

**COUNTY OF EL DORADO DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
STAFF REPORT**



**Agenda of:** April 27, 2017

**Staff:** Evan Mattes

**CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT**

- FILE NUMBER:** S16-0005/4 Directions Farm
- APPLICANTS:** Cindy Keller and Starranne Meyers
- AGENT:** Greg S. Balderree/GSB Architecture Inc.
- REQUEST:** Conditional use permit to allow for the phased construction and operation a private school teaching organic farming skills, which includes the construction of five single-story structures, paving of the existing driveway, a new parking lot, fire lanes, a new water well and a new septic system.
- LOCATION:** South side of Brandon Road, approximately 0.5 mile east of the intersection with South Shingle Road, in the Latrobe area, Supervisorial District 2 (Exhibit A).
- APN:** 087-021-66 (Exhibit B)
- ACREAGE:** 56.8 acres
- GENERAL PLAN:** Rural Residential (RR) (Exhibit C)
- ZONING:** Rural Lands 20-Acre (RL-20) (Exhibit D)
- ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT:** Mitigated Negative Declaration (Exhibit L)
- RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends the Planning Commission take the following actions:
1. Adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration based on the Initial Study prepared by staff;

2. Approve S16-0005 based on the Findings and subject to the Conditions of Approval as presented.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Approval of this Conditional Use Permit would allow for the operation of a private school, teaching organic farming skills to disabled youths, operating Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM, up to 50 students and 20 staff, which includes a demonstration farm and the construction of five single story structures (a market training building; an open gazebo; a general training building; a caretaker residence; and a greenhouse) to be constructed in three phases. Additionally the project includes the paving of existing driveway, a new parking lot, fire lanes and a new septic system and raised planter beds. Private schools are allowed in the Rural Lands 20-Acre (RL-20) Zone, with a Special or Conditional Use permit. A design exception has been requested to allow for increased use of the current driveway where existing sight distance requirements cannot be met. Staff has determined that the proposed project is consistent with the Rural Residential land use designation and RL-20 zone, as well as other applicable El Dorado County General Plan policies and Zoning Ordinance requirements, as discussed in the Findings. Staff has recommended 57 conditions of approval to address concerns of County divisions and local agencies. The applicant has agreed to the conditions of approval and staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the application S16-0005.

## PROJECT INFORMATION

**Site Description:** The project site sits on top of a small hill that slopes to the west and south. Vegetation on-site is blue oak woodland and annual grassland. The site is not within the Important Biological Corridor, but does feature potential habitat for plant and animal species that may occur in oak woodlands and grasslands. The property is traversed by several ephemeral drainage courses, and contains an emergent wetland as well as an intermittent freshwater pond. The project site is currently grazed and onsite structures consist of two animal enclosures and a small shed. The site is accessed by an unpaved driveway off Brandon Road. The entire project site is served by a private well.

**Project Description:** The applicant requests a Conditional Use Permit in order to construct and operate a private school, teaching organic farming skills to disabled youth. The project is proposed to be built in three phases (Exhibit G). Project facilities will include five buildings, a market training building, a monument sign and a wall mounted sign, an open gazebo (Phase 1), a greenhouse (Phase 2), a general training building, and a caretaker residence (Phase 3). The existing driveway will be paved into an on-site roadway, with parking stalls, and the existing encroachment at Brandon Road will be improved. A motorized iron gate and monument sign is proposed to be constructed at the entrance to the project site. Farm workers will be brought to the property by shuttle vans, while staff will arrive in private automobiles. Agricultural activities will include the cultivation of lavender, flowers/herbs (Phase 1), pumpkins (Phase 2), Christmas trees (Phase 2 & 3) and vegetables (Phase 3) as well as the grazing of alpacas. The project will result in small amounts of on-site value-added agriculture, such as soap making from lavender grown on-site. Most products and produce from the project would be taken to retailers nearer to population centers, however the site will be open to the public on a seasonal basis for the sale of

Christmas trees and pumpkins. The site is currently served by a private well and proposes the construction of a new septic system. No tree removal is proposed as the project would detail minor tree trimming. Of the 56.8 acres on the parcel the project site will disturb no more than 3 acres, which equates to 5 percent of the property. The project proposes uses permitted within the RL zone according to Table 130.21.020, as detailed below:

<b>Uses Allowed with Approval of Conditional Use Permit</b>			
Use Type	Proposed Use	Approvals Needed	Specific Use Regulation
Schools, Private	Workshop and training buildings, organic farming training	CUP required	
<b>Uses Permitted by Right</b>			
Animal Raising and Keeping, Grazing	Alpacas and goats	Permitted by right	130.40.080
Accessory Structures	Greenhouse	Permitted by right	130.40.030
Crop Production, Orchards and Vineyards	Lavender, flowers, herbs, Christmas Trees, Pumpkins, vegetables	Permitted by right	
Produce Sales: Sale of Produce Grown on-site	On-site sales	Permitted by right	130.40.240
Packing of on-site and off-site agricultural products, Agriculture, value-added processing	soaps, flower/herb boxes, lavender products, ceramic products, alpaca fiber weaving	Permitted by right	
Nursery, plants: Production and Wholesale	Trees in pots	Permitted by right	
Employee Housing: Agricultural 6 or fewer employees	Caretaker residence	Permitted by right	130.40.120

**Design Exception:** The project site is currently accessed by private driveway to Brandon Road. Brandon Road is a rural, unposted, two-lane road. The project is requesting a design exception to allow increased use on the current driveway where existing sight distance requirements can not be met. El Dorado County design standards indicate the stopping sight distance for such conditions is 305 feet. The existing stopping sight distance in the westerly direction from the proposed access road encroachment at Brandon Road, is approximately 250 feet, and would not meet the design criteria. Staff is recommending the following condition of approval in order to allow the design exception:

A Type W2-2 Intersection Warning Sign shall be installed on eastbound Brandon Road approximately 350 feet west of the project driveway. Sign Placement shall conform to Caltrans Standards Plans RS-1 and RS-2 for wood post signs. The exact location of the sign shall be approved by the Transportation Department.

Staff has analyzed the project for consistency with the General Plan and Zoning. That analysis is described in the Findings section of the staff report and are based on approval of the 57 conditions of approval that are recommended.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

Staff has prepared an Initial Study (Exhibit L). Staff has determined that there is no substantial evidence that the proposed project would have a significant effect on the environment, and a Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared.

**SUPPORT INFORMATION**

**Attachments to Staff Report:**

- Findings
- Conditions of Approval
  
- Exhibit A.....Location Map
- Exhibit B.....Assessor’s Parcel Map
- Exhibit C.....Land Use Designation Map
- Exhibit D.....Zoning Designation Map
- Exhibit E.....Aerial Map
- Exhibit F.....Site Plan
- Exhibit G.....Preliminary Grading Plan
- Exhibit H.....Elevation Plan
- Exhibit I.....Sign Plan
- Exhibit J.....4 Directions Farm Phasing Summary
- Exhibit K.....Agricultural Commission Memorandum; February 9, 2017
- Exhibit L.....Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and Initial Study