

Exhibit A

This page intentionally left blank.

DISCUSSION

Castroville Community Plan

The project was reviewed for consistency with the *Castroville Community Plan* (CCP) design guidelines for Mixed Use-Castroville zoning (MU-C), and CCP MU-C development standards. The subject parcel is within the Merritt Street Opportunity Area as illustrated in Figure 6 of the CCP. There are four CCP goals that relate to the Merritt Street Opportunity Area. Goal 1 is to “maintain the community’s existing small town, agricultural character, while enhancing its sense of place and safety through appropriate design programs.” It can be inferred that the development of Appendix A, Design Guidelines, is such a design program. Therefore, as the project adheres with the requirements of Appendix A for mixed use development, the project adheres with Goal 1. Goal 2 is to “ensure that development is compatible with existing development and enhances the character of the community.”

The proposed development fills a vacant lot which is adjacent to a roofing supply warehouse to the northwest and a boat and trailer storage facility to the southeast. There is an auto repair shop across the street. The proposed bulk and mass are consistent with these structures. The adjacent uses are mostly industrial in nature, while on the far corner of Speegle Street and Tembladera Street, the Girl Scouts of Central Coast have a leadership center. Overall, the project is consistent with neighborhood character. Goal 3 is for new development in the mixed-use area to be encouraged to contribute positively to the community’s character and sense of place. The applicant intends to create at least one mural on the front wall of the development to enhance the pedestrian experience on Tembladera Street. In the front setback, landscaping is proposed to further enhance the streetscape. In these ways, the project is consistent with Goal 3.

Although the CCP is in the process of being updated, the existing CCP envisions a linear park on the slough. “This can be accomplished by requiring defined landscaped walkways between the buildings and the Slough, constructing outdoor use areas (e.g., eating and observation decks) as part of the new development for viewing into the Slough, and care in placing outdoor storage, parking, and service uses to not detract from the visual connection desired.” The CCP’s plan for an idyllic park setting along the edge of the slough contrasts with requirement for the area pursuant to 2010 GP Agricultural Element Policy AG-1.2 because there is ongoing agricultural operations on properties zoned Farmland on the opposite side of the slough from the project site; an easement for agricultural buffer is required. Pursuant to Title 21 section 21.66.030.F.2.c, agricultural buffers such as the landscaped perimeter for this project are limited to landscaping or natural materials and would not allow a trail and certainly not picnic areas. As the project was reviewed by the Agricultural Commissioner’s office and a condition of approval was added by the office for an agricultural buffer, staff did not create a conflict by requesting redesign of the proposed project to include the types of public use areas described in the CCP. Condition No. 7 requires the applicant to establish and record a 32-foot wide agricultural buffer easement and deed for the purpose of protecting agriculture from any impacts caused by the non-agricultural development. The agricultural buffer easement and deed shall extend the full length of the boundaries between the property to be developed and the adjacent agricultural lands. A vegetative buffer, consistent with condition of approval No. 7 (Landscaping Plan), shall be allowed inside the agricultural buffer easement area. CCP Merritt Street Opportunity Area Goal 4 is to implement a land use plan that meets the needs of the local population for housing, retail, public services, and employment opportunities during the next 20 years. The project meets the

needs of the local population for mini-storage and adds one unit of housing to the community.

Restoration and enhancement of the Tembladero Slough and integration of the Slough restoration with the construction of the new Artichoke Avenue” is discussed in this section of the CCP. Merritt Street Opportunity Area Goal 5 is to “continue to protect and enhance the community’s important natural and manmade resources,” and Policy 5.1 expands that “new private and public development shall work with local and regional organizations to enhance the sloughs in the vicinity of Castroville as part of the ongoing regional slough enhancement efforts to improve habitat, provide open space and create attractive amenities for the entire community.” As the Tembladero Slough habitat is adjacent to the project site, this portion of the subject site was zoned Resource Conservation (RC). The applicant was required to prepare a Biological Report. The project specific report by Ed Mercurio (HCD-Planning Document No. LIB230194) included a pedestrian survey of the subject parcel and a desktop search for all possible special status and listed species that could be in the area. The report concluded that there were no special status plants or listed species on the premises, but there is potential for California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*) and other amphibians to enter/occupy the construction site during pre-construction activity. The report proposed pre-construction surveys and exclusionary fencing to avoid any direct impacts and restoration of native habitat along the slough to improve its ability to sustain these species. (For more on the Biological Report conclusions and recommendations, see “*Biological Resources*,” below). The landscaping plan with such restoration included is Condition No. 8. As designed and conditioned, the project is generally consistent with CCP Merritt Street Opportunity Area Goals 1 through 5, while there remains a conflict between Goals (pathways and picnic areas vs. habitat improvement and agricultural buffering) for the edge of the slough. Conflicts exist between the adopted CCP vision for a linear park along the slough and the 2010 GP Agricultural Element prescribed treatment of lands between agricultural operations and non-agricultural zoning districts.

Design

All new development in Castroville requires a Design Approval to allow for the proposed development. The 446-unit mini-warehouse storage facility and two-story mixed-use building consisting of an office on the first floor and a residential unit on the second floor demonstrate consistency with the purpose and regulations of CCP Appendix A, Design Guidelines. Commercial and Mixed Use development guidelines include that building placement should be designed to minimize the visual separation between structures as viewed from the street. Also, a minimum of 75 percent of the front of a building shall have a zero front setback. And, blank walls and a vacant lot appearance are inappropriate, as it discourages pedestrian movement. (Guideline 7.1.1). The project would front Tembladera Street with connected buildings separated only by the gate, with at least one mural is proposed for the street facing wall. Guideline 7.1.2 for outdoor spaces encourages mixed use and commercially zoned projects to be designed to enliven the sidewalk level and provide for private open space for employees and residents. Guideline 7.4 for mixed use and commercial zoning landscaping encourages landscaping to be used to soften the impact of large expanses of blank wall or fencing. Therefore, although the project is not proposed with a zero front setback, the use of landscaping in the small front setback (9 feet, 10 inches) both enlivens the sidewalk level, provides some green space and softens the impact of the long wall of Building H (201 feet long on the front property line).

Guideline 7.1.3 for mixed use and commercial site access encourages projects to develop the ground floor level of a building to encourage pedestrian activity, for linear building frontage to incorporate pedestrian-oriented elements and for the primary entrance to be oriented toward the street. Direct access should be provided from the sidewalk to the primary entrance of the building and be enhanced with landscape and/or paving improvements. Loading areas and docks, service yards, and refuse/recycling enclosures should be located out of public view and must not front onto a primary street. As designed, the project is consistent with guideline 7.1.3. The building frontage incorporates landscaping and easy parking for ADA parking or short-term visit to the office, as well as columns at intervals in the walls in a contrasting shade of gray, a pedestrian-scale mural, and landscaping. The loading and refuse/recycling enclosures are located behind the façade out of sight from Tembladera Street.

Mixed use and commercial parking guideline 7.2 encourages on-site parking to be located to minimize visibility from the sidewalk and placed behind buildings if possible, accessed from the rear of the property on parcels with alleys, so that it does not interrupt the storefront continuity along the sidewalk. Due to the site constraints of the subject parcel, an alley and rear parking is not possible. However, the project parking is consistent with guideline 7.2 in that off-street parking is located to minimize conflicts with pedestrians and to minimize the physical and visual impact to the traditional streetscape appearance, designed with security in mind, and the parking area is not between sidewalk and the front of the building, but rather it is beside the building in front of the gate and behind the gate. Bike parking is discussed in guideline 7.2, but bike parking is not offered as part of this project given the nature of the use.

The form, mass, and scale of the architecture conform with the CCP architectural design guideline 7.3.1 for form, mass and scale by proposing a simple rectangular form accented with a strong roofline. The upper floor windows are divided into units instead of a continuous stream of glass, and there is a clear visual division between the street level and upper floor incorporated through the change of materials, colors, and a short canopy (consistent with guidelines 7.3.1 and 7.3.4, window treatments). Consistent with guidelines 7.3.2 for façade treatment and 7.3.3 for mixed use storefronts, traditional patterns are delineated both vertically and horizontally, and the light gray colored perimeter walls have columns of dark gray incorporated.

Consistent with guideline 7.3.5 for building entrances as well as direction given in guideline 7.1.3 for site access, the primary entrance is clearly identified, conveys a sense of human scale and is oriented toward the street. Pursuant to this guideline, the entrance is welcoming because it is a narrow beige articulated overhang above the entrance and creating a separation between the first and second floor of the mixed use building façade (see Plans elevations on sheet A2.1). Consistent with guideline 7.3.6 for awnings, the awning is not the predominate feature of the façade but an accent.

The project is consistent with guideline 7.3.8 for building materials, colors and finishes in that the materials are similar to those used by the adjacent and neighborhood warehouses, contrasting colors accent architectural details and the finishes are matte (not shiny paint and windows are not mirrored). The mini-warehouse storage facility is proposed to be constructed of gray steel siding, light and dark gray concrete masonry units block walls, gray standing seam metal roof, and light green sectional metal roll-up doors with beige steel headers. The two-story mixed-use building

would include an office on the first floor with one restroom, and a two bedroom, two bath residential unit on the second floor. Similar in architectural design, the office and residential unit will be constructed using gray and beige stucco, dark gray metal door and window frames, and dark gray metal garage door. Consistent with guideline 7.3.8, the colors are compatible with adjacent existing structures which are gray and beige. The proposed exterior colors and materials are consistent with the area's setting and surrounding buildings.

The project has been conditioned to include an exterior lighting plan as part of the construction plan set to ensure the project complies with CCP mixed use design guideline 7.4 for lighting and the Monterey County lighting ordinance (Condition No. 6). The applicant submitted a preliminary lighting plan which includes down-lit, shielded lighting fixtures which are compatible with and complement the building's design and architectural style. The proposed exterior lighting is consistent with other commercial buildings in the neighborhood and the overall design is compatible with the neighborhood.

Consistent with the CCP mixed use and commercial sign guidelines, 7.6.1 sign type, the project proposes a recommended type of sign, a wall signs are flush-mounted and attached to the building façade, as shown in the 3D rendering within the project plan set. The one proposed project sign is 32 square feet surface area consisting of 17-inch letters in LED-illuminated light green. The design adheres with guideline 7.6.2 for sign design in that it is architecturally compatible with the building's architectural style with regards to size, color, and materials as well as the style of lettering. It is also positioned on the top of the two-story building to compliment the style and proportion of the entire building façade but does not extend above the roof fascia, in adherence with the sign guidelines.

The CCP design guidelines are intended to maintain visual integrity of the surrounding area. The proposed project site is located approximately 0.25 miles north of State Route 1 (SR 1), which is a State designated eligible scenic highway, and 0.55 miles north of SR 156 which is a County and State designated scenic highway. However, views of the project site would be limited from SR 1 and SR 156 due to topography, vegetation, and existing development in the vicinity of the Project. As discussed above in relation to Merritt Street Opportunity Area goals, the project conforms with the existing bulk, mass and types of use in the immediate vicinity and therefore assures visual integrity (**Exhibit B**).

Development Standards

The development standards for Mixed-Use designations are identified in the CCP Appendix B under Table B-6. Required setbacks are zero feet from the front, side, and rear property lines with a 10 foot minimum distance between structures. The maximum allowed height is 42 feet. As proposed, the mini-warehouse storage facility and two-story mixed-use building will be 9 feet 10 inches (front), 3 to 16 feet (sides), and 32 feet 5 inches (rear) with a minimum 10 foot distance between separated structures (three storage buildings are structurally connected, and the multi-use building is structurally connected to one of the storage buildings). The two-story building is proposed to have a height of 21 feet and one inch which is below the maximum allowed. The maximum building site coverage is 50 percent on lots that allow Mixed-Use development. The property is 3.03 acres or 132,029 square feet, which allows site coverage of 66,014 square feet. The proposed site coverage is 55,703 square feet (42 percent). The project

has complied with all development standards, setbacks, height requirements, and site coverage limitations pursuant to the CCP Appendix B. Pursuant to Title 21 section 21.58.040, residential units are required to have 2 parking spaces and mini-storage facilities to provide 2 spaces for the manager plus 2 customer spaces. As proposed, the project would include one covered and one uncovered parking space for employees, one Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) parking space with a side aisle, and two parking spaces for customers. Pursuant to Title 21 Section 21.60.110, commercial projects located within a “D” District shall be allowed an aggregate 35 square feet of signage. The one proposed project sign is 32 square feet surface area flush-mounted on the top wall of the façade of the two story building consisting of 17-inch letters in LED-illuminated light green. Therefore, the project meets the regulations for signage established in Title 21. Therefore, the project meets the parking and signage requirements of Title 21.

2010 General Plan

Consistent with 2010 GP Land Use Policy LU-1.11, this development is consistent with the GP Land Use Map designation of the subject property and the policies of the 2010 GP, pursuant to Figure LU8, North County. 2010 GP Land Use Policy LU-2.20 requires that the preferred location and priority for development in the County shall be in Community Areas such as Castroville, and that a mix of uses in Community Areas shall be supported. As a mixed-use project in MU-C zoned district (within the CCP area), this project is consistent. As a commercial business with office and one residential unit, the project is also consistent with 2010 GP Policy LU-2.22 – Community Areas shall be designed to achieve a sustainable, balanced, and integrated community offering opportunities for workers to live near jobs.

2010 GP Public Services Policy PS-2.3 requires new development to connect to existing water service providers with a “will serve” letter submitted from the Castroville Community Services District. This project is low-water use by design. The only fixtures are in the two-bedroom unit (0.146 acre-feet per year, or AFY) and the office bathroom (0.090 AFY), for an anticipated total water usage of 0.236 AFY. This parcel is within the County Water Resource Agency’s Zone 2C water service area and therefore the specific project does not have to prove long-term sustainable water supply (2010 GP Policy PS-3.1).

2010 GP Policy AG- 1.2 requires a well-defined buffer area to be provided between new non-agricultural development proposals that are located adjacent to agricultural land uses on viable farmlands designated as Prime, of Statewide Importance, Unique, or of Local Importance. As the neighboring parcel to the southwest is designated Unique farmland and, in other areas, Prime farmland and used for agricultural operations, an Agricultural Buffer is required. The area within the established buffer is also required to be placed within an agricultural easement. Title 21 section 21.66.030 provides that the agricultural buffer easement should be 200 feet across. The Tembladero Slough bisects the commercial site and the adjacent agricultural land which functions as an approximate 40 foot wide natural barrier between the adjacent parcels. The proposed 32 foot agricultural buffer easement within the mini-storage parcel would further increase the buffer distance to 72 feet. The proposed office and residential unit will be at a greater distance (over 200 feet) from the adjacent agricultural fields. Due to the proximity to agricultural lands, the project would be required to comply with an HCD-Planning non-standard condition for a Landscape Plan with Agricultural Buffer and Biologist Review (Condition No. 8), which would ensure that development, and more specifically landscaping, would not

negatively impact surrounding agricultural crops. The Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) of Monterey County reviewed the proposed landscape plan with this agricultural buffer as the focus of their review on January 25, 2024. The AAC found the proposed landscaping to serve the needs of required buffering. Therefore, the project meets the 2010 General Plan policy, and the regulations outlined in Title 21.

Health and Safety

The project was reviewed by HCD-Planning, HCD-Engineering Services, HCD-Environmental Services, Environmental Health Bureau, North County FPD, and the Agricultural Commissioner's Office. The respective agencies have recommended conditions, where appropriate, to ensure that the project will not have an adverse effect on the health, safety, and welfare of persons either residing or working in the neighborhood. Necessary public facilities will be provided to serve the proposed development. Water and sewer connections are provided by the Castroville Community Services District (CCSD). The Environmental Health Bureau received a Can and Will Serve letter from CCSD dated October 10, 2022, which indicated available water and sewer connections to the project site.

Additionally, the project site is located north of the Tembladero Slough which is within the 100-year Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Zone AE. This is not within the floodway. Pursuant to Title 16 section 16.16.050, new construction in the AE Zone is required to be one foot above the base flood elevation. Additionally, setbacks from the top bank of a watercourse are 50 feet. HCD-Environmental Services reviewed the Geotechnical Report (HCD-Planning Document No. LIB230195) submitted for the proposed project. As proposed, the project will include approximately 16,000 cubic yards of fill to achieve the one foot above base flood elevation requirement and maintain a minimum setback of 50 feet from the Tembladero Slough. The natural drainage of the subject parcel is sheet flow over the land surface into the Slough. Site improvements would include the installation of a stormwater drainage system that would include five infiltration chambers, subdrains, area drains, drop inlets with media filters, and downspouts. Stormwater collected by these features would be transported through subsurface stormwater pipes before being captured in an isolator row. Overflow of stormwater would be released to the Slough through a subsurface pipe in the southwest corner of the site. The project would be required to comply with an Operation and Maintenance Agreement (Condition No. 13) as well as an Operation and Maintenance Plan (Condition No. 14) which would ensure stormwater control measures are adequately functioning and being maintained during operation. Furthermore, the project does not propose to construct vertical development in the floodplain of the Tembladero Slough. Therefore, the project is compliant with the Title 16 provisions for flood hazard reduction (**Exhibit B**).

Biological Resources

The project is located along the Tembladero Slough which has a potential for wetland habitat and sensitive biological resources. Pursuant to Title 21 section 21.66.020, a Biological Report was prepared by qualified biologist Ed Mercurio (HCD-Planning Document No. LIB230194). On May 10, 2023, and June 23, 2023, Mercurio surveyed the site for sensitive biological resources. The report concluded that no sensitive habitat, or sensitive plant and animal species were observed on the property during the two biological surveys. However, the possibility that there would be evidence that wetland environmental conditions existed on the subject property was a

major concern. In the May 2023 report, Mercurio concluded that the presence of patches of willow weed (*Persicaria lapathifolia*) may give the false appearance that some wetland vegetation is present on parts of the project area. The “*Persicarias*” are familiar plants that commonly occur in wetlands and some species are obligate wetland plants, which means that they can only grow in wetlands. Mercurio clarified that willow weed, although it looks superficially like some of the obligate wetland *Persicarias*, grows in both wetlands and non-wetland environments. Mercurio stated that some willow weed is present, but no wetland is on the project area of the Castroville Self Storage Property. Furthermore, Mercurio determined that no special status plant or wildlife species had been found to occur on or very close to the property from current California Department of Fish and Wildlife Natural Diversity Data Base (“CNDDDB”) records for the Prunedale and Moss Landing Quadrangles and surrounding areas.

Suitable terrestrial upland habitat for California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*) usually contain burrows of rodents such as California ground squirrel (*Spermophilus beecheyi*) and sometimes valley pocket gophers (*Thomomys bottae*). Very few rodent burrows were observed on the subject parcel and the few observed by Mercurio were too small and shallow to be the right type of burrow and “probably from mice or voles.” Mercurio found no evidence of the presence of these or other adult amphibians during parcel surveys. Mercurio also found that the project site consists primarily of highly disturbed non-native grassland. For the protection and reduced impacts to habitat and biological resources, the biologist recommended pre-construction surveys for California red-legged frog, California tiger salamander, the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander, Congdon’s tarplant, Monterey spineflower, Seaside Bird’s Beak, and the Saline clover and exclusionary fencing to be implemented during construction. The report recommended that any potential impacts to the degraded habitat on the slough by the construction of the project could be mitigated by restoration of native habitat along the slough (Condition No. 7). Mercurio also noted that some nesting birds may be disturbed by construction activity and therefore recommended a bird nest survey be conducted by a qualified biologist within 14 days of the start of construction if construction is started between March 1 and August 31 (Condition No. 26). These Mitigation Measures (BIO-1 through BIO-3, as Condition Nos. 21 through 23) and conditions were found acceptable by the applicant and are incorporated into the project.

Cultural Resources

County records identify the project site is within an area of high sensitivity for archaeological resources. Pursuant to Title 21 section 21.66.050, a Phase I Archaeological Report (HCD-Planning Document No. LIB230193) was prepared by Ruben G. Mendoza and Jennifer A. Lucido with Archives and Archaeology dated May 8, 2022. The report concluded no evidence that cultural resources were found on the project site. However, on May 14, 2024, the Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation (OCEN) held a consultation meeting with HCD-Planning pursuant to California Assembly Bill 52. During the consultation, OCEN requested tribal monitoring during construction activities. Although the Phase I Archaeological Report was negative for cultural resources during a pedestrian survey, HCD-Panning found the request reasonable because the project location is within the floodplain fringe where resources could have been covered by flood-borne materials during a 100-year flood. To minimize potential impacts to archaeological and tribal cultural resources, the project has been mitigated to include tribal monitoring (Mitigation Measure TCR-1) during ground-disturbing activities and conditioned to include a note on the project plans to stop work immediately in the event a

cultural, archaeological, historical, or paleontological resource is uncovered during construction (Condition No. 3).