

**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO  
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

**DATE:** September 18, 2025

**TO:** Zoning Hearing Officer

**FROM:** Planning Staff

**SUBJECT:** Consideration of a Use Permit Renewal, pursuant to Section 6500 of the County Zoning Regulations, for the continued operation of a retreat center at 16350 Skyline Boulevard in the unincorporated Woodside area of San Mateo County.

County File Number: PLN2006-00181 (Canyon Ranch Woodside)

**PROPOSAL**

The applicant is requesting the renewal of Use Permit PLN2006-00181 for the continued operation of a retreat center (formerly known as the Stillpath Retreat Center). The project includes a three-story, 23,981-square-foot lodge containing 14 guest rooms, an indoor pool and spa, dressing and massage rooms, offices, a dining and kitchen area, a conference room, and a common/great room. Additional facilities include a 25-space parking structure, 14 uncovered parking spaces (for a total of 39 onsite spaces), 12 duplex “tree house” buildings, a 400-square-foot meditation temple (yet to be constructed), and an outdoor pool and spa facility (yet to be completed), along with supporting infrastructure such as fire protection, water supply, wastewater treatment, and access improvements. Interior finish work for all 12 duplex “tree house” buildings, including associated catwalk access, has been completed. However, base structural components (including piers, pier caps, and grade beams) for the meditation temple and spa facility have not yet been completed.

Previous planning approvals for the retreat facility were heard by the Planning Commission. However, as no amendments to the original proposal are being requested, this renewal will be heard by the Zoning Hearing Officer.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Zoning Hearing Officer approves the Use Permit Renewal, County File Number PLN 2006-00181, by making the required findings and adopting the conditions of approval listed in Attachment A.

## **BACKGROUND**

Report Prepared By: Randall Cohen, Project Planner, Telephone 650/383-4658

Applicant: CR Woodside, LLC

Owner: GPIF Woodside, LLC

Location: 16350 Skyline Boulevard, Woodside

APN: 072-331-010

Parcel Size: 16.4 acres

Existing Zoning: RM (Resource Management)

General Plan Designation: General Open Space

Existing Land Use: Retreat facility; surrounding areas include open space covered with native vegetation, mature trees, and walking trails.

Water Supply: California Water Service

Sewage Disposal: Private (on-site) wastewater treatment system

Flood Zone: FEMA Flood Zone Map indicates the parcel is located in Zone X, (*area of minimal flooding*) per Community Panel No. 06081C 0294E, effective October 16, 2012.

Environmental Evaluation: Exempt under provisions of Section 15301, Class 1, of the California Environmental Quality Act, as the continued operation of an existing facility with no expansion of use.

Setting: The project site is located on the west side of Skyline Boulevard, opposite Wunderlich County Park and approximately 1.6 miles north of the intersection with Highway 84. The project site is located within the Skyline State Scenic Corridor. The property is improved with a three-story retreat lodge, on-site parking, and 12 duplex "tree house" buildings. Surrounding areas on-site include open space covered with native vegetation, mature trees, and walking trails. Adjacent rural lands include single-family residences.

Background: The retreat center, formerly known as Stillpath Retreat Center, renamed to Canyon Ranch Woodside, is an educational retreat center and sanctuary. The Center's mission is to "provide a beautiful and relaxing educational center and sanctuary in harmony with nature where people can expand their self-awareness of body, mind, and spirit for personal growth, professional success, and positive transformation."

Chronology:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>
December 5, 1991	- Original Use Permit application for Spa/Fitness Center approved.
June 14, 2006	- Planning Commission approval of PLN2006-00084 for a Use Permit Amendment to allow a 2,243 sq. ft. addition to the existing retreat lodge (Phase 1B).
January 24, 2007	- Planning Commission approval of PLN 2006-00181 for a Use Permit Amendment to allow the construction of a parking structure, 12 "tree house" buildings, a meditation temple, pool and spa facility, walking trails, water tanks for fire and domestic use, and access road and landscape improvements (Phase 2).
October 12, 2011	- Planning Commission approval for Use Permit Renewal, PLN 2006-00181; no physical or operational changes proposed.
2013-2014	- Board of Supervisors denial of proposed amendment to allow a rehabilitation center.
March 10, 2017	- Application for permit (as approved in 2007 and 2011) renewal submitted.
July 6, 2017	- Zoning Hearing Officer public meeting. Project decision continued to August 3, 2017.
August 3, 2017	- Zoning Hearing Officer public meeting
August 17, 2017	- Appeal period ended; Use Permit Renewal approved.
February 20, 2025	- Application for Use Permit Renewal received.
April 4, 2025	- Application materials deemed complete.
September 18, 2025	- Zoning Hearing Officer public meeting.

## DISCUSSION

### A. COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS OF LAST APPROVAL

Indicated below are the conditions of approval from the last Use Permit Renewal approval letter, dated August 3, 2017. Following each condition is the staff's analysis as to whether the applicant has complied with the condition and whether it should be retained and/or modified. The meditation temple and pool and spa facility have not yet been constructed; however, they remain a future possibility. As such, all conditions of approval related to building construction continue to apply and will be carried forward.

#### Planning and Building Department

1. This approval applies only to the proposal, documents, and plans described in this report and submitted to and approved by the Zoning Hearing Officer on August 3, 2017. Minor modifications to the project may be approved by the Director of Planning and Building if they are consistent with the intent of, and in substantial conformance with, this approval.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, but modified to reflect today's hearing date of September 18, 2025.

2. This use permit shall be valid for seven years following the date of final approval. The applicant shall file for a renewal of this permit six months prior to its expiration with the County Planning and Building Department, if continuation of this use is desired. If the County finds that the use is not in compliance with the conditions of approval, the applicant shall have 30 days to comply with the terms of the approved use permit or apply for a Use Permit Amendment, including payment of all applicable fees.

Compliance with Condition? Yes, the subject application for the Use Permit Renewal was received on February 20, 2025.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes.

3. Any change in use or intensity shall require an amendment to the use permit. An amendment to this use permit requires an application for amendment, payment of applicable fees, and consideration at a public hearing.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes.

4. All remaining deferred construction work, approved under the Use Permit Amendment (PLN2006-00181) on January 24, 2007, shall be completed under a valid building permit.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes.

5. All new utilities shall be installed underground from the nearest existing utility pole. No new utility poles are to be installed.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable throughout the life of the use permit.

6. The applicant shall incorporate energy efficiency measures for all approved development, including any mechanical systems and appliances.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, the condition shall be applicable throughout the duration of this permit.

7. There shall be no removal of any significant vegetation that screens the view of the project from Skyline Boulevard. Removal of any such vegetation shall be permitted only by the Planning Commission as part of an application for Architectural Review.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, the condition shall be applicable throughout the duration of this permit.

8. Prior to the beginning of any construction activities, the applicant shall submit to the Current Planning Section for review and approval an erosion and drainage control plan which shows how the transport and discharge of soil and pollutants from and within the project site shall be minimized. The plan shall be designed to minimize potential sources of sediment, control the amount of runoff and its ability to carry sediment by diverting incoming flows and impeding internally generated flows, and retain sediment that is picked up on the project site through the use of sediment-capturing devices. The plan shall also limit application, generation, and migration of toxic substances, ensure the proper storage and disposal of toxic materials, apply nutrients at rates necessary to establish and maintain vegetation without

causing significant nutrient runoff to surface waters. Said plan shall adhere to the San Mateo Countywide Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program “General Construction and Site Supervision Guidelines”, including:

- a. Sequence construction to install sediment-capturing devices first, followed by runoff control measures and runoff conveyances. No construction activities shall begin until after all proposed measures are in place.
- b. Minimize the area of bare soil exposed at one time (phased grading).
- c. Clear only areas essential for construction.
- d. Within five days of clearing or inactivity in construction, stabilize bare soils through either non-vegetative best management practices (BMPs), such as mulching or vegetative erosion control methods, such as seeding. Vegetative erosion control shall be established within two weeks of seeding/planting.
- e. Construction entrances shall be stabilized immediately after grading and frequently maintained to prevent erosion and to control dust.
- f. Control wind-born dust through the installation of wind barriers such as hay bales and/or sprinkling.
- g. Soil and/or other construction-related material stockpiled on-site shall be placed at a minimum of 200 feet from all wetlands and drain courses. Stockpiled soils shall be covered with tarps at all times of the year.
- h. Intercept runoff above disturbed slopes and convey it to a permanent channel or storm drains by using appropriately designed earth dikes, perimeter dikes or swales, or diversions.
- i. Provide protection for runoff conveyance outlets by reducing flow velocity and dissipating flow energy.
- j. Install appropriately designed storm drain inlet protection that traps sediment before it enters any adjacent storm sewer systems.
- k. Install sediment traps/basins at outlets of diversions, channels, slope drains, or other runoff conveyances that discharge sediment-laden water. Sediment traps/basins shall be cleaned out when 50 percent full (by volume).

- i. Use silt fence and/or vegetated filter strips to trap sediment contained in sheet flow. The maximum drainage area to the fence should be 0.5 acres or less per 100 feet of fence. Silt fences shall be inspected regularly and sediment removed when it reaches 1/3 the fence height. Vegetated filter strips should have relatively flat slopes and be vegetated with erosion-resistant species.
- m. Throughout the construction period, the applicant shall conduct regular inspections of the condition and operational status of all structural BMPs required by the approved erosion control plan.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, the condition shall be applicable throughout the duration of this permit.

9. Prior to any demolition, grading, or construction activity on the project site, the applicant shall implement a tree protection plan. Said plan shall include:
  - a. All trees to be preserved, adjacent to construction areas, will be fenced with 6-foot chain-link fencing, if feasible. The fencing shall be located in accordance with the tree protection zones identified in the tree survey prepared by the project arborist, McClenahan Consulting, dated June 29, 2006.
  - b. Said fencing shall be installed prior to commencement of construction/demolition activities and be approved by the project arborist.
  - c. For trees where the entire tree protection zone cannot be fenced, the arborist shall determine the adjusted fencing location and prescribe additional protection measures where necessary. Larger areas of preserved trees, outside the construction zone, shall be fenced to prevent equipment from entering these locations.
  - d. All subsurface utility lines shall be placed outside of tree protection fencing areas to avoid impact to tree roots.
  - e. No grading shall occur within the area enclosed by tree protection fencing.
  - f. The pruning of branches greater than two inches in diameter or the cutting of roots greater than one inch in diameter must be approved in advance by the arborist.

- g. No materials, including soil, shall be stored within the dripline or protection zone of preserved trees.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable throughout the duration of this permit.

- 10. Noise-generating construction activities shall be scheduled between August 31 and February 15, outside the breeding season of raptors. If construction must occur during raptor breeding season (February 15 through August 31), pre-construction surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than 30 days prior to construction to determine if raptors are nesting in the project area.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, the condition shall be applicable throughout the duration of this permit.

- 11. The applicant shall submit a dust control plan to the Current Planning Section for review and approval prior to the issuance of a building permit for the project. The approved plan shall be implemented for the duration of any grading, demolition, and construction activities that generate dust and other airborne particles. The plan shall include the following control measures:
  - a. Water all active construction areas at least twice daily.
  - b. Water or cover stockpiles of debris, soil, sand, or other materials that can be blown away by the wind.
  - c. Cover all trucks hauling soil, sand, and other loose materials or require all trucks to maintain at least 2 feet of freeboard.
  - d. Apply water three times daily or apply (non-toxic) soil stabilizers on all unpaved access roads, parking, and staging areas at construction sites. Also, hydroseed or apply non-toxic soil stabilizers to inactive construction areas.
  - e. Sweep daily (preferably with water sweepers) all paved access roads, parking, and staging areas at construction sites.
  - f. Sweep adjacent public streets daily (preferably with water sweepers) if visible soil material is carried onto them.

- g. Enclose, cover, water twice daily, or apply non-toxic soil binders to exposed stockpiles (dirt, sand, etc.).
- h. Limit traffic speeds on unpaved roads within the project parcel to 15 mph.
- i. Install sandbags or other erosion control measures to prevent silt runoff to public roadways.
- j. Replant vegetation in disturbed areas as quickly as possible.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable throughout the duration of this permit.

- 12. Noise sources associated with demolition, construction, repair, remodeling, or grading of any real property shall be limited to the hours from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., weekdays and 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Saturdays. Said activities are prohibited on Sundays, Thanksgiving, and Christmas (San Mateo Ordinance Code Section 4.88.360).

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable throughout the duration of this permit.

- 13. Signs prohibiting vehicles from being left unattended and limiting the time for loading and unloading to 10 minutes shall remain posted and maintained at the entry plaza location where buses and vans could be parked for extended periods of time.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable throughout the duration of this permit.

- 14. If any portion of the new structures are visible from Skyline Boulevard after substantiation by the applicant that they will not be visible, the applicant shall be required to submit an application for Architectural Review for review and approval by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission may take any appropriate action to conform the structures to the Skyline Scenic Corridor guidelines, including requiring removal of the visible portion.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable throughout the duration of this permit.

15. Prior to the issuance of building permits for this project, the applicant shall submit color and material samples for review and approval by the Current Planning Section. All buildings and structures shall be painted in natural colors to match the existing trees in the vicinity. Color verification by the Current Planning Section shall occur in the field after the applicant has painted the buildings the approved color, but before the applicant schedules a final inspection.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, the condition shall be applicable throughout the duration of this permit.

16. To avoid or minimize impacts to nesting birds (including raptors), all tree removal and trimming as well as ground disturbing activities should be scheduled to take place outside of the breeding season (February 15 to August 31). However, if construction is unavoidable during the breeding season, a qualified biologist shall conduct a survey for nesting birds no more than three days prior to the removal or trimming of any tree and prior to the start of ground disturbing activities. If active nests are not present, project activities can take place as scheduled. However, if active nests are detected, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife CDFW shall be contacted on how to proceed. Prior to the Current Planning Section's release of the building permit, the biologist shall report their findings to the project planner.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, the condition shall be applicable throughout the duration of this permit.

17. In order to protect wildlife such as reptiles from falling into and becoming trapped in drill holes, all holes made during the day that are not backfilled shall be covered with plywood or similar material at the end of the workday. This will prevent wildlife from falling into the holes during the night or weekend.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable throughout the duration of this permit.

Department of Public Works

18. The provision of San Mateo County Grading Ordinance shall govern all grading on and adjacent to this site. Unless exempted by the Grading Ordinance, the applicant may be required to apply for a grading permit.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, the condition shall be applicable throughout the duration of this permit.

19. Prior to the issuance of any grading permit, the applicant shall submit to the Department of Public Works for review and approval, a plan for any off-site hauling operations. This plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following information: size of trucks, haul route, disposal site, dust and debris control measures, and time and frequency of haul trips. As part of the review of the submitted plan, the County may place such restrictions on the hauling operation as it deems necessary.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, the condition shall be applicable throughout the duration of this permit.

20. The applicant shall comply with the provisions of the County Drainage Guidelines and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit throughout all phases of construction.

County Fire Marshal

21. A statement that the building will be equipped and protected by automatic fire sprinklers must appear on the title page of the building plans.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, the condition shall be applicable throughout the duration of this permit.

22. An approved automatic fire system meeting the requirements of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)-13 is required to be installed in your project. Plans shall be designed by a licensed sprinkler system designer and submitted to the San Mateo County Building Inspection Section for review and approval by the San Mateo County Fire Department. Building plans will not be reviewed until the required sprinkler plans are received by the San Mateo County Building Inspection Section. All commercial

automatic sprinkler systems are required to be installed by a licensed sprinkler contractor and will be required to be monitored for water flow and tamper as outlined in NFPA-72.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable throughout the duration of this permit.

23. Water flow and tamper alarm hardware is required to be installed to work in conjunction with the required sprinkler system. All hardware shall be listed and monitored as required by NFPA. Hardware shall be installed so that any flow of water from a sprinkler installed in the system or an attempt to shut down any portion of the sprinkler system shall send an alarm to an approved monitoring station as approved by NFPA. All hardware is to be included on sprinkler plans submitted to the San Mateo County Building Inspection Section.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition is required for any pending construction.

24. All fire sprinkler system risers shall be equipped with two pressure gauges, one above and one below the check valve. All fire sprinkler systems shall have an inspector's test located at the most remote end of the system. All attic accesses and potential storage areas shall be protected. Where sprinkler heads are required and plastic CPVC piping is going to be used, it must be installed and protected as per the manufacturer's installation instructions and UL listing.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of this permit.

25. Occupancy separations will be required as per the current California Building Code. To be finished on the previous building permit prior to construction beginning under this permit.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of this permit.

26. This project must comply with Title 19 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR).

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of this permit.

27. Panic hardware and exit signs must be installed as per Chapter 10 of the current California Building Code.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of this permit.

28. Approved automatic fire extinguishing systems shall be provided for the protection of commercial-type cooking equipment and associated hood and duct systems as outlined in Section 1005 of the California Fire Code. Plans for required hood, duct, and commercial cooking operations are to be submitted to the San Mateo County Building Inspection Section for review and approval by the San Mateo County Fire Department.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of this permit.

29. Certain areas as designated by the San Mateo County Fire Department will be required to be designated and maintained as Fire Lanes.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of this permit.

30. The San Mateo County Fire Department is required to set a minimum fire flow requirement for the remodel and construction of all buildings using the procedure established in the San Mateo County Fire Ordinance. A fire flow of 1,500 gallons per minute (gpm) for one hour with a 20 per square inch (psi) residual operating pressure must be available as specified by additional project conditions to the project site.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of this permit.

31. Manual pull stations and a smoke detection system are required to be installed in your project as outlined in the current edition of the California Building Code, the San Mateo County Ordinance, and the National Fire Protection Association.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of this permit.

32. Portable fire extinguishers with a minimum rating of 2A-10BC are required to be placed throughout your project. Contact a licensed/certified fire extinguisher company for proper placement of the required extinguishers.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of this permit.

33. Portable type K-Extinguishers will be required in the kitchen area for this project. Contact a licensed/certified fire extinguisher company for proper size and placement of the required extinguishers.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of this permit.

34. The required fire flow shall be available from a County Standard Wet Barrel Fire Hydrant. The configuration of the hydrant shall be a minimum of 6-inch opening with a minimum of one each 4 1/2-inch outlet and one each 2 1/2-inch outlet located not less than 50 feet nor more than 250 feet from the building, measured by way of approved drivable access to the project site.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of this permit.

35. A site plan showing all required components of the water system is required to be submitted with the building plans to the San Mateo County Building Inspection Section for review and approval by the San Mateo County Fire Department for verification and approval. Plans shall show the location,

elevation, and size of required water storage tanks, and the associated piping layout from the tank(s) to the building structures, the location of the standpipe, and the location of any required pumps and their size and specifications.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of this permit.

36. Because of the fire flow and automatic sprinkler requirements for your project, an on-site water storage tank is required. Based upon building plans submitted to the San Mateo County Building Inspection Section, the San Mateo County Fire Department has determined that a minimum of 90,000 gallons of fire protection water will be required, in addition to the required domestic water storage. Plans showing the tank(s) type, size, location, and elevation are to be submitted to the San Mateo County Fire Department for review and approval. This may be modified by the Fire Marshal with an approved system using an existing commercial water purveyor fire hydrant system with tank system, with fire pump and backup generator, to augment fire flow. The water tank shall be filled using water that is procured from a source other than the Water District.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of the permit.

37. The water storage tank(s) shall be so located as to provide a gravity flow to a standpipe/hydrant, or an approved pump/pressure system shall be provided to produce a minimum of 20 pounds per square inch (psi) residual pressure. Plans and specifications shall be submitted to the San Mateo County Building Inspection Section for review and approval by the San Mateo County Fire Department.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of the permit.

38. Smoke detectors are required to be installed in accordance with Section 310.9 of the Uniform Building Code. This includes the requirement for hardwired, interconnected detectors equipped with battery backup and placed in each sleeping room in addition to the corridors and on each level of the residence.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable throughout the duration of the permit.

39. All roof assemblies shall have a minimum CLASS-B fire resistive rating and be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications and the current Uniform Building Code.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of this permit.

40. All buildings that have a street address shall have the number of those address on the building, mailbox, or other type of sign at the driveway entrance in such a manner that the number is easily and clearly visible from either direction of travel from the street. An address sign shall be placed at each break of the road were deemed applicable by the San Mateo County Fire Department. Numerals shall be contrasting in color to their background and shall be no less than 4 inches in height and have a minimum 1/2-inch stroke.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of this permit.

41. Any chimney or woodstove outlet shall have installed onto the opening thereof an approved (galvanized) spark arrester of a mesh with an opening no larger than 1/2-inch in size, or an approved spark arresting device.
- a. Maintain around and adjacent to such buildings or structures a fuel break/firebreak made by removing and clearing away flammable vegetation for a distance of not less than 30 feet and up to 100 feet around the perimeter of all structures or to the property line, if the property line is less than 30 feet from any structure. This is not a requirement or an authorization for the removal of live trees. Remove that flammable portion of any tree which extends within 10 feet of the outlet of any chimney or stovepipe, or within 5 feet of any portion of any building or structures.
  - b. Remove that dead or dying portion of any tree which extends over the roofline of any structure.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of this permit.

42. INFORMATIONAL: The project site is located within the boundaries of the San Mateo/Santa Cruz/Santa Clara hazardous fire area, as defined in the California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 1205.5. This places the project within a Hazardous Fire Area as defined in the San Mateo County Fire Ordinance, Section 3434.0.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Informational only.

43. All dead-end roadways shall be terminated by a turnaround bulb of not less than 80 feet in diameter. Any alternatives are to be approved by the Fire Marshal.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of this permit.

44. The applicant shall submit, for review by the Department of Public Works and the Fire Department having jurisdiction, a plan and profile of both the existing and the proposed access from the nearest “publicly” maintained roadway to the proposed building site.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? No, this condition has been met.

45. All propane storage tanks shall be located with respect to buildings or adjoining property lines. The placement and orientation of tanks shall be so that the ends of the tank do not point in the direction of surrounding structures. Minimum setback distances from property lines or structures will be determined by the size of the tank(s) that are being installed: Less than 125 gallons - 5 feet; 125 gallons to less than 500 gallons - 10 feet; 500 gallons to less than 2,000 gallons - 25 feet; and 2,000 gallons or more - 50 feet. The minimum distance that a liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) tank may be installed from a flammable liquid fuel tank is 20 feet.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of this permit.

46. All Occupancy Loads will be set by the San Mateo County Building Inspection Section and will be supported and enforced by the County Fire Department.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of this permit.

47. Because of limited access into your property, the San Mateo County Fire Department is requiring the installation of a Knox Box or Knox Padlock to allow rapid response of emergency vehicles onto your property in case of a fire or medical emergency. For an application or further information, please contact the Fire Protection and Planning office at 650/573-3846.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, but reworded as follows: The Knox Box shall be maintained to allow access by all rapid response of emergency vehicles onto the property in case of a fire or medical emergency.

48. Tree houses to have Class A roofs, ignition resistant siding, steel supports, and the area under tree houses to be open. Sprinklers shall be installed beneath each tree house to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Building after consultation with the County Fire Marshal and the applicant. Plantings below tree houses shall be needed, fire resistant ground cover.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of this permit.

49. Improve the trail around the property to 3 feet in width as shown on the plans for extra firebreak to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Building after consultation with the County Fire Marshal and the applicant.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of this permit.

50. Provide access to all exterior portions of the building to within 150 feet of the fire apparatus.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of this permit.

51. Turnouts to be 20 feet in width and 35 feet in length with diminishing entrance and exit.

Compliance with Condition? Yes.

Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, this condition shall be applicable for the duration of this permit.

B. COMPLIANCE WITH USE PERMIT FINDINGS

For the Zoning Hearing Officer to approve the Use Permit Renewal, the following findings must be made:

1. **That the establishment, maintenance, and/or conducting of the use will not, under the circumstances of the particular case, be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in said neighborhood.**

Use of the property as a retreat center was originally established under the Use Permit approval in 1991 and has been in operation ever since with no reported complaints from the surrounding community. Concerns from the community arose during the proposed 2013 amendment to allow a rehabilitation center. That proposal was denied and the previous approval for the retreat center was reinstated. Project referrals for this renewal were sent out to applicable reviewing agencies, none of which recommended that the Use Permit Renewal be denied. Additionally, no project changes are proposed with this renewal that have not already been approved under the last Use Permit Renewal (in 2017). Thus, there is no evidence to suggest that the continued operation of the retreat center will be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in the community. The retreat center promotes balance and serenity in harmony with nature, as confirmed by the facility's design, development, and overall mission. Furthermore, there is no evidence suggesting that the continued operation of the retreat center would cause a detriment to the public health, safety, convenience, or welfare; therefore, staff recommends that this required finding be made.

C. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed project is exempt from environmental review, per Section 15301, Class 1, of the California Environmental Quality Act, as a continued operation of

an existing facility with no expansion of use. A Categorical Exemption will be filed, upon final approval of the project.

D. REVIEWING AGENCIES

County Planning and Building  
County Fire Marshal

**ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Recommended Findings and Conditions of Approval
- B. Location Map
- C. Site Plan

County of San Mateo  
Planning and Building Department

**RECOMMENDED FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

Permit or Project File Number: PLN2006-00181      Hearing Date: September 18, 2025

Prepared By: Randall Cohen, Project Planner For Adoption By: Zoning Hearing Officer

**RECOMMENDED FINDINGS**

Regarding the Environmental Review, Find:

1. That the project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Section 15301, Class 1, relating to the continued operation of an existing facility with no expansion of use. A Notice of Exemption will be filed and posted for review.

Regarding the Use Permit, Find:

2. That the establishment, maintenance, and/or conducting of the continued operation will not, under the circumstances of the particular case, be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in said neighborhood as the use has been in operation since its original use permit approval in 1991 with no reported complaints from the surrounding community. Associated development is minimally visible from surrounding public views due to the site's topography and heavy vegetation. Additionally, no reviewing agency has recommended that the Use Permit Renewal be denied and no project changes are proposed with this renewal that have not already been approved under the last Use Permit Amendment in 2017.
3. The renewal of this use permit will allow for the continued operation of an educational retreat center and sanctuary that encourages and supports the personal growth, professional success, and positive transformation of individuals, groups, and organizations. The retreat center promotes balance and serenity in harmony with nature, as confirmed by the facility's design, development, and overall mission. Furthermore, there is no evidence suggesting that the continued operation of the retreat center would cause a detriment to the public health, safety, convenience, or welfare.

## **RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

### **Current Planning Section**

1. This approval applies only to the proposal, documents, and plans described in this report and submitted to and approved by the Zoning Hearing Officer on September 18, 2025. Minor modifications to the project may be approved by the Director of Planning and Building if they are consistent with the intent of, and in substantial conformance with, this approval.
2. This use permit shall be valid for seven years following the date of final approval. The applicant shall file for a renewal of this permit six months prior to expiration with the County Planning and Building Department, if continuation of this use is desired. If the County finds that the use is not in compliance with the conditions of approval, the applicant shall have 30 days to comply with the terms of the approved use permit or apply for a Use Permit Amendment, including payment of all applicable fees.
3. Any change in use or intensity shall require an amendment to the use permit. An amendment to this use permit requires an application for amendment, payment of applicable fees, and consideration at a public hearing.
4. All remaining deferred construction work, approved under the Use Permit Amendment (PLN2006-00181) on January 24, 2007, shall be completed under a valid building permit.
5. All new utilities shall be installed underground from the nearest existing utility pole. No new utility poles are to be installed.
6. The applicant shall incorporate energy efficiency measures for all approved development, including any mechanical systems and appliances.
7. There shall be no removal of any significant vegetation that screens the view of the project from Skyline Boulevard. Removal of any such vegetation shall be permitted only by the Planning Commission as part of an application for Architectural Review.
8. Prior to the beginning of any construction activities, the applicant shall submit to the Current Planning Section for review and approval an erosion and drainage control plan which shows how the transport and discharge of soil and pollutants from and within the project site shall be minimized. The plan shall be designed to minimize potential sources of sediment, control the amount of runoff and its ability to carry sediment by diverting incoming flows and impeding internally generated flows, and retain sediment that is picked up on the project site through the use of sediment-capturing devices. The plan shall also limit application, generation, and migration of toxic substances, ensure the proper storage and disposal of toxic

materials, apply nutrients at rates necessary to establish and maintain vegetation without causing significant nutrient runoff to surface waters. Said plan shall adhere to the San Mateo Countywide Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program "General Construction and Site Supervision Guidelines," including:

- a. Sequence construction to install sediment-capturing devices first, followed by runoff control measures and runoff conveyances. No construction activities shall begin until after all proposed measures are in place.
- b. Minimize the area of bare soil exposed at one time (phased grading).
- c. Clear only areas essential for construction.
- d. Within five days of clearing or inactivity in construction, stabilize bare soils through either non-vegetative BMPs, such as mulching or vegetative erosion control methods, such as seeding. Vegetative erosion control shall be established within two weeks of seeding/planting.
- e. Construction entrances shall be stabilized immediately after grading and frequently maintained to prevent erosion and to control dust.
- f. Control wind-born dust through the installation of wind barriers such as hay bales and/or sprinkling.
- g. Soil and/or other construction-related material stockpiled on-site shall be placed a minimum of 200 feet from all wetlands and drain courses. Stockpiled soils shall be covered with tarps at all times of the year.
- h. Intercept runoff above disturbed slopes and convey it to a permanent channel or storm drains by using appropriately designed earth dikes, perimeter dikes or swales, or diversions.
- i. Provide protection for runoff conveyance outlets by reducing flow velocity and dissipating flow energy.
- j. Install appropriately designed storm drain inlet protection that traps sediment before it enters any adjacent storm sewer systems.
- k. Install sediment traps/basins at outlets of diversions, channels, slope drains, or other runoff conveyances that discharge sediment-laden water. Sediment traps/basins shall be cleaned out when 50% full (by volume).



11. The applicant shall submit a dust control plan to the Current Planning Section for review and approval prior to the issuance of a building permit for the project. The approved plan shall be implemented for the duration of any grading, demolition, and construction activities that generate dust and other airborne particles. The plan shall include the following control measures:
  - a. Water all active construction areas at least twice daily.
  - b. Water or cover stockpiles of debris, soil, sand, or other materials that can be blown by the wind.
  - c. Cover all trucks hauling soil, sand, and other loose materials or require all trucks to maintain at least 2 feet of freeboard.
  - d. Apply water three times daily, or apply (non-toxic) soil stabilizers on all unpaved access roads, parking, and staging areas at construction sites. Also, hydroseed or apply non-toxic soil stabilizers to inactive construction areas.
  - e. Sweep daily (preferably with water sweepers) all paved access roads, parking, and staging areas at construction sites.
  - f. Sweep adjacent public streets daily (preferably with water sweepers) if visible soil material is carried onto them.
  - g. Enclose, cover, water twice daily, or apply non-toxic soil binders to exposed stockpiles (dirt, sand, etc.).
  - h. Limit traffic speeds on unpaved roads within the project parcel to 15 mph.
  - i. Install sandbags or other erosion control measures to prevent silt runoff to public roadways.
  - j. Replant vegetation in disturbed areas as quickly as possible.
12. Noise sources associated with demolition, construction, repair, remodeling, or grading of any real property shall be limited to the hours from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., weekdays and 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Saturdays. Said activities are prohibited on Sundays, Thanksgiving, and Christmas (San Mateo Ordinance Code Section 4.88.360).
13. Signs prohibiting vehicles from being left unattended and limiting the time for loading and unloading to 10 minutes shall remain posted and maintained at the entry plaza location where buses and vans could be parked for extended periods of time.

14. If any portion of the new structures are visible from Skyline Boulevard after substantiation by the applicant that they will not be visible, the applicant shall be required to submit an application for Architectural Review for review and approval by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission may take any appropriate action to conform the structures to the Skyline Scenic Corridor guidelines, including requiring removal of the visible portion.
15. Prior to the issuance of building permits for this project, the applicant shall submit color and material samples for review and approval by the Current Planning Section. All buildings and structures shall be painted in natural colors to match the existing trees in the vicinity. Color verification by the Current Planning Section shall occur in the field after the applicant has painted the buildings the approved color, but before the applicant schedules a final inspection.
16. To avoid or minimize impacts to nesting birds (including raptors), all tree removal and trimming as well as ground disturbing activities should be scheduled to take place outside of the breeding season (February 15 to August 31). However, if construction is unavoidable during the breeding season, a qualified biologist shall conduct a survey for nesting birds no more than three days prior to the removal or trimming of any tree and prior to the start of ground disturbing activities. If active nests are not present, project activities can take place as scheduled. If active nests are detected, CDFW shall be contacted on how to proceed. Prior to the Current Planning Section's release of the building permit, the biologist shall report their findings to the project planner.
17. In order to protect wildlife such as reptiles from falling into and becoming trapped in drill holes, all holes made during the day that are not backfilled shall be covered with plywood or similar material at the end of the work day. This will prevent wildlife from falling into the holes during the night or weekend.

#### Department of Public Works

18. The provision of San Mateo County Grading Ordinance shall govern all grading on and adjacent to this site. Unless exempted by the Grading Ordinance, the applicant may be required to apply for a grading permit.
19. Prior to the issuance of any grading permit, the applicant shall submit, to the Department of Public Works for review and approval, a plan for any off-site hauling operations. This plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following information: size of trucks, haul route, disposal site, dust and debris control measures, and time and frequency of haul trips. As part of the review of the submitted plan, the County may place such restrictions on the hauling operation as it deems necessary.
20. The applicant shall comply with the provisions of the County Drainage Guidelines and NPDES permit throughout all phases of construction.

## San Mateo County Fire Department

21. A statement that the building will be equipped and protected by automatic fire sprinklers must appear on the title page of the building plans.
22. An approved automatic fire system meeting the requirements of NFPA-13 is required to be installed in your project. Plans shall be designed by a licensed sprinkler system designer and submitted to the San Mateo County Building Inspection Section for review and approval by the San Mateo County Fire Department. Building plans will not be reviewed until the required sprinkler plans are received by the San Mateo County Building Inspection Section. All commercial automatic sprinkler systems are required to be installed by a licensed sprinkler contractor and will be required to be monitored for water flow and tamper as outlined in NFPA-72.
23. Water flow and tamper alarm hardware is required to be installed to work in conjunction with the required sprinkler system. All hardware shall be listed and monitored as required by NFPA. Hardware shall be installed so that any flow of water, from a sprinkler installed in the system or an attempt to shut down any portion of the sprinkler system, shall send an alarm to an approved monitoring station as approved by NFPA. All hardware is to be included on sprinkler plans submitted to the San Mateo County Building Inspection Section.
24. All fire sprinkler system risers shall be equipped with two pressure gauges, one above and one below the check valve. All fire sprinkler systems shall have an inspector's test located at the most remote end of the system. All attic accesses and potential storage areas shall be protected. Where sprinkler heads are required and plastic CPVC piping are going to be used, they must be installed and protected as per the manufacturer's installation instructions and UL listing.
25. Occupancy separations will be required as per the current California Building Code. To be finished on previous building permit prior to construction beginning under this permit.
26. This project must comply with Title 19 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR).
27. Panic hardware and exit signs must be installed as per Chapter 10 of the current California Building Code.
28. Approved automatic fire extinguishing systems shall be provided for the protection of commercial-type cooking equipment and associated hood and duct systems as outlined in Section 1005 of the California Fire Code. Plans for required hood, duct, and commercial cooking operations are to be submitted to the San Mateo County Building Inspection Section for review and approval by the San Mateo County Fire Department.

29. Certain areas as designated by the San Mateo County Fire Department will be required to be designated and maintained as Fire Lanes.
30. The San Mateo County Fire Department is required to set a minimum fire flow requirement for the remodel and construction of all buildings using the procedure established in the San Mateo County Fire Ordinance. A fire flow of 1,500 gpm for a 1-hour with a 20-psi residual operating pressure must be available as specified by additional project conditions to the project site.
31. Manual pull stations and a smoke detection system are required to be installed in your project as outlined in the current edition of the California Building Code, the San Mateo County Ordinance, and the National Fire Protection Association.
32. Portable fire extinguishers with a minimum rating of 2A-10BC are required to be placed throughout your project. Contact a licensed/certified fire extinguisher company for proper placement of the required extinguishers.
33. Portable Type K-Extinguishers will be required in the kitchen area for this project. Contact a licensed/certified fire extinguisher company for proper size and placement of the required extinguishers.
34. The required fire flow shall be available from a County Standard Wet Barrel Fire Hydrant. The configuration of the hydrant shall be a minimum of 6-inch opening with a minimum of one each 4 1/2-inch outlet and one each 2 1/2-inch outlet located not less than 50 feet nor more than 250 feet from the building, measured by way of approved drivable access to the project site.
35. A site plan showing all required components of the water system is required to be submitted with the building plans to the San Mateo County Building Inspection Section for review and approval by the San Mateo County Fire Department for verification and approval. Plans shall show the location, elevation and size of required water storage tanks and the associated piping layout from the tank(s) to the building structures, the location of the standpipe, and the location of any required pumps and their size and specifications.
36. Because of the fire flow and automatic sprinkler requirements for your project, an on-site water storage tank is required. Based upon building plans submitted to the San Mateo County Building Inspection Section, the San Mateo County Fire Department has determined that a minimum of 90,000 gallons of fire protection water will be required, in addition to the required domestic water storage. Plans showing the tank(s) type, size, location, and elevation are to be submitted to the San Mateo County Fire Department for review and approval. This may be modified by the Fire Marshal with an approved system using an existing commercial water purveyor fire hydrant system with tank system, with fire pump, and backup generator, to augment fire flow. The water tank shall be filled using water that is procured from a source other than the Water District.

37. The water storage tank(s) shall be so located as to provide gravity flow to a standpipe/hydrant, or an approved pump/pressure system shall be provided to produce a minimum of 20 pounds per square inch (psi) residual pressure. Plans and specifications shall be submitted to the San Mateo County Building Inspection Section for review and approval by the San Mateo County Fire Department.
38. Smoke detectors are required to be installed in accordance with Section 310.9 of the Uniform Building Code. This includes the requirement for hardwired, interconnected detectors equipped with battery backup and placed in each sleeping room in addition to the corridors and on each level of the residence.
39. All roof assemblies shall have a minimum CLASS-B fire resistive rating and be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications and the current Uniform Building Code.
40. All buildings that have a street address shall have the number of that address on the building, mailbox, or other type of sign at the driveway entrance in such a manner that the number is easily and clearly visible from either direction of travel from the street. An address sign shall be placed at each break of the road where deemed applicable by the San Mateo County Fire Department. Numerals shall be contrasting in color to their background and shall be no less than 4 inches in height, and have a minimum 1/2-inch stroke.
41. Any chimney or woodstove outlet shall have installed onto the opening thereof an approved (galvanized) spark arrester of a mesh with an opening no larger than 1/2-inch in size, or an approved spark arresting device.
  - a. Maintain around and adjacent to such buildings or structures a fuelbreak/firebreak made by removing and clearing away flammable vegetation for a distance of not less than 30 feet and up to 100 feet around the perimeter of all structures or to the property line, if the property line is less than 30 feet from any structure. This is not a requirement or an authorization for the removal of live trees. Remove that flammable portion of any tree which extends within 10 feet of the outlet of any chimney or stovepipe, or within 5 feet of any portion of any building or structures.
  - b. Remove that dead or dying portion of any tree which extends over the roofline of any structure.
42. INFORMATIONAL: The project site is located within the boundaries of the San Mateo/Santa Cruz/Santa Clara hazardous fire area, as defined in the California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 1205.5. This places the project within a Hazardous Fire Area as defined in the San Mateo County Fire Ordinance, Section 3434.0.

43. All dead-end roadways shall be terminated by a turnaround bulb of not less than 80 feet in diameter. Any alternatives are to be approved by the Fire Marshal.
44. All propane storage tanks shall be located with respect to buildings or adjoining property lines. The placement and orientation of tanks shall be so that the ends of the tank do not point in the direction of surrounding structures. Minimum setback distances from property lines or structures will be determined by the size of tank(s) that are being installed: Less than 125 gallons - 5 feet; 125 gallons to less than 500 gallons - 10 feet; 500 gallons to less than 2,000 gallons - 25 feet; and 2,000 gallons or more - 50 feet. The minimum distance a LPG tank may be installed from a flammable liquid fuel tank is 20 feet.
45. All Occupancy Loads will be set by the San Mateo County Building Inspection Section and will be supported and enforced by the County Fire Department.
46. The San Mateo County Fire Department requires the installation of a Knox Box or Knox Padlock to allow rapid response of emergency vehicles in case of a fire or medical emergency. For further information, please contact the Fire Protection and Planning office at 650/573-3846.
47. Tree houses to have Class A roofs, ignition resistant siding, steel supports, and area under tree houses to be open. Sprinklers shall be installed beneath each tree house to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Building after consultation with the County Fire Marshal and the applicant. Plantings below tree houses shall be needed, fire resistant ground cover.
48. Improve the trail around the property to 3 feet in width as shown on the plans for extra firebreak to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Building after consultation with the County Fire Marshal and the applicant.
49. Provide access to all exterior portions of the building to within 150 feet of the fire apparatus.
50. Turnouts to be 20 feet in width and 35 feet in length with diminishing entrance and exit.

Canyon Ranch Woodside, Unincorporated San Mateo County



