

## TRINITY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

### STAFF REPORT

**PROJECT TITLE:** Initial Commercial Cannabis Cultivation Variance (CCL772)

**APPLICANT:** Bella Lor

**PROPERTY OWNER:** Jailia Yang

**REPORT BY:** Bella Hedtke – Associate Planner, Cannabis Division & Environmental Compliance Specialist, Aida Tavakoli

**LOCATION:** 211 Old Poker Bar Rd., Douglas City (APN 025-140-004-000)

**ZONING DISTRICT:** Rural Residential with a 5-acre minimum (RR5)

**ZONING OVERLAY DISTRICT(S):** N/A

**GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION:** Rural Residential (RR)

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** An initial commercial cannabis cultivation request of the Planning Commission to reduce the required 350-foot cultivation setback from a neighboring residential structure, pursuant to Trinity County Code Section 17.43.050A(8). The Project would operate up to 10,000 sf of outdoor mature cannabis canopy cultivation composed of various sized beds, planters and pots including 440 sf of immature canopy, and 2,504 sf of associated operational support buildings. Water for the Project would be provided from an existing permitted groundwater well. An onsite septic system would serve the Project's wastewater needs. The proposed cultivation area (and property) is accessed from SR 299 by turning north onto Old Poker Bar Road and passing through a locked gate.

Location	Land Use	Zoning District	General Plan Designation
North	Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Owned	Open Space	Resource (RE)
South	Rural Residential	Rural Residential with a 5-acre minimum (RR5)	Rural Residential (RR)
East	Rural Residential	Rural Residential with a 5-acre minimum (RR5)	Rural Residential (RR)
West	Rural Residential	Rural Residential with a 5-acre minimum (RR5)	Rural Residential (RR)

Table 1: Surrounding Land Uses to Project Site

**PROJECT EVALUATION:**

**Project Consistency with the Trinity County Zoning Code**

**Trinity County Code Chapter 17.43 – Commercial Cannabis Cultivation Regulations**

Trinity County Code Section 17.43.050 describes the locations and zoning districts where commercial cannabis is not allowed in the county. The Rural Residential zoning district is not listed as a location that restricts commercial cannabis cultivation activities.

Within Section 17.43.050(A)(8), there are parameters given for cultivation variances:

“For specialty cottage, specialty and small licenses cultivation shall not be allowed within three hundred fifty feet of a residential structure on any adjoining parcels. For medium licenses, cultivation shall not be allowed within five hundred feet of an adjacent property line. Applications for a variance from this provision will be considered by the Trinity County Planning Commission. After obtaining an initial variance, the planning director can issue a director’s use permit for subsequent years after an inspection.”

The parameters for cultivation area are described in Section 17.43.010 where cultivation is defined as “... the planting, growing, harvesting, drying, or processing of cannabis plants or any part thereof.”

The term variance used in this chapter “is defined as Trinity County Ordinance No. 315, Section 31.”

As the license is for small (up to 10,000 sf) outdoor cultivation, it is required to have all cultivation activity be at least 350-feet from a residential structure on any adjoined parcel, unless a variance is obtained.

**Site Inspections:**

A site inspection was performed by Cannabis Division compliance staff on July 19, 2022 to ensure that the site plan and project description included in the Appendix C were accurately prepared. The only deficiency identified during this visit was the need for an initial CCV. A completeness review was performed by Cannabis Division staff and determined to be complete on October 7, 2021. The only remaining deficiency for licensure from these reviews is to obtain an approved CCV from the Planning Commission. Both the site inspection and completeness review processes are designed to verify site and application compliance with Trinity County Code Chapter 17.43 (Commercial Cannabis Cultivation Regulations).

Furthermore, in preparation for this staff report, an inspection was performed on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023 to measure the distance, using a hand-held rangefinder, from the closest cultivation elements to the neighboring residential structure and take pictures of the site for consideration in this staff report. An accessory structure, which is the closest cultivation related element on the site, was measured approximately 83ft from the residence on APN 025-140-033-000 (Attachment 2). As a result of the variance inspection, a formal referral was sent to the Building Division in order to verify the permit status of the accessory structure. The applicant has contracted an engineering company in order to submit a building permit application and is currently in compliance with requests made by the Building Division. The Cannabis Division will not issue a

cannabis license until the building permit is issued and buildings may not be used until the associated permit is finalized.

### **Project Consistency with the General Plan and Community Plan**

The property is within a Rural Residential (RR) land use designation. The General Plan and Douglas City Community Plan describes these areas as the following:

“Rural Residential intends to describe location of rural type residential development. Minimal county services would be provided and, in general, are not desirable in this area. Densities are designed to ensure the long-term opportunity for individual water and sewer systems. High density will be on dwelling unit per acre or larger as determined the county sanitarian and the Regional Water Quality Control Board to allow the use of both individual water and sewer systems on the same parcel. Low density will be on dwelling unit per ten acres. This is to allow limited residential development in outlying areas of the county where minimal impacts are desirable and the overall character of the landscape as well as potential for open space, recreation, or resource production is to be preserved. Special attention should be directed toward the protection of sensitive environmental resources such as water quality, unstable slopes, critical wildlife habitat, etc. This designation should not be construed as discouraging resource production activities, such as logging or grazing. This description should also provide for small home businesses, for small-scale agriculture, and for small industrial operations, subject to controls to prevent nuisances (County, Trinity County General Plan, Land Use Element, 1988) (County, Douglas City Community Plan, 1987).”

Given that the Rural Residential land use designation is intended for parcels that would allow for resource production and small-scale agriculture, subject to controls to prevent nuisance, this proposed commercial cannabis license project, with applicable mitigation measures, is an appropriate activity for the rural residential land use designation per the Trinity County General Plan.

### **Project Consistency with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**

An Appendix C document was first submitted to the Cannabis Division for CCL 772 on May 02, 2022. Throughout the Appendix C review process, an incomplete letter was sent to the applicant and their agent, followed by a resubmittal of the Appendix C document on December 19, 2022. The County’s contracted environmental consultant company, HELIX, prepared a compliance memorandum on April 12, 2023.

On May 16, 2023 the Board of Supervisors approved and adopted Resolution No. 2023-071 Commercial Cannabis Variance (CCV) renewal process. Variance Appendix C Policy Memo “Background and Guidance for the Implementation of Resolution No. 2023-071” was posted on the County website on May 26, 2023 to help facilitate applicants. As a result of the resolution, additional evaluation to Aesthetics, Air Quality, and Noise resource categories would be scoped into the applicant’s environmental document to offset any potential negative impacts to neighboring receptors. On July 12, 2023 the County received an Appendix C resubmission that incorporated additional mitigation measures within their Appendix C. Environmental Review performed on August 17, 2023 identified a minor discrepancy within the document, and a resubmission was received on September 14, 2023. A final review performed by County environmental compliance staff, that determined that approval of this project is a “later activity” associated with the Cannabis Program EIR, as defined by subsection (c) of Section 15168, in that

(i) all impacts associated with the approval of this project are within the scope of environmental review previously studied, and (ii) the requirements and mitigations required by Chapter 17.43 and 17.43G of the Trinity County Code, adequately serve to mitigate the impacts associated with approval of this project, it adequately evaluates all potential environmental impacts, and can be appropriately tiered within the Trinity County Cannabis Programmatic Environmental Impact Report. Based on the application review, site inspection and HELIX's review of the Appendix C, County environmental compliance staff recommends this license for approval.

The proposed project is seeking a small outdoor license with a residential setback reduction. A neighboring receptor identified approximately 80-feet south of the cultivation activities. Cannabis cultivation activities will occur in forty (40) 5'x5' planter boxes, (131) 4'x4' planter boxes, eight (8) 4'x8' beds, a 5'x26 bed, and a 6'x82' bed (8,335 sq ft total) for mature canopy; a 6'x30' hoop house and a 13'x20' area within a 40'x40' building will be used for immature canopy; and an accessory structure for processing. Site reconfiguration is proposed to replace existing mature canopy structures with (200) 5'x5' cultivation boxes on the existing disturbed area. No additional ground disturbance is proposed. All artificial lights used for the cultivation will be in enclosed structures which prevents light emission from the parcel; therefore, a Light Attenuation Plan is not required. The project is connected to an electrical grid and will not use back-up generators or fans; therefore, a Noise Attenuation Plan is not required. An Odor Control Plan was submitted to mitigate odor if they become a nuisance.

### Trinity County Code Chapter 17.31 – Variances

Trinity County Code Section 17.31.010 states that, "A variance is a waiver or modification of some requirement contained in the zoning ordinance. The statutory justification for a variance is that the owner would otherwise suffer unique hardship under general zoning regulations because his or her particular parcel is different from others to which the regulation applies due to size, shape, or topography. Variances may be granted only to authorize a change in development standards which is not otherwise authorized by the zoning regulations."

In considering a variance, the following guidelines shall be observed:

1. **No Special Privilege.** A variance cannot be a special privilege extended to one individual property owner. The circumstances must be such that the same variance would be appropriate for any property owner facing similar circumstances.

**Finding:** The property has topographic constraints which would make it difficult for the applicant to develop outside of the required 350-ft residential setback. Primarily, the narrow shape of the parcel lends for limited space for the site to comply with the 350-ft residential setback (Attachment 8).

2. **Use Variance Prohibited.** The consideration of "use variances" is specifically prohibited. These are variances which request approval to locate a use in a zone from which it is prohibited by ordinance.

**Finding:** The granting of this variance does not create a "use variance" because commercial cultivation licenses are allowed in the RR Zoning District.

3. **Disservice Not Permitted.** A variance must not be injurious to the public welfare, nor to adjacent properties.

**Finding:** In preparation of this staff report, a form was mailed to all adjacent property owners on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023 for neighbors to provide consent or opposition to the commercial cannabis variance (CCV) application request. Adjacent property owners within 300ft of the subject property were also notified of this public hearing via mail 10-days prior to this hearing. As of the date of this staff report, no responses were received from adjacent neighbors nor from the general public. Therefore, it can be assumed that the granting of this CCV would not be injurious to the public welfare, nor to adjacent properties.

4. **Not Adverse to General of Specific Plan.** A variance must be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the zoning ordinance and cannot adversely affect the general plan or specific plans of the county.

**Finding:** As discussed in this staff report, the project is found to be consistent with the General Plan and Douglas City Community Plan.

5. **RD-1 Overlay Zone.** Prior to approval of a variance for property within the RD-1 overlay zone, permission must be granted or deemed not necessary by the Secretary of Agriculture.

**Finding:** The project parcel is not located within an RD-1 overlay.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Planning staff recommends that the Planning Commission moves to:

- A. Adopt Resolution PC 2023-11 subject to Exhibit A – Conditions of Approval to reduce the 350-foot setback to approximately 83-feet from the residence on APN 025-140-033-000.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

If the Planning Commission does not wish to approve the CCV, the following alternatives are available:

1. In the event that more information or time is required prior to the Planning Commission making a final decision on CCV-23-07, the Planning Commission could move to continue to a future certain meeting date.
2. The Planning Commission could deny the applicant's request for a CCV, with findings stated by the Planning Commission.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Site Plan from Appendix C Environmental Document
2. Residential Setback Map
3. Location Map
4. Surrounding Uses Map
5. Zoning Districts Map

6. General Plan Designations Map
7. Site Visit Photos
8. Portion of Parcel that Complies with 350ft Setback
9. PC Resolution No. 2023-11

**REFERENCES:**

County, T. (1987). *Douglas City Community Plan*. Douglas City, CA: County of Trinity.

County, T. (1988). *Trinity County General Plan, Land Use Element*. Weaverville, CA: County of Trinity.

# Figure 4: Project Diagram

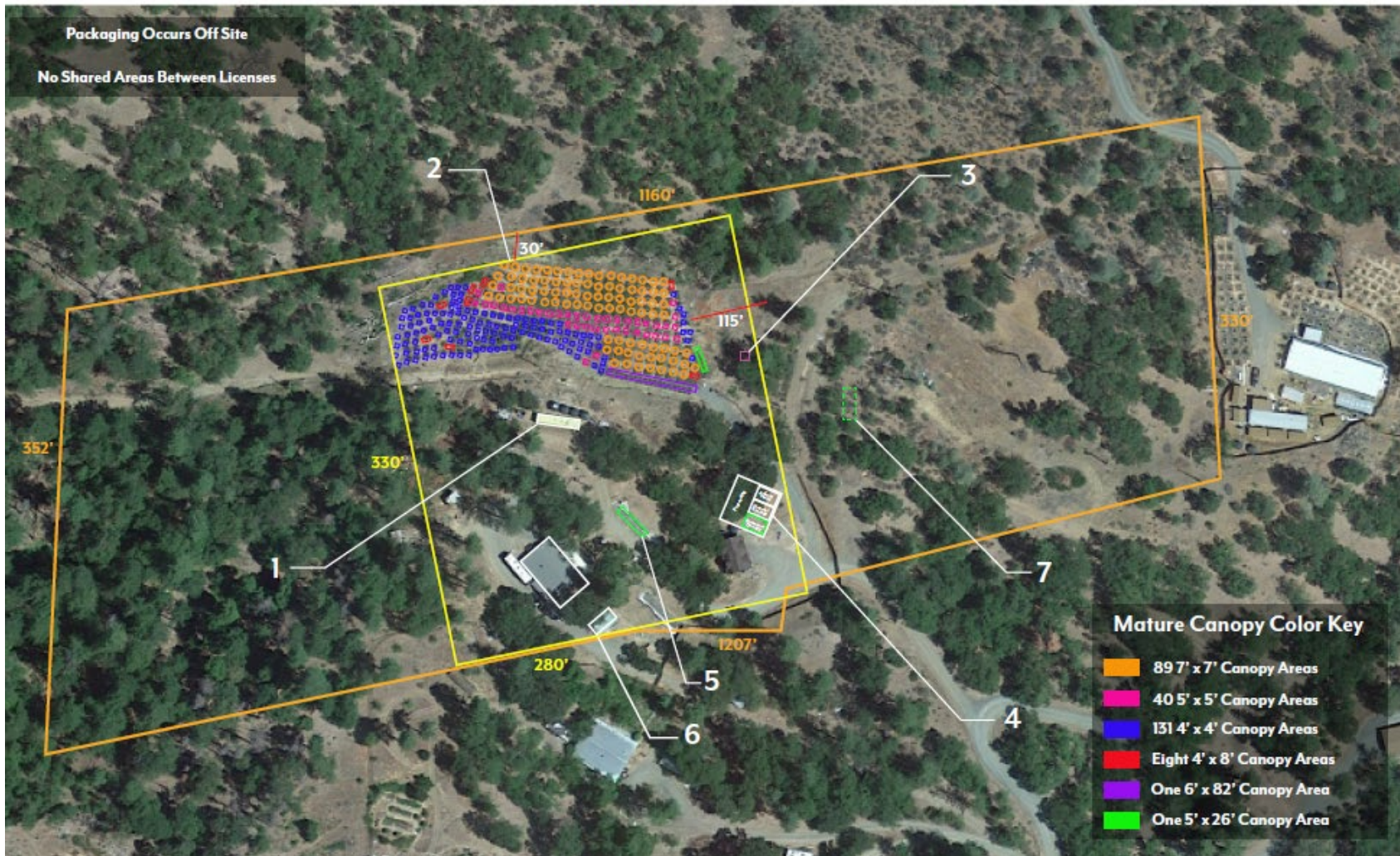
- 1.) 8'x40' Metal Container - Agricultural Chemical/Pesticide Storage Area
- 2.) Outdoor Cultivation Area - (89)7'x7' Fabric Pots, (40)5'x5' Boxes, (131)4'x4' Boxes, (8)4'x8' Beds, 5'x26' Bed, 6'x82' Bed - Mature Canopy
- 3.) 8' x8' Cannabis Waste Area - Compost
- 4.) 40'x40' Building - First Floor: 20'x40' Processing Area, 13'x20' Immature / Cloning Area, 13'x20' Harvest Storage Area, 13'x20' Admin Hold Area; Second Floor: 10'x40' Processing Area
- 5.) 6' x 30' Hoop House - Immature Canopy
- 6.) 6' x 20' Carport - Processing
- 7.) Personal Plant Area - Six 5' x 5' Boxes

Parcel Boundary  
 Premises Boundary  

APN:  
025-140-04-00

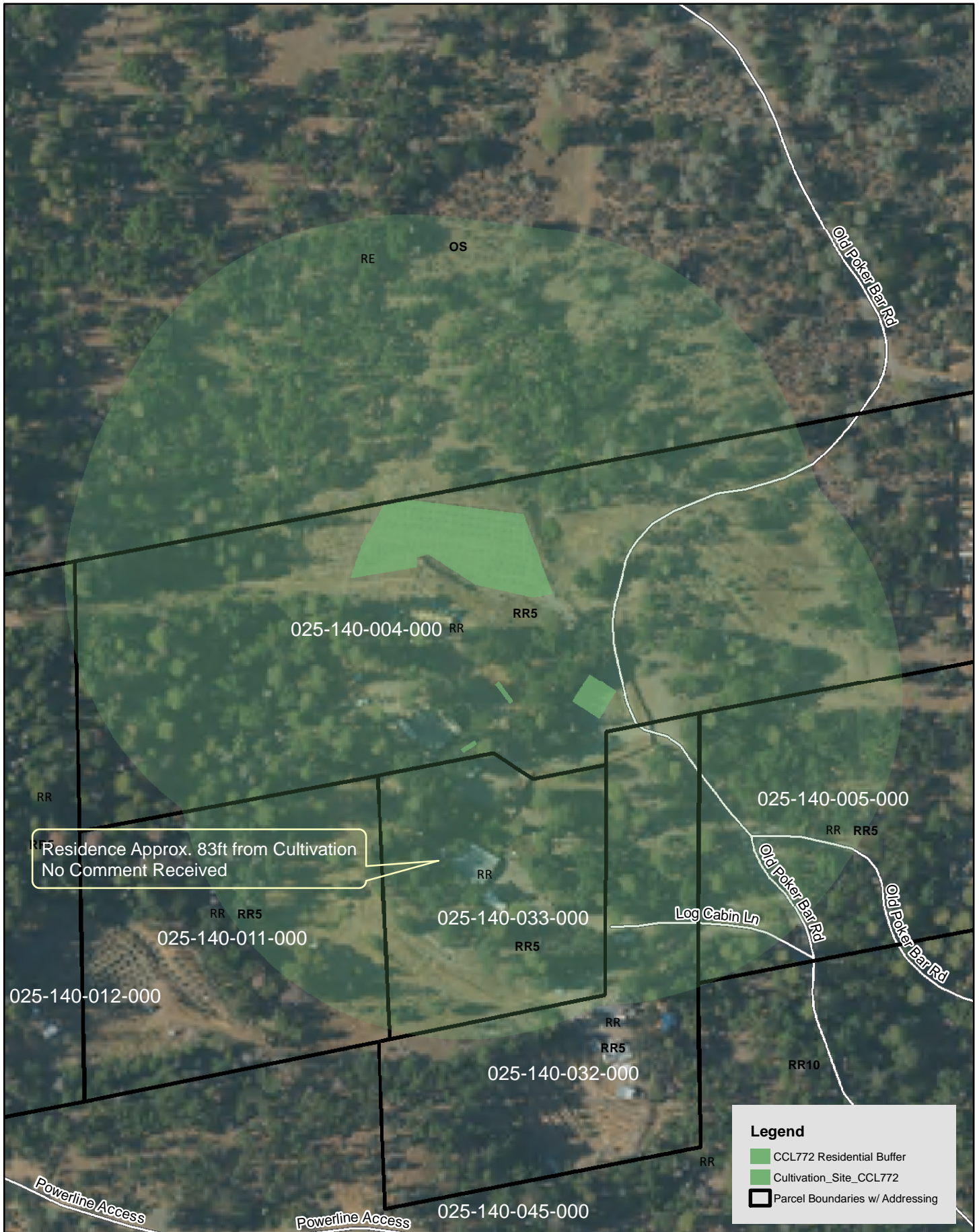
Remaining Portion of Parcel is  
Unused

Immature Canopy Area:	Mature Canopy Area:
(13'x20') = 260	(89)(7'x7') = 4361
(6' x 30') = 180	(40)(5'x5') = 1000
	(131)(4'x4') = 2096
	(8)(4'x8') = 256
	(5'x26') = 130
	(6'x82') = 492
= 440 sq ft	= 8335 sq ft





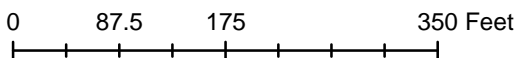
**Commercial Cannabis Variance (CCV) Residential Buffer Map**  
**CCV-23-07 | CCL-772**  
**APN 025-140-004-000**



Residence Approx. 83ft from Cultivation  
 No Comment Received

**Legend**

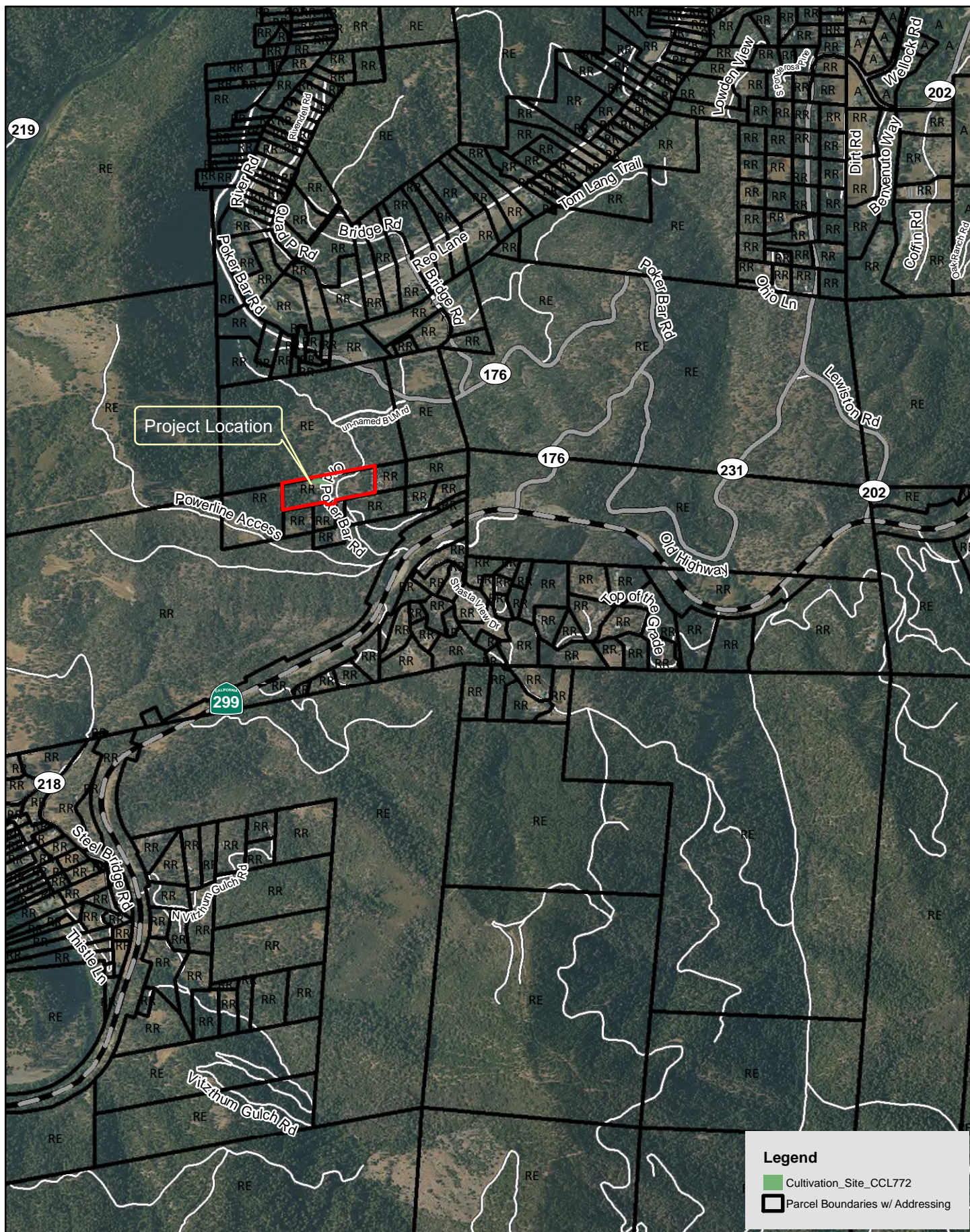
- CCL772 Residential Buffer
- Cultivation\_Site\_CCL772
- Parcel Boundaries w/ Addressing





**Staff Author: BH**  
**Date: 10/25/2023**

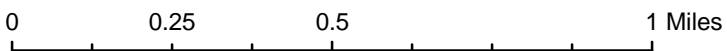


Commercial Cannabis Variance (CCV) | CCV-23-07 | CCL-772  
APN 025-140-004-000  
Project Location Map



**Legend**

-  Cultivation\_Site\_CCL772
-  Parcel Boundaries w/ Addressing

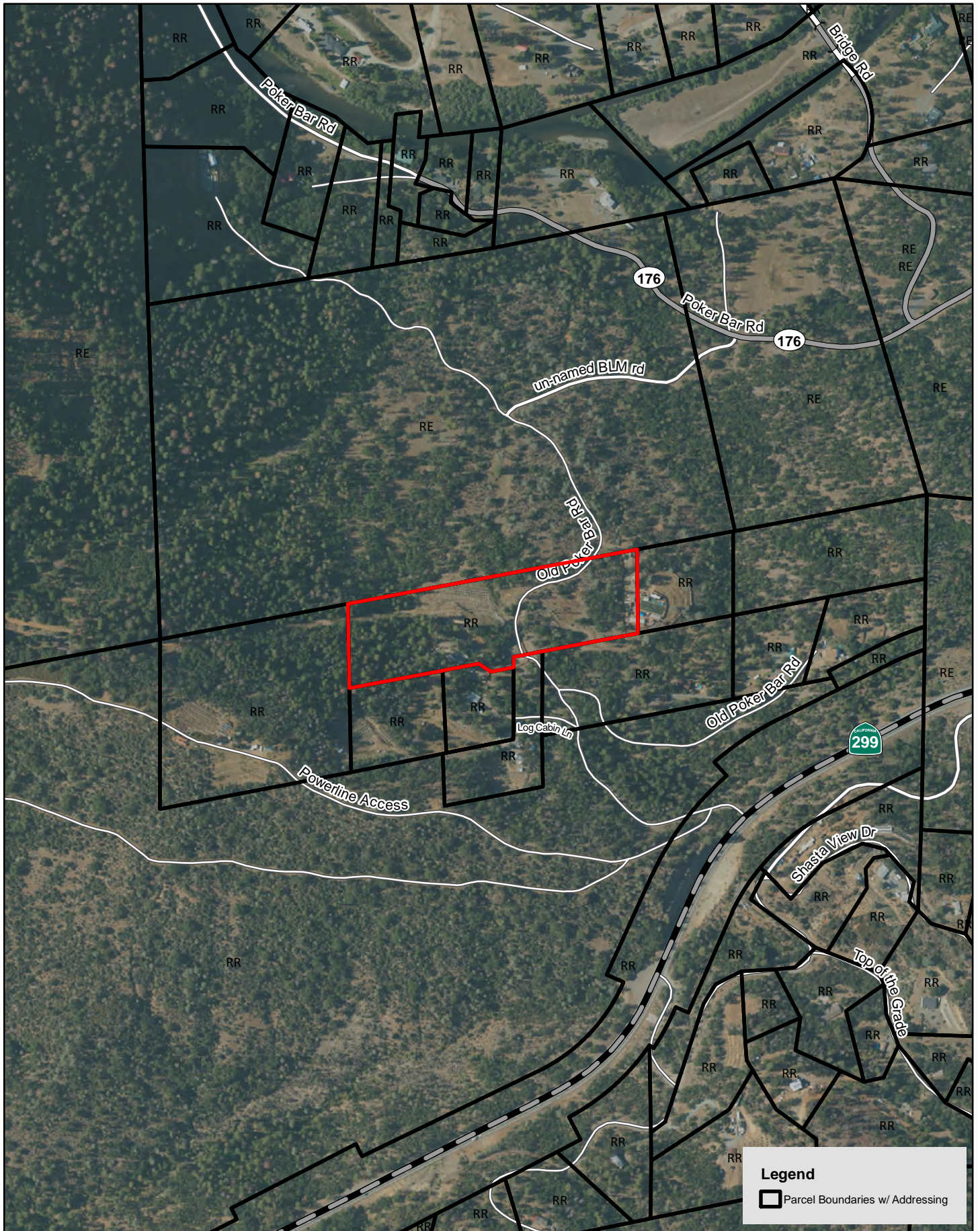


Staff Author: BH  
Date: 10/25/2023

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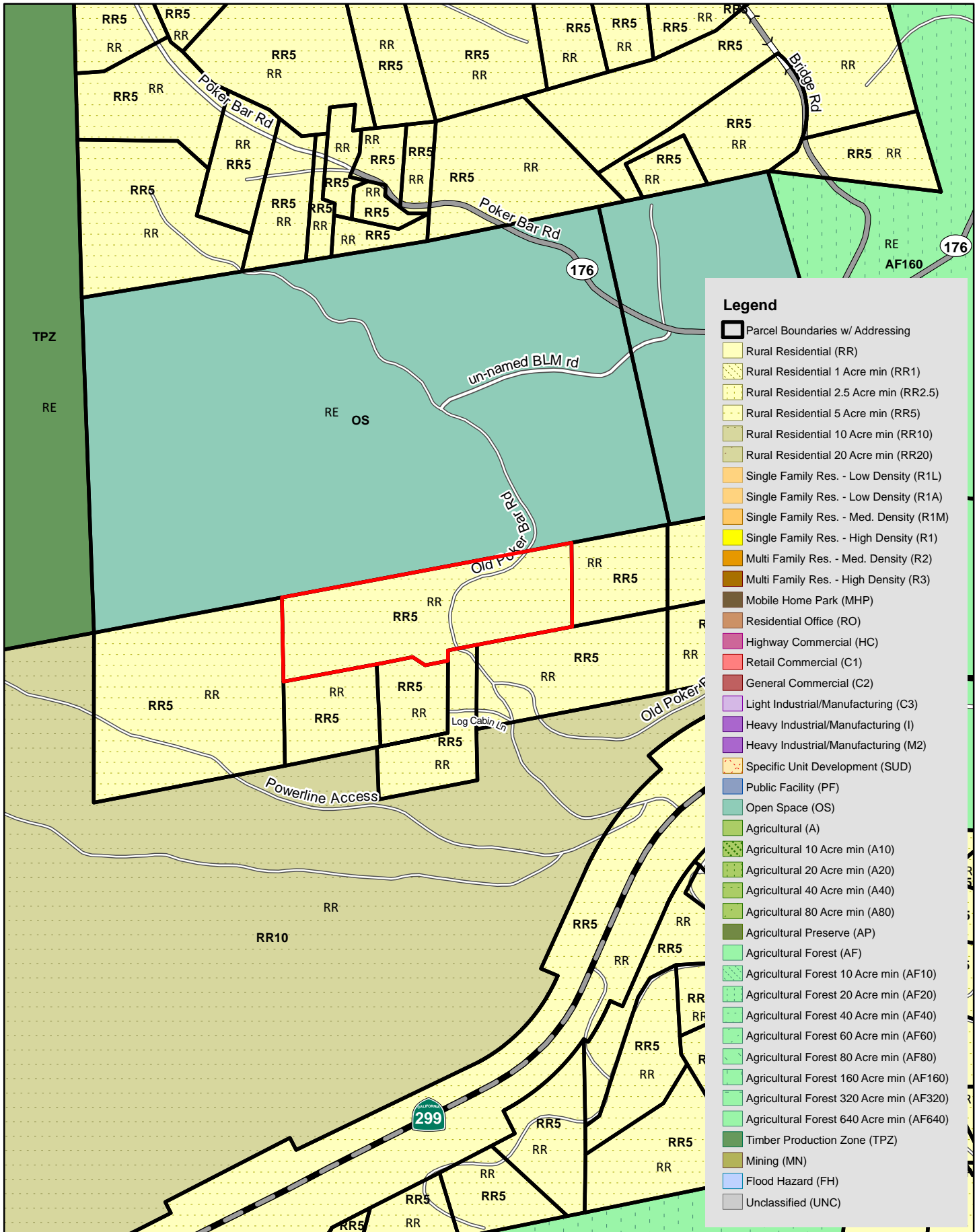
Commercial Cannabis Variance (CCV) | CCV-23-07 | CCL-772  
APN 025-140-004-000  
Surrounding Areas Uses Map



0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

Staff Author: BH  
Date: 10/25/2023

**Commercial Cannabis Variance (CCV) | CCV-23-07 | CCL-772**  
**APN 025-140-004-000**  
**Zoning Districts Map**



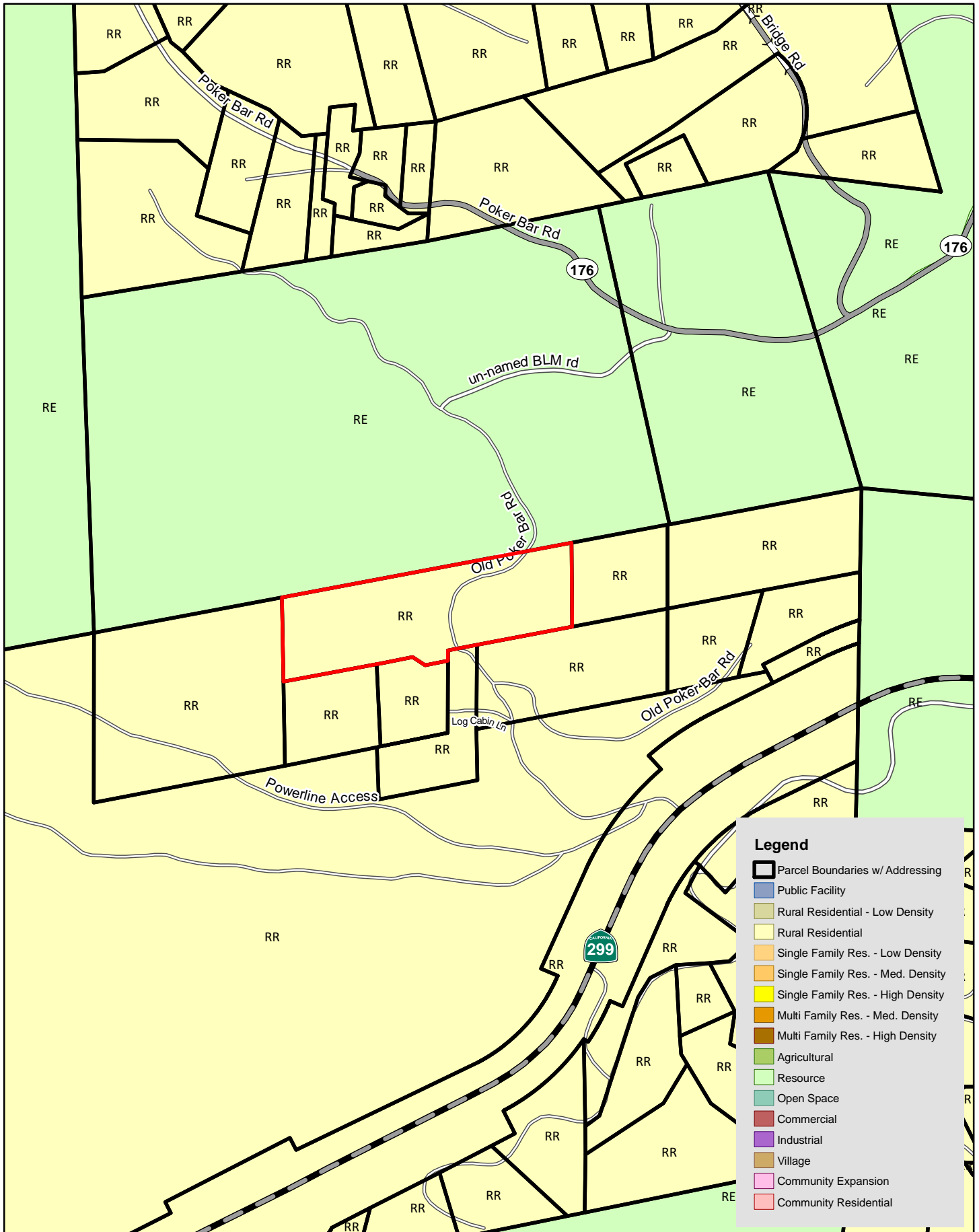
- Legend**
- Parcel Boundaries w/ Addressing
  - Rural Residential (RR)
  - Rural Residential 1 Acre min (RR1)
  - Rural Residential 2.5 Acre min (RR2.5)
  - Rural Residential 5 Acre min (RR5)
  - Rural Residential 10 Acre min (RR10)
  - Rural Residential 20 Acre min (RR20)
  - Single Family Res. - Low Density (R1L)
  - Single Family Res. - Low Density (R1A)
  - Single Family Res. - Med. Density (R1M)
  - Single Family Res. - High Density (R1)
  - Multi Family Res. - Med. Density (R2)
  - Multi Family Res. - High Density (R3)
  - Mobile Home Park (MHP)
  - Residential Office (RO)
  - Highway Commercial (HC)
  - Retail Commercial (C1)
  - General Commercial (C2)
  - Light Industrial/Manufacturing (C3)
  - Heavy Industrial/Manufacturing (I)
  - Heavy Industrial/Manufacturing (M2)
  - Specific Unit Development (SUD)
  - Public Facility (PF)
  - Open Space (OS)
  - Agricultural (A)
  - Agricultural 10 Acre min (A10)
  - Agricultural 20 Acre min (A20)
  - Agricultural 40 Acre min (A40)
  - Agricultural 80 Acre min (A80)
  - Agricultural Preserve (AP)
  - Agricultural Forest (AF)
  - Agricultural Forest 10 Acre min (AF10)
  - Agricultural Forest 20 Acre min (AF20)
  - Agricultural Forest 40 Acre min (AF40)
  - Agricultural Forest 60 Acre min (AF60)
  - Agricultural Forest 80 Acre min (AF80)
  - Agricultural Forest 160 Acre min (AF160)
  - Agricultural Forest 320 Acre min (AF320)
  - Agricultural Forest 640 Acre min (AF640)
  - Timber Production Zone (TPZ)
  - Mining (MN)
  - Flood Hazard (FH)
  - Unclassified (UNC)

0      0.125      0.25      0.5 Miles

**Staff Author: BH**  
**Date: 10/25/2023**

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Commercial Cannabis Variance (CCV) | CCV-23-07 | CCL-772  
 APN 025-140-004-000  
 GPD Map



**Legend**

- Parcel Boundaries w/ Addressing
- Public Facility
- Rural Residential - Low Density
- Rural Residential
- Single Family Res. - Low Density
- Single Family Res. - Med. Density
- Single Family Res. - High Density
- Multi Family Res. - Med. Density
- Multi Family Res. - High Density
- Agricultural
- Resource
- Open Space
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Village
- Community Expansion
- Community Residential

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

Staff Author: BH  
 Date: 10/25/2023

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## Attachment 7 – Site Visit Photos



Example of Current Site Conditions



Obstructed View of Neighboring Dwelling

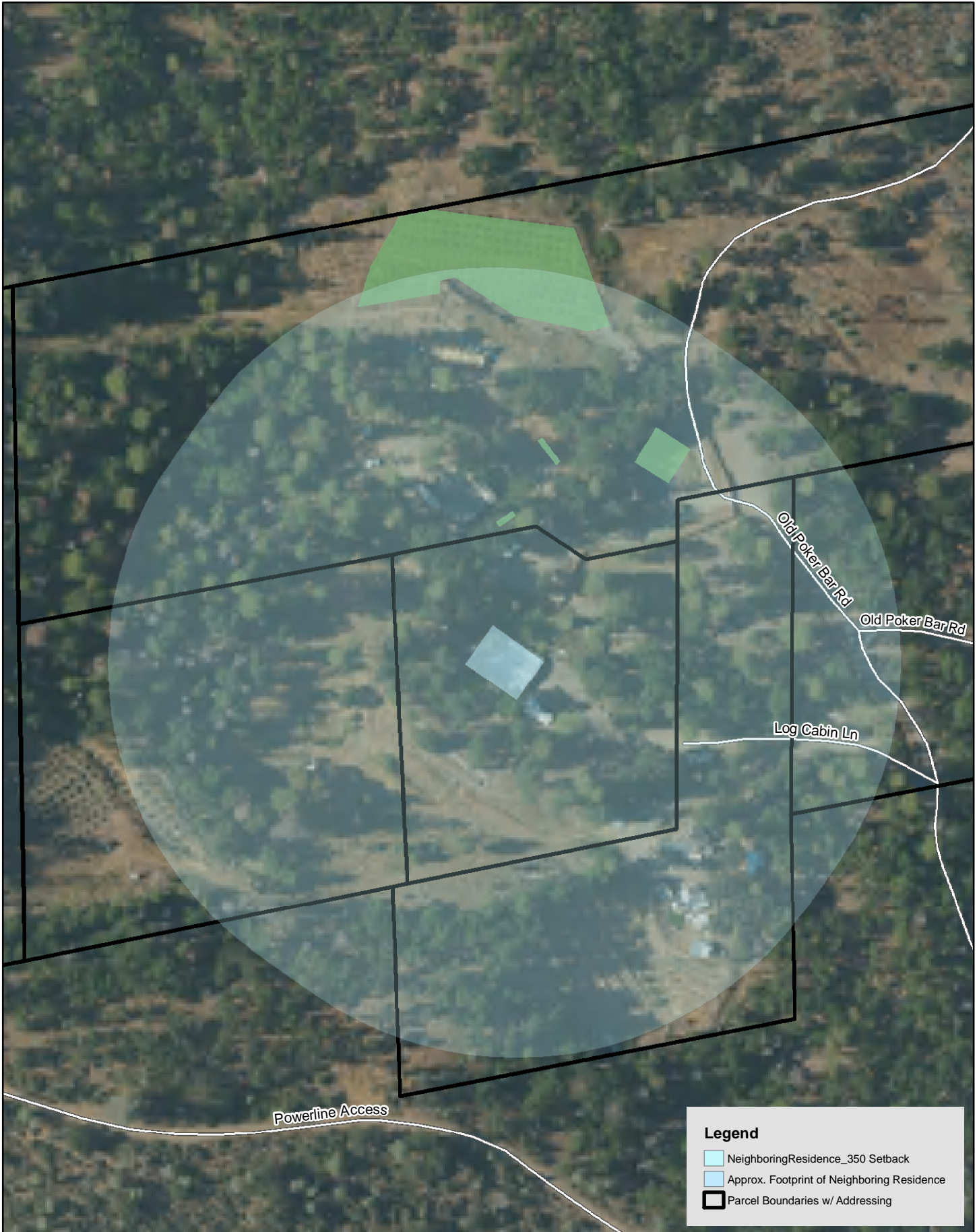
Carport



Commercial Cannabis Variance (CCV) | CCV-23-07 | CCL-772

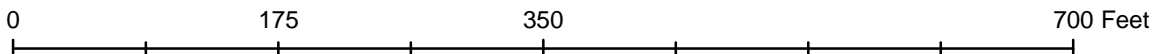
APN 025-140-004-000

Portion of Parcel that Complies with 350ft Setback



**Legend**

- NeighboringResidence\_350 Setback
- Approx. Footprint of Neighboring Residence
- Parcel Boundaries w/ Addressing



Staff Author: BH  
Date: 10/26/2023

This map is property of the County of Trinity, any manipulation or unauthorized use is prohibited by law and will not be accepted by the County.

**RESOLUTION NO. PC-2023-11**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE COUNTY OF TRINITY**

**Approving an Initial Commercial Cannabis Variance  
(Bella Lor (CCV-2023-07))**

**WHEREAS**, the Trinity County Planning Department has considered a request for an initial commercial cannabis variance, filed by Bella Lor, in accordance with Title 17, Trinity County Zoning Code Section 17.43.050A(8),

**WHEREAS**, for specialty cottage, specialty, and small licenses, cultivation shall not be allowed within three hundred fifty feet of a residential structure on any adjoining parcels unless an initial variance is obtained by approval of the Trinity County Planning Commission,

**WHEREAS**, approved or conditionally approved commercial cannabis variances are subject to annual renewal by the Planning Director through the director's use permit process, and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission held a public hearing and considered this matter at the regular meeting held on November 9, 2023,

**WHEREAS**, given that public hearing notices were not mailed to adjacent properties for this project, in adhere to noticing requirements outlined in County Code Section 17.34.050 (Notice of Hearings), staff is requested continuance of this variance request to the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting, December 14th, 2023.

**WHEREAS**, the proper notices were mailed to adjacent properties for this project, per County Code Section 17.34.050 (Notice of Hearings), on November 22, 2023.

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission held a public hearing and considered this matter at the regular meeting held on December 14, 2023,

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Planning Commission of the County of Trinity:

1. The approval of this project is a "later activity" associated with the Cannabis Program EIR, as defined by subsection (c) of Section 15168, in that (i) all impacts associated with the approval of this project are within the scope of environmental review previously studied, and (ii) the requirements and mitigations required by Chapter 17.43 and 17.43G of the Trinity County Code, adequately serve to mitigate the impacts associated with approval of this project, it adequately evaluates all potential environmental impacts, and can be appropriately tiered within the Trinity County Cannabis Programmatic Environmental Impact Report; and
2. Makes the following findings:
  - a. The applicant will not be granted a special privilege upon the approval of the proposed commercial cannabis variance;
  - b. The approval of the proposed commercial cannabis variance is not for a variance for the use of the property;
  - c. The approval of the proposed commercial cannabis variance would not be injurious to general public welfare or to the adjacent properties;

Resolution No. 2023-11

December 14, 2023

- d. The proposed commercial cannabis variance is not in conflict with the goals, objectives, and policies of the General Plan or any specific plans;
  - e. The project parcel is not located in a Recreation Development District (RD-1) overlay zone; and
3. Approves CCV-2023-07 to reduce the 350-foot setback requirement from the residence on APN 025-140-033-000, subject to the conditions set forth in Exhibit A of this resolution and incorporated herein.

DULY PASSED AND ADOPTED this Thursday, December 14, 2023 by the Planning Commission of the County of Trinity by the following vote:

AYES:  
NAYS:  
ABSENT:  
ABSTAIN:  
RECUSE:

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Carol Fall, CHAIR  
Planning Commission  
County of Trinity  
State of California

ATTEST:

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
EDWARD PRESTLEY  
Secretary of the Planning Commission  
County of Trinity, State of California



**EXHIBIT "A" to Resolution PC-2023-11**  
**COMMERCIAL CANNABIS VARIANCE CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

(Bella Lor, Commercial Cannabis Variance (CCV-23-07))

1. The commercial cannabis variance is approved for a period of one year and shall expire on the same date as the commercial cannabis license that this variance and parcel is associated with; provided, however, that the variance shall be renewed annually through the Director's Use Permit application process. The commercial cannabis renewal application shall:

1. Be submitted by the applicant or designated agent/consultant prior to expiration of the variance and preferably no later than 60 days in advance;
2. Be subject to a filing fee as specified by resolution of the Board of Supervisors;
3. Be approved, denied, or referred to the Planning Commission at the discretion of the Planning Director;

2. Structures on the property shall be in compliance with the California Building Code and Trinity County Code;

3. The applicant has the sole responsibility for renewing this commercial cannabis variance before its expiration. The County will not provide a notice prior to the expiration date;

4. No county permit or license shall be issued until the ten-day appeal period has expired. If the commercial cannabis variance approval is appealed, no county permit or license shall be issued while a commercial cannabis variance hearing or appeal is pending.

**END OF CONDITIONS.**