

County of Fresno

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND PLANNING STEVEN E. WHITE, DIRECTOR

Planning Commission Staff Report Agenda Item No. 4 January 25, 2024

SUBJECT: Variance No. 4149, Director Review and Approval No. 4734, and Environmental Review No. 8364

Variance to waive road frontage requirements (165-foot minimum) and lot depth ratio requirements necessary to allow a property lot line adjustment reducing APN: 335-090-93 by 1.82-acres (from 17.08-acres to 15.26-acres) and enlarging APN: 335-090-14 by 1.82acres (from 0.29-acres to 2.11-acres) and consider a Directors Review and Approval to allow an existing 1,248 square feet second residence and an existing 1,412 square feet primary residence on APN: 335-090-14 within the AE-20 (Exclusive Agricultural, 20-acre minimum parcel size) Zone District.

LOCATION: The subject parcels are located on the west side of Maple Avenue, approximately 680 feet north of Sumner Avenue, 2.8-miles south from the City of Fresno (APNs: 335-090-93 and 335-090-14) (7349 S. Maple Ave.) (Sup. Dist. 1).

OWNER/APPLICANT: John Jensen

STAFF CONTACT: Elliot Racusin, Planner (559) 600-4245

David Randall, Senior Planner (559) 600-4052

RECOMMENDATION:

- Approve Variance No. 4149 and Director Review and Approval No. 4734 based on the analysis of the required findings in the Staff Report; and
- Direct the Secretary to prepare a Resolution documenting the Commission's action.

EXHIBITS:

- 1. Conditions of Approval and Project Notes
- 2. Location Map
- 3. Existing Zoning Map
- 4. Existing Land Use Map
- 5. Variances within one mile of subject parcel
- 6. Site Plan
- 7. Floor Plan
- 8. Elevations/ Photos
- 9. Applicant's Variance Findings

SITE DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONAL INFORMATION:

Criteria	Existing	Proposed
General Plan Designation	Agriculture	No change
Zoning	AE-20 (Exclusive Agricultural, 20-acre minimum parcel size) Zone District	No change
Parcel Size	Parcel 1: 0.29 acres Parcel 2: 17.08 acres	Parcel 1: 2.11 acres (increased by 1.82 acre) Parcel 2: 15.26 acres (decreased by 1.82 acres)
Project Site	See description under parcel size.	See proposed Parcel Sizes above.
Structural Improvements	Parcel '1' is improved with a single-family residence and a detached garage Parcel '2' is improved with a single-family residence and a detached garage	Adjust property lines to accommodate both existing homes, 1,412 square foot and 1,248 square foot respectfully on the proposed 2.11-acres. The secondary 15.26-acre parcel will continue to be used to support agricultural operations.
Nearest Residence	400-feet north of homesite parcel	No change

EXISTING VIOLATION (Y/N) AND NATURE OF VIOLATION: N

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

It has been determined pursuant to Section 15305(a) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines: Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations, that the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment and is not subject to CEQA.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

Notices were sent to 21 property owners within 1,320 feet of the subject parcel, exceeding the minimum notification requirements prescribed by the California Government Code and County Zoning Ordinance.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comment was received as of the date of preparation of this report.

PROCEDURAL CONSIDERATIONS:

VARIANCE:

A Variance Application may be approved only if four Findings specified in the Fresno County Zoning Ordinance, Section 873-F are made by the Planning Commission.

The decision of the Planning Commission on a Variance Application is final, unless appealed to the Board of Supervisors within 15 days of the Commission's action.

The minimum parcel size that may be created in the AE-20 Zone District is 20 acres. A property owner may not create parcels with less than the 20-acre minimum parcel size if they do not qualify under the conditions listed in Section 817.5, or unless the substandard-size parcel is approved through the Variance process. The previous residential use and nonconforming status of the subject parcels does not exempt the property from the 20-acre minimum established to protect productive farming units and limit residential density to the standards of the Zone District.

DIRECTOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL:

Pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance, Section 872.C, a Director Review and Approval (DRA) Application may be approved only if four Findings specified within the ordinance are made by the Planning Commission.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

County records indicate that the subject parcels were zoned A-1 (Agricultural District, 36,000 square-foot minimum parcel size required) on June 8, 1960. On August 31, 1976, the subject property and several other properties in the area were rezoned (Amendment Application No. 2870) from the A-1 Zone District to the AE-20 (Exclusive Agricultural, 20-acre minimum parcel size) Zone District which resulted in the existing parcel configuration. The current zoning on the property is AE-20.

The existing homesite parcel contains a 1,248 square-foot single-family residence with attached garage, on-site sewage disposal system, a water well, and one shed. The remainder of the property is in farming operation.

A Variance Application is required to allow the creation of two substandard legal parcels in the AE-20 Zone District. Should this Variance be approved, a subsequent mapping procedure

would be required. Staff notes that every variance request is considered on its own merit and is based upon the four required Findings and circumstances of the property.

County records indicate there were no variance requests within a ¹/₄ mile radius of the parcel.

<u>Finding 1:</u> There are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applicable to the property involved which do not apply generally to other property in the vicinity having the identical zoning classification.

	Current Standard:	Proposed Configuration:	Is Standard Met (y/n):
Setbacks	AE-20 Front: 35 feet Side: 20 feet Rear: 20 feet	No change	Yes
Parking	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lot Coverage	No requirement	N/A	N/A
Separation Between Buildings	No requirement for residential or accessory structures, excepting those used to house animals which must be located a minimum of 40 feet from any human- occupied building.	N/A	N/A
Wall Requirements	N/A	N/A	N/A
Septic Replacement Area	100 percent of the existing system	No change	N/A
Water Well Separation	Building sewer/septic tank: 50 feet Disposal field: 100 feet Seepage pit/cesspool: 150 feet	Any existing or proposed water wells will be required to meet minimum setbacks (separation) from proposed septic systems.	Yes

Reviewing Agency/Department Comments Regarding Site Adequacy:

No comments specific to site adequacy were expressed by reviewing Agencies or Departments.

Finding 1 Analysis:

In support of Finding 1, the applicant states that the proposed subject parcels will not cause any negative effects to the character, existing development pattern, nor increase the intensity of the property from this proposal.

Regarding Finding 1, upon analyzing the site aerial photo, the proposed parcel line adjustment (Site Plan) and comments from reviewing agencies, staff has concluded that adjusting the existing homesite parcel to envelop the two existing homes are justified. The Applicant's Findings (Exhibit 7) merit the requested parcel configuration proposed with the Variance request, and as such support meeting Finding 1.

Recommended Conditions of Approval:

None.

Finding 1 Conclusion:

Finding 1 can be made as there are extraordinary circumstances relating to the property that could not apply to other properties in the same zone classification.

<u>Finding 2:</u> Such Variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right of the applicant, which right is possessed by other property owners under like conditions in the vicinity having the identical zoning classification.</u>

Reviewing Agency/Department Comments:

No comments specific to the preservation of a substantial property right were expressed by reviewing Agencies or Departments.

Finding 2 Analysis:

Variances can only be used to provide relief to preserve the "substantial property right" to be able to utilize a property for the intended use of the zoning. If regulations and unique physical attributes prohibit this property from realizing any reasonable use intended under the zoning, a variance would be appropriate to preserve the "substantial property right". The intent of the variance is to create/adjust the existing parcel line configuration to be more in-line with the existing physical conditions of the land.

Staff concurs with the applicant as the adjustment of the existing homesite parcel is in keeping with the property right enjoyed by other owners in the vicinity, under the same zoning.

Recommended Conditions of Approval:

None.

Finding 2 Conclusion:

Finding 2 can be made based on the above analysis as including the two homes as a part of the homesite parcel in this circumstance would allow for a substantial property right of the applicant, which right is possessed by other property owners under like conditions (existing homesite parcels).

Finding 3: The granting of a variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property and improvement in the vicinity in which the property is located.

Surrounding Parcels

	Size (acres):	Use:	Zoning:	Nearest Residence:
North:	18.24	Orchard	AE-20	500 feet
South:	15.3	Single Family Residence	AE-20	300 feet
East:	19.56	Orchard	AE-20	N/A
West:	16.79	Single Family Residence	AE-20	N/A

Reviewing Agency/Department Comments:

<u>Water and Natural Resources Division of the Fresno County Department of Public Works</u> <u>and Planning:</u> The subject parcel is not located in a water-short area.

No other comments specific to land use compatibility were expressed by reviewing Agencies or Departments.

Finding 3 Analysis:

The Applicant's statement justifying the finding, indicates that the variance will not change what is currently occurring on the property, and verifies it is the intention of the applicant, if this variance is approved, to continue to use the existing homes contained within the existing homesite parcel and the larger parcel will continue to be farmed.

Staff has noted that the subject property is in an area of both residential and agricultural uses, primarily orchards and row crops. Parcel sizes in the immediate vicinity range from one acre to 30 acres. The proposed property line adjustment would result in a minimal change to the configuration and size of both existing parcels. The parcel being enlarged does not pose a significant detriment to the public.

The requested reduction of the required road frontage requirements reasonable accommodation based on the circumstances presented. The parcels are unlikely to have any adverse impacts from the road frontage of the larger parcel.

Recommended Conditions of Approval:

Setbacks for new construction shall be based on the ultimate right-of-way.

Finding 3 Conclusion:

Finding 3 can be made, based on the above information and with adherence to the requirements included as project notes the proposal will not have adverse effects upon surrounding properties.

<u>Finding 4:</u> The granting of such a variance will not be contrary to the objectives of the <u>General Plan.</u>

Relevant Policies:	Consistency/Considerations:
General Plan Policy LU-A.6: The County shall maintain twenty (20) acres as the minimum permitted parcel size in areas designated Agriculture, except as provided in Policies LU-A.9, LU- A.10, and LU-A.11. The County may require parcel sizes larger than twenty (20) acres based on zoning, local agricultural conditions, and to help ensure the viability of agricultural operations.	Consistent: The Applicant is requesting a Variance from the 20-acre minimum parcel size requirement. The parcel was previously granted as a homesite parcel. The intent is to increase the homesite parcel, thus becoming more aligned with the 20-acre minimum size.
General Plan Policy LU-A.7: County shall generally deny requests to create parcels less than the minimum size specified in Policy LU-A.6 based on concerns that these parcels are less viable economic farming units, and that the resultant increase in residential density increases the potential for conflict with normal agricultural practices on adjacent parcels. Evidence that the affected parcel may be an uneconomic farming unit due to its current size, soil conditions, or other factors shall not alone be considered a sufficient basis to grant an exception. The decision-making body shall consider the negative incremental and cumulative effects such land divisions have on the agricultural community.	Consistent: Staff believes that this request is not contrary to General Plan Policy because the resultant parcel would not be substantially smaller than it is currently and would therefore not affect its viability as farmland. No additional development is proposed therefore no increase in residential density would occur.
General Plan Policy PF-C.17: The County shall, prior to consideration of any discretionary project related to land use, undertake a water supply evaluation.	Consistent: This proposal was reviewed by the Water and Natural Resources Division, which did not express concerns related to water supply.

Reviewing Agency Comments:

Policy Planning Section of the Development Services Division: The subject parcel is designated Agriculture. Policy LU-A.6 states that the County shall maintain twenty (20) acres as the minimum permitted parcel size in areas designated Agriculture. Additionally, General Plan Policy LU-A.7 states that the County shall generally deny requests to create parcels less than the minimum size specified by the acreage designation in agricultural areas. Those policies are detailed in the table above. The subject parcel is not subject to a Williamson Act Contract.

No other comments specific to General Plan Policy were expressed by reviewing Agencies or Departments.

Finding 4 Analysis:

In support of Finding 4, the applicant's findings assert that the purpose of the property line adjustment to modify property lines will not adversely affect the production of agriculture as it will not reduce agricultural production or its intensity. Accordingly, there will be no change in

land available for agricultural production, as the quantity of land being transferred is less than one tenth of an acre.

Staff notes that General Plan Goal LU-A is "to promote the long-term conservation of productive and potentially-productive agricultural lands and to accommodate agricultural support services and agriculturally-related activities that support the viability of agriculture and further the County's economic development goals."

Staff concurs with the applicant's statement that the project would not be contrary to the objectives of the General Plan. There are no new parcels being created and neither of the existing parcels conform to minimum lot size requirements. If the Variance is approved, the net result would be a negligible area of productive farmland; and would not substantially hinder the potential for continued agricultural use of the property.

Finding 4 Conclusion:

Finding 4 can be made as the variance will not be contrary to the objectives of the General Plan.

DIRECTOR REIVEW AND APPROVAL:

<u>Finding 1:</u> That the site of the proposed use is adequate in size and shape to accommodate said use and all yards, spaces, walls and fences, parking, loading, landscaping and other features required by this Division, to adjust said use with land and uses in the neighborhood.

Reviewing Agencies/Department Comments Regarding Site Adequacy:

<u>Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division:</u> In the case of this application, it appears the parcel can accommodate the sewage disposal systems and expansion areas meeting the mandatory setback requirements established in the California Plumbing Code and California Well Standards Ordinance.

Recommended Conditions of Approval:

None.

Finding 1 Analysis & Conclusion:

Finding 1 can be made with the adherence to the aforementioned requirements included as Conditions of Approval and mandatory Project Notes staff believes that the lot line adjustments are adequate in size and shape to accommodate the proposed use.

Finding 2: The site for the proposed use relates to streets and highways adequate in width and pavement type to carry the quantity and kind of traffic generated by the proposed use.

		Existing Conditions	Proposed Operation
Private Road	No	N/A	N/A
Public Road Frontage	Yes	Maple Avenue	No change
Direct Access to Public Road	Yes	Maple Avenue	No change
Road ADT		400	No change

		Existing Conditions	Proposed Operation
Road Classification		Maple Avenue (Local Road)	No change
Road Width		19.9 feet with dirt shoulders	No change
Road Surface		Paved	No change
Traffic Trips		Residential	Additional Residential trips
Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) Prepared	No	N/A	N/A
Road Improvements		None	None

Reviewing Agencies/Department Comments:

<u>Road Maintenance and Operations Section of the Fresno County Department of Public</u> <u>Works and Planning:</u> No comment. The project will have no impact on County roads.

Finding 2 Analysis & Conclusion:

Finding 2 can be made based on Staff's determination that the streets are adequate to accommodate the proposed use.

<u>Finding 3:</u> <u>The proposed use will have no adverse impact on abutting property and surrounding neighborhood or the permitted use thereof.</u>

Reviewing Agencies/Department Comments:

None.

Building Sizes:

Size of Existing Primary House	Size of Proposed House (2,000 feet max):
1,412 square feet	1,248 square feet

Surrounding Properties:

	Size (acres):	Use:	Zoning:
North:	18.24	Orchard	AE-20
South:	15.3	Single Family Residence	AE-20
East:	19.56	Orchard	AE-20
West:	16.79	Single Family Residence	AE-20

Approximate distances to nearest neighboring residences (in feet)

	Primary Residence	Secondary Residence
North	500	500
East	200	200
South	300	300
West	N/A	N/A
There are approximately 115 feet between the primary and proposed secondary residence.		

Finding 3 Analysis & Conclusion:

According to site and aerial photographs, the subject property is in an area of agricultural land use. Pictures of the existing primary residence and floor plans for the existing secondary residential unit show that the two units are complementary and compatible with surrounding land uses. No concerns were expressed by any reviewing agency.

Finding 3 can be made with the adherence to the requirements included as Conditions of Approval and mandatory Project Notes, staff believes that the proposal will not have an adverse effect upon surrounding properties.

Finding 4:	The proposed development is consistent with the General Plan.
i mang n	

Relevant Policies:	Consistency/Considerations:
Policy LU-H.4 – The County shall allow second dwellings, not to be sold as a separate unit, subject to a discretionary permit in areas designated for low, medium, and medium high density residential use, rural residential use, and agricultural or rangeland use. The second dwelling shall be clearly subordinate in size to the primary dwelling.	Both residential units are located on land that is designated Agricultural in the Fresno County General Plan. The primary residence is 1,412 square feet and the secondary residence is 1,248 square feet.
 Policy PF-C.17 – The County shall, prior to consideration of any discretionary project related to land use, undertake a water supply evaluation. The evaluation shall include the following: a. A determination that the water supply is adequate to meet the highest demand that could be permitted on the lands in question. If surface water is proposed, it must come from a reliable source and the supply must be made "firm" by water banking or other suitable arrangement. If groundwater is proposed, a hydrogeologic investigation may be required to confirm the availability of water in amounts necessary to meet project demand. If the lands in question lie in an area of limited groundwater, a hydrogeologic investigation shall be required. b. A determination of the impact that use of the proposed water supply will have on other water users in Fresno County. If use of surface water users within Fresno County. If use of groundwater is 	The subject property is not located in a low-water area. The parcels are adequate to support both residences.

Relevant Policies:	Consistency/Considerations:
 proposed, a hydrogeologic investigation may be required. If the lands in question lie in an area of limited groundwater, a hydrogeologic investigation shall be required. Should the investigation determine that significant pumping-related physical impacts will extend beyond the boundary of the property in question, those impacts shall be mitigated. c. A determination that the proposed water supply is sustainable or that there is an acceptable plan to achieve sustainability. The plan must be structured such that it is economically, environmentally, and technically feasible. In addition, its implementation must occur prior to long-term and/or irreversible physical impacts, or significant economic hardship, to surrounding water users. 	
Policy PF-D.6 – The County shall permit individual on-site sewage disposal systems on parcels that have the area, soils, and other characteristics that permit installation of such disposal facilities without threatening surface or groundwater quality or posing any other health hazards and where community sewer service is not available and cannot be provided.	The Environmental Health Division determined that the soils of the subject property were adequate to accommodate the sewage disposal systems currently installed. (See previous comments under "Reviewing Agencies and Department Comments Regarding Site Adequacy".)

Reviewing Agencies/Department Comments:

Policy Planning Section of the Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning: The subject parcel is not subject to an Agricultural Land Conservation Contract.

Finding 4 Recommended Conditions of Approval:

None.

Finding 4 Analysis & Conclusion:

Finding 4 can be made as the proposed allowance is consistent with the General Plan.

SUMMARY CONCLUSION:

This is a unique situation due to the parcel lot line adjustment incorporating both homes of which creates a unique circumstance. While the parcel sizes are not consistent with the 20-acre minimum, the proposal increases the size of the smaller parcel with less than significant decrease on the larger parcel. This proposal does not further divide or reduce parcel size. The goal of preserving the viability of agricultural lands is not appreciably impacted by the proposal.

Based on the factors cited in the analysis, staff believes that the four necessary Findings

required for granting the Variance and the required Findings for granting Director Review and Approval Application can be made, and therefore recommend approval of Variance Application No. 4149 and Director Review and Approval Application No. 4734.

PLANNING COMMISSION MOTIONS:

Recommended Motion (Approval Action)

- Move to determine that the required Findings can be made based on the information in the Staff Report and move to approve Variance No. 4149 and DRA No. 4734, subject to the Conditions and Project Notes attached as Exhibit 1; and
- Direct the Secretary to prepare a Resolution documenting the Commission's action.

Alternative Motion (Denial Action)

- Move to determine the required Findings cannot be made (stating the basis for not being able to make the findings) and move to deny Variance No. 4149 and DRA No. 4734; and
- Direct the Secretary to prepare a Resolution documenting the Commission's action.

Recommended Conditions of Approval and Project Notes:

See attached Exhibit 1.

ER:jp

G:\4360Devs&PIn\PROJSEC\PROJDOCS\DRA\4700-4799\4734 & VA 4149\Staff Report\DRA 4734 VA 4149 SR.docx

Director Review and Approval No. 4734, Variance No. 4151, and Environmental Review No. 8364 Conditions of Approval and Project Notes

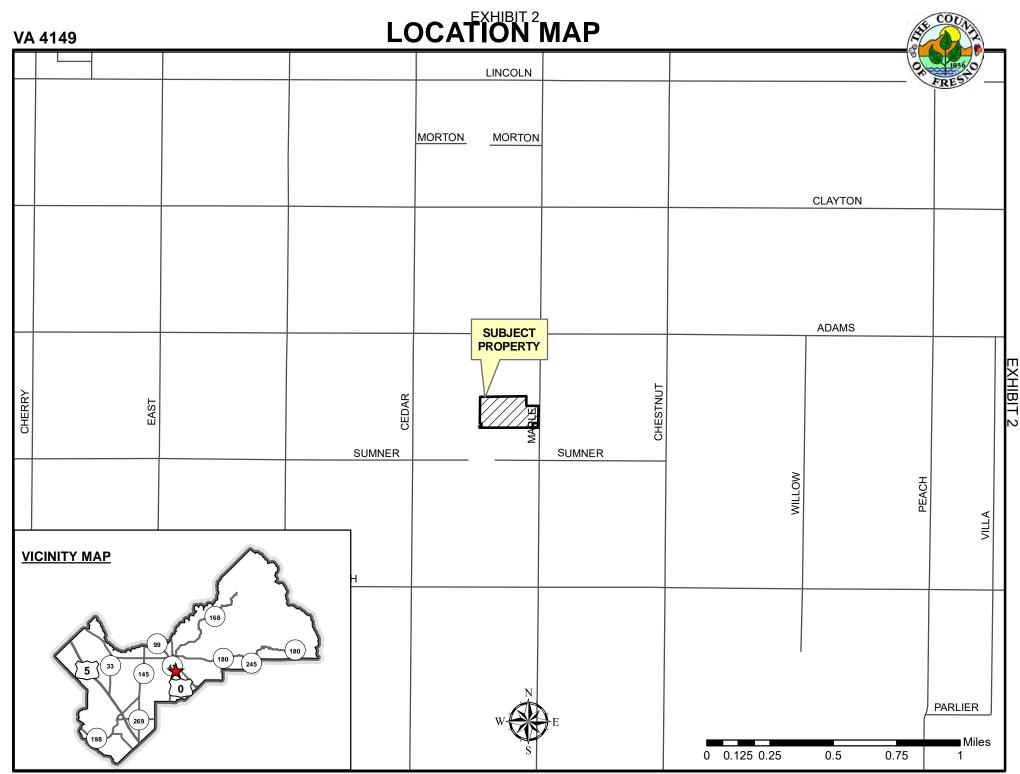
	Conditions of Approval
1.	Division of the subject parcels shall be in substantial accordance with the site plan (Exhibit 6) as approved by the Planning Commission.
2.	Development shall be in accordance with the approved site plan, floor plan, and elevation including compatible appearance and color of the proposed and primary homes.

Conditions of Approval reference recommended Conditions for the project.

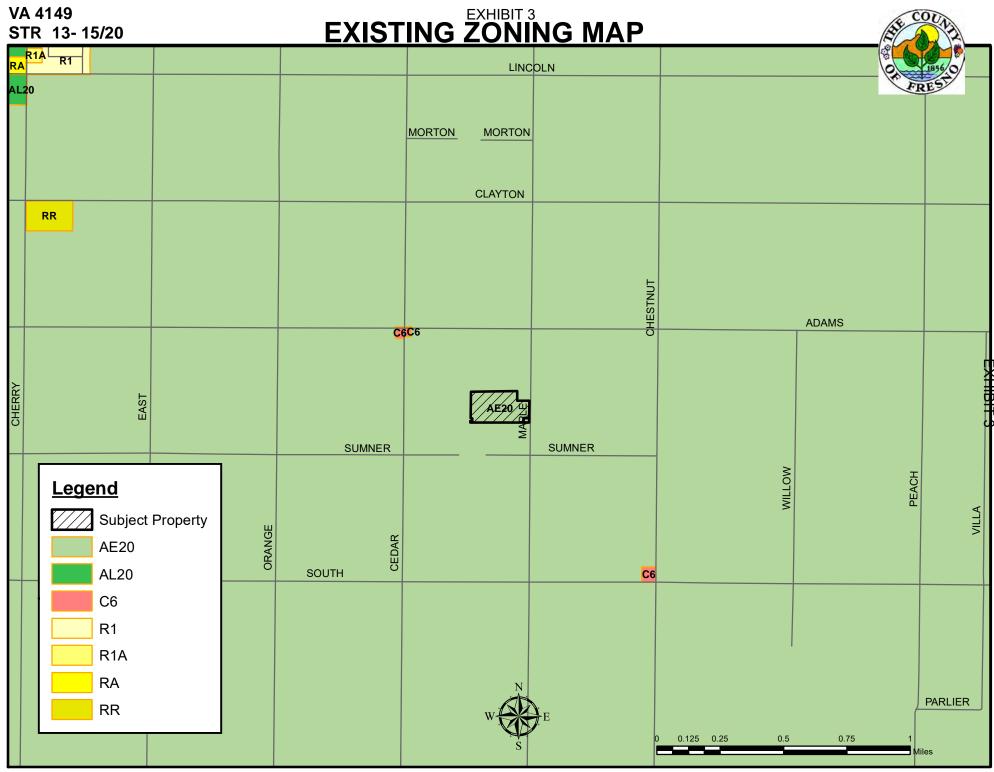
	Notes
	bllowing Notes reference mandatory requirements of Fresno County or other Agencies and are provided as information to the ct Applicant.
1.	Environmental Health Division
	Septic system density will be limited to one system per two acres. Any new development of less than two acres or secondary dwelling will require a nitrogen loading analysis by a qualified professional, demonstrating to the Department of Public Works and Planning (Department) that the regional characteristics are such that an exception to the septic system density limit can be accommodated. The Department will refer any analysis to the Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region for their concurrence and input. Contact Department of Public Works and Planning at (559) 600-4540 for more information.
	 It is recommended that the applicant consider having the existing septic tanks pumped and have the tanks and leach lines evaluated by an appropriately licensed contractor if it has not been serviced and/or maintained within the last five years. The evaluation may indicate possible repairs, additions, or require the proper destruction of the system
	 Any new sewage disposal system proposal shall be installed under permit and inspection by the Department of Public Works and Planning Building and Safety Section. Contact Department of Public Works and Planning at (559) 600-4540 for more information.
	 At such time the applicant or property owner(s) decides to construct a water well, the water well contractor selected by the applicant will be required to apply for and obtain a Permit to Construct a Water Well from the Fresno County Department of Community Health, Environmental Health Division. Please be advised that only those persons with a valid C-57 contractor's license may construct wells. For more information, contact the Water Surveillance Program at (559) 600-3357.
	 If any underground storage tank(s) are found during construction, the applicant shall apply for and secure an Underground Storage Tank Removal Permit from the Fresno County Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division. Contact the Fresno County Hazmat Compliance Program at (559) 600-3271 for more information.

	 As a measure to protect ground water, all water wells and/or septic systems that exist or have been abandoned within the project area should be properly destroyed by an appropriately licensed contractor.
2.	Development Engineering
	All Conditions of Approval for any previous applications shall be implemented if not already in place.
	• According to the U.S.G.S. Quad Map, intermittent stream may be present within the subject property. Any future work within or near a stream will require a clearance from California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).
	 According to the Wetlands Mapper of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a wetland may be present within/nearby the subject property. For any future development on wetlands, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other appropriate agencies should be consulted regarding any requirements they may have.
	 The end of curbed/taper edge of any existing or future access driveway approach should be set back a minimum of 5 feet from the property line.
	 Any existing or future entrance gate should be set back a minimum of 20 feet from the road right-of-way line or the length of the longest truck entering the site and shall not swing outward.
	 A 10 foot x 10 foot corner cut-off should be improved for sight distance purposes at any existing or future driveway accessing Maple Avenue if not already present.
	 Any future work done within the County Road right-of-way to construct a new driveway or improve an existing driveway will require an Encroachment Permit from the Road Maintenance and Operations Division.
	 Any encroachment or access over A.T. & S.F. R.R. (Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad Right-of-Way) should require approval from the owner.
	 A grading permit/voucher may be required for any grading that has been done without a permit and any future grading with this application.
	• If this application is approved, a parcel map application will have to be filed with Fresno County to effect the property division

EXHIBIT 1 PAGE 2



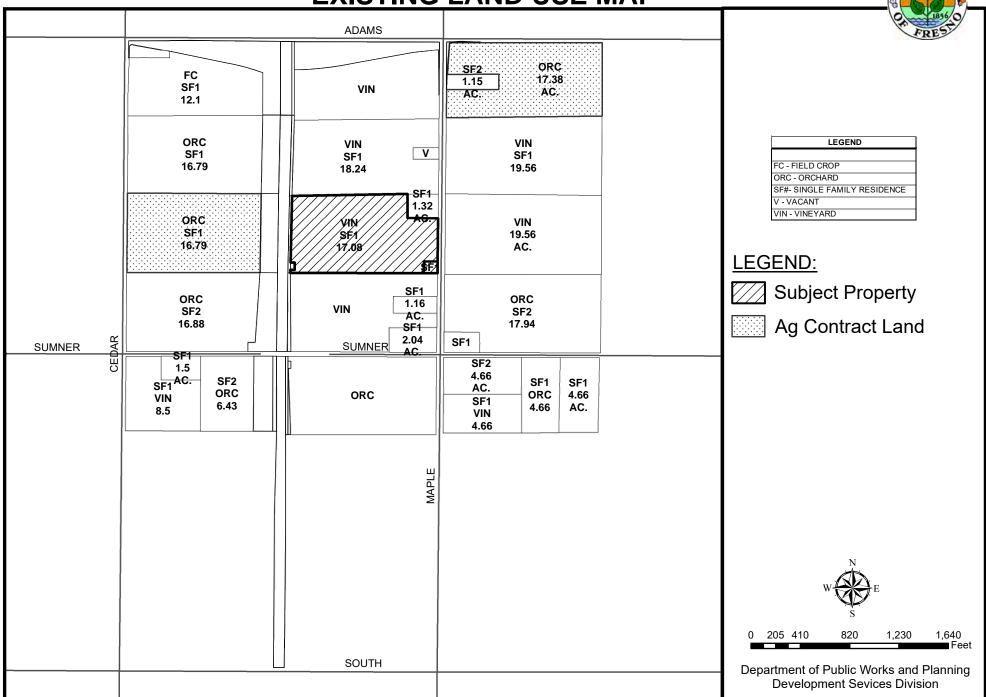
Prepared by: County of Fresno Department of Public Works and Planning, Development Services Division



Prepared by: County of Fresno Department of Public Works and Planning, Development Services Division

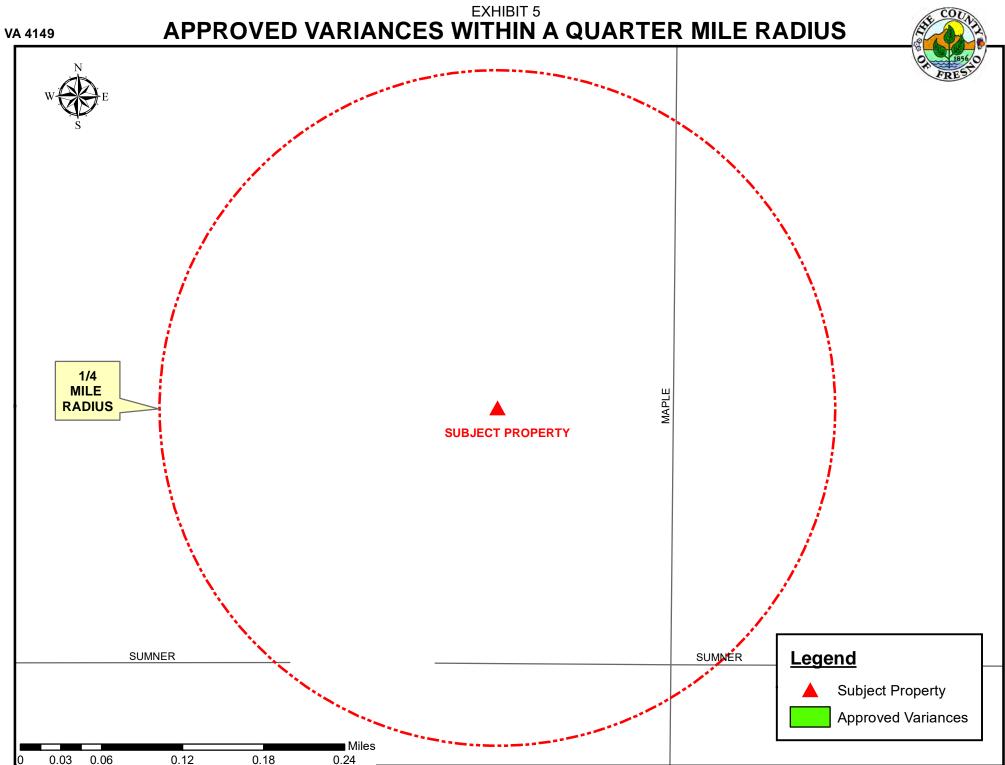
EXISTING LAND USE MAP





Prepared by: County of Fresno Department of Public Works and Planning, Development Services Division

AL COULT



Prepared by: County of Fresno Department of Public Works and Planning, Development Services Division

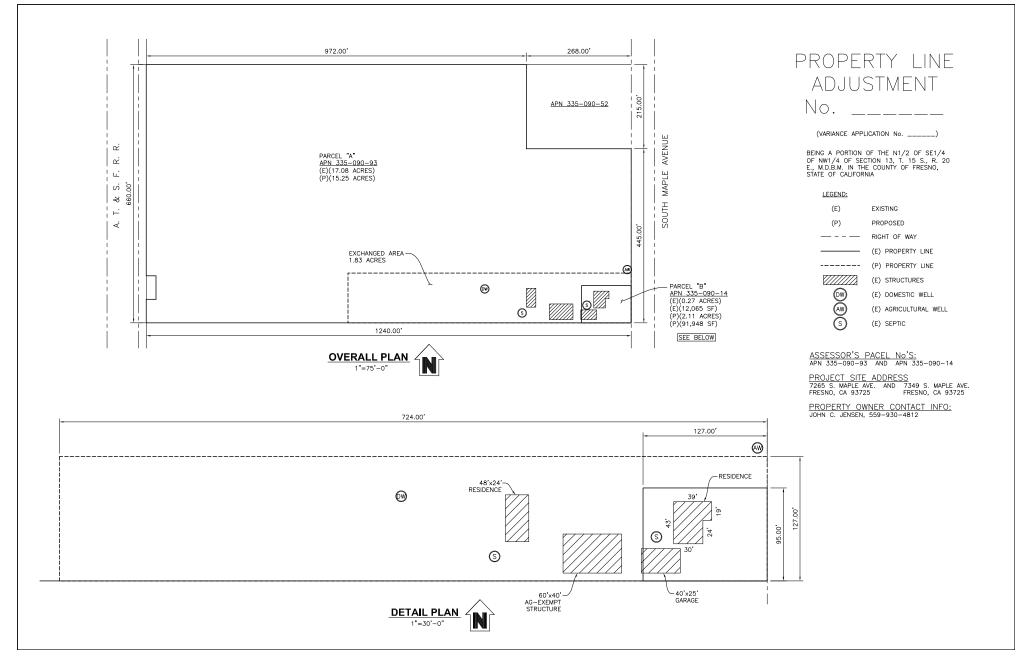
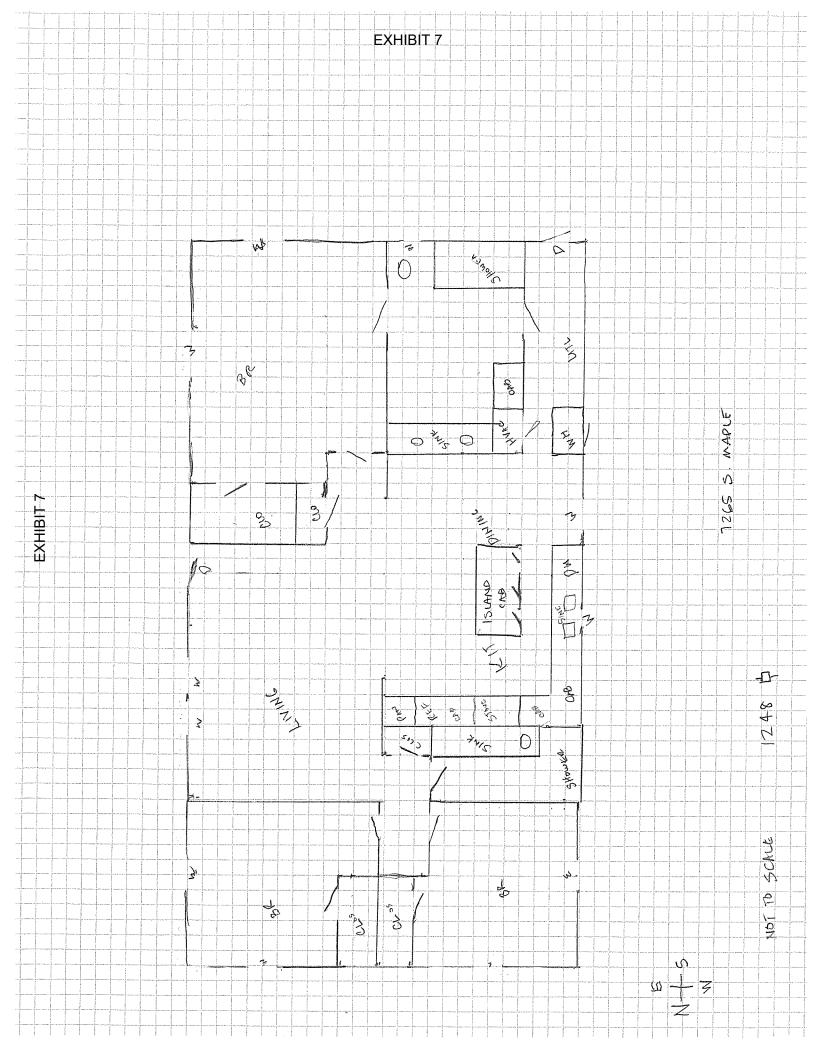
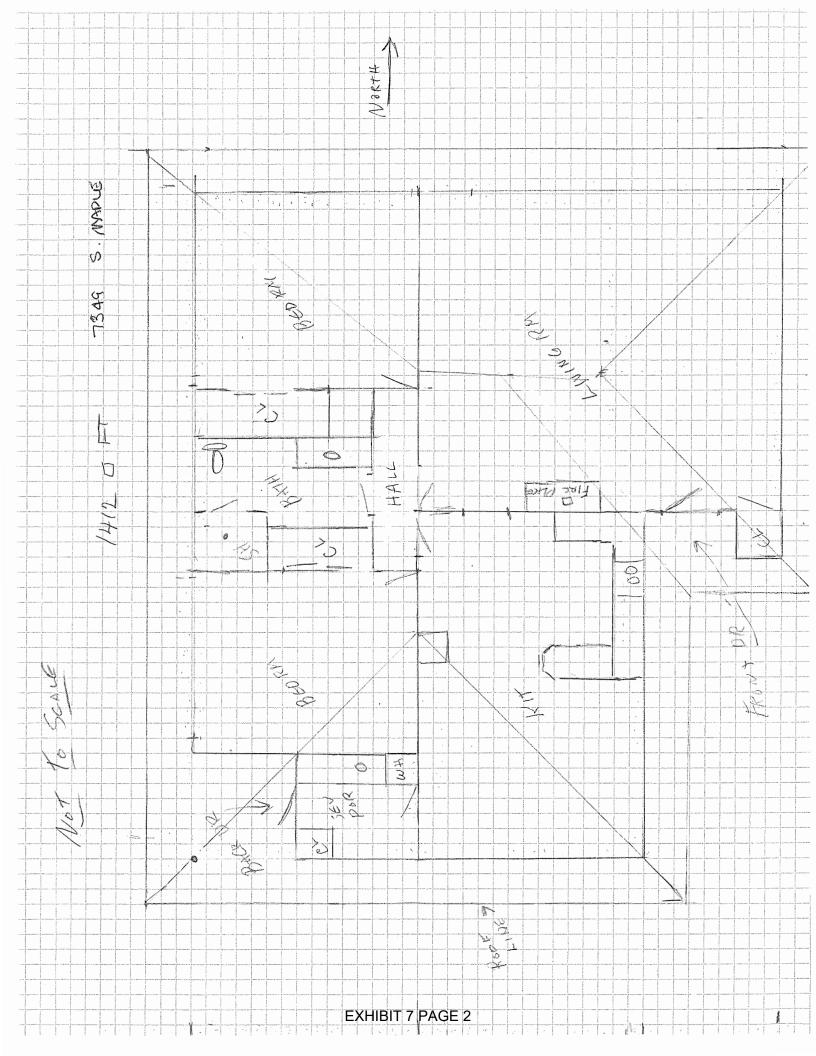


EXHIBIT 6













Findings Necessary For The Granting Of A Variance

1. The initial lot was created in 1956, prior to zoning codes. Over the years the property has evolved to it current use. The last change was in 2006 with the adding of the mobile home. The variance will more correctly represent the current use.

2. This variance will separate the ag portion from resident portion.

3. The variance will have no impact on nor be detrimental to the public welfare. The proposed realignment will reflect the use of the property since 2006.

4. I don't believe this variance will be contrary to the General Plan.