

STAFF REPORT

PROJECT INFORMATION:

Application: PLN210016 Minor Subdivision request to divide a 23.7-acre agricultural parcel into a 10.1-acre parcel and a 13.6-acre parcel, San Juan Bautista Area.

Public Hearing: November 17, 2021

Applicant: Wald, Ruhnke, Dost Architects, LLP, Alan Hendry

Owner: 700 Duncan Holdings, LLC, Sheena and Vijay Viadyanathan

Location: 700 Duncan Avenue, San Juan Bautista, CA 95045, near Bixby Road

APN: 018-080-020

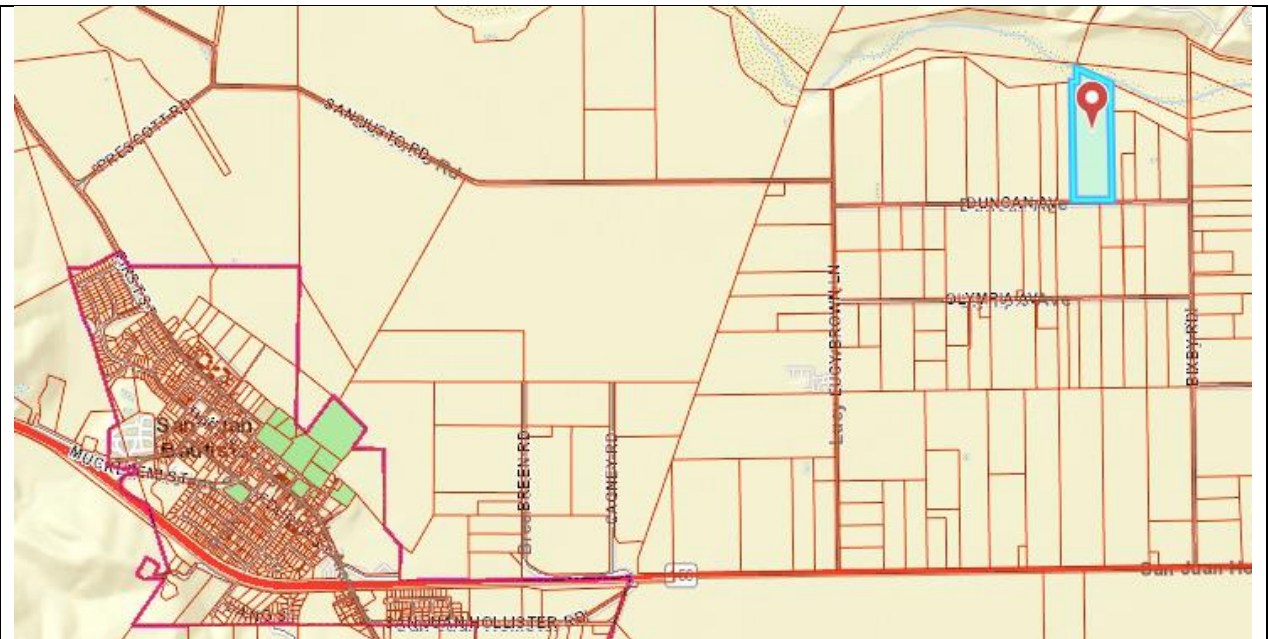
General Plan: Agriculture (A)

Zoning: Agricultural Productive (AP)

Planner: Taven M. Kinison Brown

SITE DESCRIPTION:

The proposed project is located 700 Duncan Avenue, San Juan Bautista area, near Bixby Road and encompasses 23.7 acres of agricultural properties. The property is surrounded by other farming uses on three sides and the San Benito River to the North.



Vicinity Map.
Northeast of San Juan Bautista, west of Bixby Road, North side of Duncan Avenue

Legal Lot of Record: Yes. San Benito County Official Records, Deed of Partition, Recorded February 28, 1961, in Volume 264, Page 570.

Minimum Building Site Allowed: Five acres.

Sewage Disposal: Septic System (if needed in the future)

Water: Well

State Farmland Map Designation: Prime Farmland and Other Land.

Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act): Not a preserve.

Soils: Grade 1

Seismic: Not within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone.

FEMA Flood Zone: Not within a floodplain, except for a small portion of the northern boundary with the San Benito River.

Fire Severity: Non wildland/non-urban, and high hazard adjacent to river.

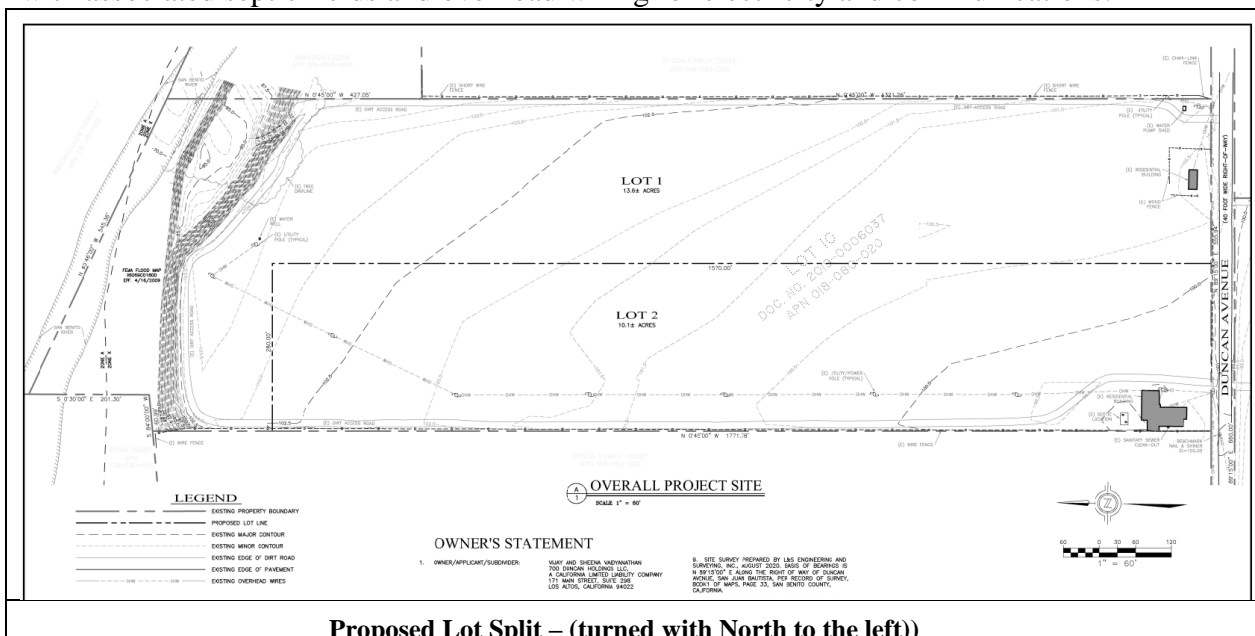
Wildlife Habitat: Not within a mapped habitat area.

Archaeological Sensitivity: Roughly, the northern half of the original parcel is shown to be Highly Sensitive.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is a request to divide a 23.7-acre agricultural parcel into a 10.1-acre parcel and a 13.6-acre parcel, San Juan Bautista Area. A farm road circumscribes the perimeter of the property and along the southern edge of the river channel. No new roads or access improvements are proposed. Two residential structures exist on the original property size, with associated septic fields and overhead wiring for electricity and communications.



According to the Applicant, the lot split is being proposed to allow a lowed point of affordability for ownership (in smaller parcels) for persons who have worked farmlands yet have not been able to purchase farmlands previously; on behalf of ALBA, the Agricultural and Land Based Training Association. According to the ALBA website, “ALBA creates opportunities for low-income field laborers through land-based training in organic farm management, helping them advance their careers or pursue the dream of farm ownership.” See <https://albafarmers.org/>.

PLANNING AND ZONING

The property is designated as Agriculture (A) by the County General Plan and Agricultural Productive (AP) by the Zoning Ordinance. The General Plan designation is intended for agriculture, activities in support of agriculture, and residential uses if on building sites of at least five acres. The AP zoning district implements the A land use designation. Both designations allow secondary dwellings for family relatives and employees provided the minimum building site area, and one accessory dwelling as large as 1,200 square feet. These potential structures would be allowed on each lot as directed by State law for zones permitting residential use.

ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

The project is Categorically Exempt, per California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15061 (b)(3). The activity is covered by the common sense exemption that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where there can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA.

The site is presently farmed agricultural land and no new development is proposed at this time. The two-lot parcel map conforms to the General Plan and Zoning District. The existing 23.7-acre agricultural parcel has grade-1 soils, is actively farmed, but does not include a Williamson Act contract. The new smaller parcels will remain productive.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The subdivision proposes a 10.1-acre lot and a 13.6-acre lot, double the minimum building site of the Agricultural Productive (AP) zoning district and half the permissible density of the site’s Agricultural (A) land use designation under the County General Plan. The project site is in a location that is not environmental sensitive. The applicant’s intent is for agricultural activities to remain the primary use of land, not residential development. The draft resolution (Attachment B) contains findings recognizing the lot split’s suitability for the setting and its compliance with the General Plan.

While new development is not proposed or expected at this time, the General Plan includes policies to reduce impacts from development and construction. Among these are Policy NCR-4.7, regarding best-management practices for preserving water quality through runoff reduction and source controls, and Policy HS-5.4, to minimize particulate matter emissions that could be generated by construction. Conditions of project approval have been included to implement these requirements in this project should a residential construction permit be applied for later. Also addressing environmental concerns are conditions that restrict use of water softeners, limit

exterior lighting, provide guidance should cultural resources be discovered and require a financial contribution to habitat conservation planning. Together these conditions can allow the subdivision to be realized with minimal environmental impact.

Lastly, the proposal has been reviewed by multiple public agencies for compliance with regulations, reduction of environmental effects, and proper design. These agencies have offered conditions of approval that are included in the staff recommendation and resolution for Planning Commission action.

Per County Code Section 23.07.006 (D)(2), the Planning Commission may modify or delete any of the conditions of approval recommended in the Planning Department report. The Planning Commission may also add requirements as a condition of its approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission review the staff report and review the attached draft resolution in Attachment B, which includes findings and recommended conditions of approval. Staff further recommends that the Planning Commission make the findings included in the resolution and adopt the resolution to approve the lot split request for 700 Duncan Holdings, LLC (PLN210016, Minor Subdivision), subject to the conditions of approval found in the resolution.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Proposed Tentative Parcel Map
- B. Planning Commission Resolution 2021-____

Proposed Tentative Parcel Map,

