



County of Fresno

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

Planning Commission Staff Report Agenda Item No. 4 June 28, 2018

SUBJECT: Variance Application No. 4046

Allow the creation of a 2.02-acre parcel and a 49.28-acre parcel from existing 16.12-acre and 35.18-acre parcels in the AE-20 (Exclusive Agricultural, 20-acre minimum parcel size) Zone District.

LOCATION: The project site is located on the west side of N. Madsen Avenue on the northwest corner of its intersection with E. Belmont Avenue, approximately 2 miles northeast of the nearest city limits of the City of Sanger (1115, 1129 N. Madsen Avenue & 13728 E. Belmont Avenue) (SUP. DIST. 5) (APN: 309-100-35, -37).

OWNER: Academy Ranch LLC
APPLICANT: Jane Gamble

STAFF CONTACT: Danielle Crider, Planner
(559) 600-9669

Marianne Mollring, Senior Planner
(559) 600-4569

RECOMMENDATION:

- Deny Variance No. 4046; 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. Proposed Parcel Configuration (Site Plan)
6. Variance Map
7. Applicant's Statement of 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)	No change
Parcel Size	16.12 acres (APN: 309-100-35) 35.18 acres (APN: 309-100-37)	2.02 acres 49.28 acres A 2.02-acre parcel will be created from the 16.12-acre parcel, and the 14.10-acre balance will be combined with the westerly adjacent 35.18-acre parcel, resulting in the creation of a 49.28-acre parcel.
Project Site	16.12-acre parcel (309-100-35): Two single-family residences with on-site septic systems and residential water well, accessible from N. Madsen Avenue 35.18-acre parcel (309-100-37): Single-family residence with on-site septic system, garage, barn, residential water well, agricultural water well, and orchard accessible from E. Belmont Avenue	2.02-acre parcel: Single-family residence with on-site septic system and residential water well 49.28-acre parcel: Single-family residence with on-site septic system, garage, barn, two residential water wells, one agricultural water well, and orchard The 14.10-acre balance of the existing 16.12-acre parcel will be combined with the 35.18-acre westerly adjacent parcel resulting in the creation of a 49.28-acre parcel. Staff notes that the 14.10-acre remainder parcel is currently uncultivated and contains a mobile home, on-site septic system, and residential water well. The removal of this mobile home and abandonment of the septic system has already been permitted. This acreage will be used for agricultural cultivation. Additionally, the residential water well on the 2.02-acre parcel has not yet been drilled, but will exist prior to final mapping approval per a Condition of Approval of this Variance.

Criteria	Existing	Proposed
Nearest Residence	240 feet to the east	No change
Surrounding Development	Agricultural uses	No change
Traffic Trips	Residential/Agricultural	No change
Lighting	Residential/Agricultural	No change

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

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

It has been determined, pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines, 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 9 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.

PROCEDURAL CONSIDERATIONS:

A Variance (VA) may be approved only if the 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.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Academy Ranch runs a productive agricultural operation on the 35.18-acre western parcel, and wishes to expand this operation to the majority of the 16.12-acre eastern parcel, which they acquired on February 8, 2011. There is an existing custom home on the 16.12-acre parcel, and Academy Ranch would like to sell this residence with a 2.02-acre parcel while retaining the farmable land. They would accomplish this by merging the remaining 14.10 acres with the entire 35.18-acre western parcel, which would create a 49.28-acre parcel.

Both parcels are located in the AE-20 (Exclusive Agricultural, 20-acre minimum parcel size) Zone District. The eastern parcel (16.12 acres) is considered legal non-conforming because at the time of its creation, it conformed to the minimum parcel size requirements. It was not until October 29, 1968 that the area was rezoned from A-1 (Agricultural District, 100,000 square-foot minimum parcel size) to AE-20 (Ord. No. 490-A-946). The western parcel (35.18 acres) currently conforms to the AE-20 Zone District minimum parcel size. If this Variance is approved and a 2.02-acre and 49.28-acre parcel are created, there will continue to be one legal non-conforming parcel and one parcel that conforms to the zone district’s minimum parcel size standard.

In addition to the subject application, there have been five other variance applications to allow the creation of parcels with substandard sizes in agricultural zone districts within one mile of the subject property. The following table provides a brief summary of the other variance applications and final actions.

Application/Request:	Date of Action:	Staff Recommendation:	Final Action:
VA No. 3539: Allow the creation of two 0.715-acre parcels from a 1.430-acre parcel in the AE-20 Zone District.	September 19, 1996	Approval	Approved by the Planning Commission
VA No. 3415: Allow the creation of a 17.95-acre parcel and a 1.30-acre parcel in the AE-20 Zone District.	May 20, 1993	Denial	Denied by the Planning Commission
VA No. 3277: Allow the creation of a 2-acre parcel and a 16.72-acre parcel in the AE-20 Zone District.	July 26, 1990	Denial	Approved by the Planning Commission
VA No. 3156: Recognize a 12.83-acre parcel previously created from an approximately 33-acre parcel in the AE-20 Zone District.	June 28, 1990	Approval	Approved by the Planning Commission
VA No. 3130: Allow the creation of two 2.43-acre parcels from a 4.86-acre parcel in the AE-20 Zone District.	January 21, 1988	Denial	Approved by the Planning Commission

Although there is a history of variance requests within proximity of the subject parcel, each variance request is considered on its own merit, based on unique site conditions and circumstances.

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION:

Findings 1 and 2: 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; and

Such a 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.

	Current Standard:	Proposed Configuration:	Is Standard Met (y/n):
Setbacks	Front: 35 feet Side: 20 feet Street Side: 35 Rear: 20 feet	<u>2.02-acre parcel:</u> Front (east property line): 93 feet Side (south property line): 167 feet Side (north property line): 88 feet Rear (west property line): 66 feet	Yes

	Current Standard:	Proposed Configuration:	Is Standard Met (y/n):
		49.28-acre parcel: Front (south property line): 75 feet Side (west property line): 300 feet Street Side (east property line): 1,250 feet Rear (north property line): 970 feet	
Parking	No Requirement	No Requirement	N/A
Lot Coverage	No Requirement	No Requirement	N/A
Separation Between Buildings	No animal or fowl pen, coop, stable, barn, or corral shall be located within 40 feet of any dwelling or other building used for human habitation.	No change	Yes
Wall Requirements	No Requirement	No Requirement	Yes
Septic Replacement Area	100 percent	No change	Yes
Water Well Separation	Septic tank: 50 feet; Disposal field: 100 feet; Seepage pit: 150 feet	One proposed well on the 2.02-acre parcel. To build this well, a permit must be acquired and minimum setbacks must be met.	Yes

Reviewing Agencies/Department Comments:

Fresno County Department of Agriculture: No comments.

Design Division of the Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning: No comments.

Development Engineering Section of the Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning: No Comments.

Zoning Section of the Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning: No Comments.

Analysis:

In support of Finding 1, the Applicant states that the 16.12-acre eastern parcel has not been farmed in many years, and it is their intent to engage as much of the parcel as possible in agricultural production.

In support of Finding 2, the Applicant states that the 16.12-acre parcel is already non-conforming to the minimum parcel size, contains two single-family residences, and no agricultural production. The Applicant plans to remove one homesite and reduce this parcel to an approximately 2-acre size, which is comparable to other single-family homesites in the area.

With regard to Finding 1 and Finding 2, staff could not identify any unique physical circumstances that apply to the subject property that do not apply to other properties in the area. Staff research did confirm that the 16.12-acre parcel has not been used for agricultural purposes since before 2004.

A consideration in addressing variance applications is whether there are alternatives available that would avoid the need for the Variance. In this case, the Applicant could lease the residence on the 16.12-acre parcel while expanding their agricultural operation to the rest of the parcel. The Applicant's ability to sell the single-family residence is not a substantial property right, and it has no bearing on the Applicant's ability to farm the additional land.

Recommended Condition of Approval:

None.

Conclusion:

Findings 1 and 2 cannot be made.

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:	Use:	Zoning:	Nearest Residence:
North:	226.19 acres	Orchard/Single-Family Residence	AE-20	1,350 feet
West:	26.59 acres	Orchard/Single-Family Residence	AE-20	1,650 feet
	2.5 acres	Single-Family Residence	AE-20	2,290 feet
South:	57.95 acres	Orchard	AE-20	N/A
	19.96 acres	Orchard/Single-Family Residence	AE-20	2,110 feet
	35.94 acres	Orchard/Single-Family Residence	AE-20	1,925 feet
	40.66 acres	Orchard/Single-Family Residence	AE-20	1,350 feet
	58.03 acres	Orchard	AE-20	N/A
East:	37.61 acres	Orchard/Single-Family Residence	AE-20	370 feet
	19.2 acres	Orchard	AE-20	N/A

Reviewing Agencies/Department Comments:

Road Maintenance and Operations Division of the Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning: Belmont Avenue is classified as a Collector road in the County's General Plan, requiring an ultimate right-of-way of 80 to 100 feet. Currently, there is 80 feet of right-of-way on Belmont Avenue; no additional right-of-way is required.

Madsen Avenue is classified as a Local road requiring an ultimate right-of-way of 60 feet. Currently, there is 40 feet of road right-of-way on Madsen Avenue. The Applicant should irrevocably offer an additional 10 feet of road right of way along the Madsen Avenue frontage, including a 20-foot by 20-foot corner cutoff at the intersection of Belmont Avenue and Madsen Avenue.

Existing residential properties are currently served by dirt approaches in the road right-of-way. If any improvements for these driveway approaches are proposed in the road right-of-way, an encroachment permit will be required. This mandatory requirement has been included as a Project Note.

Environmental Health Division of the Fresno County Department of Public Health: In the case of this application, it appears the parcel can accommodate the sewage disposal systems and expansion areas, meeting the mandatory setback requirements as established in the California Plumbing Code and California Well Standards Ordinance. It is recommended that the Applicant consider having the existing septic tank pumped, and have the tank and drain fields evaluated by an appropriately-licensed contractor if they have 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. This recommendation has been included as a Project Note.

At such time as the Applicant or future property owner(s) decide to construct a water well, the water well contractor will be required to apply for and obtain a Permit to Construct a Water Well from the Fresno County Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division. This mandatory requirement has been included as a Project Note.

Zoning Section of the Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning: Permit records for the garage on the western parcel (13728 E. Belmont) were not located in our permit records. Structures over 120 square-feet and within 6 feet of an existing residence, if built after March 1, 1958, require review, approval, permits, and inspections from the Zoning Section of the Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning. Appropriate permits must be acquired for this structure within 90 days of the effective date of approval. Additionally, these permits must be acquired prior to the final approval of the subsequent mapping action or Lot Line Adjustment to authorize the proposed parcelization.

Building Section of the Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning: Septic system density will be limited to one system per two acres. Any new development of less than two acres or secondary dwelling on less than four acres will require a nitrogen loading analysis by a qualified professional, demonstrating to the 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 Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) for their concurrence and input. Supplemental treatment systems for nitrogen reduction will be referred to RWQCB for permitting. This development standard has been included as a Project Note.

Analysis:

In support of Finding 3, the Applicant states that, with the exception of the custom single-family residence, the property has been a “weed-riddled eyesore for decades” and that by removing the existing mobile home and cultivating the land, they will positively affect the aesthetics of the property.

In regard to Finding 3, staff notes that by decreasing the size of one parcel from 16.12 acres to 2.02 acres, the number of residences allowed by right does not change. However, increasing the size of the 35.18-acre parcel to 49.28 acres will result in the allowance of two residences on that property by right, instead of the one that is allowed by right currently. Therefore, three total permitted residences would be allowed by right on the two parcels. Staff notes that there are currently three total permitted residences on these parcels, but that the existing mobile home has already been permitted for removal. There is no new development proposed at this time, but an additional residence could be built without a discretionary use permit on the 49.28-acre parcel in the future. This could result in a minor traffic impact to the area, but it should not surpass the level of existing traffic resulting from the three existing residences. Due to the limited potential impact, staff has concluded that no traffic mitigation, including the dedication of road right-of-way, is warranted for this project.

The adjacent properties support orchards and single-family residences, as do the subject properties. The uses of the properties will not change as a result of the proposed project, so it can be concluded that the character and use of the area will not be affected. Additionally, the aesthetic impact should be positive for the reasons provided by the Applicant.

Finally, it can be detrimental to a property owner and their surrounding community if they find themselves unable to access potable water. The proposed Variance will separate an existing single-family residence from the well it currently accesses water from. The Applicant has proposed a new well to serve the single-family residence on the 2.02-acre parcel, but to mitigate the risk of this residence being without water, it will be a Condition of Approval that a well must be drilled on the 2.02-acre parcel to serve the existing single-family residence prior to final mapping approval.

Recommended Conditions of Approval:

See recommended Conditions of Approval attached as Exhibit 1.

Conclusion:

Finding 3 can be made.

Finding 4: The granting of such a Variance will not be contrary to the objectives of the General Plan.

Relevant Policies:	Consistency/Considerations:
Policy LU-A.6: The County shall maintain twenty (20) acres as the minimum permitted parcel size in areas designated Agricultural, 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,	This Variance would allow the creation of a 2.02-acre parcel with the 14.10-acre balance of the existing 16.12-acre parcel being combined with an adjacent 35.18-acre parcel resulting in a 49.28-acre parcel. The subject property is zoned AE-20, with a 20-acre minimum parcel size. As such, the

Relevant Policies:	Consistency/Considerations:
and to help ensure the viability of agricultural operations.	<p>creation of a 2.02-acre parcel in the AE-20 Zone District is inconsistent with Policy LU-A.6. Further, the proposed project does not qualify for an exception under Policies LU-A.9, LU-A.10, or LU-A.11:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LU-A.9: The lot is not for a financing parcel, gift lot, or owned by the property owner prior to the date the policies were implemented. - LU-A.10: The request is not to allow for the development of an agricultural commercial center. - LU-A.11: The request is not to allow the recovery of mineral resources, oil, or gas.
<p>Policy LU-A.7: The 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 parcels 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.</p>	<p>The Variance request proposes to create a 2.02-acre parcel smaller than 20 acres in an area designated as Agricultural and zoned AE-20. As such, this proposal is not consistent with General Plan Policy LU-A.7.</p>
<p>Policy PF-C. 17: The County shall, prior to consideration of any discretionary project related to land use, undertake a water supply evaluation.</p>	<p>The project is not in a water-short area, and no change in land use is proposed as a part of this application.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>A minimum standard of two acres has been set forth by the Local Area Management Program (LAMP), approved by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). The proposed parcels meet the minimum parcel size required to support the existing septic systems.</p>

Reviewing Agencies/Department Comments:

Policy Planning Section of the Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning: The subject parcels are not subject to a Williamson Act Contract.

Water and Natural Resources Division of the Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning: No comments.

Analysis:

In support of Finding 4, the Applicant states that their goal is to farm 14.1 acres of land that has not been farmed for at least 14 years, and that they are removing one residence from the property which will create additional farmable space. The promotion of agricultural uses is a primary goal of the General Plan, therefore this proposal should be in conformity with the policy document.

In regard to Finding 4, staff notes that the subject property is designated as Agricultural in the Fresno County General Plan. Additionally, General Plan Policies LU-A.6 and LU-A.7 require a minimum parcel size of 20 acres as a means of encouraging continued agricultural production and minimizing the amount of land converted to non-agricultural uses. The subject proposal would create a 2.02-acre parcel that is less than the minimum 20-acre parcel size required in the AE-20 (Exclusive Agricultural, 20-acre minimum parcel size) Zone District. As such, the proposal is inconsistent with Policies LU-A.6 and LU-A.7. However, the 14.10-acre remainder of the existing 16.12-acre parcel would be merged with the 35.18-acre parcel, resulting in a 49.28-acre parcel. This parcel would conform to the minimum parcel size requirement in the AE-20 Zone District. The proposal is consistent with General Plan Policy PF-C.17 because the property is not located in an area designated as water-short, and because the use of the property is not changing.

Additionally, staff does note that the creation of a 2.02-acre parcel will not adversely affect the current agricultural use of the property; it will simply adjust the lot line. Although the proposal is consistent with some of the General Plan policies, the proposed 2.02-acre parcel is not eligible to be a homesite retention parcel as defined in the County General Plan, and therefore cannot conform to all of the relevant General Plan policies due to its size. Finding 4 cannot be made.

Recommended Conditions of Approval:

None.

Conclusion:

Finding 4 cannot be made.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

CONCLUSION:

Staff believes the required Findings 1, 2, and 4 for granting the Variance cannot be made based on the factors cited in the analysis. Staff therefore recommends denial of Variance No. 4046.

PLANNING COMMISSION MOTIONS:

Recommended Motion (Denial Action)

- Move to determine the required Findings cannot be made and move to deny Variance No. 4046; and
- Direct the Secretary to prepare a Resolution documenting the Commission's action.

Alternative Motion (Approval Action)

- Move to determine that the required Findings can be made (state basis for making the Findings) and move to approve Variance No. 4046, subject to the Conditions of Approval and Project Notes listed in Exhibit 1; and
- Direct the Secretary to prepare a Resolution documenting the Commission's action.

Recommended Conditions of Approval and Project Notes:

See attached Exhibit 1.

DTC:ksn

G:\4360Devs&PIn\PROJSEC\PROJDOCS\VA\4000-4099\4046\SR\VA 4046 SR.docx

**Variance Application No. 4046
Conditions of Approval and Project Notes**

Conditions of Approval	
1.	Development shall be in substantial compliance with the site plan, as approved by the Planning Commission.
2.	A separate permitted water well shall be established and connected to the residence on the proposed 2.02-acre parcel prior to the final approval of the subsequent mapping action or Lot Line Adjustment to authorize the proposed parcelization.
3.	Permit records for the garage on the western parcel (13728 E. Belmont) were not located in our permit records. Structures over 120 square-feet and within 6 feet of an existing residence, if built after March 1, 1958, require review, approval, permits, and inspections from the Zoning Section of the Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning. Appropriate permits must be acquired for this structure within 90 days of the effective date of approval. Additionally, these permits must be acquired prior to the final approval of the subsequent mapping action or Lot Line Adjustment to authorize the proposed parcelization.

Conditions of Approval reference recommended Conditions for the project.

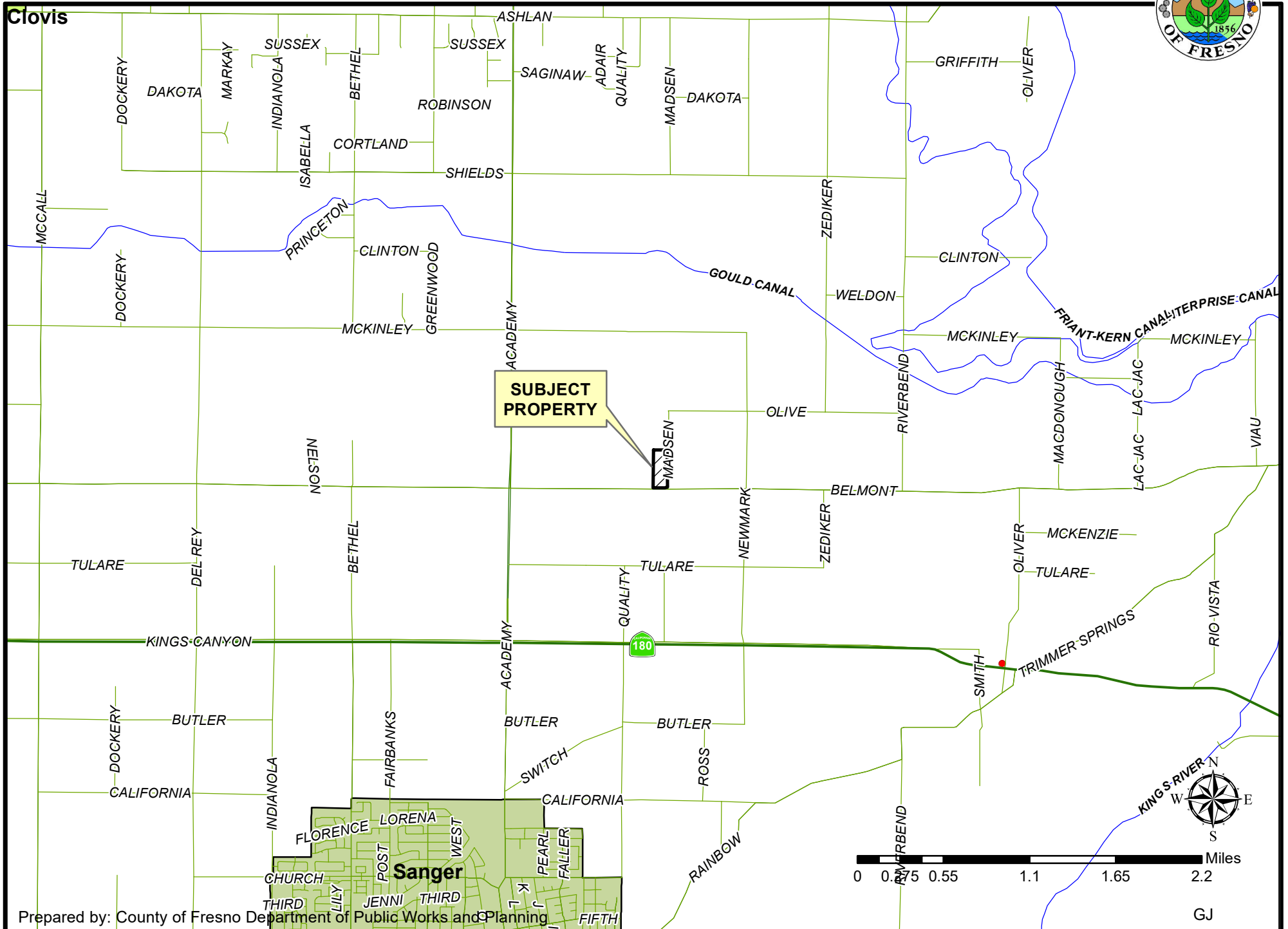
Notes	
The following Notes reference mandatory requirements of Fresno County or other Agencies and are provided as information to the project Applicant.	
1.	In the case of this application, it appears the parcel can accommodate the sewage disposal systems and expansion areas, meeting the mandatory setback requirements as established in the California Plumbing Code and California Well Standards Ordinance. It is recommended that the Applicant consider having the existing septic tank pumped, and have the tank and drain fields evaluated by an appropriately-licensed contractor if they have 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.
2.	At such time as the Applicant or future property owner(s) decide to construct a water well, the water well contractor will be required to apply for and obtain a Permit to Construct a Water Well from the Fresno County Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division.
3.	Septic system density will be limited to one system per two acres. Any new development of less than two acres or secondary dwelling on less than four acres will require a nitrogen loading analysis by a qualified professional, demonstrating to the 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 RWQCB for their concurrence and input. Supplemental treatment systems for nitrogen reduction will be referred to RWQCB for permitting.
4.	Existing residential properties are currently served by dirt approaches in the road right-of-way. If any improvements for these driveway approaches are proposed in the road right-of-way, an encroachment permit will be required.

DTC:ksn

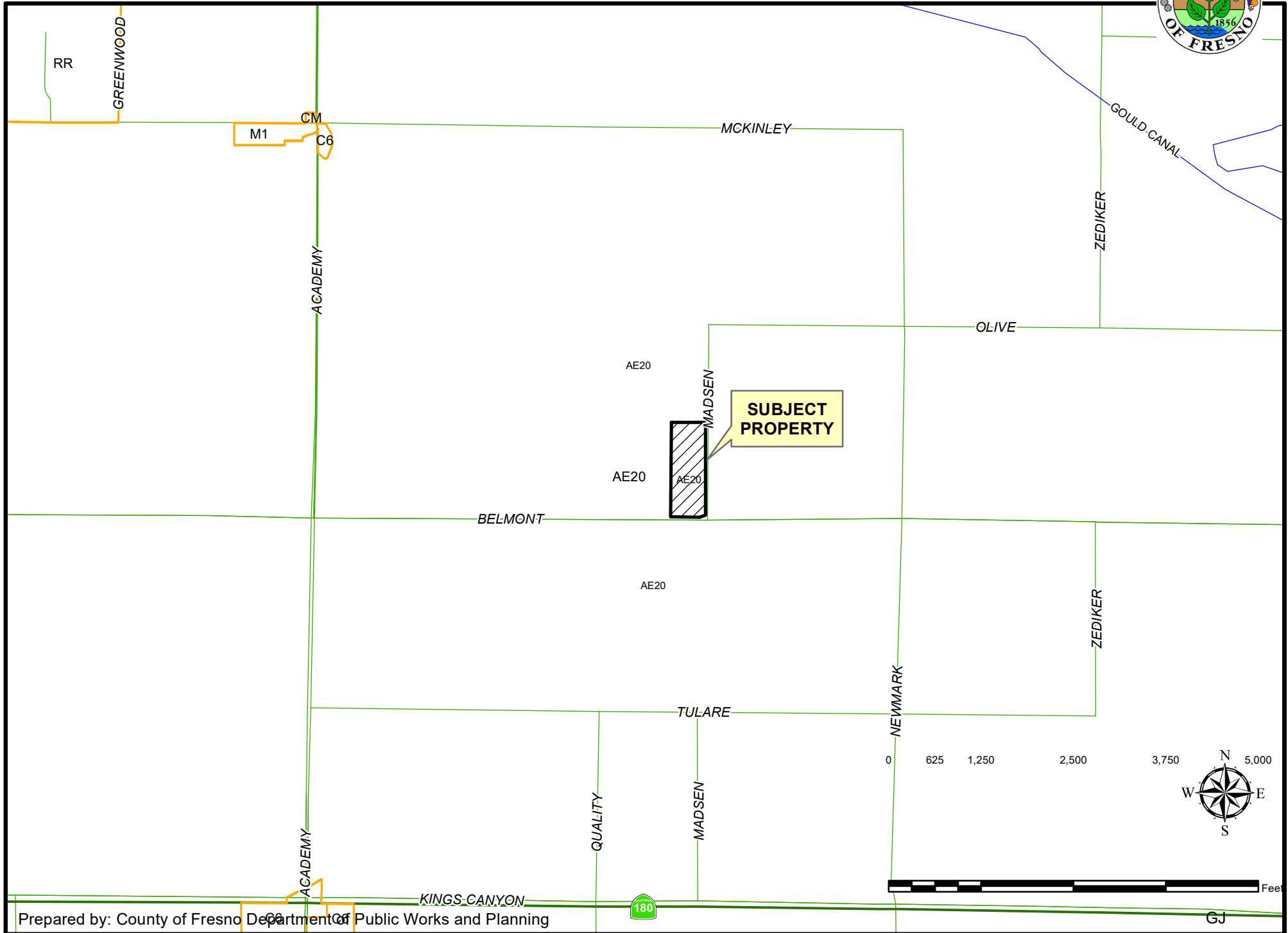
G:\4360Devs&PIn\PROJSEC\PROJDOCS\VA\4000-4099\4046\SR\VA 4046 Conditions & PN (Ex 1).docx

EXHIBIT 1

LOCATION MAP



EXISTING ZONING MAP



EXISTING LAND USE MAP



LEGEND	
ORC - ORCHARD	
SF#- SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE	
V - VACANT	

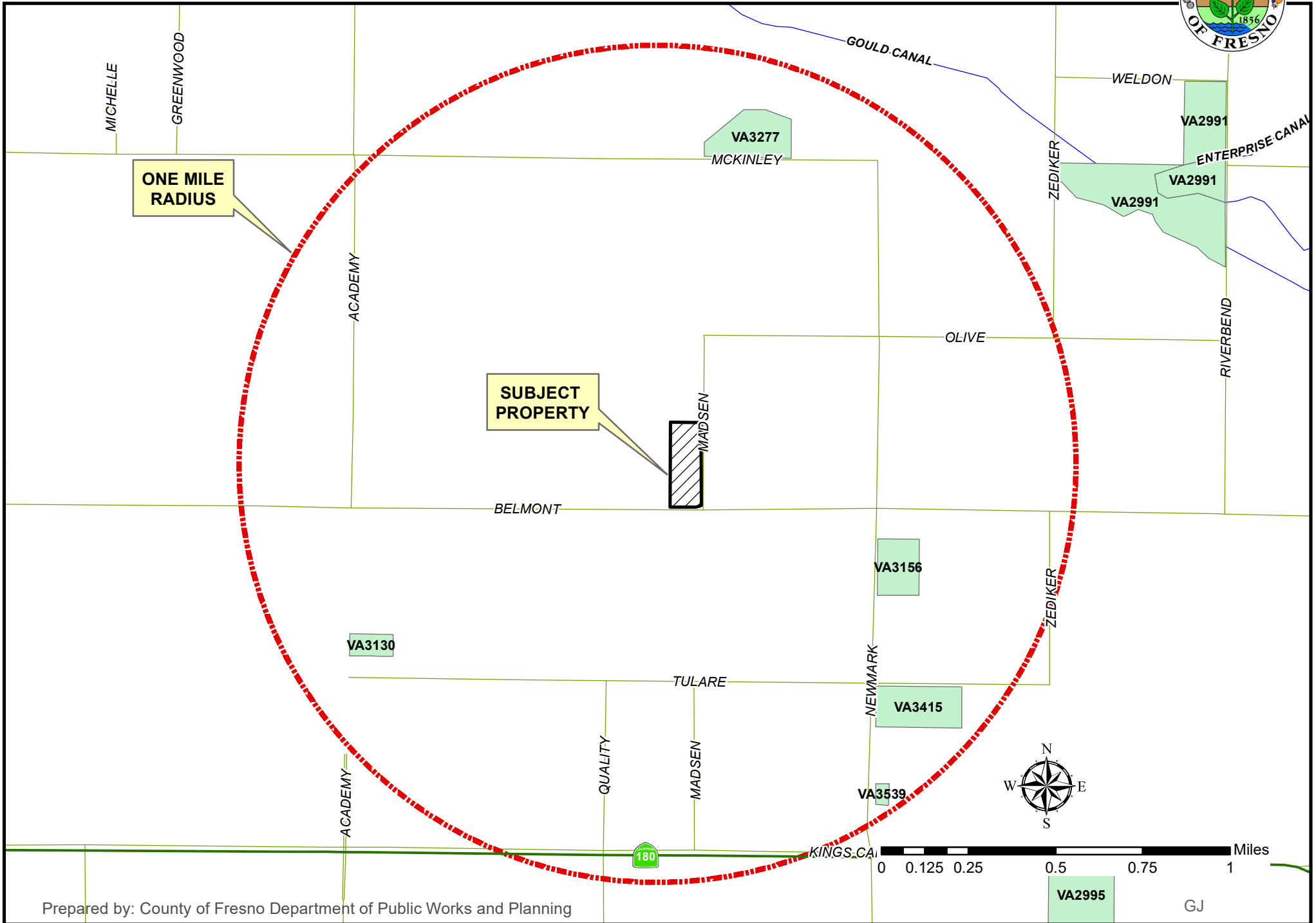
LEGEND:

- Subject Property
- Ag Contract Land



Department of Public Works and Planning
Development Services Division

APPROVED VARIANCES WITHIN A ONE MILE RADIUS



Academy Ranch, LLC

1115 North Madsen Avenue, Sanger

APN: 309-100-35

13728 East Belmont, Sanger

APN: 30910037

Variance Application Findings

- 1. There are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applicable to the property involved which do not apply generally to other properties in the vicinity having the identical zoning classifications;*

1115 North Madsen (APN 309-100-3514.45) is a 14.45 acre parcel in an AE20 zone district. For many years, there has been no production agriculture on this parcel. When we (Academy Ranch, LLC) purchased the parcel (August 2017), there were two structures on the parcel. One was a custom-built 2,300 ft² home. The second was a mobile home in major disrepair. It is our objective to return the majority of the property to production agriculture.

It is our desire to combine the 14.45 acre parcel with the 33.94 acre parcel we own at 13728 East Belmont (APN 30910037), which is adjacent to the west. (There is a home site on the Belmont property.) This would create one 48.39 acre parcel. We plan on removing the mobile home and it is our hope that the County will permit the creation of a 2.02 acre home site for the custom built home, returning the remaining acreage to production agriculture.

- 2. 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;*

At present, this is a non-conforming property. There were two homes on a 14.45 acre parcel. In the area, there exist other properties with approximately 2 acre home sites.

- 3. The granting of the 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;*

Other than the approximately 2.02 acre home site, this property has primarily been a weed-riddled eyesore for decades. To return the majority of the acreage to production agriculture will improve the vicinity in which the property is located. This property is surrounded by production agriculture.

- 4. The granting of such variance will not be contrary to the objectives of the Fresno County General Plan.*

If we are permitted to combine the parcels, receive a variance for an approximately 2.02 acre home site, and return more land to production agriculture, we are meeting a goal of the Fresno County General Plan which is to 'promote the long-term conservation of productive and potentially-productive agricultural lands.' Also, with the removal of the mobile home, one non-conforming home site will be removed.