

**CITY OF GRASS VALLEY  
MEMORANDUM FOR  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF OCTOBER 23, 2007**

**TO:** Members, City Council

**FROM:** Joe C. Heckel, Community Development Director

**SUBJECT:** SDA Decision Making Process – Step 4  
Review revised Loma Rica Ranch SDA Application for  
Consistency with Council Resolution 6-88

**RECOMMENDATION:** Adopt resolution confirming that the revised Loma Rica Ranch SDA Application is in general compliance with the City’s SDA Application Criteria and Resolution 6-88 and authorize its release for processing pursuant to CEQA

**BACKGROUND:** On November 13, 2006, the City Council conducted a special meeting to review whether an application filed for the Loma Rica Ranch Special Development Area (SDA), as identified in the 2020 General Plan, generally meets the SDA application criteria outlined in resolution 06-60. This unique step of “pre-screening” an SDA application through this “application criteria” was developed by the Council in response to concerns with the land use mix changes that were being proposed by the SDA’s and a desire to work within the boundaries of the 2020 General Plan. After reviewing the Loma Rica Ranch proposal, the Council adopted resolution 6-88 which found their proposal of September 22, 2006 did not generally meet the City’s SDA application criteria due to the infusion of commercial land, the additional residential units and the need for additional business park land. Resolution 6-88 further found that the project would be in general compliance with the City’s SDA application criteria if the following modifications were made:

- A) Reduce the residential uses on the property to a maximum of between 500 to 700 units to be developed by 2020 with an option to project additional units for potential development after 2020; and
- B) Increase amount of business park land within project to accommodate future business park for light industrial users.

The wording of resolution 6-88 provided direction to staff that if the Specific Plan was revised to incorporate these two measures, the Plan could be processed. The primary reason for why the Specific Plan is being returned to the Council for consideration instead of being processed is the amount of business park acreage. Since resolution 6-88 was not clear as to the specific acreage of business park land to be set aside, staff determined it would be appropriate for the Council to consider this revised Plan.

**REVISED SPECIFIC PLAN APPLICATION FILED:** On August 17, 2007, the applicant for the Loma Rica Ranch, Carville Sierra, Inc., filed a revised Specific Plan with the City. In addition to filing the Specific Plan, the applicant also filed applications for Annexation,

General Plan Amendment and Rezoning. After reviewing the revised Specific Plan, the following points were noted:

- **Residential Use.** The number of residential units was reduced to 700 units. The most easterly 100 acres of the SDA was designated as Planning Reserve, an area deferred from development until after 2020.
- **Business Park Land.** The amount of acreage solely devoted to business park or light industrial uses was increased from 0 to 23.4 acres. Though the acreage falls short of the 118 acres required by the 2020 General Plan, the Plan demonstrates that through sound design and the integration of mixed use, a significant level of job growth will be created by the implementation of the Plan.
- **Community Amenities.** The Plan still integrates a similar level of community amenities as what was considered in the version reviewed in November 2006. For example, the Plan still shows the protection and adaptive re-use of the existing ranch buildings, the integration of a pedestrian network, the provision of community and neighborhood parks, the protection of open space and the provision of infrastructure that have regional and local importance.

Resolution 06-60 also provides guidance on how the City should evaluate the land use mix of the four SDA's from a cumulative perspective. Per this resolution, it was the goal of the Council to maintain between 211 to 300 acres of business park/commercial lands and that housing could be increased from 600 to 1,263 units (beyond the GP number of 643). The table below compares the land use acreages of the SDA's from their General Plan designations to the current proposal:

**COMPARISON OF LAND USE MIX WITHIN SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT AREAS (SDA'S)  
October 2007**

SDA's	Commercial Acreage			Business Park/ Industrial Acreage			Residential Units		
	General Plan	Proposed 2006	Pending 2007	General Plan	Proposed 2006	Pending 2007	General Plan	Proposed 2006	Pending 2007
<b>Loma Rica (452 acres)</b>	0	27 - 69	27 - 69	115	16	24	180	1,229	700
<b>Northstar (762 acres)</b>	20	9	17	240	44	123	363	2,140	438
<b>Kenny Ranch (365 acres)</b>	22	12	0	88	17	0	100	429	77
<b>Southhill Village (66 acres)</b>	N/A	16	16	N/A	3	18	N/A	279	122
<b>Totals</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>64 - 106</b>	<b>60 - 102</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>643</b>	<b>4,077</b>	<b>1,337</b>

- Notes: 1) Southhill Village SDA was not allocated specific land use acreages in 2020 General Plan, but targeted for a mix of commercial, business park and residential uses.  
 2) For 2007, Northstar SDA Business Park includes 48 acres for community conference center. Also, the projections for 2007 were tied to Council resolution 07-58, adopted 8/16/07

The table above reflects that the residential units for all SDA's are now totaling 1,334, an overall increase of 694 units over the 2020 General Plan and well within the projections shown in resolution 06-60. Approximately 225 acres are now tentatively targeted to be developed for business park and commercial uses. However, the business park and/or industrial land of 165 acres maybe viewed as not sufficient to address the future job creation needs of the future. Since the City has historically experienced an extremely low lot coverage ratio of 17% due to our uneven terrain, the need to protect an adequate supply of business park lands for future employment opportunities is viewed as a priority.

The Loma Rica Specific Plan projects a much higher lot coverage ratio at around 45%. The Plan demonstrates that their development approach will maximize the use of their 23.4 acres devoted to business park and light industrial uses through the following measures:

- Increasing building height limits to 3 stories;
- Locating buildings to avoid such constraints as sensitive habitat and steep terrain;
- Grouping development into a compact pattern and providing for "shared" open space which allows for increased lot coverage.

When these measures are combined with the integration of commercial, business and retail uses on another 69 acres within the Loma Rica Specific Plan, the job creation opportunities can be increased to a level where the City can maintain a healthy job-housing balance into the future. However, these measures, particularly the larger scale mixed use approach, are somewhat untested in this region, so it is difficult to ascertain the ultimate success of the Plan. It is believed that these questions can be better evaluated and answered during the environmental and discretionary review for this project.

**NEXT STEPS:** This report advances a recommendation of support for authorizing the Loma Rica Ranch Specific Plan to be processed by the City. If the Council determines the Loma Rica Ranch SDA application is aligned with the City's criteria in both resolutions 06-60 and 06-88, authorization may be given to staff that the application be released for processing by the City. An authorization by the Council to allow a project to be processed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is not tantamount to approval of the project or an agreement that the City's General Plan would be altered.

If Council were to adopt the attached resolution, staff would initiate the environmental review of this Specific Plan pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The City would recruit a consultant to assist in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for this project. The contract for the consultant, as well as a reimbursement agreement with the applicant, would be returned to the Council for their review and approval. The Council would be able to review the scope of work for the EIR, including all alternatives to evaluated, the general schedule for completion and the budget.

If should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Cc: Members, Planning Commission  
SDA Applicant / Representative

Members, Planning Division  
City Department Heads

Attachments:

1. Resolution confirming Loma Rica Ranch SDA Application is in general compliance with the City's SDA Application Criteria and authorizing its release for processing
2. Comparison of land use mix between 2020 General Plan and 2004/2007 Specific Plans for Loma Rica SDA
3. October 2, 2007 letter from Carville Sierra, Inc. on Loma Rica Ranch Specific Plan compliance with Grass Valley Resolution 6-88
4. City Council Resolution 6-88 on Loma Rica Ranch proposal
5. Excerpts from Loma Rica Specific Plan, July 2007 (Note: Specific Plan is available upon request, but distribution is being deferred since it has not been deemed complete by City)
6. Resolution 06-60 adopting preferred approach for evaluating SDA Applications
7. Staff Report for November 13, 2006 Council meeting on Loma Rica Ranch

## ATTACHMENT 2

### COMPARISON OF LAND USE MIX BETWEEN GENERAL PLAN AND SPECIFIC PLAN LOMA RICA SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT AREA (SDA) – OCTOBER 2007

Land Use Mix of Loma Rica SDA Total Acreage = 452	2020 General Plan	2003 Specific Plan	July 2007 Specific Plan
<i>Business Park/Industrial Designation</i>	115 acres	0 acres	580,000 sq.ft. of bldgs on 24 acres
<i>Commercial and Office Designation</i>	0 acres	27 acres	385,000 sq.ft. of bldgs on 69 acres* (*mixed uses)
<i>Residential Designation (Max. Single &amp; Multi-Family Housing Units)</i>	180 units on 121 acres	1,225 units on 148 acres	700 units on 130 acres
<i>Open Space</i>	165 acres	200 acres	199 acres
<i>Other Community Facilities</i>	Adaptive use of ranch bldgs in 50 acre recreation district	Same as GP w/active play fields, parks, and multi-use paths	Same as GP w/active play fields, parks, and multi-use paths