## Hollister, Aaron

**From:** Teri Shore <tshore@greenbelt.org>
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 27, 2017 10:28 AM
**To:** Hollister, Aaron
**Subject:** Round Barn Village
**Attachments:** Briefing Memo.docx; Buzzard_Gulch_PPC_map.jpg; MapPages from Biological Study 091316.pdf

Dear Aaron,

Would you please add me to the list for notifications for the Round Barn Village rezoning and General Plan amendment and any future project proposals for the site?

I've marked my calendar for the Oct. 26 Planning Commission meeting.

Can you provide me with the application and any additional files that are available now?

Also, I'm sharing with you a briefing I gave yesterday to Senior Planner Cheryl Whitfield and Bill Rosa about a proposed commercial visitor serving luxury resort in lands near the Round Barn Village project site in county lands on the edge of the UGB.

The luxury resort, if approved, would generate significant impacts on the area and the neighbors, particularly those who rely on Old Redwood Highway and the Round Barn access road that heads up the hill toward Vineyard Commons and Round Barn Village.

Between just these two potential projects, significant cumulative impacts will be generated.

Thanks,

Teri

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Teri Shore
Regional Director, North Bay

Greenbelt Alliance
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1 (707) 575-3661 office | 1 (707) 934-7081 cell | tshore@greenbelt.org
greenbelt.org | Facebook | Twitter

*Bay Area greenbelt lands are at risk of being lost to sprawl development. Get the facts here.*

Briefing Memo
To: Cheryl Whitfield / Senior Planner
From: Teri Shore, Regional Director, North Bay, Greenbelt Alliance
Re: Proposed luxury resort at Buzzard's Gulch (aka "Sonoma Solstice") on edge of Santa Rosa Urban Growth Boundary in Sonoma County Community Separator
Date: September 27, 2017

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## Overview

### The Proposed Project

A developer is seeking a use permit from the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors to convert the 22-acre Buzzard's Gulch property on rural lands within the community separator into a high-end luxury resort and event center. The property is principally undeveloped open space and contains two single-family homes and several abandoned structures from a now-defunct youth camp. The project would develop the property with 25 lodging units and a variety of ancillary buildings (event hall, offices, etc.) and host 100 events a year, drawing a combined total of 16,000 to 30,000 new visitors annually.

### Problem

The large luxury resort and event center is in the Windsor-Larkfield-Santa Rosa Community Separator, protected by the voters last year with Measure K. The site is also adjacent to outside edge of the city of Santa Rosa's voter-approved Urban Growth Boundary. Due to the new use, size and scale of the project it is inconsistent with:

1. The city of Santa Rosa's Urban Growth Boundary.
2. Sonoma County Community Separator Policies.
3. Voter Approved Measure K -2016 (81% support in countywide vote).
4. Existing Zoning of Rural and Resource Development.
5. General Plan parcel-specific policies

### 1. Violates Santa Rosa Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)

The proposed project violates several core policies of the city of Santa Rosa's UGB. Santa Rosa's UGB was renewed in 2010 and extends until 2035. The express purpose of the UGB is to "encourage residential, commercial, and industrial growth in areas already served by urban services and protect open space surrounding the city."

Instead, the proposed project will add a road and a large parking lot that will remove any separation that now exists between the city and county. It will add lighting, noise, and disturbance to lands that have provided a rural buffer for decades. Ultimately, the project will constitute urbanization outside of city services and erode the community separator between Santa Rosa, Larkfield-Wikiup, and the town of Windsor.

The county of Sonoma has already allowed out-of-scale commercial development on the edge of the city's UGB here including the large medical offices of Sutter Health which is now expanding beyond what was allowed originally. This project adds to the past erosion of this community separator.

**GHGs and VMTs:** The project is slated to attract 16,000 to 30,000 new visitors and associated vehicle trips per year that will generate significant new emissions and traffic congestion.

**WATER and HABITAT:** In addition, the land in question lies within the Santa Rosa Valley groundwater basin and contains important farmlands, oak woodlands, a creek tributary to Santa Rosa Creek, and wildlife habitats that are likely to be heavily impacted by a project of this size and scale. The groundwater use alone would escalate by more than 1000 percent from 1.2 to 14 acre feet per year – more than the neighboring 160-acre parcel uses at 12 acre feet per year. The recharge on the property is about 5 acre feet per year, per county review of developer's studies.

**TREES:** The proposal is to remove more than half of 85 trees inventoried at the site, many of them protected oak trees.

**NEIGHBORS:** On the city side, the Vineyard Commons senior center and offices on Round Barn and in Fountaingrove will be highly impacted by lighting, noise, traffic, emissions, visual and other impacts.

To the immediate north and inside the community separator is Cloverleaf Ranch, a 160-acre rural property where a long-time Sonoma County family still operates a youth camp and riding academy. In fact, the Buzzard's Gulch was once part of the neighboring ranch but was split off when the original owners died. The Buzzard's Gulch land owner is in fact the uncle of the woman who owns and runs Cloverleaf Ranch. She is not happy with the luxury resort but won't publicly oppose. The sale of the property to the developer is contingent on securing entitlements from the county. The property is advertised for $3 million.

## 2. Violates Community Separators

The size and scale of the proposed luxury resort conflicts with community separator policies that are contained in the Sonoma County General Plan. The General Plan calls for community separators to serve as "rural open space and agricultural and resource lands that separate cities and other communities, prevent sprawl, protect natural resources, and provide city and community identity by providing visual relief from continuous urbanization."

The purpose of the community separators goes far beyond visual impacts alone. In addition, this project will be highly visible from neighboring roads including Round Barn Road and Fountaingrove.

In particular, the project directly conflicts with policies to "avoid commercial or industrial uses in Community Separators other than those that are permitted by the agricultural or resource land use categories."

To further prevent commercial development, the community separator policies were revised last year to specifically remove an exception that allowed such development if open space land was protected at the site or elsewhere in the community separator.

### 3. Conflicts with Measure K, Requires Countywide Vote

Measure K, adopted by Sonoma County voters in 2016, renewed Sonoma County's community separator policy. The ballot measure requires voter approval of changes to the General Plan that increase the allowed density or intensity of development within Community Separators. A countywide vote is required specifically if the change of use requires a zoning change and/or General Plan amendment. The luxury resort as proposed significantly increases the density and intensity of development. As described below, we believe it would require a zoning change and General Plan amendment and a countywide vote.
In addition, the ballot measure argument in favor of Measure K, co-signed by Greenbelt Alliance, states that the measure "prevents conversion of these lands to shopping centers, strip malls and resort hotels." Voters approved Measure K with this description of the measure's expected impact in mind.

### 4. Conflicts with Existing County Zoning

The proposed luxury resort is incompatible with General Plan land use designation and zoning under Resources and Rural Development (RRD). The proposed project exceeds the size and scale of other allowable uses in RRD, such as bed and breakfast inns, occasional cultural events, campgrounds, and visitor-serving activities.

The purpose of RRD land use and zoning is "to provide protection of lands needed for commercial timber production, geothermal production, aggregate resources production; lands needed for protection of watershed, fish and wildlife habitat, biotic resources, and for agricultural production activities that are not subject to all of the policies contained in the agricultural resources element of the General Plan." The RRD district is also intended to allow very-low-density residential development and recreational and visitor-serving uses where compatible with resource use and available public services.

Given the size and scale, the project needs rezoning to "K" zoning, specifically for large recreation and visitor-serving projects which allow 50 to 100 or more lodging units, restaurants, and facilities – such as Morton's Warm Springs, Sonoma Country Inn, and the like.

Rezoning would require a General Plan amendment and vote of the people.

### 5. Conflicts with Sonoma County General Plan Parcel Specific Policies

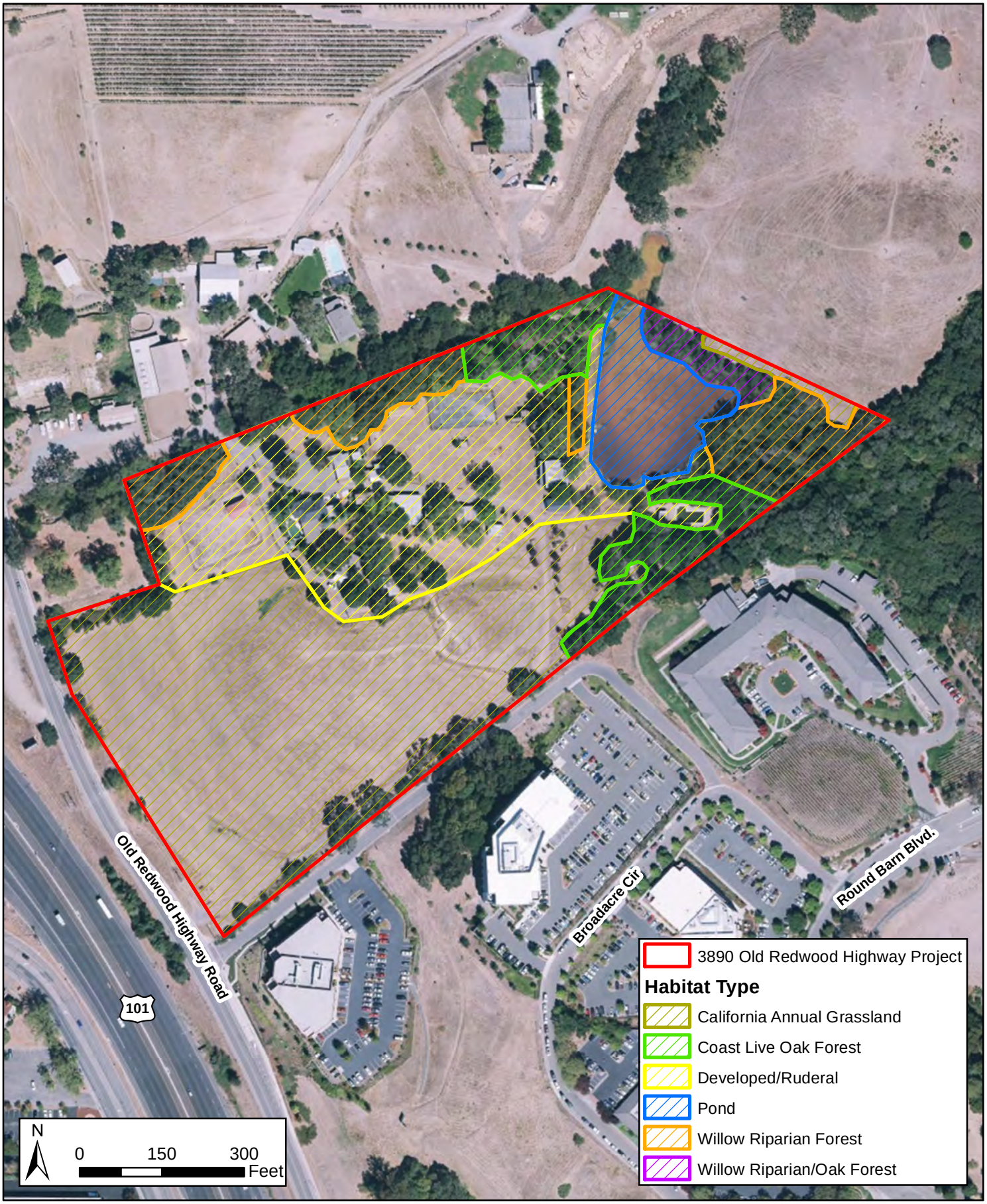
The project as proposed significantly increases the density and intensity of development as specifically provided for use as an "existing youth camp, riding academy and day care use" (GP Policy LU-16n). Change this use would require a General Plan amendment.

# BUZZARD GULCH

## Urban Resort Hotel Proposed in the Windsor-Larkfield-Santa Rosa Community Separator

## Proposed

## Existing




Californian Environmental Services, Inc.

4127 Bay Street, Ste. B
Fremont, CA 94538

**Habitat Types on**
**3890 Old Redwood Highway**
**Santa Rosa, California**

December 16, 2017

Aaron Hollister
Project Manager
City of Santa Rosa
100 Santa Rosa Ave.
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Re: Proposed Round Barn Village

Dear Mr. Hollister,

My wife and I vehemently oppose the proposed amendment to the General Plan allowing rezoning of the 10.18-acre site from business park to residential.

Traffic on Fountaingrove Parkway, without upgrading the infrastructure by adding more egress and entrances to the area, would cause gridlock and become a traffic nightmare. As it does not appear that this important matter has been addressed (or can be addressed), the request for rezoning should be denied.

Sincerely,

Steven & Sharon Bowne
1956 Gardenview Ct.
Santa Rosa, CA 95403