



**COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** County Planning Commission

**FROM:** Alice McCurdy, Deputy Director  
Staff Contact: Dana Eady, Planner

**DATE:** April 23, 2015

**HEARING  
DATE:** May 13, 2015

**RE:** El Grosso Application for a General Plan Amendment  
Case No. 14GPA-00000-00014  
9150 Highway 101, Los Alamos; APN 101-120-023  
Third Supervisorial District

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**1.0 REQUEST**

Hearing on the request of David Swenk of Urban Planning Concepts, agent for the owner, El Grosso, LLC, to consider Case No. 14GPA-00000-00014 [application filed on August 1, 2014] for initiation of a General Plan Amendment (GPA) to change the land use designation from Highway Commercial (H) to General Commercial (C).

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

Your Commission's motion should include the following:

1. Decline to accept the General Plan Amendment application for processing; and
2. Refer the application to the Board of Supervisors for a final decision and recommend that the Board of Supervisors decline to accept the application for processing.

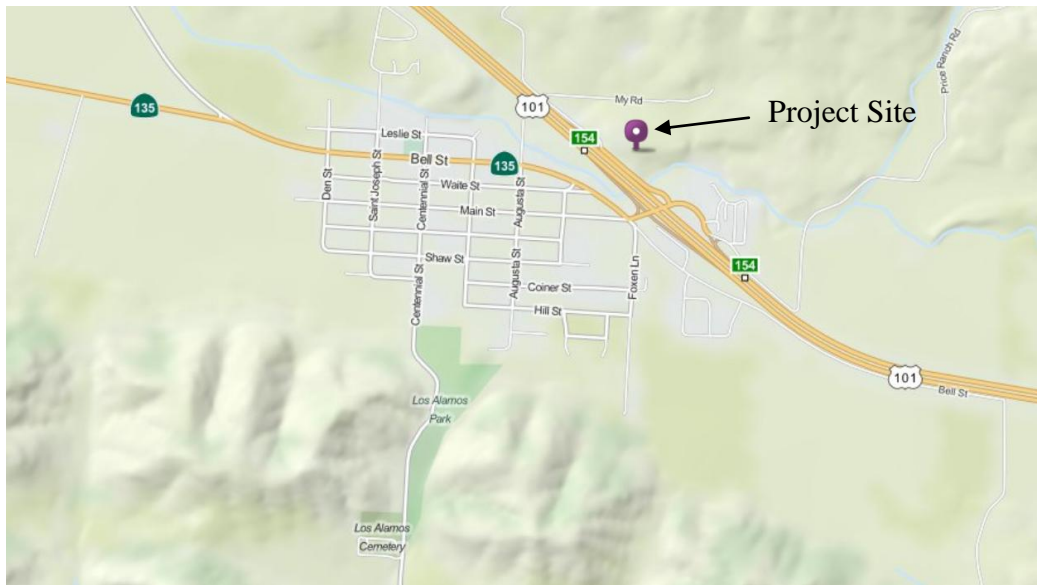
Please refer back to staff if your Commission takes other than the recommended action.

**3.0 PROJECT SITE INFORMATION**

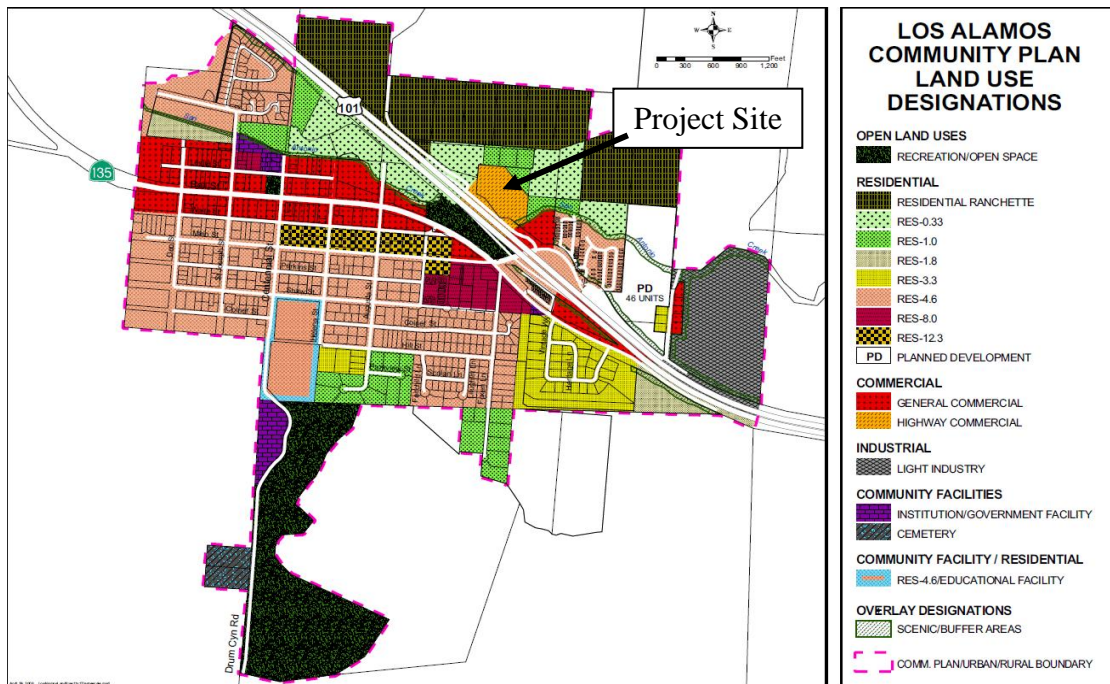
The subject 5.58 gross acre parcel is located approximately 500 feet northeast of the Highway 101/Bell Street intersection, commonly known as 9150 Highway 101, in the Los Alamos Community Planning area. Existing onsite development consists of the Sky View Motel, constructed in 1957. The parcel is zoned Highway Commercial (CH) with a

corresponding land use designation of Highway Commercial (H). The parcel is constrained topographically with slopes on the majority of the parcel exceeding 20%. Surrounding parcels are zoned residential (1-E-1, 3-E-1), and retail commercial (C-2). These parcels are either vacant or developed with low intensity residential uses. The adjacent parcel to the southeast is zoned C-2. This parcel is located entirely within the identified 100 year flood hazard overlay, and is highly constrained for development.

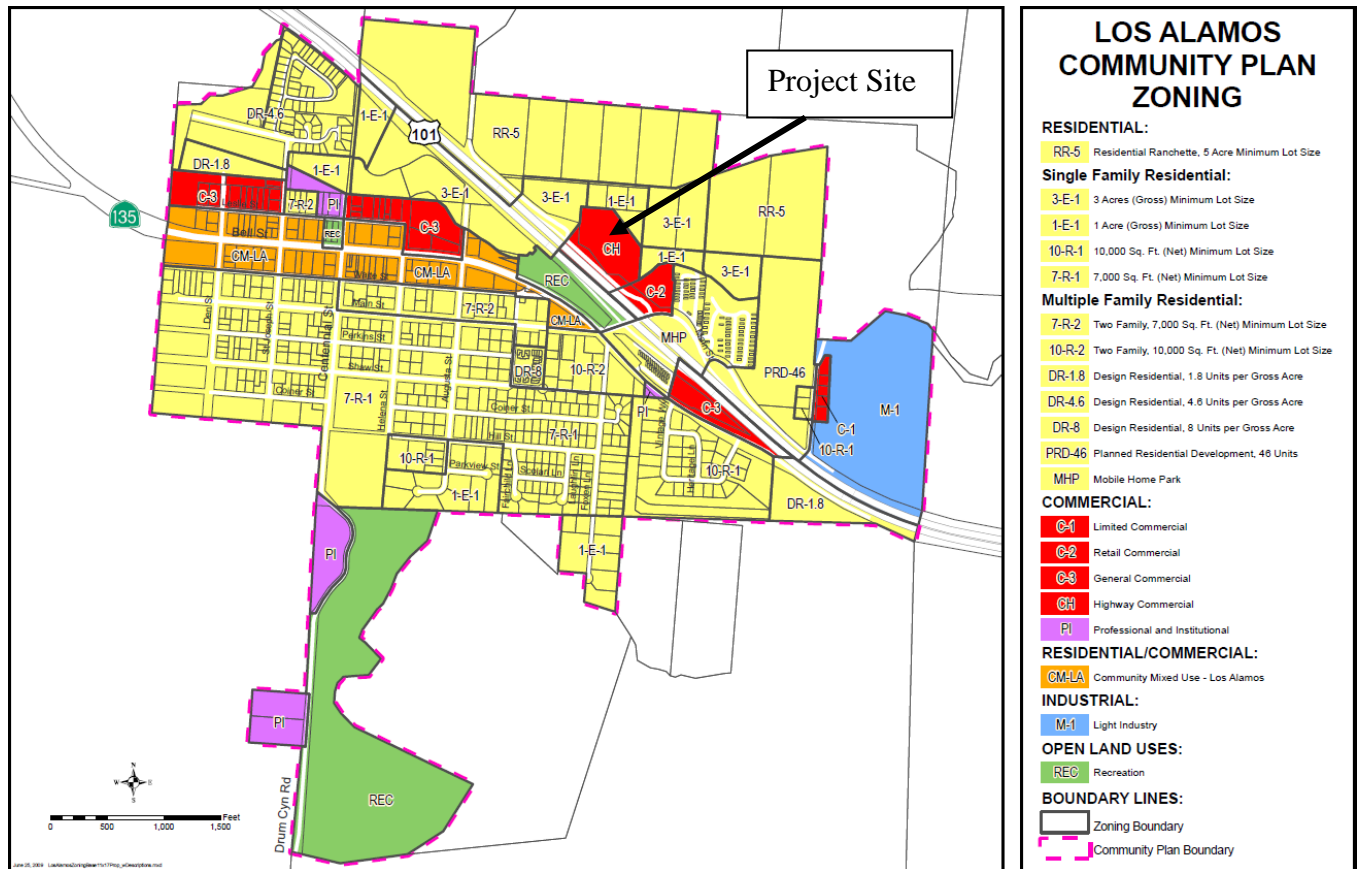
### Vicinity Map



### Los Alamos Community Plan Land Use Designations



## Los Alamos Community Plan Zoning



### 4.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is a request by the property owner for approval of a General Plan Amendment to change the land use designation on the parcel from H to C. If the application is accepted by the Planning Commission for initiation, the owner would submit an application to rezone the subject parcel from CH to C-2. Rezoning the parcel to C-2 would allow the property owner to apply for permits to offer wine tasting at the Sky View Motel.

### 5.0 ISSUE SUMMARY

#### 5.1 Planning Commission Referral

In accordance with LUDC Section 35.104.040, the Director of Planning and Development is referring the application to the Planning Commission to determine whether to accept the application for processing. If the Commission declines to accept the application for processing, the application will be referred to the Board of Supervisors for a final decision regarding whether to accept the application for processing.

## 5.2 Land Use Designation and Zoning

The Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element specifies that the Highway Commercial (H) land use designation permits only those uses which serve the highway traveler such as hotels, motels, restaurants, garages, and service stations. The Sky View Motel is consistent with this type of land use.

The General Commercial (C) land use designation is used to denote areas suitable for many types of commercial activities. Central business district areas, district centers, service commercial, neighborhood centers, and design commercial are all contained under this designation. Permitted uses in the C designation range from convenience activities, which serve such day-to-day needs such as food, drugs, gasoline, and other incidentals to major commercial centers. Also included are wholesale facilities which support agricultural, construction and transportation activities. The subject parcel is one of only two remaining parcels with the H land use designation located within the Los Alamos Community Plan (LACP) area.

Attachment 2 includes a list of all of the allowable uses within both the CH and the C-2 zone districts. The types of land uses allowable in the C-2 zone district that are not allowable in the CH zone include a higher intensity of retail trade uses such as auto and vehicle sales and rentals, convenience stores, general retail, grocery food/stores, and offices supporting retail. Medical services and offices as well as recycling centers and wholesaling and distribution centers are also allowable uses in the C-2 zone district. The following table identifies all of the land uses allowed in the C-2 zone which are not allowed under the current CH zoning.

### Land Uses allowed in the C-2 zone which are not allowed in the CH zone

<b>Agriculture, Mining &amp; Energy Facilities</b>
Oil and Gas Uses
<b>Industry, Manufacturing &amp; Processing, Wholesaling</b>
Furniture/fixtures manufacturing, cabinet shops
Handcraft industry, small scale manufacturing
Laundry, dry cleaning plant
Recycling – Small collection center
Recycling – Small collection center, non profit
Wholesaling and distribution – Essential to agriculture
<b>Recreation, Education &amp; Public Assembly Uses</b>
Commercial entertainment – Indoor
Commercial entertainment - Outdoor
Fitness/health club or facility
Sports or entertainment assembly facility
Theater – Indoor
<b>Residential Uses</b>
Emergency shelter
Mixed use project residential component

<b>Retail Trade</b>
Auto and vehicle sales and rental
Bar, tavern
Building and landscape materials sales – Indoor
Building and landscape materials sales – Outdoor
Convenience store, 3,000 sf or more net floor area
General retail
Grocery/food store, more than 5,000 sf
Mobile home, boat, and RV sales and repair
Office supporting retail
Plant nursery
Truck, trailer, construction, farm, heavy equipment sale/rental
<b>Services – Business, Financial, Professional</b>
Bank, financial services – Branch facility
Bank, financial services – Complete facility
Business support service
Medical services – Animal hospital, small animals
Medical services – Doctor office
Office – Business/service
Office – Professional/administrative
<b>Services – General</b>
Lodging – Bed and breakfast inn
Personal services
Repair service – Equipment, appliances, etc. – Indoor
Repair service – Equipment, appliances, etc. – Outdoor
Vehicle services – With outdoor work areas
<b>Transportation, Communications &amp; Infrastructure</b>
Parking facility, public or private
Vehicle storage

The property owner is applying for the subject GPA in order to rezone the parcel to C-2, which permits wine tasting (bar/tavern). As identified in the table above, there are many types of land uses which are allowed in the C-2 zone district that are not currently allowed in the CH zone. Many of these uses are of a higher intensity, and due to the close proximity to Highway 101 and constrained topography, would not be appropriate on the subject parcel.

### 5.3 Consistency with the Los Alamos Community Plan (LACP)

LACP Policy LUC-LA-2.1 states that new commercial mixed-use development (both local and visitor serving) shall be encouraged directly along the Bell Street corridor, and that renovation and/or expansion of existing local-serving uses in this commercial core shall be encouraged. This policy promotes general planning principles which encourage keeping downtown areas vibrant and economically successful by focusing commercial uses in the commercial core area. Changing the land use designation on the subject parcel to C with a corresponding rezone to C-2 is not consistent with the intent of this policy, as it would allow for a higher intensity of land uses east of Highway 101, and outside of the Bell street downtown commercial core area.

#### **5.4 Los Alamos Planning Advisory Committee (LAPAC) Review**

During the adoption of the Los Alamos Community Plan, the previous owners of this property attended LAPAC meetings on May 12, 2008, and March 18, 2010 (see Attachment 3). At both of these meetings, they formally requested that the land use designation on the subject parcel be amended as part of the update to the LACP. This request was not incorporated into the recommendation to the decision maker due to concerns associated with the potential for other types of allowable uses that could occur within the C-2 zone district.

LAPAC and the Board of Supervisors did support a request by the adjacent property owner to the southeast (APN 101-120-022) to change the land use designation on this vacant parcel from H to C and to rezone it from CH to C-2.

The current General Plan Amendment request was reviewed by LAPAC on December 17, 2014 and February 18, 2015. At the February 18, 2015 meeting, LAPAC voted to recommend against initiating the proposed General Plan Amendment. Concerns by LAPAC continue to be the additional water usage and sewer treatment capacity required, community plan integrity, more intense uses allowed under the C-2 zoning, and the proliferation of wine tasting rooms in Los Alamos. In the Bell Street commercial core area of Los Alamos there are currently a total of five wine tasting rooms. Related businesses include a beer tasting room and a tavern.

#### **6.0 CONCLUSION**

Changing the Land Use Designation on the parcel from H to C would result in a higher intensity of allowable uses on the subject parcel. These uses would be located outside of the downtown commercial core area of Los Alamos which is inconsistent with the intent of LACP Policy LUC-LA-2.1. This policy encourages keeping downtown areas vibrant and economically successful by focusing commercial uses in the downtown Bell Street commercial core area. In addition, due to the close proximity to Highway 101, and constrained topography, many of the land uses allowed under the C-2 zone district would not be appropriate on the subject parcel.

#### **7.0 APPEALS PROCEDURE**

The action of the Commission to refer an application to the Board of Supervisors is final and not subject to appeal. The Board of Supervisors may accept or decline to accept the application for processing. The decision of the Board of Supervisors is final.

**Attachments:**

- 1) Assessor's Parcel Map
- 2) LUDC Commercial Zones Allowable Uses
- 3) LAPAC Minutes:
  - a. May 12, 2008
  - b. March 18, 2010
  - c. February 18, 2015 (draft minutes)

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