



MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Entitlement: Major Modification to Conditional Use Permit (CUP) No. 3697 (Case No. PL17-0012)

Applicant: Krishnamurti Foundation of America (KFA)

Location: The 11.06-acre project site is located along McAndrew Road, approximately 1,044 feet north of the intersection of McAndrew Road and Grand Avenue, and approximately 11,614 feet east of the City of Ojai in the unincorporated area of Ventura County.

Assessor's Parcel Nos.: 029-0-033-240, 029-0-033-250, 029-0-033-260, 029-0-033-270, and 029-0-033-280

Parcel Size: 11.06 acres

General Plan Designation: Rural

Ojai Valley Area Plan Designation: Rural Institutional:

Zoning Designation: RE 5-ac TKS/DKS (Rural Exclusive, 5 acre minimum lot size, Temporary Rental Unit Overlay Zone/Dark Sky Overlay Zone)

Responsible and/or Trustee Agencies: California Department of Fish and Wildlife, SRWQCB and Ventura County Local Action Formation Commission (Responsible Agency)

Project Description: KFA requests a Major Modification to CUP No. 3697 for the continued use and maintenance of the existing facility for a twenty-year period. KFA also requests the following modifications to the existing entitlement:

Change of Use: KFA requests to change the use of the facility from an adult educational center and religious retreat to a camp for adult education and religious retreat purposes.¹ Overnight accommodations will continue at the site, thereby meeting the definition of a "camp" per Section 8102-0 of the Ventura County NCZO.

¹ Ventura County's non-coastal (NCZO) Section 8102-0 defines "camp" as a rural facility with permanent structures for overnight accommodations and accessory structures and buildings which are used for temporary leisure, recreational or study purposes and provides opportunities for the enjoyment or appreciation of the natural environment. "Retreat" is defined as a facility which (a) provides opportunities for small groups of people to congregate temporarily on a site for such purposes as education, enlightenment, contemplation, renewal or solitude; and (b) by its nature, needs to be located in a quiet, sparsely-populated, natural environment.

CUP Boundary: The current CUP Boundary includes APNs 029-0-033-27 and 029-0-033-28 (3.17 acres). KFA requests the CUP boundary to increase in size from 3.17 acres to 11.12 acres. The expanded CUP boundary would include APNs 029-0-033-240, 029-0-033-250 and 029-0-033-260.

New Structures: KFA requests the construction, use, and maintenance of the following new structures on the project site:

Proposed Structures	
Structures	Size (sq. ft.)
Reception/Canteen Building (with Kitchen and Dining Area)	2,193
Solar Array Roof Structure*	3,168
Maintenance Shed	1,800
American Disability Act (ADA) Accessible Public Restroom	180
Shade Structure	400
Storage Building and Water Cooler	120
Three Underground Rainwater Capture Tanks**	75,000 gallons
Two Cottage Structures***	3,070
TOTAL	10,931 sq. ft.

Notes:

* The ground-mounted solar array roof structure will be built approximately 17 feet above grade and located adjacent to the maintenance shed.

** The rainwater capture tanks are 25,000 gallons each.

*** The two cottage structures (each structure is 1,535 sq. ft. in size) will provide overnight accommodations for up to 18 resident scholars and 3 staff members.

The proposed project will be conducted in two phases: (1) Phase I includes the installation of the solar arrays and rainwater capture tanks; and, (2) Phase II includes the construction of the remaining proposed structures, stone work and tree removal / planting.

Conversion of Existing Structures: The Pine Cottage (4,181 sq. ft.) will be converted from a residence to a library and study hall/meeting room. The existing garage/storage building (780 sq. ft.) will be converted to a visitor serving exhibit/display building.

Staff and Work Hours: Five permanent staff will continue to live and work on site. Two employees will continue to work Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the archives building.² Five new employees are proposed to work on site arriving at 6:30 a.m. and departing at 2:30 p.m.

² The archives building was built in 1977. A 4,000 sq. ft. addition was constructed in 1997. Two employees have worked in the archives building since 1997 and will continue to as part of the proposed project.

Overnight Guests: Six overnight guests will continue to be permitted to stay overnight in the Arya Vihara and Pine Cottage Annex buildings.

Daytime Visitors: KFA will be open to visitors to study the history and teachings of J. Krishnamurti Monday through Friday, with approximately eight visitors and two archive scholars expected to come to the site. On the weekends, approximately 35 to 45 visitors are expected to use the project site. Weekday and weekend visiting hours are from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The buildings available to the public will be locked before 10:00 a.m. and after 2:30 p.m. Notification of the "open to the public" hours will be posted on the facility's website, including the requirement that the public must leave the site at or before 2:30 p.m. The facility will be closed to the public outside of these hours.

Krishnamurti Archives Resident Scholars: Scholars of the Krishnamurti Archives come to study the teachings of J. Krishnamurti. This includes handwritten manuscripts, letters, photographs, original audio and video recordings, and related materials. KFA will sponsor 18 resident scholars who will be temporary residents for a 30-day period. The 18 resident scholars will arrive and depart the KFA property by shuttle from a pre-determined pick-up and drop-off location during non-peak hours³ on the weekdays or on the weekends; the scholars do not arrive using their personal vehicles.

Programs and Activities: KFA will host programs and events related to the teachings of J. Krishnamurti. The midweek programs and evening dialogues would include small groups of 12 to 15 people gathering on site in the following areas: at the northwest parking area, in the grassy areas between the northwest parking area and the Arya Vihara structure, in the grassy area east of the Arya Vihara structure, in the grove west of restroom and Pine Cottage, in the vegetable and flower garden, and in the open area north of the proposed shade structure (Attachment 3, Project Plans). The table below includes information on these programs and events that will be in addition to the daytime visitors noted above.

KFA Programs and Events					
	Monday through Friday	Time	Saturday and Sunday	Time	Frequency
Midweek Programs*	10 attendees and on-site staff	2:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.*			50 events annually
Tuesday Evening Dialogue	20 attendees and on-site staff	7:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.			52 events annually

³ 6:30 am to 9:30 am and 3:30 pm and 6:30 pm in both directions on State Highway 33.

Saturday Evening Dialogue			20 attendees	4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.	52 events annually
Weekend Evening Talks			40 attendees	7:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.	12 events annually
TOTAL	30		60		

*Note: * Midweek Programs begin at 2:00 p.m. and end at 7:30 p.m. Midweek Programs are by invite only and are held in the Pine Cottage. This building will be open to the public; however, at 2:30 p.m. the public will be asked to leave.*

One annual conference will be held on site. The conference will occur over a three-day period (Friday through Sunday). Each day's program will begin at 11:00 a.m. and end at 7:30 p.m. A maximum of 40 individuals per day are expected to attend the conference. All conference attendees will remain on site throughout the conference.

The six overnight guests and 18 archive resident scholars may also participate in these programs, events, and the annual conference. Their attendance would be in addition to the numbers noted above.

There are 72 protected trees on the project site that will be encroached upon as a result of the proposed construction. Four protected heritage sized coast live oak trees (tree nos. 19, 21, 63, and 64) will need to be removed (Attachment 4, August 26, 2019, Cragoe Arborist Report). Seventy-five trees will be planted to offset the loss of the four protected oak trees. Approximately 0.81 acres of the existing citrus orchards will be removed to offset the increase in water demand resulting from the proposed project. Approximately 196 drought-tolerant olive trees will be planted to offset the loss of the orchard (Attachment 5, Water Resource Engineering Associates (WREA) Water Usage Memorandum, dated January 24, 2022).

The existing Ayra Vihara, Pine Tree Retreat, Administration Building, and Pine Cottage are all served by existing on-site wastewater treatment systems (OWTS) (3,000-gallons). The new Retreat/Canteen building, and the new cottages will be served by two new 3,000-gallon septic tanks for a combined capacity of 6,000 gallons connected to four 30-foot-deep by 4-foot diameter seepage pits, each with 5 feet of cover. One of the septic tanks will be dedicated to the commercial kitchen and will include a grease interceptor located in the Reception/Canteen building. All of the OWTS' are under the permitting authority of the State Regional Water Quality Control Board (SRWQCB).

Water is currently provided by the Senior Canyon Mutual Water District (SCMWD). There is an approved Water Availability Letter (WAL) on file with the Ventura County Public Works Agency for SCMWD, dated May 23, 2016. A Will Serve Letter was also provided on February 6, 2017 and amended on April 20, 2022, by the SCMWD, which stated that the proposed project would not increase current

demand. Rainwater capture tanks are proposed and would supply up to 75,000 gallons of water for irrigation, which will offset the increase in water demand caused by the addition of the resident scholars.

Access to the site is made available by two existing driveways adjacent to McAndrew Road. A total of 50 uncovered parking spaces will continue to be provided on site to accommodate staff and visitors. All deliveries will occur during non-peak hours on the weekdays or on the weekends.

B. STATEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS:

State law requires the Resource Management Agency, Planning Division, as the lead agency for the proposed project, to prepare an Initial Study (environmental analysis) to determine if the proposed project could significantly affect the environment. Based on the findings contained in the attached Initial Study, it has been determined that the proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment; however, mitigation measures are available that would reduce the impacts to less than significant levels. Therefore, a Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared and the applicant has agreed to implement the mitigation measures.

C. LISTING OF POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS IDENTIFIED:

1. Item 4A- Biological Resources (Species) and Item 4B- Ecological Communities - Sensitive Plant Communities: The Initial Study concluded that there would be potentially significant impacts to species and sensitive plant communities. Impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level with the implementation of mitigation measures BIO-1 and BIO-2, which require KFA to prepare and implement a Tree Protection Plan and submit annual monitoring reports after initiation of construction activities and until five years after the completion of construction activities, which address the success of tree protection measures and the overall condition of encroached-upon trees relative to their condition prior to the initiation of construction activities. Mitigation Measure BIO-3 requires KFA to retain a qualified biologist to conduct land clearing activities, and on a weekly basis with the last survey being conducted no more than 3 days prior to the initiation of land clearing activities.
2. Item 4C- Ecological Communities - Waters and Wetlands: The Initial Study concluded that there would be potentially significant impacts to waters and wetlands. Impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level with the implementation of mitigation measure BIO-4, which requires KFA to retain a landscape architect to prepare a landscape plan that prohibits the planting of non-native invasive plants, and plant native trees, shrubs and grasses that are compatible with the historic nature of the project site.

3. 5B- Agricultural Resources – Land Use Incompatibility: The Initial Study concluded that there would be potentially significant impacts to agricultural land use incompatibility. Impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level with the implementation of mitigation measure AG-1, which requires KFA to install and maintain a vegetative screen and a reinforced 8-foot-high chain link fence with top bar that meets the physical characteristics outlined in the Ventura County Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee *Agricultural/Urban Buffer Policy*.
4. 8A- Cultural Resources – Archaeological and 36- Tribal Cultural Resources: The Initial Study concluded that there would be potentially significant impacts to archeological and tribal cultural resources. Impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level with the implementation of mitigation measures CUL-1 and CUL-2, which require KFA to retain a Native American monitor onsite to oversee all project-related ground disturbance and implement protection measures if archaeological or historical artifacts are uncovered during ground disturbance or construction activities.
5. 8B- Cultural Resources Historic: The Initial Study concluded that there would be potentially significant impacts to historic resources. Impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level with the implementation of mitigation measures CR-1 through CR-4, which require KFA to implement design features for stonework alterations at the northwest edge of the project site (mitigation measure CR-1), for the garage rehabilitation (mitigation measure CR-2), any exterior repairs or repainting of existing structures pursuant to the Secretary of Interior Standards (SOI) standards for Rehabilitation (mitigation measure CR-3) and provide documentation of the historic buildings and historic cultural landscape that meet the SOI Standards for Architectural documentation at Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) / Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS) Level II standards.

D. PUBLIC REVIEW:

Legal Notice Method: Direct mailing to property owners within 300 feet of the property on which the proposed project is located, and a legal notice in the *Ventura County Star*.

Document Posting Period: May 5, 2022 through June 4, 2022

Public Review: The Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration is available for public review online at <https://vcrma.org/divisions/planning> (select “CEQA Environmental Review”) or at the County of Ventura, Resource Management

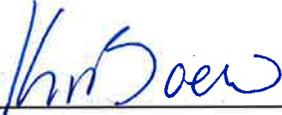
Agency, Planning Division, 800 South Victoria Avenue, Ventura, California, from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

Comments: The public is encouraged to submit written comments regarding this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration no later than 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the document posting period to Kristina Boero, the case planner, at the County of Ventura Resource Management Agency, Planning Division, 800 South Victoria Avenue L#1740, Ventura, CA 93009. You may also e-mail the case planner at kristina.boero@ventura.org.

D. CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF THE MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION:

Prior to approving the project, the decision-making body of the Lead Agency must consider this Mitigated Negative Declaration and all comments received on the Mitigated Negative Declaration. That body may approve the Mitigated Negative Declaration if it finds that all the significant effects have been identified and that the proposed mitigation measures will reduce those effects to less than significant levels.

Prepared by:



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Reviewed for Release to the Public by:



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