



**PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING  
JULY 24, 2018**

MAJOR USE PERMIT AND DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION #17-08  
"FLYING CHANGE FARMS EQUESTRIAN CENTER"  
APPLICANT: GRACE AND REX KAMPHAFNER

**STAFF REPORT**

**REQUEST**

To allow the construction and operation of a private equestrian center to be known as the "The Flying Change Farms Equestrian Center." The facility will cater to dressage and hunter/jumper riders, and consist of a 40-stall boarding barn, covered riding arena, two outdoor arenas, buildings for hay storage and manure storage, and an on-site manager's quarters.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Planning Commission adopt Resolution #18-04 approving a Major Use Permit (MUP) to allow construction and operation of a private equestrian center to be known as the "The Flying Change Farms Equestrian Center" subject to the approved Design Review and adoption of a Mitigated Negative Declaration as per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the recommended findings and conditions of approval.

**SITE DESCRIPTION**

**Location:** Approximately ¼ mile north of the intersection of James Drive and Rocklin Rd.  
APN: 045-050-003  
**Size:** 40.0 acres

**General Plan, Zoning, and Existing Land Uses**

	GENERAL PLAN	ZONING	CURRENT LAND USE
ON SITE	RESIDENTIAL ESTATE	RE	VACANT
NORTH*	LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	PD-1.93	OPEN SPACE
EAST	RESIDENTIAL ESTATE	RE	VACANT
SOUTH	RESIDENTIAL ESTATE	RE	VACANT
WEST*	MIXED USE	PD-CC	VACANT

\*Within the City of Rocklin

**Improvements/Utilities/Service Systems**

**Sewer** – Septic  
**Water** – Currently wells, will be served by PCWA  
**Gas/Electric** – PG&E  
**Trash** – Recology  
**Fire** – South Placer Fire District

## **Existing Conditions**

The project site is currently grazing land with one residence and associated out buildings. The residence would remain if the project is approved. There is also an 8-stall "mare motel" (barn for mares and foals) on the site. The project site consists of gently rolling topography, with elevations ranging from 340 to 380 feet. Most of the site is composed of grasslands and oak woodland and is used for grazing. A seasonal pond is located along the northern border that drains to a larger pond in the City of Rocklin. In addition to the pond, there are seeps and wetland swales located on the project site.

The project site is surrounded primarily by grasslands and oak woodlands. A band of trees and other vegetation abuts the northern and western project boundaries, along with a large pond to the north. The project site is surrounded by undeveloped open spaces and rural residences at present, higher-density development is being proposed on the Sierra College property to the west. Sierra College has partnered with a development company on an application to develop a 107-acre Planned Development in the City of Rocklin. The "North Village" of this project would be located immediately west of the project site, and include residential and mixed uses (e.g., residential, institutional, medical, retail, office) along the project site's western boundary.

To the south of the project site is the approved Poppy Ridge 1 project to develop seven lots on 20 acres. The equestrian center property had previously been approved for Phase II of Poppy Ridge, but its subdivision map was never recorded and expired. The area to the east is also designated Residential Estate, which allows for residential development on lots of at least 2.3 acres. The partially-developed Croftwood project is located to the north, in the City of Rocklin. The Croftwood Unit 1 project plans for 156 single-family homes with minimum 10,000 square foot residential lots. The pond immediately north of the project site will remain as designated open space, of the Croftwood project.

Existing access to the site is from James Drive, an 18-foot wide gravel road, via Rocklin Road. Currently no other public streets abut the project site or provide access. The easement for James Drive is 33-foot wide from Rocklin Road to the entrance of the project site. There is an additional 17-foot easement along James Drive adjacent to the two parcels immediately north of Rocklin Road.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### **Facilities**

The proposed facility will consist of the following structures:

- 40-stall barn,
- 250-foot x 120-foot covered riding arena,
- 230-foot x 150-foot outdoor arena,
- 210-foot x 75-foot outdoor arena (dressage court),
- 30-foot x 90-foot building for storage of hay, bedding and fodder system,
- 30-foot x 40-foot enclosed manure storage building
- two- 75-foot diameter round pens,
- three 130-foot x 50-foot paddocks

The U-shaped barn will be about 15 feet tall and have a central aisle along each leg with stalls on either side. In addition to the 40 horse stalls, the barn will have feed rooms, wash racks, grooming bays, tack rooms, a rest room, an office, and a lounge. The covered arena have a pitched metal roof, approximately 20 to 23 feet at its peak, and open sided. Lighting will be suspended from the covered arena roof, and not directly visible outside of the arena. Outdoor arenas will be fenced but not covered and will not be lighted. Security lighting will be provided for ingress/egress and at trailer parking area. The covered arena will use

footing not requiring watering and will be dust free. (Footing is a mixture of sand and other soil like amendments to provide an even surface that prevents slippage and cushioning for hoofs.) The footing for outdoor arenas will also be dust free, with little watering. A tractor would be used to daily "drag" (i.e., fluff and level) the arena.

### **Construction**

Project construction will require grading to level the building sites and create pads. Concrete work will be undertaken for barn and arena footings. Standard techniques will be used to construct the barn. The driveway and parking areas will be paved. An estimated 5.3 acres will be graded, including 0.1 acres offsite (the intersection improvements). Approximately 11,500 cubic yards of soil are expected to be disturbed and distributed on site. The earthwork will be balanced on-site, so that no native soil will be exported or imported. Approximately 1.75 acres of new impervious surface will be created onsite. An additional 0.09 acres of impervious surface will be created at the offsite intersection of James Drive with Rocklin Road.

### **Operation**

Flying Change Farms will be able to board 40 horses within the horse barn, an additional eight within the Mare Motel, and seven in open pasture for a maximum total of 55 horses allowed on the site. These horses will be predominantly high-end performance horses, competing in dressage and hunter/jumper disciplines. The average boarder would visit their horse(s) 4-6 times per week. Two trainers would be on site daily to train horses and give lessons. All the boarded horses would be in a full or partial training program. One to two clients are expected to trailer in 3 to 4 days per week for lessons, primarily from the surrounding area, such as Auburn, Newcastle, Penryn, Loomis, Granite Bay and Orangevale. The facility will not host horse shows or similar events. The site has a single residence, which will be the on-site manager's quarters. Two additional employees will live off site. Operating hours will be 7am to 8:30 pm, seven days per week.

## **PROJECT ISSUES**

### **Biology**

Habitat on the 40-acre project site is composed of approximately 17.2 acres of annual grassland, 24 acres of oak woodland, and 0.18 acres of seasonal pond. The oak woodland is dominated by blue and interior live oaks. The understory of the oak woodland is composed primarily of grasslands, lacking woody vegetation. The annual grassland is dominated by nonnative grasses. The project site provides habitat for several special-status species. An elderberry shrub is located near the western border of the project site. Elderberry shrubs can provide habitat for the Valley elderberry longhorn beetle, which is a Federal threatened species. Although they were not observed during field surveys, both California red-legged frog and Northwestern pond turtle could occur in the onsite pond. However, the pond is outside of the area to be disturbed by the Proposed Project. Three special-status raptors listed in Table 3-4 of the IS\MND were observed on or over the project site during surveys. Migratory birds, including non-listed raptors, are protected and mitigation measures have been prepared for their protection.

A wetland delineation was prepared in June 2004 and verified by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). The verified delineation identified a total of 1.72 acres of jurisdictional wetlands on the 40-acre project site, including a seasonal pond, wetland swales, seeps, fringe wetlands and an isolated wetland. All of the wetlands appeared to be seasonal, and are typically dormant and dry by September or October. The seasonal pond is an extension of a larger pond on the Croftwood project to the north of the project site. This pond dries out substantially during the dry season, and the portion of the pond on the project site is completely dry by summer. None of these wetlands are located disturbed by the Proposed Project.

An arborist report was also prepared for the entire project site. Every tree meeting the Town's criteria for

protected trees was tagged, evaluated for structural condition and vigor and inventoried. The resulting arborist report was prepared in April 2017, and focused on the area in which the Proposed Project would be constructed. The 2017 arborist report found 54 oak trees measuring 4 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh) within and/or overhanging the area to be developed. Of these, five were recommended to be removed due to the nature and extent of defects, compromised health and/or structural instability. The 2017 report also provides general guidelines for the protection of trees that will remain in place. As shown in Figure 2-4 of the IS\MND, project facilities, including the access road, water line, parking and structures, have been sited so that the oak trees need not be removed. However, portions of some elements of the project, such as the access road, would be located under the tree canopy, and therefore could disturb the critical root zone. Grading, excavation, compaction and application of materials (e.g., asphalt) in these areas could result in damage to the root zone, with an adverse effect on one or more protected oak trees. In addition, if final design requires that the planned facilities be shifted closer to one or more protected trees, those trees may need to be removed. There are two oak trees west of James Drive that are within the area to be disturbed. Those that would be removed within the site are subject to **Section 13.54 Tree Preservation and Protection** of the Loomis Zoning Ordinance. This requires the applicant to acquire a Tree Removal Permit prior to any on site grading or construction and provide mitigation and/or replacement as part of their improvement plans.

The Proposed Project would result in conversion of approximately 1.84 acres of grassland to roads, barns and riding facilities, including the intersection improvements at James Drive and Rocklin Road and installation of the water line.

### **Cultural Resources**

In November 2004, a Cultural Resources Assessment was prepared by Peak and Associates which included the current project site. For that study the North Central Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System was contacted to identify cultural resources that had been reported in or near the project site. The sacred lands file was checked, but no sites were listed in the project site. Native Americans with knowledge of the area were contacted. A field inspection was conducted in October 2004 using 15-meter transects, and a test excavation was conducted at one site that appeared to have potential for historic archaeology. Five cultural resources were recorded and evaluated in 2004. Previous surveys identified a prehistoric food processing loci and evidence of mining activity north of the project site, along Secret Ravine. The 2004 survey found no evidence of prehistoric occupation or use of the project site.

In October 2017, Peak and Associates updated the 2004 study. A records check was performed, which found that no subsequent surveys of the project site had been conducted. A pedestrian field inspection was conducted. There was good soil visibility throughout the project site. Evidence of a recent fire was observed, and there was heavy ground squirrel activity, which provided for ample visual access to subsurface soils. The five historic resources were still present, although one, a cistern, had been repaired and altered since 2004. There was no evidence of other historic resources or prehistoric occupation or use of the project site. The United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC) in response to the request for review and comment sent recommended measures which have been included as part of the IS\MND mitigation measures and conditions of approval.

### **Hydrology\Water Quality**

The approximately 11-acre portion of the project site that would be developed drains from south to north. Stormwater runoff sheet-flows across natural open space and low-lying areas. Construction of the Proposed Project will involve earth-disturbing and building activities that could result in the discharge of sediment or other pollutants. Because activities associated with project development would disturb more than one acre of land, the applicant is required to obtain and comply with the State General Construction

Activity Stormwater Permit. The project must also comply with the Town's Grading, Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance (Chapter 12.04 of the Municipal Code), which requires preparation of an erosion and sediment control plan that complies with the Town's stormwater management plan and the *California Stormwater Quality Association Stormwater Best Management Practice Handbook*. The Town's Grading Ordinance specifies that the erosion and sediment control plan prevent discharge through all stages of project construction and that the plan include measures to ensure permanent site stabilization. The Grading Ordinance also requires that all construction equipment and maintenance and construction materials storage areas be located within designated areas protected with a berm to contain any loose materials, and all that disturbed areas be protected through revegetation or a protective cover. The Preliminary Drainage and Storm Water Quality Report identifies BMPs that would be used during construction, including sediment controls, paving and grading measures, and waste management.

The Proposed Project will result in approximately 1.84 acres of new impervious surfaces. This will result in an increase in stormwater runoff, which could alter downstream flood conditions, which would be a significant impact. Furthermore, urban contaminants could be released into surface waters, which would be a significant impact on water quality. The Report for the project states that stormwater would be collected from roof drains in trenches, which would drain to an approximately 4,400 square foot bioretention area. The bioretention areas would provide water quality treatment and hydromodification sufficient to capture and treat the runoff from the project's new impervious surfaces. The report also identifies a number of measures and best management practices (BMPs) to protect the quality and quantity of stormwater run off that include a 125-foot setback and buffer from the nearest streams, creeks; and ponds; and permeable pavement in the parking area.

### **Noise**

The noises generated by the Proposed Project would be consistent with the existing rural environment. Onsite activities would not exceed the 24-average or short-duration noise standards identified in the General Plan, because there would be no permanent sources of excessive noise. In the future, there could be residences located north and west of the project site who may be able to hear some noise at times. For example, small tractors could be used for maintenance activities, such as dragging the arenas. However, the indoor arena and barn walls would dampen noise from within or south or west of those buildings. The outdoor arena would be 25 feet from the northern property line, however most of the land immediately to the north is dedicated open space. While future residents might hear some project noise, it would be of short duration. **There will be no amplified sound.** Because the barn would be closed from 8:30pm to 7am, there would be little or no discernable noise at night.

### **Transportation\Traffic**

An equestrian center is compatible with rural residential uses, such as those located in the vicinity of the project site. For the most part, vehicles entering and leaving the project site would be similar to those using any commercial facility, such as personal automobiles and trucks, delivery trucks, and waste removal vehicles. Trucks with horse trailers would also enter and exit the site. Some farm equipment, such as a tractor, would be used onsite, but would not travel on public roads.

The Proposed Project is estimated to generate 139 new vehicle trips per day, with 6 of those trips occurring during the weekday a.m. peak hour and 16 trips occurring in the weekday p.m. peak hour. As shown in Tables 3-7 and 3-8, of the IS\MND the study area intersections and roadway segments would operate at LOS C or better under both existing and existing plus project conditions. Therefore, the increase in traffic under Existing plus Project conditions would be less-than-significant.

The existing Rocklin Road/James Drive intersection is not designed to current Town standards. Therefore, there could be conflicts with entering and exiting vehicles that are using James Drive at the same time.

The Proposed Project includes improvements to James Drive and its intersection with Rocklin Road in order to better accommodate entering and exiting vehicles, including those with horse trailers. James Drive would be widened to 20 feet within approximately 100 feet of Rocklin Road. Tapers would be provided east and west of James Drive, which would provide an area for vehicles that are entering or existing to accelerate or decelerate. The intersection configuration and improvements will be subject to review and approval by the Town Engineers of **both** Rocklin and Loomis during the Improvement Plan process to ensure that compatible standards are met.

#### **Utilities\Public Services**

Both the Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) and the South Placer Municipal Utility District (SPMUD) have had the opportunity to review the project during the preliminary application review, and review of the proposed IS\MND. Neither currently serve the project site, but the applicant has been in discussion with PCWA for extension of their line along James Road to their property for future service, subject to compliance with their standard conditions and regulations, to obtain a Can and Serve Letter.

Policy 4 of the Public Services Element of the Loomis General Plan states public water and sewer is required for any proposed (new) dwelling unit within 300 feet of such service, and for all proposed development in a **“nonresidential land use designation.”**

The project site is designated Residential Estate within the Land Use Element, a residential land use designation. Therefore, the proposed equestrian center is **not** required to be served by public water or sewer. Since no new dwelling is proposed, only the use of the existing house, public water and sewer service is not required. In addition, public services are not required, as the project parcel is over 300 feet from the nearest available public service on Poppy Ridge Court. There is also precedent as the Planning Commission approved the Shambaugh Equestrian Facility In December 2004 and did not require either public water or sewer.

#### **DESIGN REVIEW**

Design Review is required for all non-residential development as per **Section 13.62.040 Design Review** to ensure proposed development maintains and enhances ***“the small-town, historic, and rural character of the community.”***

The proposed buildings are consistent with the historic and rural character of the community. The design and choice of colors are traditional styles found in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century motifs typical of farm and ranches of that period. The massing of the buildings create a harmonious groupings, while limiting the built environment to less than 25% of the total project site. The buildings are setback away from neighboring properties creating a sense of space, while also allowing native vegetation to buffer the structures. Development of the proposed project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or the quality of the site and its surroundings. The project site will not be converted to residential uses, as allowed by the zoning, but instead retain the natural oak woodland landscape character of the area. Existing vegetation will shield and buffer the site uses from public vantage points and future off-site residential development, such as to the west. Additional landscaping is proposed around the parking areas from the future residences to the west as per Section 13.30.100 A of the Loomis Zoning Ordinance. Irrigation and watering is consistent with the Town’s Water Efficient Landscape Conservation Ordinances.

**Section 13.30.080** of the Loomis Municipal Code requires outdoor lighting to be shielded or recessed so that the light source is not visible from off the site and so that glare and reflections are confined to the maximum extent feasible within the boundaries of the site. Further, **Section 13.30.080(b)** requires lighting fixtures to be directed downward and away from adjoining properties and public rights-of-way

and requires that off-site illumination does not exceed one foot-candle.

Chapter 13.54 of the Loomis Municipal Code protects native oak trees with a diameter of six or more inches at dbh, defined as 54 inches above the ground. The report prepared by Sierra Nevada Arborists in April 2017 identified 56 oak trees subject to the ordinance in the area to be developed. The project facilities, including the access road, water line, parking and structures, have been sited so that the oak trees need not be removed. However, portions of some elements of the project, such as the access road, would be located under the tree canopy, and therefore could disturb the critical root zone. In addition, if final design requires that the planned facilities be shifted closer to one or more protected trees, those trees may need to be removed. In addition to complying with the Town's Tree Ordinance, mitigation has been required as part of the Negative Declaration that should any protected tree be removed or irrevocably damaged, an in-lieu fee be paid or replacement trees be planted on-site.

### **CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)**

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15070 Decision to Prepare a Negative or Mitigated Negative Declaration the Town of Loomis prepared an *Initial Study Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND)*. (Attachment 3) Mitigation measures were identified to reduce potential impacts to a level of less than significant in the *IS/MND Mitigation Monitoring Report Plan (MMRP)* (Attachment 6) and included as required Conditions of Approval for this project

A Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration was posted and mailed to adjacent property owners and Public Agencies for the 30 day public review between June 1, 2018 and and July 7, 2018.

Negative Declarations do require a formal response to comments as do environmental impact reports. However, the Public Comments (attachment #7) were reviewed and where necessary the draft IS\MND was revised as shown in the *IS\MND Errata* document (Attachment #5). In addition, the town prepared a *Response to Comments Memorandum* (Attachment #8) providing a summary of the pertinent comments and any town response to it.

A Notice of Determination will be filed with the Placer County Clerk upon approval of the project.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Planning Commission adopt Resolution #18-04 approving a Major Use Permit (MUP) to allow construction and operation of a private equestrian center to be known as the "The Flying Change Farms Equestrian Center" subject to the approved Design Review and adoption of a Mitigated Negative Declaration as per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the recommended findings and conditions of approval.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Draft Resolution #18-04
  - Exhibit A: Recommended Findings
  - Exhibit B: Recommended Conditions of Approval

2. Project Application

### **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Documents**

3. Flying Change Farms Initial Study\Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS\MND)\*
4. Studies and Reports
  - Arborist Report
  - Cultural Studies Report

Drainage Report  
Traffic Analysis Report

5. IS\MND Errata
6. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP)
7. Public Comments  
    Agency Comments  
    Citizen Comments
8. Response to Comments Memorandum

*\* Previously Distributed to Planning Commission Members. Additional copies available at Town Hall or the Loomis Website: [www.Loomis.ca.gov](http://www.Loomis.ca.gov)*

**NOTE: Notice published in the Loomis News on July 12, 2018, and mailed July 12, 2018.**