COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 5/7/2026

File #: 26-435

To: Planning Commission

From: Planning and Building Department

Agenda Section: Consent

SUBJECT:
Humboldt Farm, LLC Conditional Use Permit
Assessor Parcel Numbers (APN) 212-041-005 and 214-233-008
Record No.: PLN-11025-CUP
Miranda area

A Conditional Use Permit for 40,000 square feet of existing outdoor commercial cannabis cultivation and 4,000 square feet of ancillary propagation. All water for cultivation is sourced from a permitted well. Existing water storage is 101,200 gallons in a series of tanks. Estimated annual water usage is 194,500 gallons. Power is provided by a proposed solar system with generators reserved for emergency use only.

RECOMMENDATION(S):
That the Planning Commission:

1. Adopt the resolution, (Attachment 1) which does the following:

    a. Finds the Planning Commission has considered the Addendum (Attachment 3) to the Mitigated Negative Declaration previously adopted for the Commercial Medical Marijuana Land Use Ordinance that was prepared for the Humboldt Farm, LLC project; and

    b. Finds that the proposed project complies with the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance; and

    c. Approves the Conditional Use Permit as recommended by staff and subject to the conditions of approval (Attachment 1A).

DISCUSSION:
Project Location: The project is in the Miranda area, approximately 2.51 miles south from the

intersection of State Highway 254 and French Road, on the property know as 2520 French Road.

Present General Plan Land Use Designation: Timberland (T), 2017 General Plan, Density: 40-160 acres per unit, Slope Stability: Moderate Instability (2).

Present Zoning: Timberland Production (TPZ).

Environmental Review: An Addendum to a previously adopted Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared for consideration per §15164 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

State Appeal: Project is NOT appealable to the California Coastal Commission.

Major Concerns: None.

Monitoring Required: Annual Compliance Monitoring.

Executive Summary: A Conditional Use Permit for 40,000 square feet of existing outdoor commercial cannabis cultivation and 4,000 square feet of ancillary propagation. All water for cultivation is sourced from a permitted well. Existing water storage is 101,200 gallons in a series of tanks. Estimated annual water usage is 194,500 gallons. Power is provided by a proposed solar system with generators reserved for emergency use only. The project includes onsite relocation and restoration.

The single legal parcel is comprised of APNs 212-041-005 and 214-233-008. Cultivation takes place in four areas utilizing light deprivation techniques and full sun outdoor areas. Proposed on site processing includes, drying, curing, trimming, and packaging. Trimming cannot occur until adequate facilities such as septic are installed. The permitted groundwater well has been deemed hydrologically disconnected by a Geologist and use of the well will not impact Public Trust Resources.

A biological assessment found some sensitive plants near one of the cultivation areas and a buffer area and fencing are recommended. Additional assessment and survey are required for the proposed relocation area before any ground disturbance is allowed. As proposed and conditioned, the project is consistent with CMMLUO performance standards and CDFW guidance and will not negatively affect the Northern Spotted Owl or other sensitive species.

Access is taken from French Road, which is privately maintained, and staff has determined that the road functions at a Category 4 standard. The project parcels have experienced timber conversion that have been deemed in compliance with the Forest Practice Rules by a Registered Professional Forester. Cal Fire responded to the project referral with no comment. No new grading is proposed. The project is also conditioned to include the standard inadvertent discovery protocol regarding tribal cultural resources. The project, if approved, would be consistent with Humboldt County Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 18-43.

Water Resources: Estimated annual water usage is 194,500 gallons (4.42 gallons per square foot per year). Permit conditions include the installation of a water meter **(Condition of Approval A4)**.

Irrigation is provided by a permitted groundwater well (16/17-1272) **(Attachment 4A)**. The groundwater Well Completion Report (WCR2017-006002) **(Attachment 4B)** indicates that it yields approximately 18 gallons per minute. The irrigation well is located at coordinates 40.1931660, -123.8106990. Per the Operations Plan, irrigation water will be applied by hand watering, and a timed, metered, drip irrigation system is proposed to minimize overwatering and reduce the risk of irrigation runoff. The Site Plan indicates a second groundwater well. This well cannot be used for irrigation but can be used for to handwashing and cleaning associated with accessory uses such as processing **(Condition of Approval B3)**.

A geologic analysis of the irrigation well was prepared by Lindberg Geologic Consulting in September 2022 **(Attachment 4C)** to assess hydrologic connection to surface waters, wetlands or wells. Per the analysis, the well has a low potential of having any direct connection to surface waters. The nearest watercourse, Coon Creek is Class II and approximately 1,380 feet to the west. The elevation of the bottom of the well is 1,195, above sea level and Coon Creek is 245 feet below the bottom of the well. Based on elevation and distance and other factors, the analysis concludes there is sufficient evidence to preclude the potential for hydrologic connectivity with surface waters or other water resources such as wetlands. As the well is hydrologically disconnected from surface waters, it does not result in any impacts to public trust resources.

The project site has an active Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement (LSAA) (1600-2019-0750-R1) **(Attachment 4F)**. The project is conditioned to comply with the terms of the LSAA **(Condition of Approval C16)**.

There are five Class III streams on the project parcels. Also located on near the project sites are two Class II watercourses one of which is the headwater to Coon Creek which is a tributary of South Fork Eel River that runs parallel and is approximately over 1,300 feet to the west of the parcels. Per the Site Plan, all project related uses and structures a sufficiently setback from streams.

The project is subject to the State Water Board General Order No. WQ 2019-0001-DWQ. The applicant has provided documentation demonstrating enrollment **(Attachment 4B and 4C)**.

The project referral to the Division of Environmental Health **(Attachment 5)** resulted in a recommendation of approval with conditions. Seasonal cultivation areas may be supported by portable toilets. If portable toilets are used, records must be kept and made available upon request during annual inspections **(Condition of Approval B4)**. The onsite septic system may not be used unless an evaluation by a qualified professional is provided certifying system capacity and functionality. The septic system evaluation must be reviewed and approved by the Division of

Environmental Health. **(Condition of Approval B4)**. Trimming may not occur on site unless done in a permitted commercial building with an approved septic system **(Condition of Approval B5)**. Trimming and packaging must occur off site an a licensed facility until a permitted structure and septic system are constructed **(Condition of Approval B5)**.

Biological Resources: The Timberland Conversion Evaluation Report, prepared by Timberland Resource Consultants indicates one observation of a sensitive, rare, threatened, or endangered species or special of special concern within a 0.7-mile radius. A peregrine falcon was observed in the southern parcel (APN 214-233-008). The Report concluded the sighting may be associated with a nesting site somewhere on the Bear Buttes in the surrounding area. The nearest NSO Activity Center is 0.7 miles north (HUM0527). Another activity center is 1.49 miles northwest (HUM0528) and 1.8 miles west (HUM1122). The project proposes outdoor cultivation utilizing light deprivation techniques only. The project has been conditioned to ensure supplemental lighting associated with the nursery adheres to Dark Sky Association standards including security lighting **(Condition of Approval C3)**. Permit conditions of approval also prohibit using synthetic netting for erosion control **(Condition of Approval B12 and C5)**, ensure refuse is contained in wildlife-proof storage **(Condition of Approval C6)** , and prohibit use of anticoagulant rodenticides to further protect wildlife **(Condition of Approval C8)**. Additionally, any noise sources are limited to 50dB at 100 feet or forest edge, whichever is closer **(Condition of Approval C2)**. As proposed and conditioned, the project is consistent with CMMLUO performance standards and CDFW guidance and will not negatively affect the Northern Spotted Owl or other sensitive species.

A Floristic Survey Report was prepared by Wildland Restoration and Botanical Services **(Attachment 4H)**. The survey was limited to the central cultivation area and did not cover the southernmost cultivation area referred to as Site F in the Site Management Plan and Timberland Conversion Evaluation Report. Results found multiple occurrences of special status plants in the project area within 150 feet of one of the cultivation sites. The proximity indicates that impacts to sensitive species from the cultivation area are possible. The Report recommendations include a 50-foot buffer and the construction of a fence to prevent accidental intrusion into the area. Employees will also be given an orientation to avoid the area **(Condition of Approval A9)**. Additional conditions of approval from the Report recommendations include weed free straw and the generation and implementation of an integrated pest management and invasive species management plans **(Condition of Approval A10)**. Project conditions also include limiting construction to outside the Northern Spotted Owl breeding season and affixing lids to all water tanks **(Conditions of Approval A11 and A12)**.

Site Relocation and Restoration: An Operations Plan Addendum and the Site Plan propose the relocation of approximately 8,000 square feet of cultivation because the two areas identified have been deemed unsuitable by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). The conditions of approval require the development and implementation of a restoration plan for the two retired areas. This plan must be reviewed and approved by the Planning and Building Department in consultation with CDFW prior to implementation **(Condition of Approval A13)**. The restoration plan must be

prepared by a qualified professional and include success criteria and monitoring. The restoration plan must include decommissioning of roads as requested by CDFW **(Condition of Approval A13)**.

The proposed relocation area is known as Site F in the Site Management Plan and The Timberland Conversion Evaluation Report. Prior to relocating any cultivation to this area, the applicant must provide a Biological Assessment and a seasonally appropriate, protocol level Botanical Survey prepared by a qualified professional. The Assessment and Survey results must be reviewed and approved by the Planning and Building Department in consultation with CDFW prior to any ground disturbance in the area **(Condition of Approval A13)**. If sensitive resources are identified and mitigation is not possible, the cultivation cannot be relocated and will be permanently retired.

Energy: Per the Operations Plan addendum, power will be provided by a proposed solar system. Generators may only be used for emergencies (**Condition of Approval B6**).

Access: Access is taken from French Road, which is privately maintained, and French Road takes access from Highway 101. Staff reviewed a road evaluation for an approved Conditional Use Permit for cannabis cultivation that also takes access from French Road and determined there is sufficient evidence to conclude that French Road functions equivalent to a Category 4 standard. There will be a maximum of seven employees at peak operations. The site plan will need to be revised to depict the location of parking (**Condition of Approval A3**).

Geologic Suitability: The project parcel is mapped in the County GIS as moderate instability. The existing cultivation is in areas mapped as 15 - 50% slope. No new grading is proposed or authorized to implement the project **(Condition of Approval B2)**. The project is conditioned to obtain after the fact grading permits for graded flats that were created for the operation. **(Condition of Approval A8)**.

Timber Conversion: The project parcel is zoned TPZ and almost entirely forested**.** Cannabis cultivation and accessory activities such as trimming occur in clearings and previously converted areas. A Less Than 3 Acre Conversion Exemption **(Attachment 4I)** totaling 2.9 acres was approved by Cal Fire in November 2015. Additionally, a Timberland Conversion Evaluation Report prepared by a Registered Professional Forester **(Attachment 4G)** determined that Site F was previously used as a log landing under an approved Timber Harvest Plan (THP 1-07-047 HUM). The Forester concluded that the total conversion area is approximately 2.74 acres, which is less than what was contemplated under the Conversion Exemption approved by Cal Fire. A referral response was received from Cal Fire with no comments **(Attachment 5)**.

No additional tree removal is proposed or authorized by this permit and any structures must be located accordingly to not require any tree removal. If a Registered Professional Forester determines tree removal is needed to protect structures associated with cannabis operations, the structure(s) will either need to be moved to comply with appropriate distances or the structure(s) removed, and the cultivation converted to full sun cultivation techniques to avoid any timber conversion **(Condition of**

Approval B7).

Security and Safety: Per the Operations Plan, the operation is secured behind locking metal gates, and a caretaker is present. The Site Plan provided by the applicant shows adequate space for emergency vehicle turnaround in the central cultivation area but does not depict that capability in other project areas. The Site Plan does not show water storage dedicated to fire suppression. The project is conditioned to provide a water source dedicated to fire protection and provide a site plan update **(Condition of Approval A3 and A5)**. The project parcel is within the Miranda Voluntary Fire Department (VFD) response area. The project is conditioned to provide a will-serve letter from the VFD or record an acknowledgement of no available emergency response and fire suppression services **(Condition of Approval A6)**. The project is also conditioned to obtain after the fact building permits and/or agriculture exemptions for all project structures **(Condition of Approval A7)**.

Tribal Consultation: The project is within the historic aboriginal territory of the Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria and the Intertribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council. The project was referred to the Northwest Information Center, the Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria, and the Intertribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council. The Bear River Tribal Historic Preservation Office recommended the standard inadvertent discovery protocol, which has been incorporated into the project **(Condition of Approval C1)**.

Consistency with Humboldt County Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 18-43: Approval of this project is consistent with Humboldt County Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 18-43 which established a limit on the number of permits and acres which may be approved in each of the County's Planning Watersheds. The project site is in the South Fork Eel Planning Watershed, which under Resolution 18-43 is limited to 730 permits and 251 acres of cultivation. With the approval of this project the total approved permits in this Planning Watershed would be 308 permits and the total approved acres would be 95 acres of cultivation.

Environmental Review: Environmental review for this project was conducted and staff conclude that all aspects of the project have been considered in a previously adopted Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) that was adopted for the CMMLUO. Staff have prepared an addendum (Attachment 3) to the MND for consideration by the Planning Commission.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:
The project was referred to responsible agencies and all responding agencies have either responded with no comment or recommended approval or conditional approval. (Attachment 5)

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:
1. The Planning Commission could elect to add or delete conditions of approval. The Planning Commission could deny approval if unable to make all the required findings. Staff have concluded the required findings in support of the proposal as conditioned can be made. Consequently, Staff

does not recommend further consideration of these alternatives.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution
    A. Conditions of Approval
    B. Cultivation and Operations Plan with Addendums
    C. Site Plan
2. Location Map
3. CEQA Addendum
4. Applicant's Evidence in Support of the Required Findings
    A. Well Permit
    B. Well Completion Report
    C. Well Geologic Analysis
    D. Notice of Applicability
    E. Site Management Plan
    F. Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement
    G. Timberland Conversion Evaluation Report
    H. Floristic Survey
    I. Less Than 3 Acre Conversion Exemption
5. Referral Agency Comments and Recommendations
    A. Environmental Health
    B. California Department of Fish and Wildlife
    C. Cal Fire

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