



## SUMMARY

<b>OWNER/ APPLICANT:</b>	ALBION LITTLE RIVER FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT (ALRFPD) PO BOX 634 ALBION, CA 95410
<b>REQUEST:</b>	Coastal Development Use Permit and Coastal Boundary Line Adjustment at the existing fire station serving Albion Little River Fire Protection Department (ALRFPD). Coastal Development Use Permit to construct a new apparatus building (Phase 1) and remove existing apparatus building and construct a new administrative building to serve existing ALRFPD (Phase 2). Coastal Boundary line adjustment to merge seven (7) underlying legal parcels into one (1) legal parcel of 1.81± acres.
<b>LOCATION:</b>	In the Coastal Zone, within the Albion town center, 425± feet northeast of the intersection with Albion Ridge Road (CR 402) and State Route 1 (SR 1), 150± feet west of the intersection of Albion River South Side Road (CR 402A) and Albion Ridge Road (CR 402), located at 33870 Albion Little River South Side Road and 33900 West Street, Albion; APN(s): 123-150-45, 123-150-47, and 123-150-48.
<b>TOTAL ACREAGE:</b>	1.81± Acres
<b>GENERAL PLAN:</b>	Rural Village (RV)
<b>ZONING:</b>	Rural Village (RV)
<b>COMBINING DISTRICT:</b>	None
<b>SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT:</b>	5 (Williams)
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:</b>	MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION
<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>	APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS
<b>STAFF PLANNER:</b>	MATT GOINES

## BACKGROUND

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Albion Little River Fire Protection District (ALRFPD) seeks a Boundary Line Adjustment to merge seven (7) lots into one (1) lot of 1.81± acres and a Coastal Development Use Permit for removal of an existing fire station, construction of a new fire station with an apparatus bay with roof mounted solar panels, a detached administration building with roof mounted solar panels, two (2) new asphalt encroachments onto Albion River South Side Road (CR 402A) and Albion Ridge Road (CR 402), new parking areas, underground utilities, the removal of an existing septic system, the installation of a new septic system, a propane tank, the relocation of a fence, grading for encroachments, driveways, and building footprints, compacted fill for new driveways, parking, and portions of a building footprint, new landscaping, water storage tanks, a storage building for a generator, a new gate, and a new address sign and Boundary Line Adjustment to merge seven (7) lots into one (1) lot of 1.8± acres. The development will be phased. The first phase shall consist of construction of the apparatus bay to house fire trucks, vehicles, and equipment while maintaining the existing fire station. The second phase shall consist of the removal of the existing fire station, construction

of the new administration building, and other appurtenant development listed above as funding is available. This description shall be known as “the Project” within this document.

**SITE CHARACTERISTICS:**

The property is situated along Albion Street, with its primary entrance located on the western side of the street. The entrance is notably wide, measuring approximately 30 feet across. This entrance leads to a 100-foot-long corridor that serves as a shared access point for both the post office and the general store, which are adjacent to the property. The corridor itself is equipped with parking spaces designated for the post office and general store. At the end of this corridor lies the Albion Little River Fire Department, which has its own dedicated parking area. This parking area is sufficiently spacious, capable of accommodating 10 or more vehicles. Currently, the property houses a single structure, which is the operational facility for the Albion Little River Fire Department. This structure is positioned on the northeastern portion of the property.

The area surrounding the existing firehouse is relatively flat, providing a stable foundation for the structure. However, the property's topography varies, featuring gentle slopes towards the southern boundary and steeper inclines towards the far northern end. The property predominantly consists of grassland vegetation, with sparse shrubs and bushes scattered throughout the area. This contributes to the rural and natural aesthetic of the property. An Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area Report has identified an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA) at the northwestern corner of the property. This area will require special attention to ensure compliance with environmental regulations and Mendocino County Codes.

The property exhibits a range of characteristics as identified through various county-provided maps. It is situated within a critical water resource area, falling under the jurisdiction of the Local Coastal Plan that spans from Dark Gulch to Navarro River. The Agricultural Lands feature both Urban and Built-Up Land designated as "D," as well as Grazing Land marked as "G." In terms of fire safety, the property is categorized within moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zones and falls under the State's responsibility area for fire management. Additionally, the property is recognized as a highly scenic area. The soil composition is varied, with parts of the property classified under soil class 139—Dystropepts with 30 to 75 percent slopes, and soil class 117—Cabrillo-Heeser complex with 0 to 5 percent slopes. The property is also part of the Wildland-Urban Interface Zones, specifically falling under the Medium Density Interface Zone Class. Further examination of the land capabilities and natural hazards map reveals that the northern end of the property contains a small section of non-prime agricultural land. Importantly, the property is not situated within a Coastal Commission appealable area. Lastly, the property is serviced by the Albion Mutual Water Company.

**RELATED APPLICATIONS:**

- Certificate of Compliance CC 27-92 which created the current lot configuration.

**SURROUNDING LAND USE AND ZONING:**

<b>Table 1: SURROUNDING LAND USES AND ZONING</b>				
	<b>GENERAL PLAN</b>	<b>ZONING</b>	<b>LOT SIZES</b>	<b>USES</b>
<b>NORTH</b>	Rural Village (RV)	Rural Village (RV)	0.27± Acres; 1.45± Acres	Residential
<b>EAST</b>	Rural Village (RV)	Rural Village (RV)	0.27± Acres; 1.00± Acres	Residential
<b>SOUTH</b>	Range Land (RL)	Range Land (RL)	19.0± Acres	Residential
<b>WEST</b>	State Route 1 (SR 1)	State Route 1 (SR 1)	State Route 1 (SR 1)	State Route 1 (SR 1)

**PUBLIC SERVICES:**

Access: Albion Ridge Road (CR 402)  
 Fire District: Albion Little River FPD  
 Water District: Albion Mutual Water Company  
 Sewer District: None  
 School District: Mendocino Unified

**AGENCY COMMENTS:** On February 8, 2023, project referrals were sent to the following responsible or trustee agencies with jurisdiction over the Project. Any comment that would trigger project modification, denial, conditions of approval, or required permits are discussed in full in the following section:

Table 2: REFERRAL AGENCY RESPONSES	
REFERRAL AGENCIES	COMMENT
Planning Division	Comments
Department of Transportation	Comments
Environmental Health (Fort Bragg)	No Comment
Building Inspection (Fort Bragg)	No Response
Assessor	No Response
Air Quality Management District	No Response
Archaeological Commission	Comments
Northwest Information Center	Comments
CAL FIRE (Land Use)	No Response
California Department of Fish & Wildlife	No Response
California Coastal Commission	No Response
County Addresser	Comments
Cloverdale Rancheria	No Response
Redwood Valley Rancheria	No Response
Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians	No Response
Albion Mutual Water District	No Response
Albion Little River Fire District	No Comment

On February 13, 2023, the Department of Transportation recommended approval of the Project with a condition of approval that requires the applicant to obtain an encroachment permit to construct two commercial driveway approaches onto Albion Ridge Road (CR 402) and Albion Little River South Side Road (CR 402A) prior to issuance of building permits. Staff has included this recommendation into the condition of approval.

On February 13, 2023, the County Addresser noted that new addresses will need to be assigned with new building permits for the proposed structures.

On February 20, 2023, the Northwest Information Center at Sonoma State University (NWIC) noted that previous study included the proposed project area and identified no cultural resources within the portions of the proposed project area. Based on the results of that survey, NWIC noted that the proposed project area has a low possibility of containing unrecorded archaeological sites and recommended no further survey. However, an archeological survey was submitted and reviewed by the Mendocino County Archaeological Commission at their meeting on April 12, 2023. The Commission accepted the Evaluation and recommended that the Discovery Clause be implemented to address any unanticipated discovery of cultural resources per MCC Section 22.12.090 and 22.12.100. Staff has added this recommendation as a Condition of Approval requiring that the Discovery Clause be adhered to.

On February 24, 2023, the Planning Division provided additional background information regarding the subject lots.

For comments submitted by the California Department of Fish & Wildlife, see the “Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA)” section below.

**LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM CONSISTENCY**

**Land Use:** The subject parcel is located within the Rural Village (RV) land use classification as described in Mendocino County Coastal Element Section 2.2. The RV classification is intended,

*“To preserve and maintain the character of the rural atmosphere and visual quality of the following villages: Westport, Cleone, Caspar, Little River, Albion, Elk and Manchester; and to provide a variety of community- oriented neighborhood commercial services; and to provide and allow for mixed residential and commercial activities.”*

The Project would preserve the rural character and visual quality of the Albion village because the scale of development is consistent with the surrounding neighborhood and the proposed colors and materials are consistent with the Development Criteria for Highly Scenic Areas and Special Communities and Neighborhoods (see “Visual Resources” section below). Public and semi-public facilities are listed as a conditional use in the RV classification, as such the proposed improvements to fire district facilities are permitted upon issuance of a Coastal Development Use Permit. With adherence to the conditions of approval, the Project would comply with the applicable sections of Coastal Element Section 2.2 for the RV classification.

**Zoning:** The subject parcel is located within the Rural Village (RV) zoning district as described in Mendocino County Code Chapter 20.388. Per Section 20.388.005, the RV district is intended *“to preserve and maintain the character of the rural atmosphere and visual quality of existing coastal rural villages; to provide a variety of community-oriented neighborhood commercial services; and to provide and allow for mixed residential and commercial activities.”*

As noted above, the Project would preserve the character of the rural atmosphere and visual quality of the Albion village because the scale of development is consistent with the surroundings, particularly the grocery store and post office adjacent to the subject parcel. The scale of development may also be compared to the nearby Albion Biological Field Station. The services to be provided are community-wide. As discussed in the “Visual Resources” section below, the building materials and colors are consistent with the Development Criteria for Highly Scenic Areas and Special Communities/Neighborhoods.

Per MCC Section 20.320.055, the proposed use is classified as Fire and Police Protection Services. Per MCC Section 20.388.015, this use type is a Conditional Use in the RV district. Per Section 20.388.020, the proposed lot merge Boundary Line Adjustment would result in a lot that meets the 12,000 square foot minimum lot size for the RV district. In this case, the front lot lines are those lot lines immediately adjacent to either Albion River South Side Road or Albion Ridge Road because the site is accessed from these roads, as well as those lot lines adjacent to State Route 1. All other lot lines shall be considered side lot lines. Therefore, the proposed structures would meet the required setback distances outlined in Sections 20.388.030 and 20.388.035 (see attached Plans). According to the application materials, the total height of structures would not exceed thirty-five (35) feet in accordance with Section 20.388.040 (see attached Plans) and the total amount of impervious surfaces would equate to approximately 47.8% of the total lot area, thus maintaining consistency with Section 20.388.045. As noted in Section 20.388.060, the Project is subject to the development criteria outlined in Section 20.504.020 (see “Visual Resources” section below).

The Project elements that may not be encompassed by the Fire and Police Protection Services use type include relocation of the existing fence, water storage tanks, propane tank, storage building for a generator, driveways, and utilities. However, in accordance with MCC Section 20.456.010, these uses are necessarily and customarily associated with the proposed use type, are incidental and subordinate to such use, and are therefore permitted at accessory Civic Use types pursuant to Section 20.456.020. These Project elements support the primary use.

According to the application materials and submitted plans, twenty-one (21) parking spaces would be provided to accommodate the proposed use in addition to a gravel parking area without defined spaces. Three (3) of these spaces would be of accessible size and are designed in conformance with MCC Section 20.472.015. For the purpose of determining how many parking spaces are required, staff considers the proposed use and structures to be most similar to an office and warehouse use per MCC Section 20.472.020(L) and 20.472.035(G), respectively. According to the square footage and employee information provided in the application along with these sections, a total of nineteen (19) spaces are required, one (1) of which must be accessible. Therefore, the project meets off-street parking requirements.

The Project includes the installation of an address sign and a wall-mounted identification sign for the fire station. Per MCC Section 20.476.035(A)(1), these signs are considered “Special Purpose Signs” that are exempt from sign regulations because they are informational signs erected by a special district. These signs are necessary for public identification purposes and emergencies.

**Grading, Erosion, & Runoff:** According to the application materials, the Project would involve approximately 868 cubic yards of cut and 738 cubic yards of fill. The maximum height or fill slope would be between eight (8) and nine (9) feet. The maximum height of cut slope would be one (1) foot. No import or export of soils would occur. Grading would be required for encroachments, driveways, and building footprints. Compacted fill would also be required for driveways, parking, and portions of a building footprint. The Project is subject to the requirements contained in MCC Chapter 20.492.

Staff recommends conditions of approval requiring that Best Management Practices (BMPs) be implemented during construction activities to ensure that these requirements are met. Additionally, the Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area Report prepared for the Project identifies several BMPs that would further reduce impacts due to development. As such, staff recommends that these BMPs be included as conditions of approval. Standard building permit and encroachment permit requirements, including their necessary inspections, will further limit post-project impacts. For example, the Department of Transportation can require any encroachment permit applicant to submit a Water Pollution Control Plan if the project may result in pollutants entering storm drainage systems or waters of the United States.

**Habitats and Natural Resources:** Per MCC Section 20.492.015 and Coastal Element Policy 3.1-2, an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA) Report prepared by WRA, Inc was submitted for the Project (available on file at Planning & Building Services). The report summarized the findings of multiple field surveys conducted in April and June of 2020 and 2021 on the Project site. The surveys found that the site is composed of existing development, non-native grassland, coastal scrub, and a seasonal wetland. Only the seasonal wetland was found to meet the criteria of an ESHA. The surveys found that no special-status plant species were present in the Project area, and that no impacts to such species would occur. However, it was found that several special-status bat and bird species have the potential to occur on the site. The Report recommends several avoidance measures and Best Management Practices (BMPs) to avoid impacts to bats and birds.

The Project would avoid the literal extent of the identified ESHA and would be located no closer than 20 feet from the ESHA. Therefore, the Project would encroach into the 100 foot and 50 foot ESHA buffers. Therefore, the Project must comply with the standards outlined in MCC Section 20.496.020(A)(4) and Coastal Element Policy 3.1-7. The Report provides responses to each of these standards as paraphrased or copied from the Report below:

- Per MCC Section 20.496.020(A)(4)(a), the Project will deploy avoidance measures and best management practices to ensure protection of the seasonal wetland during construction. Post-construction activities are unlikely to affect the seasonal wetland.
- Per MCC Section 20.496.020(A)(4)(b), a U-shaped ingress/egress is necessary to provide access for emergency vehicles without creating a danger to pedestrians in the immediate vicinity of the fire house.
- Per MCC Section 20.496.020(A)(4)(c), the Project has been designed to minimize the conversion of naturalized and native vegetation to hardscape while creating the development necessary to provide the community with updated effective emergency services.
- Per MCC Section 20.496.020(A)(4)(d), the Project will deploy avoidance measures and best management practices to ensure protection of the seasonal wetland during construction. Post-construction activities are unlikely to affect the seasonal wetland.
- Per MCC Section 20.496.020(A)(4)(e), the Project is situated within the only available locations on the site. Avoidance measures and BMPs will be deployed to alleviate some of the vegetation loss.
- Per MCC Section 20.496.020(A)(4)(f), development will be similar to existing and surrounding development and is not expected to significantly increase existing levels of noise, artificial light, impervious surfaces, dust, or air pollution. Avoidance measures and BMPs will be incorporated into the Project to reduce soil removal to the greatest extent feasible, covering any exposed bare soil during development and seeding bare soil after completion of the structures. Project design will include light fixtures that will not significantly increase artificial light.

- Per MCC Section 20.496.020(A)(4)(g), no riparian vegetation will be impacted by the Project.
- Per MCC Section 20.496.020(A)(4)(h), the Project area is not located within or near a 100 year floodplain.
- Per MCC Section 20.496.020(A)(4)(i), the Project is unlikely to disrupt the hydraulic capacity of the project. Near-subsurface flows are unlikely due to the location and lack of a sizable watershed. The biological diversity will not be entirely disrupted; much of the on-site vegetation will remain intact and is common on the coast of Mendocino County. The vegetation between the Project and seasonal wetland is entirely dominated by non-native herbaceous species; planting native shrubs and perennial native herbs in the buffer will maintain water quality, capture sediment, and provide functional uplift. Avoidance measures and BMPs will be deployed to protect the seasonal wetland.
- Per MCC Section 20.496.020(A)(4)(j), development will allow for continuance of runoff to contribute to surface hydrology. Water from impervious surfaces will be shunted toward existing roadside ditches.
- Per MCC Section 20.496.020(A)(4)(k), through the implementation of avoidance measures and BMPs, impacts to the ESHA and ESHA buffer are not anticipated to have a long-term negative effect on the ESHA and will allow continuance of ESHA and functions of ESHA buffers. Proposed avoidance measures are anticipated to offset impacts to the ESHA and ESHA buffers.

The avoidance measures and BMPs discussed in the Report include delineation and demarcation of the ESHA, staging requirements, sediment control measures, dry season construction, bat habitat surveys, and bird surveys. These measures are recommended as Conditions of Approval (see below).

Staff concurs with the findings contained in the Report. Therefore, staff recommends that the recommended measures be adopted as Mitigation Measures in the Conditions of Approval and that the proposed development be permitted within the ESHA buffer area.

On March 14, 2023, the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW) provided comments regarding the Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area Report prepared for the Project, including recommendations to clarify recommendations within the Report and to require the installation of high visibility fencing and silt fencing on the northern perimeter of the project site to protect the seasonal wetland for the duration of the Project. CDFW also recommended that a low, permanent symbolic fence be installed along the northern perimeter of the Project area to reduce encroachment into the seasonal wetland once construction is complete. CDFW provided further comments on February 1, 2024, including a recommendation that symbolic fencing be in place prior to ground disturbance, with high visibility fencing and silt fencing installed on the “project-side” of the symbolic fencing. Staff concurs that CDFW recommendations would ensure that encroachment into the ESHA does not occur and recommends Conditions of Approval to match CDFW comments (see below).

Upon implementation of the measures recommended by WRA, Inc. and CDFW, staff finds the Project to be consistent with the regulations contained in MCC Chapter 20.496 and Coastal Element Policy 3.1-2. Compliance with these regulations inherently shows that the Project will comply with the General Review Standards contained in MCC Section 20.488.010.

**Hazard Areas:** Per MCC Section 20.500.020 and Coastal Element Policy 3.4-1, 3.4-3, & 3.4-6, County LCP mapping does not associate the Project site with any faults, blufftop geology, tsunami inundation areas, or landslide hazard areas. The site is mostly flat. Though some risk of landslide and erosion still exists, the implementation of BMPs, standard construction practices, and other measures outlined in the ESHA Report would minimize such risks. Staff recommends conditions of approval requiring grading specifications and techniques to follow the recommendations cited in the Uniform Building Code, engineers' reports, and MCC Chapter 20.492 in accordance with Section 20.500.020(E)(3).

Per MCC Section 20.500.025 and Coastal Element Policy 3.4-13, the site is in the Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone as mapped by CAL FIRE. The application included CAL FIRE Conditions of Approval #166-22, which outlines those measures that must be implemented into the Project to comply with State Fire Safe Regulations. CAL FIRE also issued an exception to their Setback for Structure Defensible Space standard in

a letter to the applicant on January 13, 2023 with certain conditions. Staff recommends that these measures be memorialized as Conditions of Approval. Upon implementation of CAL FIRE Conditions of Approval, the risk of fire hazards would be minimized.

**Visual Resources:** Per MCC Section 20.504.015 and Coastal Element Policy 3.5-1, the site is within a mapped Highly Scenic Area. As such, the Project is subject to the Development Criteria contained in MCC Section 20.504.015(C) and Coastal Element Policy 3.5-4. For the purposes of reviewing consistency with these criteria, the Project site shall be considered a “terrace”.

Per MCC Section 20.504.015(C)(1), the only coastal view from public areas in the vicinity of the project are those views of the Pacific Ocean from Albion Ridge Road (CR 402) east of the project site at higher elevations (see attached *Google Street View 1*). This view would be protected by the proposed development because structures would be located behind the existing grocery store. Views of the ocean behind the grocery store are blocked by a large hill west of State Route 1. The structures would not be located in the portion of the site that contains the ocean views, which are mostly seen above the post office and southern corner of the site near the intersection between Albion Ridge Road and State Route 1.

Per MCC Section 20.504.015(C)(2), the site is not west of State Route 1.

Per MCC Section 20.504.015(C)(3), the exterior materials would include stucco, stone cladding, and cement board & batten. Roofing would be standing seam metal, windows would be aluminum clad with non-reflective glazing, and driveways & parking would be asphalt & gravel (see *Plans*). The stone cladding would be in gray and tan earth tones. The stucco exterior walls would be in earthen reddish maroon and tan colors. The roofing would be gray, while the doors and windows would be dark gray. Examples of proposed colors are included in the attached *Plans, Finish Schedule, and Visual Simulations*. These materials and colors would blend in hue and brightness with their surroundings, except for the red color of the fire station. However, the red color of the proposed structure is vital for public safety purposes to identify the site as a fire station and is similar to the color of the nearby Albion Little River Fire Department Station 811 at 32600 Albion Ridge Road (see attached *Google Street View 2*). These materials are not expected to result in substantial reflection. The structures would be subordinate to their natural setting because they would not block views of the ocean from Albion Ridge Road and are of similar size to the existing grocery store and post office.

Per MCC Section 20.504.015(C)(4), the proposed Boundary Line Adjustment does not include any physical development and would not result in any impacts.

Per MCC Section 20.504.015(C)(5), the site is mostly flat, is not on or near a ridge, and does not contain any wooded areas. There are no areas on the site that would allow structures to be sited in this way.

Per MCC Section 20.504.015(C)(7), the site is not within a large open area. When viewed from Albion Ridge Road, the structures would be clustered behind the existing grocery store. The site is not in a blufftop location. As noted below in the section titled “Dark Gulch to Navarro River Planning Area”, the development cannot reasonably be expected to conform to the scale of rural character in the area because the majority of development is of a different use type. The proposed structures are similar in size to the existing post office and grocery store.

Per MCC Section 20.504.015(C)(10) and Coastal Element Policy 3.5-5, landscaping is proposed, including tree planting along the northern edge of the property. This would limit views of the site when travelling south on State Route 1, as can be seen in the attached *Visual Simulations*. These trees are not expected to block views any more than the trees that can be seen behind the existing grocery store in the attached *Google Street View 1*.

Per MCC Section 20.504.015(C)(11) and (12), all proposed utilities would be located underground.

Per MCC Section 20.504.015(C)(13) and Coastal Element Policy 3.5-9, the proposed driveways and parking areas would cause minimal visual disturbance because they would be sited at-grade. Direct access to State Route 1 is not proposed.

**Special Community and Neighborhood:**

The project is located within a mapped Highly Scenic Area (per MCC Section 20.504.015 and Coastal Element Policy 3.5-1), which is accorded special protection. The project's location in Albion falls under special consideration for community character and scenic value.

The scale of the new development is compatible with existing development in the surrounding neighborhood. As described, the proposed structures, in terms of height and bulk, are similar in size to the existing grocery store and post office in the vicinity, adhering to the criterion of maintaining the scale and character of the neighborhood. Granted, given the use of the structures and the importance of the fire department, a slightly larger scale of development for the apparatus building is to be expected to some degree.

The project is sited such that public coastal views are protected. Specifically, views of the Pacific Ocean from Albion Ridge Road will not be obstructed by the new structures, as it is located east of the coastal views and does not block key view corridors.

There is no indication that the project adversely affects nearby historic structures. The information provided and researched does not explicitly mention historic structures, suggesting that the project's design and location are not in conflict with this criterion.

The selection of building materials and exterior colors is in harmony with existing structures in the area. The use of stucco, stone cladding, and cement board & batten in earth tones, along with non-reflective glazing and similar roofing materials, ensures compatibility with the local architectural style and color palette.

The project's adherence to design principles that ensure minimal visual disturbance, such as downcast and shielded exterior lighting, and the siting of driveways and parking areas, demonstrates a commitment to preserving the scenic and visual qualities of the coastal area. The proposed landscaping, including tree planting, further helps in integrating the development into its natural setting, respecting the character of the Highly Scenic Area.

In conclusion, the project, through its careful consideration of scale, siting, material selection, and preservation of public views, complies with the requirements of MCC Section 20.504.020. This compliance ensures that the development is not only respectful of the special community of Albion but also contributes positively to the scenic and visual qualities of Mendocino County's coastal areas.

Per MCC Section 20.504.035, all proposed exterior lighting would be downcast and shielded as shown in the attached *Exterior Lighting Plans*. Nevertheless, staff recommends a condition of approval memorializing the standards contained in this section. As shown above in the visual resources section, with following the recommended conditions of approval the project will comply with MCC Section 20.504.015 and Coastal Element Policy 3.5-1.

**Transportation, Utilities, & Public Services:** Per MCC Section 20.516.015(A) and Coastal Element Policy 3.8-1, 3.8-7, & 3.9-1, the Environmental Health Division responded to the Project referral with no comment regarding the proposed relocation and newly designed septic system. A Non-Standard Sewage System Permit for the Project was tentatively issued by the Environmental Health Division on April 10, 2023 (Permit No. SP24035). The permit is currently on hold pending approval of U\_2023-0002. Therefore, a satisfactory site of an individual sewage system and leach field exists for the Project and has been tentatively approved by the Environmental Health Division.

Per MCC Section 20.516.015(B) and Coastal Element Policy 3.8-1 & 3.9-1, the site is located within the service area of the Albion Mutual Water Company, who did not respond with any comments on the Project. However, the applicant did provide a statement from the Water Company from October 2022 showing that the Fire District is connected to Water Company service. Therefore, staff finds that adequate water supply is available to serve the Project because service exists to a local water district and no concerns were raised by the district.

Per MCC Section 20.516.015(C) and Coastal Element Policy 3.8-1, the Project would maintain the required Corridor Preservation Setback of 25 feet from the centerline of both County roads abutting the site as well as the required setback of 40 feet from the centerline of State Route 1. As noted above, the Department of Transportation recommended conditional approval of the Project, and those recommendations have been



included as Conditions of Approval. The maximum number of employees working any one (1) shift would be three (3). This is similar to the size of a standard residential household, and as such, the impact of the Project on Highway 1 capacity is minimal because the impacts of a standard residential household on Highway 1 capacity were addressed when the Local Coastal Program was adopted.

**Coastal Access Regulations:** Per MCC Section 20.528.010 and Coastal Element Policy 3.6-9, the Project site is not within a Minimum Access Location as shown on County LCP maps. Existing shoreline access is located nearby along the Albion River flats and south of the site along Spring Grove Road (CR 401). Therefore, the Project is consistent with the Coastal Access policies of the Coastal Zoning Code, Coastal Element, and Coastal Act.

**Archaeological and Cultural Resources:** Per MCC Chapter 22.12 and Coastal Element Policy 3.5-10, a Cultural Resources Evaluation was submitted for the Project. The Evaluation concluded that no significant or potentially significant artifacts, archaeological deposits, or features were identified within the Project area and that the Project would not impact known cultural resources. No indications of potentially significant cultural resources were observed at any examined location. The Evaluation was reviewed by the Mendocino County Archaeological Commission at their meeting on April 12, 2023. The Commission accepted the Evaluation and recommended that the Discovery Clause be implemented to address any unanticipated discovery of cultural resources per MCC Section 22.12.090 and 22.12.100. Staff recommends a Condition of Approval requiring that the Discovery Clause be adhered to.

**Dark Gulch to Navarro River Planning Area:** Per Coastal Element Policy 4.9-2, *“building permits shall require that building materials, color, and architectural forms of new structures exposed to public view be similar to those of existing buildings. Existing buildings shall not be remodeled in a manner that would detract from their historic character.”*

According to the application materials, the exterior materials would include stucco, stone cladding, and cement board & batten. Roofing would be standing seam metal, windows would be aluminum clad with non-reflective glazing, and driveways & parking would be asphalt & gravel (see *Plans*). The stone cladding would be in gray and tan earth tones. The stucco exterior walls would be in earthen reddish maroon and tan colors. The roofing would be gray, while the doors and windows would be dark gray. Examples of proposed colors are included in the attached *Plans*, *Finish Schedule*, and *Visual Simulations*.

The existing fire station structure, the post office, and the grocery store have wood exteriors and shingle roofs. The colors of these exterior materials are mostly wood earth tones and dark grey roofing, but the grocery store is a bright blue color.

Therefore, the Project would utilize several different materials compared to existing structures. The proposed earth tones are in keeping with existing development. However, the red color of the proposed structure is vital for public safety purposes to identify the site as a fire station and is similar to the color of the nearby Albion Little River Fire Department Station 811 at 32600 Albion Ridge Road (see attached *Google Street View 2*). The proposed architectural form of the structure is also similar to the existing station on Albion Ridge Road. Though the proposed materials are somewhat inconsistent with existing development, the proposed use is also different from surrounding development. Therefore, the Project cannot be expected to maintain consistency with nearby development because its use necessitates different materials and colors. For example, a metal roof may be desired for the fire station because it is less prone to fire damage compared to shingles.

**Coastal Land Division Regulations:** The project was reviewed by the Mendocino County Subdivision Committee on November 9, 2023, at which time the Subdivision Committee recommended approval of the proposed adjustment to the Planning Commission per the required findings of Mendocino County Code Section 17-17.5. No conflicts with the County Division of Land Regulations were identified at the meeting. The Committee recommended that a Special Condition of Approval be included requiring that a notation appear on the deeds that the Boundary Line Adjustment is a voluntary merger of parcels.

**Coastal Policy Consistency Review:** Staff reviewed the proposed Boundary Line Adjustment relative to coastal issues and determined the following:

1. The boundary line adjustment will not result in a net loss of density. Four (4) of the seven (7) existing lots have a lot area below the current requirement of 12,000 square feet, indicating that they would not be suitable for residential development. Additionally, the ALRFPD ownership of each lot indicates that the lots are not intended for residential use. Though each legal lot is entitled to a single-family residence, the sale of such lots for residential development is unlikely. Consolidation of the lots would allow the district to construct necessary fire protection facilities; and
2. The boundary line adjustment will not create any new parcels; and
3. Per Coastal Element Policy 3.1-32, the parcels subject to the merger are not located entirely within an ESHA and no fully impacted parcel will be created as a result of the adjustment. A portion of the lot is intended for development and has been sited outside of the literal extent of mapped ESHA; and
4. No substandard lot will result from the adjustment. The resulting lot would conform to the minimum lot size of 12,000 square feet; and
5. The property subject to the adjustment is in an area served by the Albion Mutual Water Company; and
6. No pygmy vegetation or pygmy-capable soils were identified on the project site, as evidenced in the biological report submitted for the Project; and
7. The project site is located in a Highly Scenic Area, but the proposed development has been designed to conform to the established criteria (see "Visual Resources" section above). Merging of the lots on its own would not result in any physical development; and
8. The boundary line adjustment is an appealable project and is being processed simultaneously with a Coastal Development Use Permit, and as such shall be under the authority of the Planning Commission; and
9. The boundary line adjustment would not result in any lot having more zoning district designations than were present prior to adjustment. The resulting lot would remain entirely within the RV zoning district.

**ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:**

An Initial Study for the Project was completed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Some potentially significant impacts were identified, but mitigation measures were recommended that would reduce potential impacts to less than significant levels. As such, a Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared. Those mitigation measures have been recommended as conditions of approval.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 20.532 and Chapter 20.536 of the Mendocino County Code, that the Planning Commission adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration and approve the proposed project subject to the findings and conditions of approval contained in the Resolution and Exhibit A.

3/1/2024  
DATE

Matt Goines  
MATT GOINES  
PLANNER II

Appeal Period: 10 Days  
Appeal Fee: \$2,674.00

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| A. Location                                     | P. Highly Scenic & Tree Removal Areas |
| B. Aerial Imagery                               | Q. Estimated Slope                    |
| C. Topographic Map                              | R. Western Soil Classifications       |
| D. Zoning                                       | S. Important Farmlands                |
| E. General Plan                                 | T. DWR Crop Type                      |
| F. LCP Land Use Map 18: Albion                  | U. Water Districts                    |
| G. LCP Habitats & Resources                     | V. Plans                              |
| H. LCP Land Capabilities & Natural Hazards      | W. Exterior Lighting Plans            |
| I. Post LCP Certification & Appeal Jurisdiction | X. Finish Schedule                    |
| J. Adjacent Parcels                             | Y. ESHA Maps                          |
| K. Fire Hazard Zones & Responsibility Areas     | Z. Visual Simulations                 |
| L. Wildland-Urban Interface                     | AA. Google Street View 1              |
| M. Flood & Tsunami Inundation Zones             | BB. Google Street View 2              |
| N. Wetlands                                     | CC. CAL FIRE Conditions of Approval   |
| O. Coastal Ground Water Resources               | DD. CAL FIRE Setback Exception        |

**RESOLUTION AND CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL (Exhibit A):**

**MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION / Initial Study available online at:**

<https://www.mendocinocounty.gov/government/planning-building-services/meeting-agendas/planning-commission>