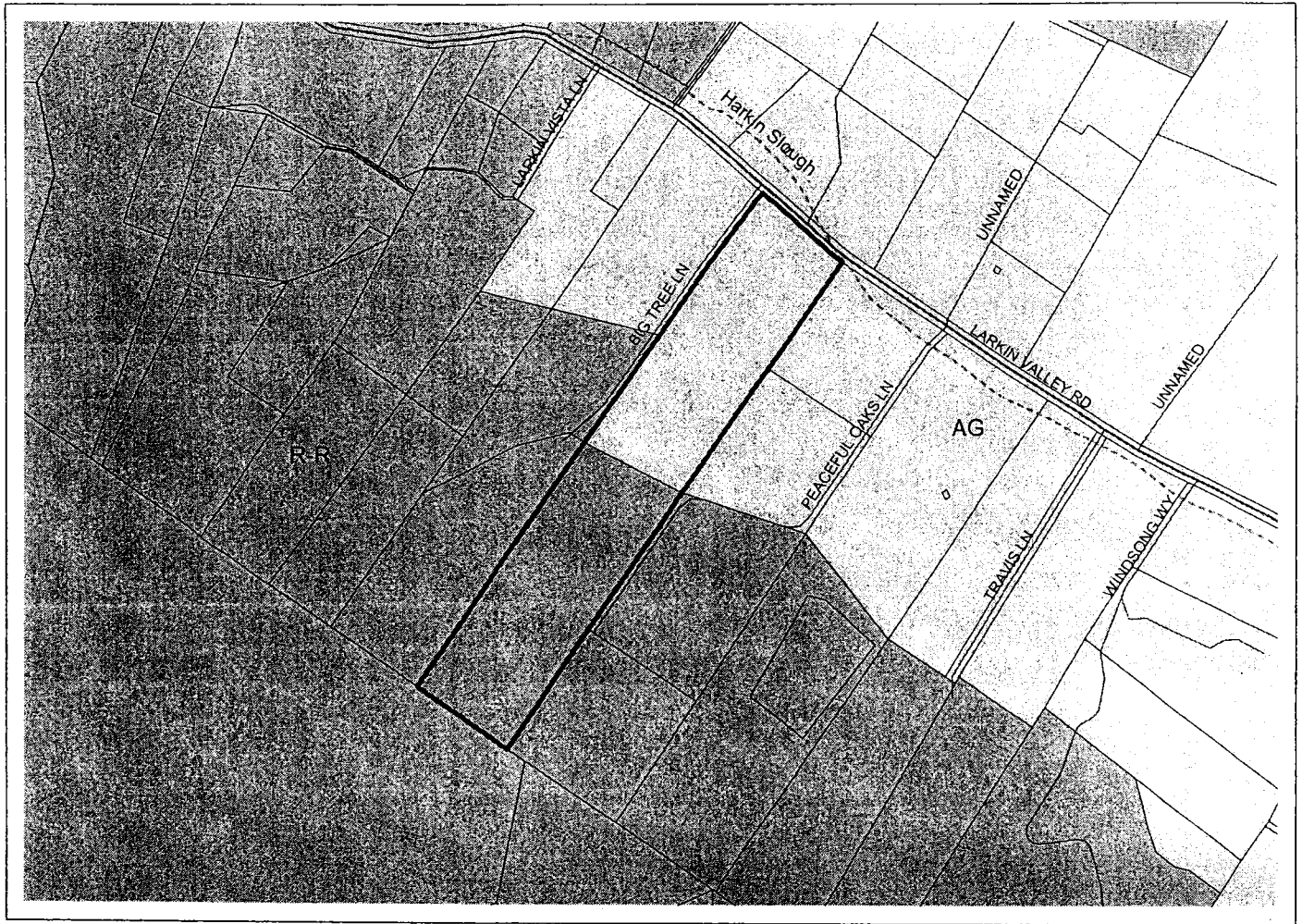
Legend



Map created by Santa Cruz County
Planning Department:
June 2004

EXHIBIT C

General Plan Map



1000 0 1000 2000 Feet

Legend

	APN 049-121-23
	Streets
	Intermittent Stream
	Agriculture
	Rural Residential



Map created by Santa Cruz County
Planning Department:
June 2004

EXHIBIT C

Exhibit C

Letter from Richard Nutter, Retired Agricultural Commissioner

Richard Nutter

104 Glen Lake Drive ❖ Pacific Grove CA 93950
Phone and Fax: (831) 649-4230 ❖ dicknutter@earthlink.net

To: Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission
c/o Samantha Haschert
County of Santa Cruz Planning Department

Date: 2/28/2010

Subject: Nathan Lewis Minor Land Division #10-0030 APN 049-121-23


At the request of Stephen Graves and with agreement of Nathan Lewis I have been retained to review the Agricultural Viability Study of the above Minor Land Division.

I visited the site and toured the proposed development with Mr. Lewis for the purpose of making my best informed decision.

After a review of the Agricultural Viability Study it is my finding that the it meets the criteria as stated in the Santa Cruz County General Plan Policy 5.13.21.

My professional opinion is that the proposed land division is not viable for agriculture. This conclusion is supported by the following:

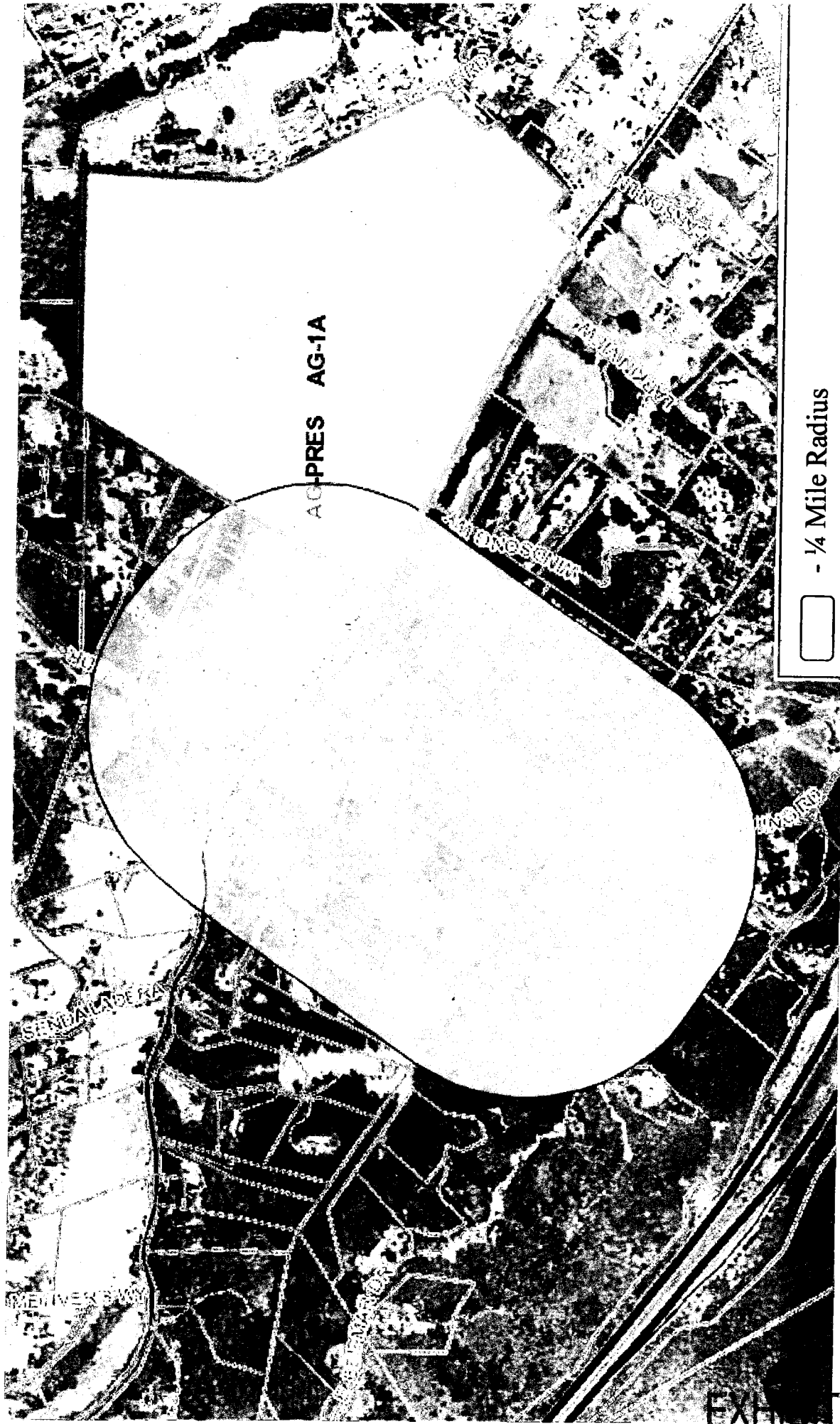
- 1) The parcel does not have a history of commercial agriculture.
- 2) There does not appear to be any commercial agriculture occurring on any other parcels in the Larkin Valley corridor.
- 3) Site soils lack proper drainage and would pose significant constraints to farming.
- 4) The majority of the area designated as Agriculture is developed with the existing residence and its associated improvements, resulting in a lack of contiguous farmable area.



Richard Nutter
Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner (Retired)
Past Santa Cruz County Agricultural (1984-85)

EXHIBIT C

Parcels within 1/4 mile of the project site that are designated as an Agricultural Resource in the County General Plan

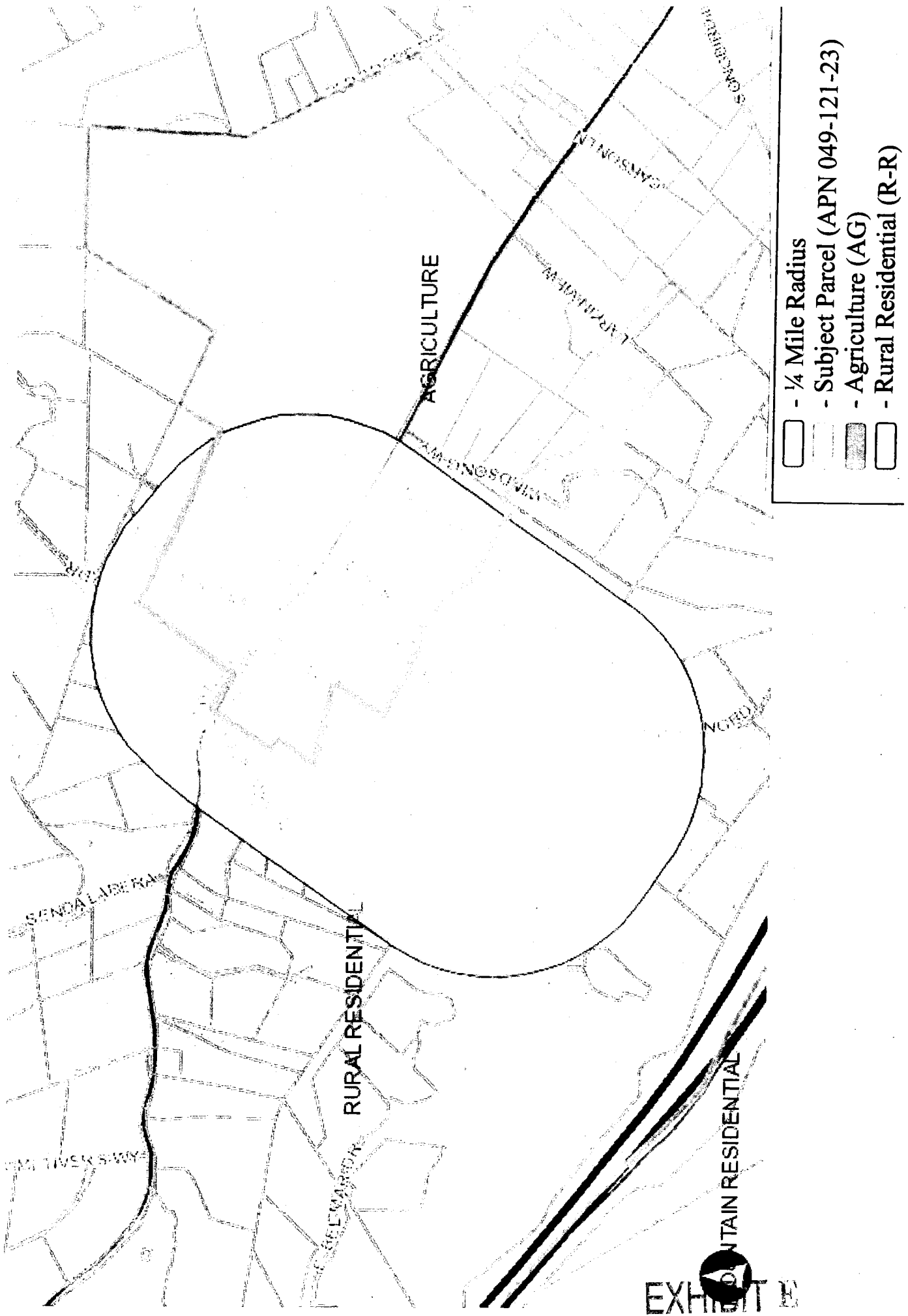


☐ - 1/4 Mile Radius

☐ - Subject Parcel (APN 049-121-23)

☐ - Type 1 Agricultural Resource Designated Parcel

General Plan Designations of parcels within ¼ mile of the project site



County Maintained Through Roads within 1/2 mile of Project Site



— - 1/2 Mile Radius

- - - Subject Parcel (APN 049-121-23)

~ - Larkin Valley Road