PLANNING COMMISION FEBRUARY 05, 2026
STAFF REPORT- GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT & REZONE GP_2023-0002/R_2023-0002

PROJECT PLANNER CONTACT
Russ Ford
860 N Bush St
Ukiah, CA 95482
Phone: 707-234-6650
fordr@mendocinocounty.gov

PROJECT SUMMARY

OWNER/APPLICANT:	Rustic Retirement, LLC (Jared & Bonnie Carter) 1961 Vichy Springs Road Ukiah, CA 95470
REQUEST:	General Plan Amendment and Rezone to change the land use classification and zoning of an existing 160± acre parcel. The land use classification will change from Rangelands (RL) to Remote Residential (RMR:40), and the zoning will change from Rangeland (R-L) to Upland Residential (U-R:L:40).
LOCATION:	1.75± miles east of Ukiah on the south side of Vichy Springs Road (CR 215) 0.53± miles east of its intersection with Redemeyer Road (CR 215-A) at 1961 Vichy Springs Road, Ukiah. APNs: 178-220-09, 181-240-01
TOTAL ACREAGE:	160± Acres
GENERAL PLAN:	Range Lands (RL) General Plan (Chapter 2 – Development Element)
ZONING:	Rangeland- 160 Acre Minimum (RL 160) Mendocino County Code Title 20, Division I
SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT:	District 1 (Cline)
ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:	Negative Declaration
RECOMMENDATION:	By resolution, the Planning Commission recommends the Board of Supervisors adopt a Negative Declaration and approve the project, as proposed by the applicant, based on the facts and findings.

PROJECT BACKGROUND & INFORMATION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The applicant requests a General Plan Amendment and Rezone to change the land use classification and zoning of a 160± acre parcel from Rangeland (RL 160) to Upland Residential (UR 40). The project will allow the a current or future owner to pursue a land division of the site into as many as four separate parcels, but that is not currently proposed as part of the project. The applicants stated intent is to grant the property to their heirs as part of their estate, and they want to create options for future uses should that be desired.

SITE CHARACTERISTICS: The project site is located off Vichy Springs Road in the eastern foothills of the Ukiah Valley. Access is provided via Vichy Springs Road and a private driveway. The site sits in a small valley with steep to moderate hills on the north, west and south sides, and gradual uplift to the east towards the Cow Mountain range. An east/west oriented ridge dominates the northern portion of the parcel. A significant majority of the site (>75%) is heavily forested with oak woodlands, predominantly to the south. The site is developed with one single family residence (SFR), a barn and a driveway, which sit in a small draw near the center of the site. A seasonal creek runs along the western border of the project site and connects to Sulphur Creek, approximately 1,000 feet downstream. The SFR is served by Rogina Water Company for domestic water and has an on-site septic system that was finaled in 2003. The difference in elevation from the lowest portion (~760 feet) to the highest portions (~1000 feet) is 240 feet, indicating significant elevation changes within a relatively small area.

The northeast corner of the parcel is adjacent to the Vichy Springs Community Homes development, a high-density residential neighborhood served by both a public water and sanitation district. The entire western and southern boundary of the parcel is adjacent to the Rogina Heights subdivision, a medium-density residential development served by a public water district.

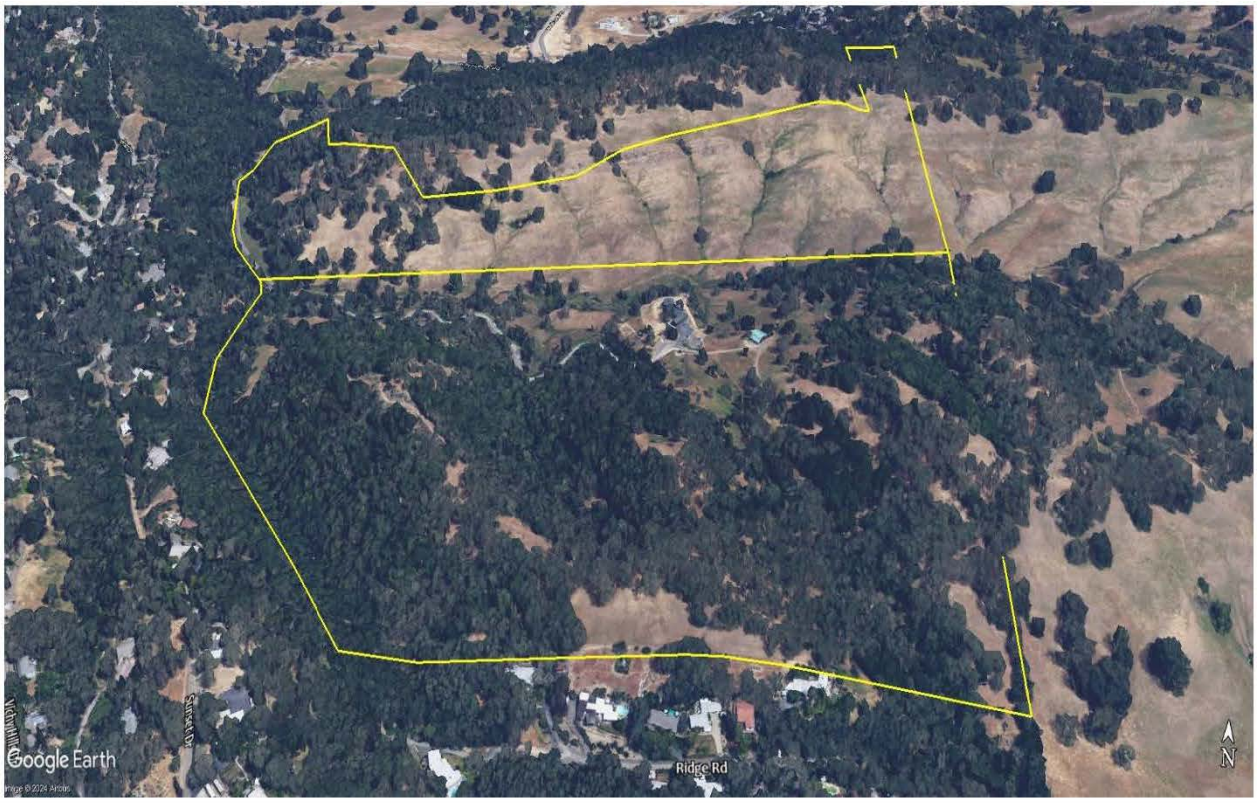


Fig. 1: Project Site

Public Services:

Access:	Vichy Springs Road (CR 215)
Water District:	Rogina Water Company
Sewer District:	None
Fire District:	Ukiah Valley Fire Protection District

RELATED APPLICATIONS: The following applications have occurred on the subject parcel or on the surrounding properties and are relevant to the proposed project. All projects listed below have already been approved, unless otherwise stated.

Subject Parcel Projects:

- BU 2001-0678 – Construction of new SFD
- BU 2003-0239 – Construction of residential driveway
- BU 2004-0356 – New barn and shop
- BU 2018-1502 – Bedroom addition to existing SFD

Neighboring Projects:

- S 5-87 – Vichy Springs Community Homes, Unit Two

AGENCY COMMENTS: On December 19, 2023 project referrals were sent to the following responsible or trustee agencies with jurisdiction over the Project. Following minor project revisions, an updated referral was again sent on April 2, 2024 to relevant agencies. Their submitted recommended conditions are discussed in this staff report and contained in Conditions of Approval. A summary of the submitted agency comments are listed below. Responses are marked as (I) if the responses were to the initial referral, (S) if the responses were to the subsequent referral, or (B) if the same comment was received for both.

TABLE 1: Referral Agency Responses

REFERRAL AGENCIES	COMMENT
Mendocino County Building Division (Ukiah)	No Comment (B)
Mendocino County Agricultural Commissioner	No Response
CAL FIRE	Comments (B)
City of Ukiah	Comments (I)
Mendocino County Department of Transportation	No Comment (B)
Mendocino County Division of Environmental Health	No Comment (I)
LAFCo	Comments (I)
Ukiah Valley Sanitation District	No Comment (B)
Mendocino County Farm Advisor	No Comment (S)
Mendocino County Forestry Advisor	No Comment (S)
Ukiah Valley Fire District	No Response
Ukiah Unified School District	No Response
Rogina Water District	No Response
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	No Response
Regional Water Quality Control Board	No Response
Redwood Valley Rancheria	No Response
Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians	No Response
Round Valley Tribe	No Response
Native American Heritage Commission	Comments (S)
Robinson Rancheria	No Response

CAL FIRE responded to both referrals noting that while the project site is mapped within an area containing 'timberland' as defined by the California Forest Practice Rules, no tree removal is proposed as a part of the project so no permitting would be required from CAL FIRE. The agency notes that any future removal of timber from the site would require a permit under PRC§ 4581.

The City of Ukiah responded to the initial referral with concerns about possible premature expansion of infrastructure and possible adverse effects on agricultural uses in the area, which would be inconsistent with Ukiah Valley Area Plan (UVAP) policies. The City recommended that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) be prepared to fully analyze possible impacts as a result of the project. However, staff notes that the

initial project proposed changing the site from Rangeland to Rural Residential 10-acre minimum (RR-10), which would have allowed for the subsequent creation of up to 16 total lots. The revised project decreased the intensity of future development by proposing a change to Upland Residential 40-acre minimum (UR 40), which would limit a future subdivision to only 4 total lots, significantly decreasing the scale of a full buildout and resulting impacts. No response was received from the City of Ukiah following the project update and subsequent re-referral.

The Mendocino Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) also responded with concerns about premature ag land conversion and the impacts to existing services. LAFCo's recommendations included coordination with the Ukiah Valley Sanitation District (for possible annexation), the City of Ukiah, and the Mendocino County Farm Bureau. As noted above, LAFCo's response was to the initial version of the project and no response was received following the revised, reduced intensity referral.

Consistent with California Senate Bill 18 (SB 18) requirements, a referral was sent to the Native American Heritage Commission on June 27, 2025. The NAHC provided a list of tribes with potential interest in the area, and a subsequent referral was sent to these tribes on July 3. Of those referrals, a request for review was submitted by Robinson Rancheria. The required consultation fee was paid and a follow-up request submitted in August of 2025 but no response was ever received from the tribe.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING DISTRICT CONSISTENCY: The project site is currently classified as 'Range Lands' by the Mendocino County General Plan. The stated intention of the Range Lands classification is to:

> *"…be applied to lands which are suited for and are appropriately retained for the grazing of livestock. The classification should include land eligible for incorporation into Type II agricultural preserves, other lands generally in range use, intermixed smaller parcels, and other contiguous lands, the inclusion of which is necessary for the protection and efficient management of rangelands. The policy of the County and the intent of this classification shall be to protect these lands from the pressures of development and preserve them for future used as designated."*

General Plan Policy DE-17 states: *"The policy of the County and the intent of the [Range Lands] classification shall be to protect these lands from the pressure of development and preserve them for future use as designated."* The project site had previously been under a Williamson Act contract for grazing, but that was entered into nonrenewal more than 10 years ago and is now unrestricted. The State's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) classifies the site as *Grazing Land*, which is not a classification requiring special consideration or protection. No agricultural uses currently exist on the site. The EIR prepared for the Vichy Springs Community Homes subdivision provided analysis on the ability of the region, including the project site, to sustain a viable agricultural operation. The analysis in the EIR notes that the local soil types would require approximately 72 acres to support one 1,000 pound steer without overgrazing. The totality of the 160 acre site would thus support only two head, making its use for a grazing operation limited.

General Plan Policy DE-1 states: "*Further growth in Mendocino County should be accommodated in the cities, the cities' sphere of influence, and in unincorporated communities with the infrastructure and service capacity to support growth. Future growth should be encouraged on infill parcels and areas contiguous to existing development.*" California's office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) defines infill development as "*…building within unused and underutilized lands within existing development patterns, typically but not exclusively in urban areas.*"[1] In this context, urban areas are defined by the US Census Bureau using a number of factors, but most include some degree of existing infrastructure. The project is currently outside of a designated urban area, but is served by the Rogina Water Company for domestic water needs. The project is immediately adjacent to two existing residential developments; the Rogina Heights subdivision to the west and the Vichy Springs Community Homes subdivision to the northeast, so development of the project site for low density residential would be consistent with this policy.

[1] Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI)

General Plan Policy DE-37 states: *"Work with LAFCO and other agencies to reduce suburban sprawl, promote efficient service delivery and protect agricultural, timber and open space areas from unintended conversion to urban uses."* No definition of 'unintended' is provided in this case, but the project would allow a future land division application that could divide the parcel into as many as 4 total lots, each entitled to an SFR and accessory unit development. A more in-depth review of such a project would occur as part of an associated application. Additionally, the General Plan contains policies related to development clustering (DE-21, DE-25) that could provide incentives to a future developer to capture the potential density and bonuses while still maintaining the maximum amount of open space without physical division of the parcel.

The proposed Land Use classification for the site is Remote Residential (RMR). The intent of the RMR classification is to:

> *"…be applied to lands having constraints for commercial agriculture, timber production, or grazing, which are well suited for small scale farming and low density agricultural/residential uses by the absence of such limitations as inadequate access, unacceptable hazard exposure or incompatibility with adjoining resource land uses. The classification is also applied to some areas that might not otherwise qualify except that the land has been divided and substantial development has occurred."*

As discussed above, the use of the project site for commercial agriculture is limited by the quality of the local soils, but conversion to the RMR classification would still provide opportunities for smaller scale agricultural operations. These smaller operations may be able to work more constructively with low-density residential that could be supported by existing infrastructure. If combined with a dwelling group to cluster residential development, a deed restriction could also be applied to protect the balance of the site for future agricultural uses. This would require discretionary review through the use permit process.

The proposed zoning district for the parcel is Upland Residential 40-acre minimum (UR 40). While the intent of both districts is harmony between agricultural and residential uses, the UR district is overall more restrictive than the existing RL district. Table 2 below lists the changes that would occur to allowed uses when switching from the RL to the UR district:

TABLE 2: Changes to Allowed Uses

USE CLASSIFICATION	CHANGE
Group Care	Was prohibited, now conditional
Major Impact Facilities	Was prohibited, now conditional
Animal Sales & Services – Kennels	Was ministerial, now conditional
Animal Waste Processing	Was ministerial, now conditional
Forest Production & Processing – Portable Sawmills	Was ministerial, now conditional
Packing & Processing – Winery	Was ministerial, now conditional
Agricultural Sales & Services	Was conditional, now prohibited
Animal Raising – Personal	Was conditional, now prohibited
Animal Sales & Services – Stockyards	Was conditional, now prohibited
Commercial Recreation – Outdoor Entertainment	Was conditional, now prohibited
Commercial Recreation – Outdoor Sports and Rec	Was conditional, now prohibited
Packing & Processing – Commercial Cooperage	Was conditional, now prohibited
Packing & Processing – General	Was conditional, now prohibited

No new ministerial uses would be gained in the change, many existing ministerial uses would become conditional, and a number of existing conditional uses would become prohibited.

Ultimately, a reclassification and rezone of the project site would maintain many options for agricultural uses while also allowing the addition of a limited number of housing units. The total number of possible housing units would vary depending on what kind of development was proposed, but a future four lot subdivision would allow the construction of three more SFRs and an additional number of accessory dwellings including Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), Second Residential Units (SRUs), and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (JADUs). This would strike an effective balance between the General Plan policies protecting agricultural lands from conversion, and siting of development within areas that have the

benefit of existing infrastructure.

CEQA: As noted in Table 2 above, the project would not create a ministerial pathway for development beyond those that currently exist. While an increase in the density from one unit per 160 acres to one unit per 40 acres would allow a future subdivision of up to four lots, all uses gained by the district change would require discretionary review by the Department. This would provide additional opportunities to review environmental impacts against a more defined project, and to apply mitigation or conditions as may be appropriate. The current project would have no impact on the environment within the meaning of CEQA.

SPECIAL PLANS: The project site lies within the Ukiah Valley Area Plan (UVAP), approved by the Board of Supervisors in 2011. The UVAP provides a number of policies intended to guide smart development within the Ukiah Valley, and staff has identified the following UVAP policy as being applicable to the project:

OC3.1b – Agricultural Land Conversion Criteria. *"Proposals to convert Agricultural lands to non-agricultural classification will be considered only after satisfying the following requirements:*

- *The project shall not result in a need for premature expansion of infrastructure in conflict with other area plan policies.*
- *The project shall not have a significant adverse effect on agricultural uses in the area.*
- *The project site is substantially unusable for agricultural purposes due to encroaching adjacent nonagricultural uses.*
- *The proposal must achieve the long-range goals of the General Plan and UVAP for the area as it exists prior to the proposal.*

While the project would change the general plan classification and zoning district, it would not wholly constitute an agricultural 'conversion'. As discussed in sections above, the proposed UR classification allows for a number agricultural uses similar to the existing RL classification, including stables, kennels, general agriculture, forest production and processing, horticulture, tree, row, and field crops, and wineries. Staff finds the project to be consistent with UVAP policy OC3.1b in the following ways

- No expansion of infrastructure would be required by the project or reasonably foreseen as a result of its approval. New development within the project site is already within the service boundary of the Rogina Water Company for domestic water and would require on-site septic for wastewater disposal.
- Existing agricultural uses in the area are minimal. There is an operating vineyard southeast of the project site, but currently no other agricultural operations. Allowing some additional development on the site would not have any effect on agricultural uses in the area. As noted in the General Plan analysis section above, the EIR prepared for the General Plan determined that poor soil quality in the area would make an agricultural operation related to cattle uses impractical.
- As discussed in the General Plan section above, the primary factor limiting agricultural uses on the site is the poor quality of the soils and not encroaching adjacent uses. However, development within the Vichy Springs Community Homes subdivision continues as more of the lots are built upon. An expansion of that development within the next several decades would not be inconceivable.
- The proposed project supports the following General Plan and UVAP goals:
    - DE-1: *"Land use patterns that maintain the rural character of Mendocino County, preserve its natural resources, and recognize the constraints of the land and the limited availability of infrastructure and public services."* The project proposes a general plan amendment that would allow a very limited amount of future new development by way of a land division creating up to three new parcels. The site is within an existing water district and served by existing public road and would not require or induce the extension of utilities.
    - LU4: "*Manage future growth to ensure that essential support infrastructure is in place prior to development*." The site is served by Rogina Water Company and Vichy Springs Road, but requires onsite septic for wastewater treatment. The incremental development that would be allowed following an approved subdivision would be located within existing infrastructure service areas.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: An Initial Study for the proposed project was completed by staff in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Based on this initial evaluation, it was found that the Project would not result in any physical impacts on the environment and a Negative Declaration was prepared.

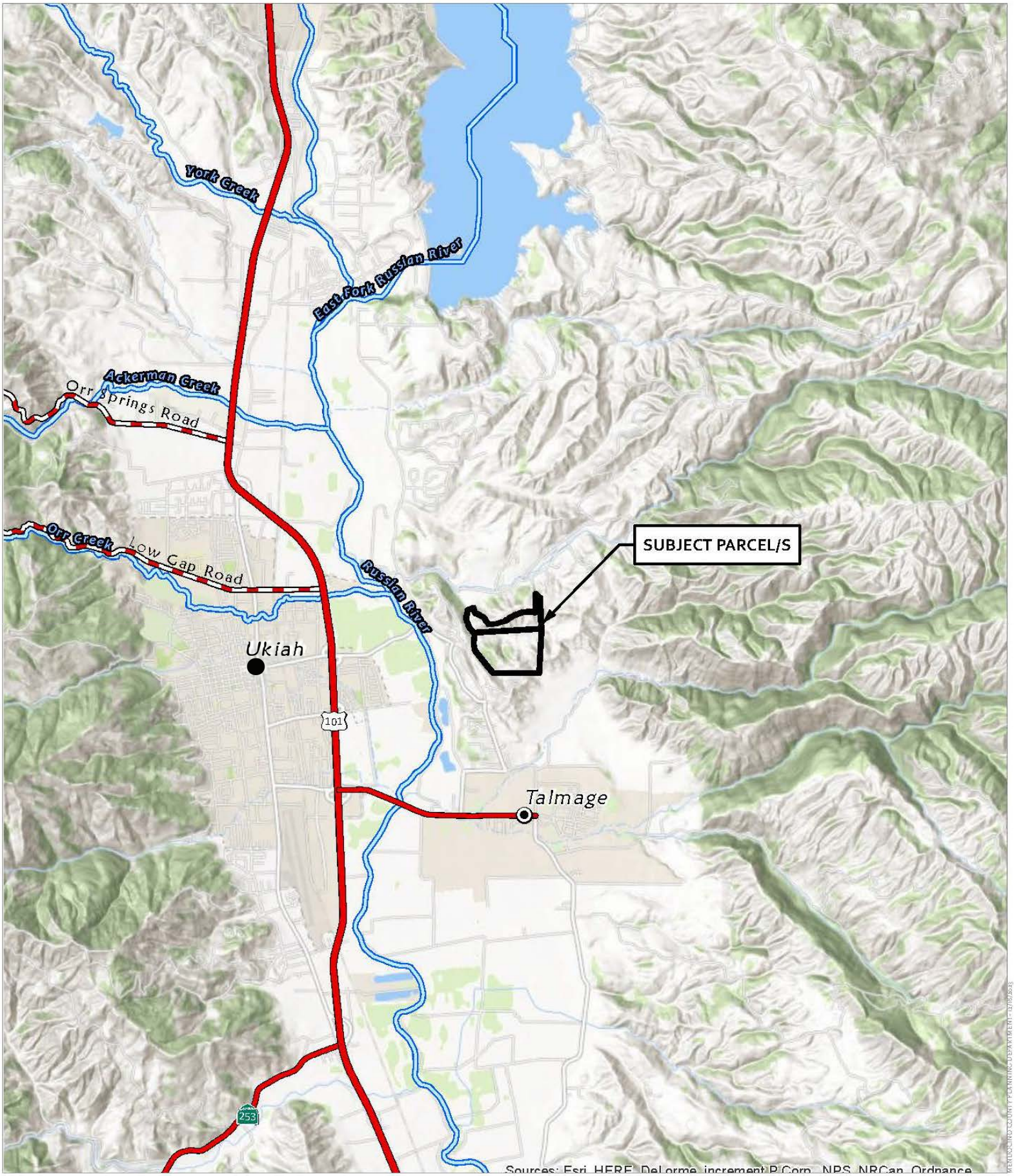
12/16/2025
DATE

Russ Ford
RUSS FORD
SENIOR PLANNER

ATTACHMENTS:
A. Location Map
B. Topo Map
C. Aerial Imagery
D. General Plan
E. Zoning
F. Farmland Classifications

RESOLUTION

NEGATIVE DECLARATION AVAILABLE ONLINE AT:
https://www.mendocinocounty.gov/government/planning-building-services/meeting-agendas

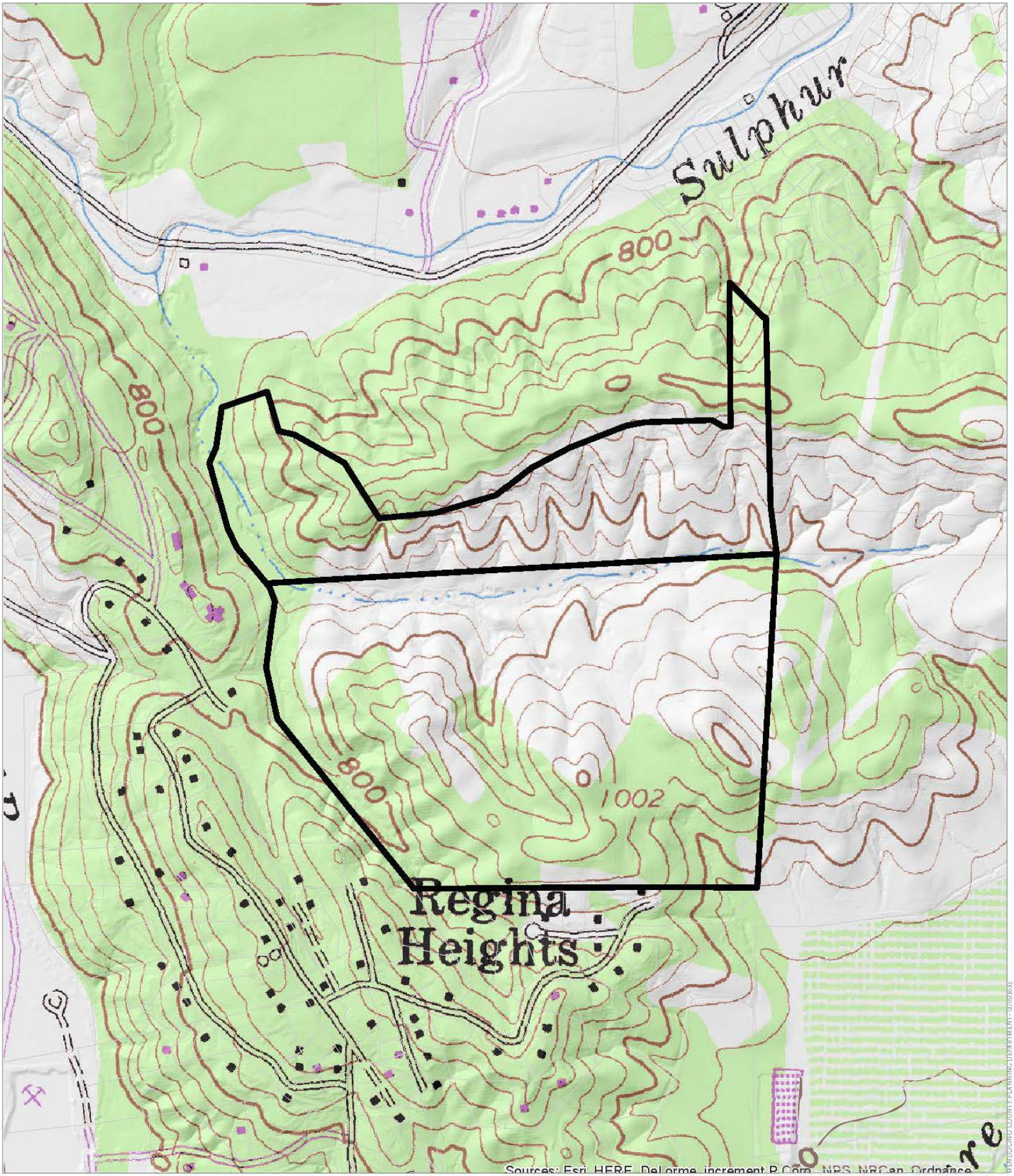


CASE: GP/R 2023-0002
OWNER: Rustic Retirement, LLC
APN: 178-220-09, 181-240-01
APLCT: CARTER, Jared & Bonnie
AGENT: None
ADDRESS: 1961 Vichy Springs Road, Ukiah

Major Towns & Places
Highways
Major Roads

0 2,550 5,100 Feet
0 0.5 1 Miles
1:63,360

LOCATION MAP

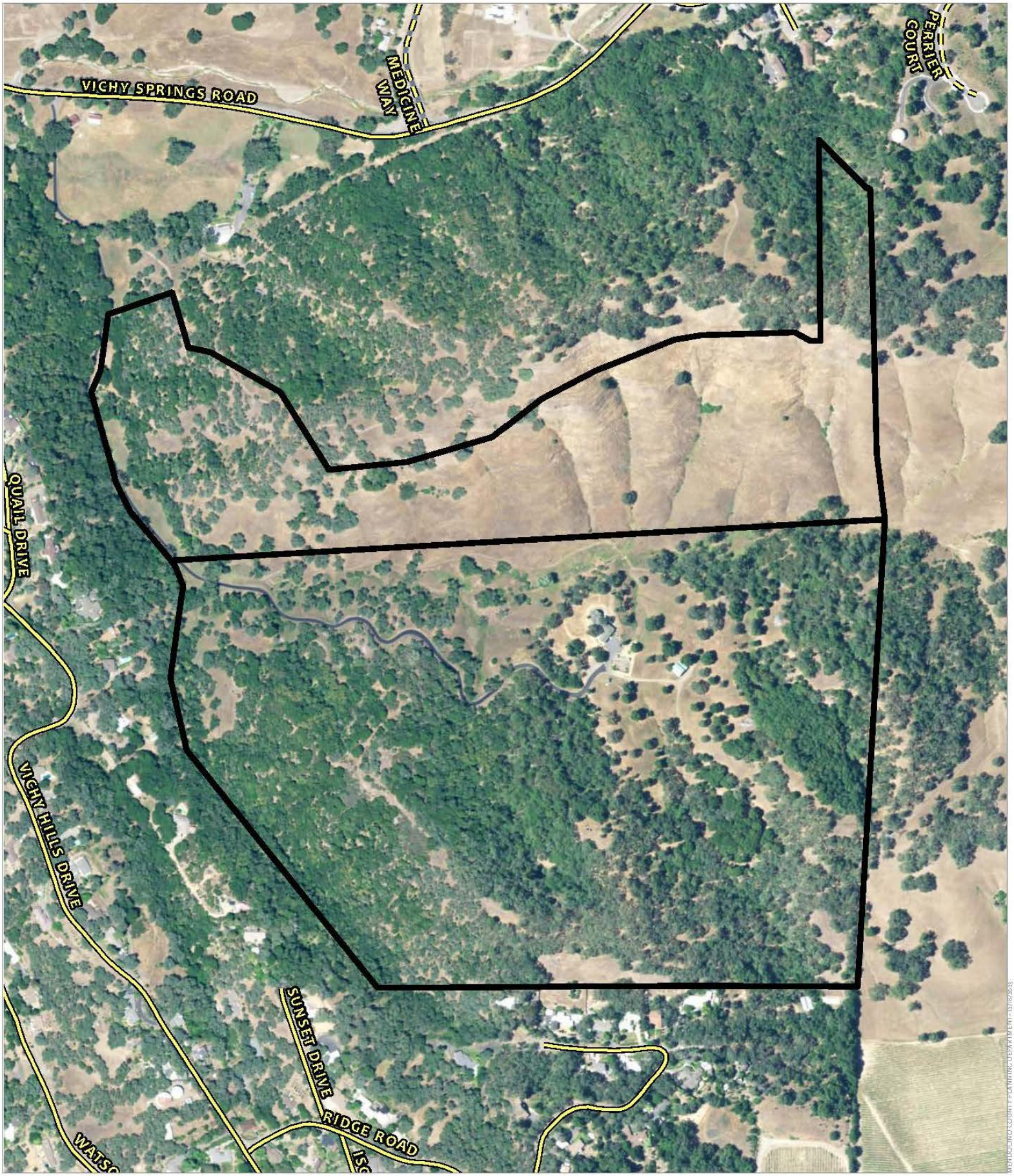


CASE: GP/R 2023-0002
OWNER: Rustic Retirement, LLC
APN: 178-220-09, 181-240-01
APLCT: CARTER, Jared & Bonnie
AGENT: None
ADDRESS: 1961 Vichy Springs Road, Ukiah

0 350 700 Feet
0 0.05 0.1 Miles
1:8,400

TOPOGRAPHIC MAP
CONTOUR INTERVAL IS 40 FEET

MENDOCINO COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT - 02/03/2023



CASE: GP/R 2023-0002
OWNER: Rustic Retirement, LLC
APN: 178-220-09, 181-240-01
APLCT: CARTER, Jared & Bonnie
AGENT: None
ADDRESS: 1961 Vichy Springs Road, Ukiah

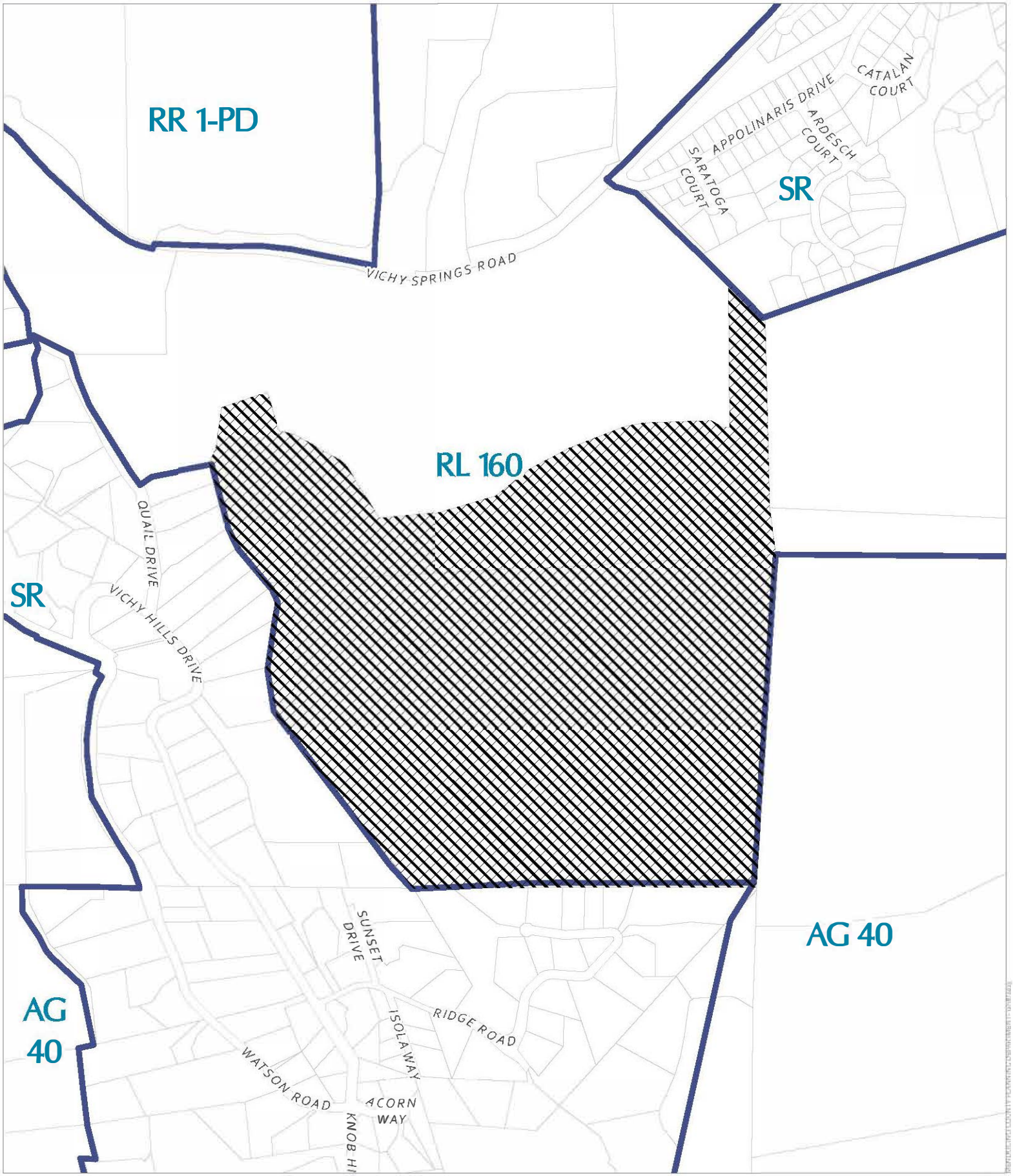
Public Roads

Private Roads

0 250 500 Feet
0 0.0425 0.085 Miles
1:6,000

N W E S

AERIAL IMAGERY

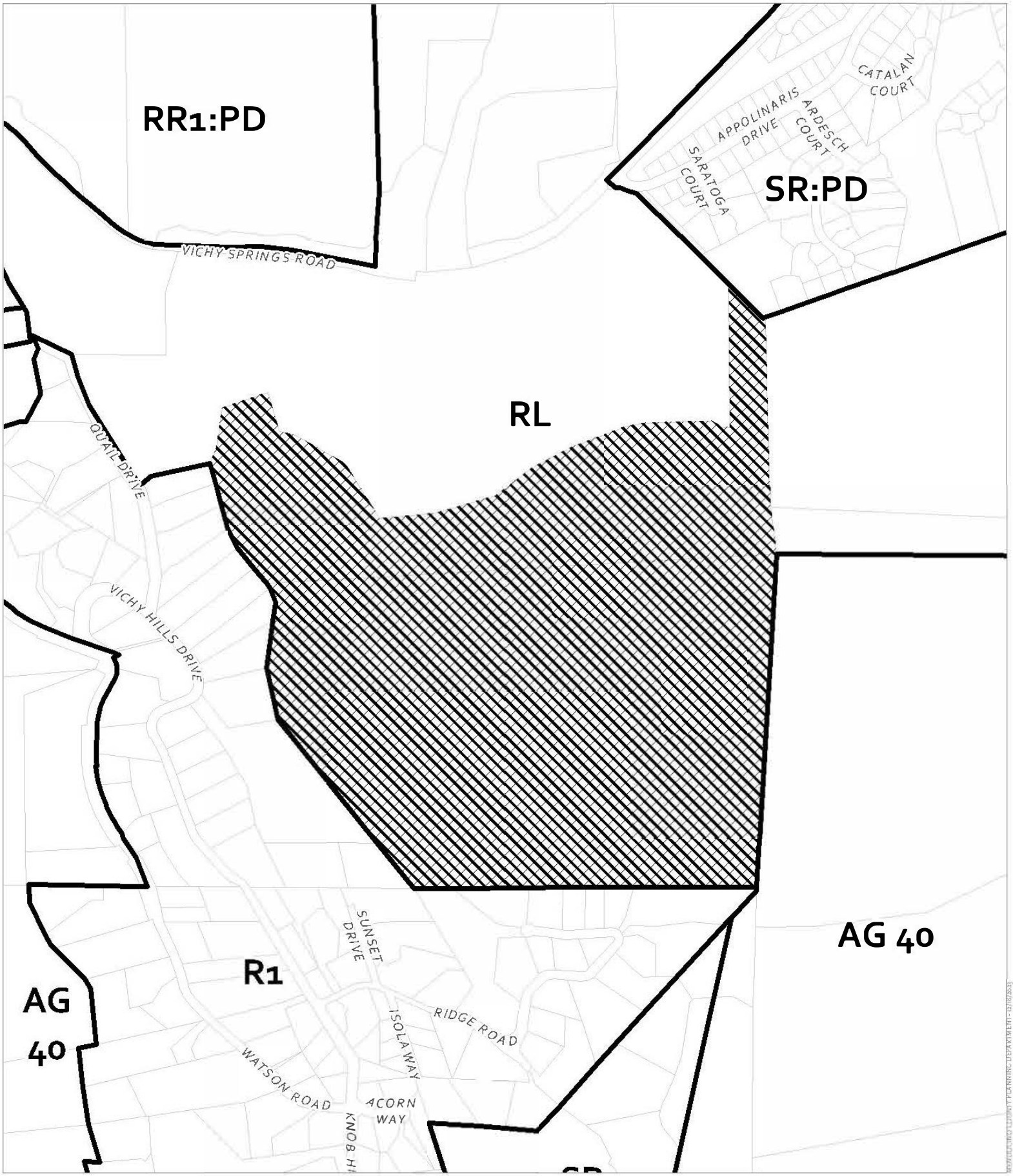


CASE: GP/R 2023-0002
OWNER: Rustic Retirement, LLC
APN: 178-220-09, 181-240-01
APLCT: CARTER, Jared & Bonnie
AGENT: None
ADDRESS: 1961 Vichy Springs Road, Ukiah

General Plan Classes

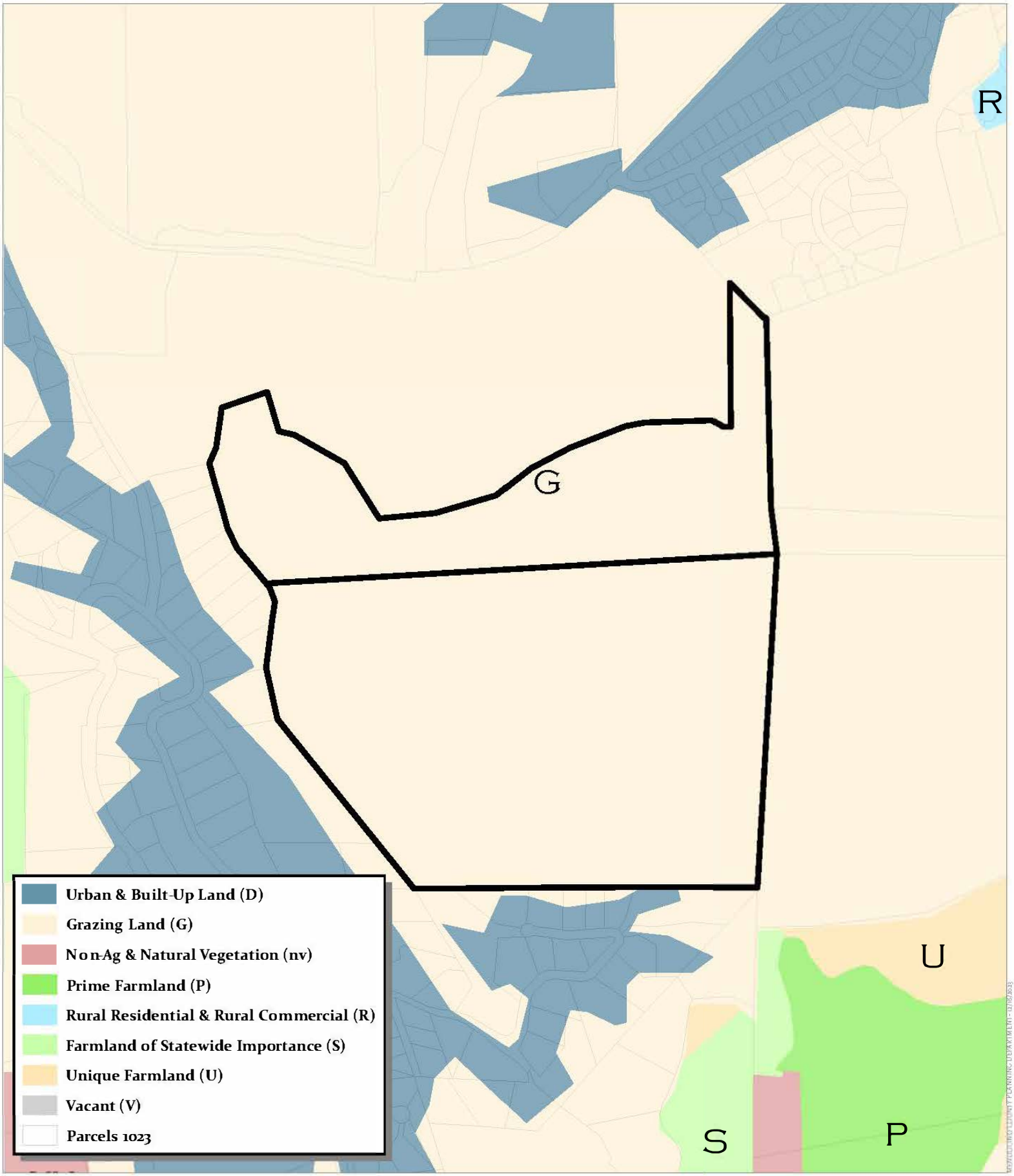
0 350 700 Feet
0 0.05 0.1 Miles
N W E S
1:8,400

GENERAL PLAN CLASSIFICATIONS



CASE: GP/R 2023-0002
OWNER: Rustic Retirement, LLC
APN: 178-220-09, 181-240-01
APLCT: CARTER, Jared & Bonnie
AGENT: None
ADDRESS: 1961 Vichy Springs Road, Ukiah

ZONING DISPLAY MAP



CASE: GP/R 2023-0002
OWNER: Rustic Retirement, LLC
APN: 178-220-09, 181-240-01
APLCT: CARTER, Jared & Bonnie
AGENT: None
ADDRESS: 1961 Vichy Springs Road, Ukiah

FARMLAND CLASSIFICATIONS

Resolution Number_____

County of Mendocino
Ukiah, California

FEBRUARY 05, 2026

GP_2023-0002 / R_2023-0002 - COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION, COUNTY OF MENDOCINO, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, MAKING ITS REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION TO THE MENDOCINO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS REGARDING A GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT AND REZONE TO CHANGE THE CLASSIFICATION AND ZONING OF TWO ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBERS (APNS) FROM RANGELAND (RL) TO REMOTE RESIDENTIAL (RMR) AND FROM RANGELAND (RL 160) TO UPLAND RESIDENTIAL, FORTY ACRE MINIMUM (UR 40).

WHEREAS, the Applicants, Jared and Bonnie Carter, filed an application with the Mendocino County Department of Planning and Building Services to change the General Plan classification and zoning of Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 178-220-09 and 181-240-01 from Rangeland (RL) to Remote Residential (RMR) and Range Lands (RL) to Upland Residential (UR) forty-acre minimums, located 1.75± miles east of Ukiah on the south side of Vichy Springs Road (CR 215) 0.53± miles east of its intersection with Redemeyer Road (CR 215-A) at 1961 Vichy Springs Road, Ukiah. APNs 178-220-09, 181-240-01 (the "project"); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq.; "CEQA") and the CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 California Code of Regulations section 15000 et seq.), a Negative Declaration was prepared for the project and made available for agency and public review on December 31, 2025;

WHEREAS, in accordance with applicable provisions of law, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on February 05, 2026 at which time the Planning Commission heard and received all relevant testimony and evidence presented orally or in writing regarding the Negative Declaration and the Project. All interested persons were given an opportunity to hear and be heard regarding the Project; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has had an opportunity to review this Resolution and finds that it accurately sets forth the intentions of the Planning Commission regarding the Negative Declaration and the Project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission, based on the evidence in the record before it, makes the following report and recommendation to the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors regarding General Plan Amendment GP_2023-0002 and Rezone R_2023-0002:

1. The Planning Commission recommends that the Board of Supervisors adopt the Negative Declaration prepared for General Plan Amendment GP_2023-0002 and R_2023-0002 and find that, on the basis of the whole record before them, that there is no substantial evidence that the project will have a significant effect on the environment and that the negative declaration reflects the Board of Supervisors independent judgment and analysis.

2. The Planning Commission recommends that the Board of Supervisors find the Project consistent with applicable policies and goals of the County's General Plan as discussed in the staff report prepared for the February 05, 2026 Planning Commission meeting.

3. The Planning Commission recommends that the Board of Supervisors approve General Plan Amendment GP_2023-0002 and R_2023-0002, making the amendment to the Mendocino County

General Plan and rezoning APNs 178-220-09 and 181-240-01, as shown in Exhibits "A" and "B" attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning Commission designates the Secretary as the custodian of the document and other material which constitutes the record of proceedings upon which the Planning Commission decision herein is based. These documents may be found at the office of the County of Mendocino Planning and Building Services, 860 North Bush Street, Ukiah, CA 95482.

I hereby certify that according to the Provisions of Government Code Section 25103 delivery of this document has been made.

ATTEST: Jocelyn Gonzalez-Thies
Commission Services Supervisor

By:_____

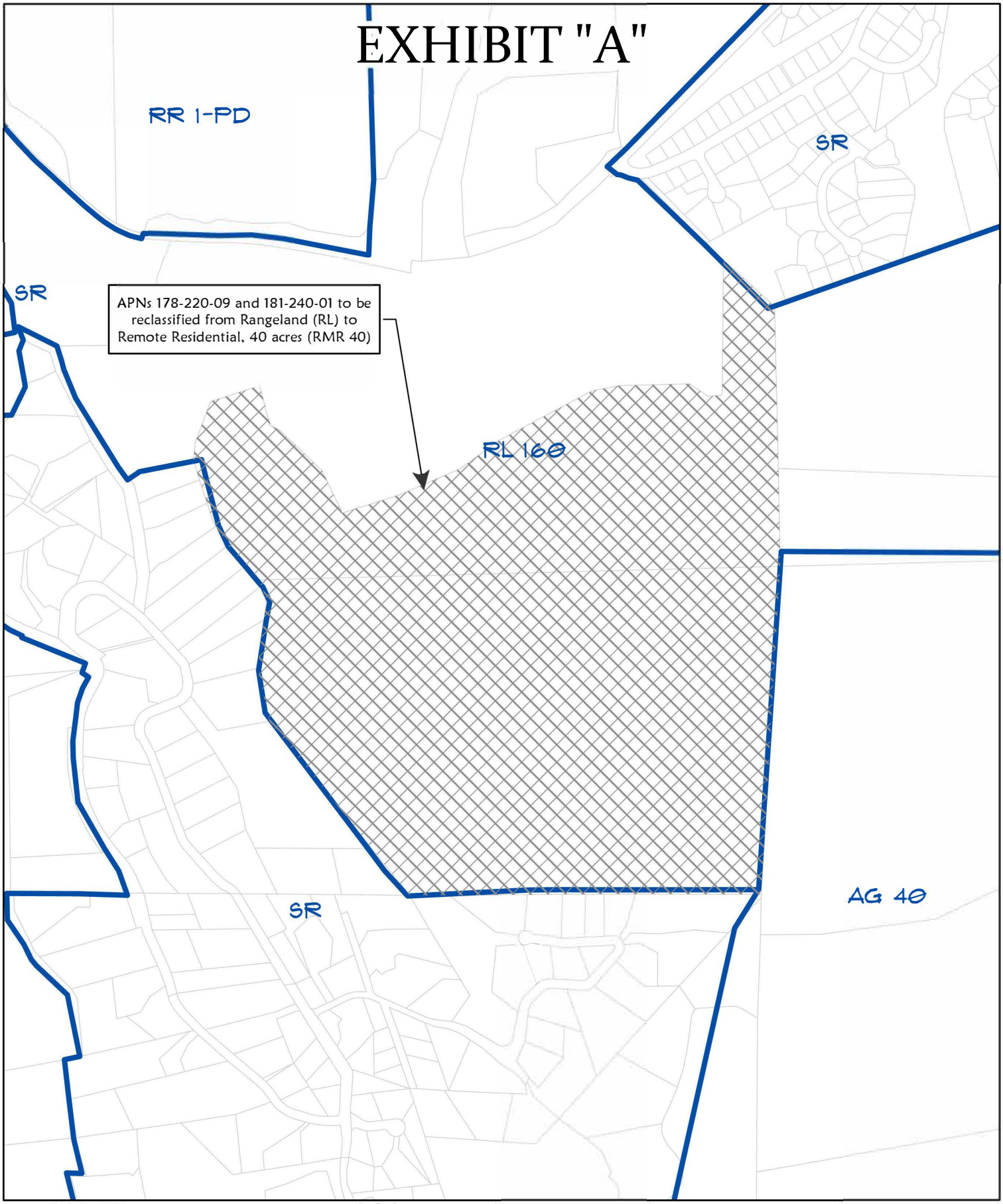
BY JULIA KROG
Planning & Building Director

CLIFF PAULIN, Chair
Mendocino County Planning Commission

EXHIBIT A: GENERAL PLAN EXHIBIT

EXHIBIT B: REZONE EXHIBIT

EXHIBIT "A"



CASE: GP/R 2023-0002
OWNER: Rustic Retirement, LLC
APN/S: 178-220-09, 181-240-01
APPLICANT: Jared & Bonnie Carter
AGENT: None
ADDRESS: 1961 Vichy Springs Road, Ukiah

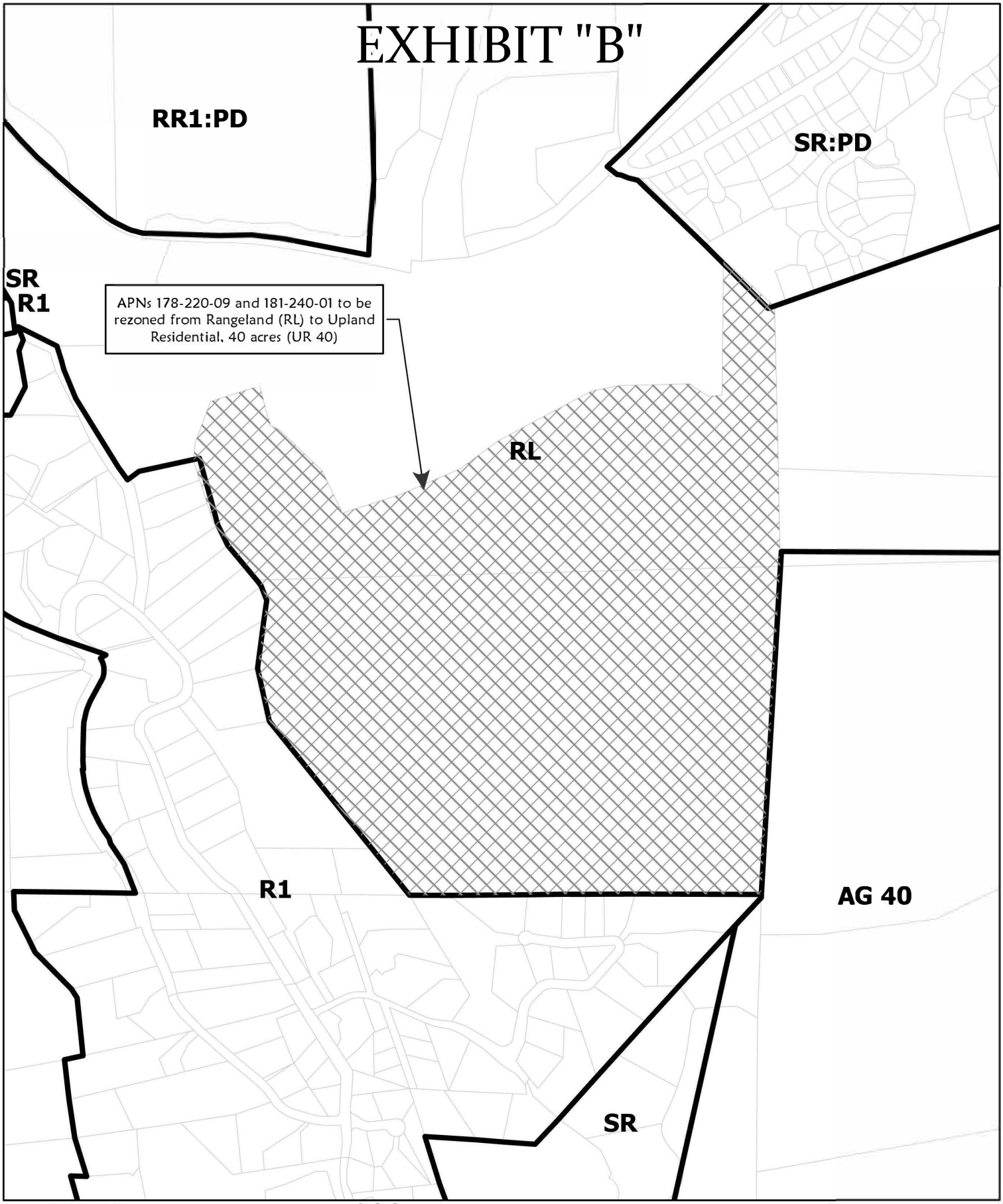
GP 2023-0002
General Plan Classifications
Assessors Parcels

RECLASSIFICATION EXHIBIT

N
W E
S

THIS MAP AND DATA ARE PROVIDED WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND
DO NOT USE THIS MAP TO DETERMINE LEGAL PROPERTY BOUNDARIES

EXHIBIT "B"



CASE: GP/R 2023-0002
OWNER: Rustic Retirement, LLC
APN/S: 178-220-09, 181-240-01
APPLICANT: Jared & Bonnie Carter
AGENT: None
ADDRESS: 1961 Vichy Springs Road, Ukiah

GP 2023-0002
Zoning Districts
Assessors Parcels

REZONE EXHIBIT

N
W E
S

THIS MAP AND DATA ARE PROVIDED WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND
DO NOT USE THIS MAP TO DETERMINE LEGAL PROPERTY BOUNDARIES