

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

**DATE:** November 20, 2025

**TO:** Zoning Hearing Officer

**FROM:** Planning Staff

**SUBJECT:** Consideration of a Use Permit and Off-Street Parking Exception, pursuant to Sections 8.344.040 and 8.344.050, of the County's Zoning Regulations, to allow the operation of a 98-seat restaurant/wine bar with 25 parking spaces where 32 parking spaces are required, on a 2.5-acre parcel located at 8865 La Honda Road in the unincorporated area of La Honda. No tree removal or grading is proposed. The project site is located in the La Honda Road County Scenic Corridor.

County File Number: PLN2024-00112 (Beltran)

**PROPOSAL**

The applicant is requesting a Use Permit and Off-Street Parking Exception to allow the operation and tenant improvements for a restaurant/wine bar within an existing space that was previously used as a market, and to allow 25 parking spaces where 32 parking spaces are required, on a 2.5-acre parcel located at 8865 La Honda Road in the unincorporated La Honda area. No tree removal or grading is proposed.

The applicant proposes to convert the existing 5,457-sq. ft. lease space (including 1,960 sq. ft. of outdoor rear patio space) to a 98-seat restaurant/wine bar, with 44 seats indoors and 54 seats in the outdoor patio area. Minor tenant improvements are proposed. The space is part of a small multi-unit commercial building that includes a post office and dentist's office next door in the same building. A building approximately 70 feet to the south, on the same parcel, is a grocery market. The second floor of the subject space is existing habitable area that is not part of the project scope and is not accessible to the public, the applicant, or staff.

The Off-Street Parking Exception is requested to allow 25 parking spaces, where 32 standard-sized (9 feet by 19 feet) off-street parking spaces are required. Additionally, five of the 25 parking spaces are proposed as parallel compact spaces, measuring 8 feet by 16 feet, located along the front property line, on the subject parcel. The project is within the La Honda Road County Scenic Corridor.

The restaurant/wine bar will initially be open exclusively on weekends with eight staff. Hours of operation will be 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. If business goes well, the venue will also be open weekdays. Eventually, the applicant would like to expand the hours to seven days a week.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Zoning Hearing Officer approve the Use Permit and Off-Street Parking Exception, County File Number PLN2024-00112, by adopting the required findings and conditions of approval in Attachment A.

## **BACKGROUND**

Report Prepared By: Olivia Boo, Planner, [oboo@smcgov.org](mailto:oboo@smcgov.org)

Applicant: Ambassador Wine Bar, LLC., Barbara Beltran

Owner: La Honda Center, LLC

Public Notification: Ten-day advanced notification for the hearing was mailed to property owners within 300 feet of the project parcel and a notice for the hearing posted in a newspaper (San Mateo County Times) of general public circulation on November 8, 2025.

Location: 8865 La Honda Road, La Honda

APN: 083-014-150

Size: 2.5 acres

Existing Zoning: H-1/S-10

General Plan Designation: Neighborhood Commercial

Sphere-of-Influence: None

Williamson Act: Not a Williamson Act parcel

Existing Land Use: Existing multi-unit commercial structure. The subject space was last used as a market. The two adjacent spaces next door are currently used as a post office and a dental office. A building approximately 70 feet to the north, on the same parcel, is a grocery market.

Water Supply: La Honda Center, the public water system is regulated by the State Regional Water Quality Control Board Division of Drinking Water. The water supply has been reviewed and conditionally approved by the State Regional Water Quality Control Board Division.

Sewage Disposal: Existing on-site septic system. The septic system has been reviewed and conditionally approved by Environmental Health Services.

Flood Zone: Zone X (area of minimal flood), Panel Number 06081C0384E, effective date: October 16, 2012.

Environmental Evaluation: The project is categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15301, Existing Facilities, Class 1, for minor alteration to an existing structure involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use.

Setting: The property is located in the unincorporated area of La Honda. It is developed with an existing outdoor multi-use commercial building occupied with existing business uses, which includes the proposed wine bar space (formerly a market), an existing post office, and an existing dentist office. A building approximately 70 feet to the north, on the same parcel, is a grocery market. The existing parking lot is paved and accommodates a total of 33 parking spaces: 25 parking spaces would be allocated for the proposed restaurant /wine bar, and four spaces each for the dental office and the post office. The grocery market has an additional 16 parking spaces.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **A. KEY ISSUES**

#### **1. Conformance with the General Plan**

The proposal has been reviewed against and found to be consistent with all applicable General Plan Policies. This property is designated Neighborhood Commercial. The space was previously used as a grocery market but has been vacant for some time. The proposed changes to the space will not expand the footprint or height of the existing building. Parking compliance is discussed below. All public services and infrastructure are currently available to service the proposed project. The applicable General Plan policies are discussed below.

#### **Visual Quality**

Policy 4.22 (*Scenic Corridors*) requires the protection and enhancement of the visual quality of scenic corridors by managing the location and appearance of structural development.

The subject property is located within the La Honda County Scenic Corridor. The proposed restaurant/wine bar will be located in an existing building; no new square footage is proposed. Although the building is visible from La Honda Road, no exterior changes are proposed at this time. The existing visual quality of the property will be retained.

Policy 4.49 (*Scale*) requires structures to be compatible in size and scale with their building site and surrounding environment, including adjacent man-made or natural features. Policy 4.52 (*Colors and Materials*) encourages the use of colors and materials which (1) blend with or complement the surrounding natural environment, (2) do not dominate or overpower the site, (3) are compatible with the size, scale, and architectural style of the structure, and (4) with the exception of greenhouses, are not highly reflective.

There is no new square footage proposed to be added to the existing multi-use commercial building. No exterior changes are proposed at this time. The building is painted a light gray color.

#### Rural Land Use

Policy 9.23 (*Land Use Compatibility in Rural Lands*) encourages compatibility of land uses in order to promote the health, safety, and economy and to maintain the scenic and harmonious nature of the rural lands.

The proposed restaurant/wine bar is compatible with the general use of the parcel in supporting neighborhood commercial businesses and services. The restaurant/wine bar would only require minor tenant improvements to an existing space formerly used as a market. No new footprint square footage is proposed that would disturb scenic resources or visually intrude from the public right-of-way. The existing building is not located in a special flood hazard, on a steep slope, or on unstable soil.

#### Water Supply and Wastewater

Policy 10.15 (*Water Suppliers in Rural Areas*) considers the following as appropriate methods of water supply in rural areas: systems and wells. Policy 11.10 (*Wastewater Management in Rural Areas*) considers the following as appropriate methods of wastewater management in rural areas: individual sewage disposal systems.

This project has been reviewed by and received conditional approval from La Honda Center, the public water system regulated by State Regional Water Quality Control Board Division of Drinking Water, and the County's Environmental Health Services.

2. Conformance with the Zoning Regulations

The subject parcel is located in the H-1/S-1 Zoning District. The proposal requires approval of the subject Use Permit to operate a restaurant in this district. The proposal is in conformance with applicable development standards as shown below. The structure is existing, with no significant exterior changes proposed to the building. The structure has existed since the mid-1950s per review of the properties parcel history.

Development Standard	Required	Proposed
Minimum Building Site	20,000 sq. ft.	2.5 acres (no change)
Minimum Front Yard	20 feet	50 ft. (no change)
Minimum Side Yard	5 feet	129 ft. Right Side (no change) 130 ft. Left Side (no change)
Minimum Rear Yard	20 feet	86 ft. (no change)
Maximum Building Height	36 feet/3 stories	<36 feet/two stories (no change)

Parking Requirements

The proposed use is within an existing multi-unit commercial building, which also houses a post office and dental office next door. A building approximately 70 feet to the north, on the same parcel, is a grocery market. Per Section 8.344.030 (Parking Spaces Required), the requirement is noted in the chart below. The detached grocery market has a separate parking area on site. Staff believes the proposed on-site parking is reasonable. There are more than 25 parking spaces on site and no new footprint is proposed.

Use	Required	Proposed
Dental Clinic	2.8 spaces (1 space/200 sq.ft. of floor area)	4 spaces
Post Office	2.5 spaces (1 space/160 sq.ft. of floor area)	4 spaces
Establishment for the Sale and Consumption (on the premises) of alcoholic beverages, food and refreshments	32 spaces (for 98 seats) (54 seats outdoors/44 seats indoors) (1 space per 3 seats)	25 spaces * (5 parking spaces to be parallel/compact, 8 ft. x 16 ft.)
Grocery store	5 spaces (1 space/160 sq.ft.)	12 parking spaces + 4 parallel parking spaces on parcel, along La Honda Road

\*Off Street Parking Exception required.

3. Conformance with Use Permit Findings

The Zoning Hearing Officer must make the following finding in order to approve the Use Permit.

**That the establishment, maintenance and/or conducting of the use will not, under the circumstances of the particular case, result in a significant adverse impact to coastal resources, or be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in said neighborhood.**

As conditioned, the project will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in the neighborhood. The building is existing, and no exterior modifications are proposed. There is no evidence to suggest that proposed restaurant/wine bar will conflict with the adjacent commercial uses on site, which include a post office and dental office. There is a meat/grocery store located on site, approximately 70 feet south of the subject building. There will be no expansion of the subject building's footprint. Though the space has a second story that is habitable living space, the space is not in use and is not part of the proposed restaurant use, and access will be restricted as part of the subject use permit approval. Parking will be provided on site, as discussed under the parking section.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The project is categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15301, Class 1, Existing Facilities, for minor alteration of an existing structure involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use.

C. REVIEWING AGENCIES

Building Inspection Section  
Environmental Health Services  
San Mateo County Fire Department  
La Honda Center - State Regional Water Quality Control Board, Division of Drinking Water

**ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Recommended Findings and Conditions of Approval
- B. Vicinity Map
- C. Floor Plan
- D. Parking Plan
- E. Photos



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

# **ATTACHMENT A**

County of San Mateo  
Planning and Building Department

**RECOMMENDED FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

Permit or Project File Number: PLN2024-00112      Hearing Date: November 20, 2025

Prepared By: Olivia Boo, Project Planner      For Adoption By: Zoning Hearing Officer

**RECOMMENDED FINDINGS**

For the Environmental Review, Find:

1. The project is categorically exempt pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15303, Class 1, Existing Facilities, for minor alteration of an existing structure involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use.

For the Use Permit, Find:

2. That the establishment, maintenance and/or conducting of the use will not, under the circumstances of the particular case, result in a significant adverse impact to coastal resources, or be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in said neighborhood. The project site is not located in the coastal zone and is designed and located to minimize impacts to the neighboring properties and the public, as no physical changes are proposed. There is a reasonable amount of parking on site to accommodate the proposed use to accommodate parking without impacting road safety.

For the Off-Street Parking Exception, Find:

3. That the establishment, maintenance, and/or conduct of the off-street parking facilities as proposed are as nearly in compliance with the requirements as are reasonably possible. That the number of spaces, location, and design of existing parking would adequately serve the new building occupants. That the project provides sufficient on-site parking.

## **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 November 20, 2025. The Director of Planning and Building may approve minor revisions or modifications to the project if they are consistent with the intent of and in substantial conformance with this approval.
2. This Use Permit and Off-Street Parking Exception is valid for one year from the date of final approval, in which time a valid building permit shall be issued. Any extension of this permit shall require submittal of an application for permit extension and payment of applicable fees 60 days prior to expiration.
3. Any change in use or intensity not already approved shall require an amendment to the use permit. Amendment to this use permit requires an application for amendment, payment of applicable fees, and consideration at a public hearing
4. To reduce the impact of any construction-related activities on neighboring properties, comply with the following:
  - a. All debris shall be contained on site; a dumpster or trash bin shall be provided on site during construction to prevent debris from blowing onto adjacent properties. The applicant shall monitor the site to ensure that trash is picked up and appropriately disposed of daily.
  - b. The applicant shall remove all construction equipment from the site upon completion of the use and/or need of each piece of equipment which shall include but not be limited to tractors, back hoes, cement mixers, etc.
  - c. The applicant shall ensure that no construction-related vehicles shall impede through traffic along nearby rights-of-way. All construction vehicles shall be parked on site outside public right-of-ways or in public locations which do not impede safe access. There shall be no storage of construction vehicles in the public right-of-way.
5. During project construction, the applicant shall, pursuant to Chapter 4.100 of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code, minimize the transport and discharge of stormwater runoff from the construction site by:
  - a. Protecting areas not to be disturbed using a vegetative buffer strip or fence/barrier.
  - b. Covering construction materials stored on site with a tarp or other waterproof material when not in use.

- c. Storing, handling, and disposing of construction materials and wastes so as to avoid their entry to the storm drain system or water body.
  - d. Avoiding cleaning, fueling or maintaining vehicles on site, except in an area designated to contain and treat runoff.
6. The property owner shall adhere to the San Mateo Countywide Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program “General Construction and Site Supervision Guidelines,” including, but not limited to, the following:
- a. Delineation with field markers of clearing limits, easements, setbacks, sensitive or critical areas, buffer zones, trees, and drainage courses within the vicinity of areas to be disturbed by construction and/or grading.
  - b. Protection of adjacent properties and undisturbed areas from construction impacts using vegetative buffer strips, sediment barriers or filters, dikes, mulching, or other measures as appropriate.
  - c. Performing clearing and earth-moving activities only during dry weather.
  - d. Stabilization of all denuded areas and maintenance of erosion control measures continuously between October 1 and April 30.
  - e. Storage, handling, and disposal of construction materials and wastes properly, so as to prevent their contact with stormwater.
  - f. Control and prevention of the discharge of all potential pollutants, including pavement cutting wastes, paints, concrete, petroleum products, chemicals, wash water or sediments, and non-stormwater discharges, to storm drains and watercourses.
  - g. Use of sediment controls or filtration to remove sediment when dewatering the site and obtain all necessary permits.
  - h. Avoiding cleaning, fueling, or maintaining vehicles on site, except in a designated area where wash water is contained and treated.
  - i. Limiting and timing application of pesticides and fertilizers to prevent polluted runoff.
  - j. Limiting construction access routes and stabilization of designated access points.
  - k. Avoiding tracking dirt or other materials off-site; cleaning off-site paved areas and sidewalks using dry sweeping methods.

- I. Training and providing instruction to all employees and subcontractors regarding the Watershed Protection Maintenance Standards and construction Best Management Practices.
  - m. Additional Best Management Practices in addition to those shown on the plans may be required by the Building Inspector to maintain effective stormwater management during construction activities. Any water leaving the site shall be clear and running slowly at all times.
  - n. Failure to install or maintain these measures will result in stoppage of construction until the corrections have been made and fees paid for staff enforcement time.
7. 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 County Ordinance Code Section 4.88.360).
8. This permit does not allow for the removal of any trees. Prior the removal or pruning of any trees, the applicant shall notify the Current Planning Section who will determine if a Protected Tree Removal or Pruning Permit is required pursuant to the County's Protected Tree Ordinance.
9. The existing second-story habitable space shall not have access to the public or the operators of the subject restaurant/wine bar.
10. The applicant shall maintain a valid license from the State Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) for the facility and shall provide a copy to the Planning Division prior to building inspection final and certificate of occupancy. If the license is ever revoked or suspended, the applicant shall notify the Planning Division within ten (10) days of any such revocation or suspension.
11. Any new exterior lighting shall be designed and located so as to confine direct rays to the subject property and prevent glare in the surrounding area. All proposed exterior lighting shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Division (design manufacturer's "cut sheets") prior to the issuance of a building permit. Prior to Planning final of the building permit for this project, the applicant shall submit photos verifying the installation of any approved exterior light fixtures.
12. The applicant shall apply for a building permit and shall adhere to all requirements from the Building Inspection Section, the Drainage Section, County Fire, Environmental Health Services, and La Honda Center (State Regional Water Quality Control Board, Division of Drinking Water).

- 13. No site disturbance shall occur, including any grading or vegetation removal, until a building permit has been issued.

Building Inspection Section

- 14. building permit is required for tenant improvements.

Drainage

- 15. All new impervious surface shall be designed to adhere to the the San Mateo County Drainage Manual. All impervious surface shall be clearly identified as “existing” or “proposed” on the plans submitted for building permit review.

Environmental Health Services

- 16. The applicant shall submit an application, appropriate fees, and comprehensive plans to the County’s Environmental Health Consumer Protection section for plan review and to obtain a Permit to Operate.

County Fire

- 17. Address Numbers: Building identification shall be conspicuously posted and visible from the street. (TEMPORARY ADDRESS NUMBERS SHALL BE POSTED PRIOR TO COMBUSTIBLES BEING PLACED ON SITE). The letters/numerals for permanent address numbers shall be of 6-inch height with a minimum 1/2-inch stroke and of a color, which is contrasting with the background. Such letter/numerals shall be illuminated and facing the direction of access.

Distance from Road    Address No.    Size:

0-50 feet	6-inch
50-100 feet	8-inch
100-150 feet	10-inch
150 + feet	12-inch

with a corresponding increase in stroke width.

- 18. Address numbers and directional signs may be required at the entrance to the driveway/access road, road forks, and intersections. When located on the street the numbers shall be visible from each direction of travel. This remote signage shall consist of a 6-inch by 18-inch green reflective metal sign with 3-inch reflective Numbers/ Letters similar to Hy-Ko 911 or equivalent.
- 19. Exit Doors: Exit doors shall be of the pivoted type or side-hinged swinging type. Exit doors shall swing in the direction of exit when serving an occupant load of 50 or more.

20. Exit Door Hardware: Exit door(s) shall be operable from the inside without the use of a key, special knowledge or effort. Exception: Main exit doors may be equipped with a keyed-locking device if there is a readily visible sign on or adjacent to the door stating "THIS DOOR TO REMAIN UNLOCKED WHENEVER THE BUILDING IS OCCUPIED". The letters in the sign shall not be less than 1-inch in height.
21. Exit Illumination: Signs shall be internally or externally illuminated by two electric lamps or shall be of an approved self-luminous type.
22. An exit analysis shall be provided.
23. Power Supply: Current supply to one of the lamps for exit signs shall be provided by the premises wiring system. Power to the other lamp shall be from the storage of batteries or an on-site generator set. Include exit illumination with electrical plans and submit to the San Mateo County Building Division for review and approval.
24. Occupancy Load Sign: Any room having an occupant load of 50 or more where fixed seats are not installed, and which is used for classroom, assembly or similar purpose, shall have the capacity of the room posted in a conspicuous place.
25. Emergency Building Access: The proposed project will require the installation of "Knox Boxes". These emergency key boxes are required when access to or within a structure or an area is unduly difficult because of secured openings or where immediate access is necessary for life-saving or fire-fighting purposes. The Chief will determine the location for the key box and provide an authorized order form. All security gate systems controlling vehicular access shall be equipped with a "Knox"; key-operated emergency entry device. For application and instructions, please email [cfpdfiremarshal@fire.ca.gov](mailto:cfpdfiremarshal@fire.ca.gov).
26. Fire Extinguishers: There must be at least one 2A10BC fire extinguisher for each 3,000 square feet, travel distance not to exceed 75 feet with at least one extinguisher per floor per Title 19, California Code of Regulations. Locations shall be provided on plans.
27. Provide penetration protection in all membranes through fire-rated assemblies (i.e. dampers, fire caulking).
28. Provide an interior layout of the bar and dining area. Including the proposed layout of the bar and all tables and chairs.
29. Kitchen details shall be provided, including all appliances and layout.

30. The Commercial Kitchen hood system shall be up to date and comply with CFC and NFPA requirements. The applicant shall provide a full layout that shows the hood system is compliant with the proposed layout and appliances that are going to be used.

All fire conditions and requirements must be incorporated into your building plans (see attached conditions) before building permit issuance. It is your responsibility to notify your contractor, architect, and engineer of these requirements.

Our review is not construed as encompassing the structural integrity of the facility nor abrogating more restrictive requirements by other agencies having responsibility. Final acceptance is subject to field inspection and necessary tests.

NOTE: An additional re-inspection fee may be charged for missed appointments, failure to comply or not being ready.

For additional information or to schedule an inspection, you may contact [smcfdfiremarshal@fire.ca.gov](mailto:smcfdfiremarshal@fire.ca.gov)

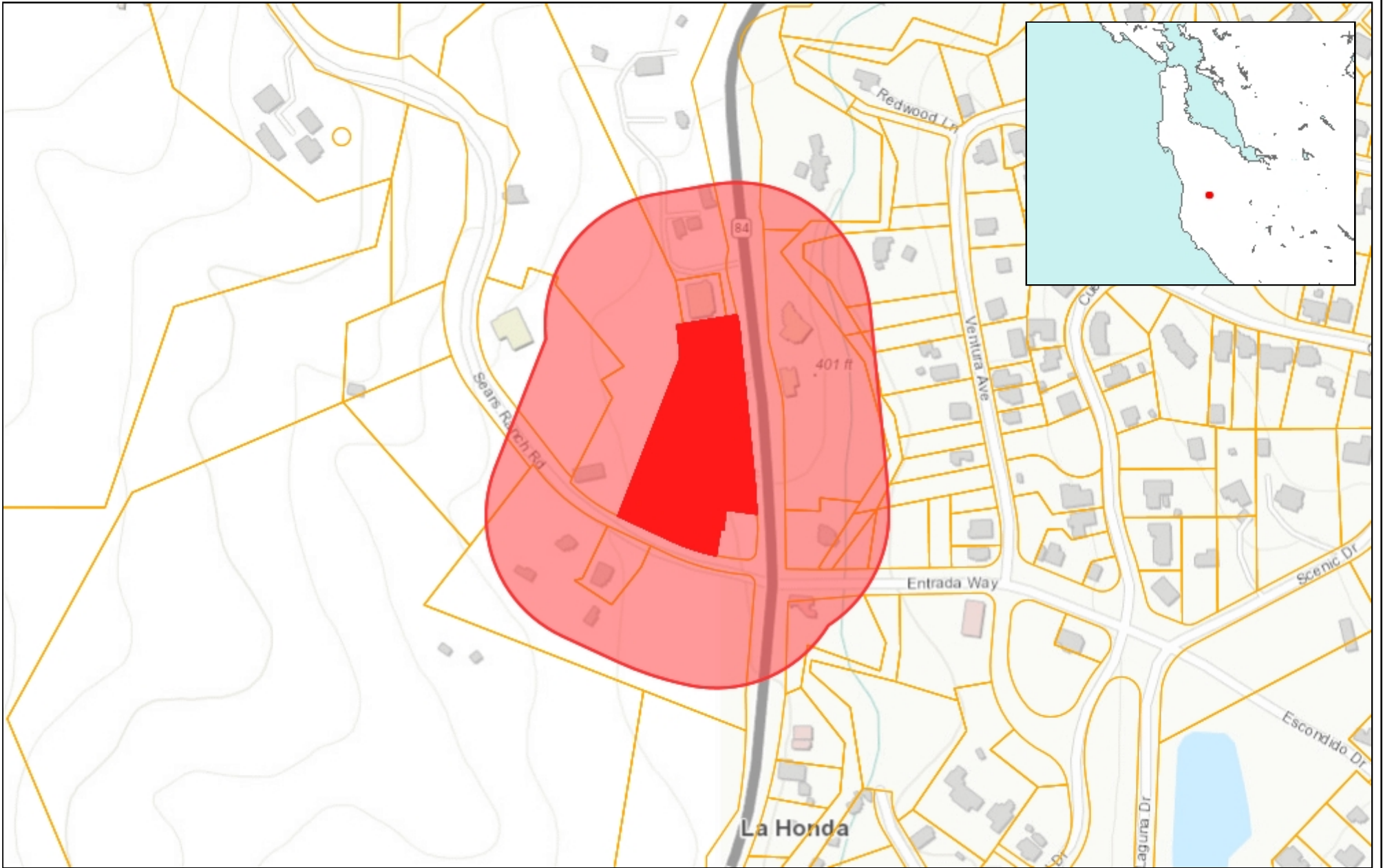
La Honda Center - State Regional Water Quality Control Board, Division of Drinking Water

31. The applicant shall comply with the regulations of the State Regional Water Quality Control Board, Division of Drinking Water for service by the La Honda Center public water system.



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

# **ATTACHMENT B**



0.14 0 0.07 0.14 Miles

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© Latitude Geographics Group Ltd.

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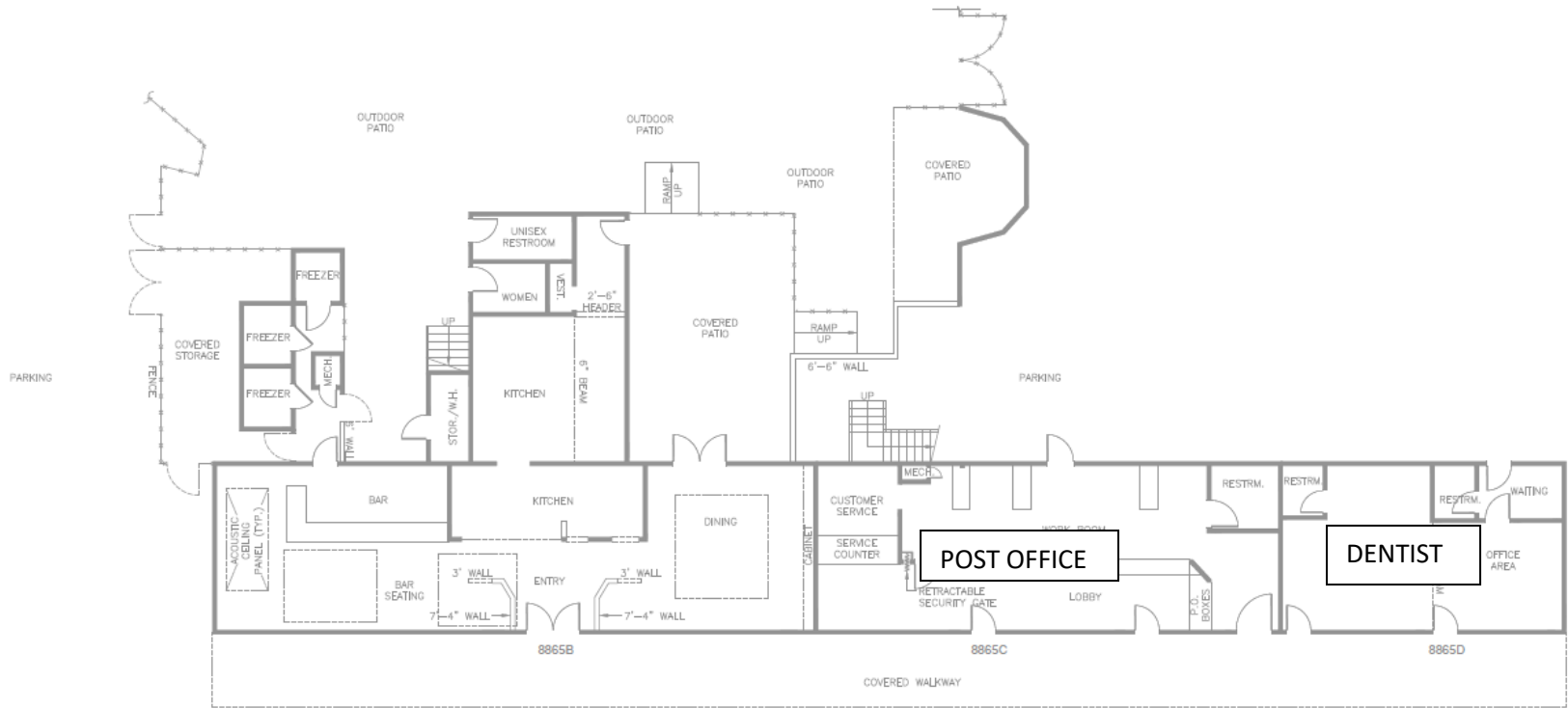
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**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

# **ATTACHMENT C**

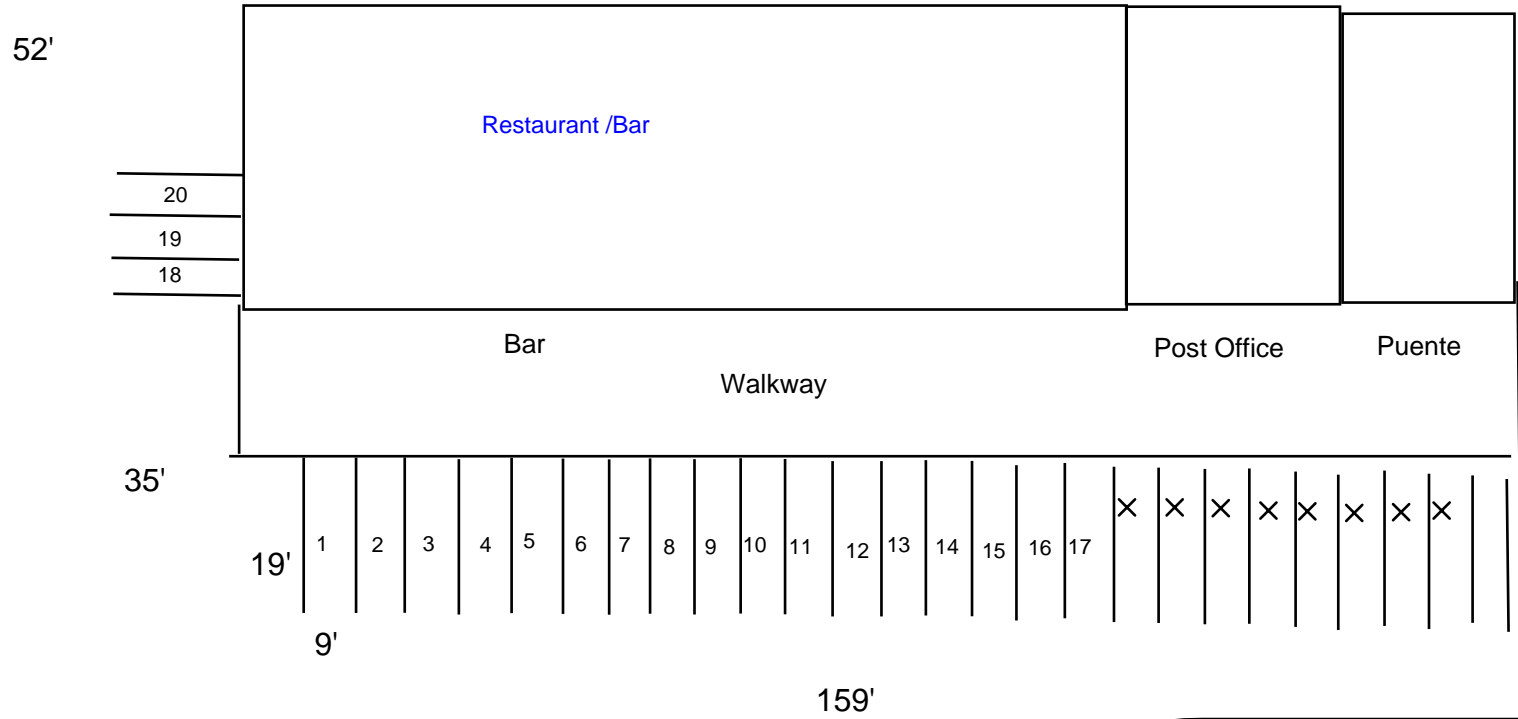


# FLOOR PLAN



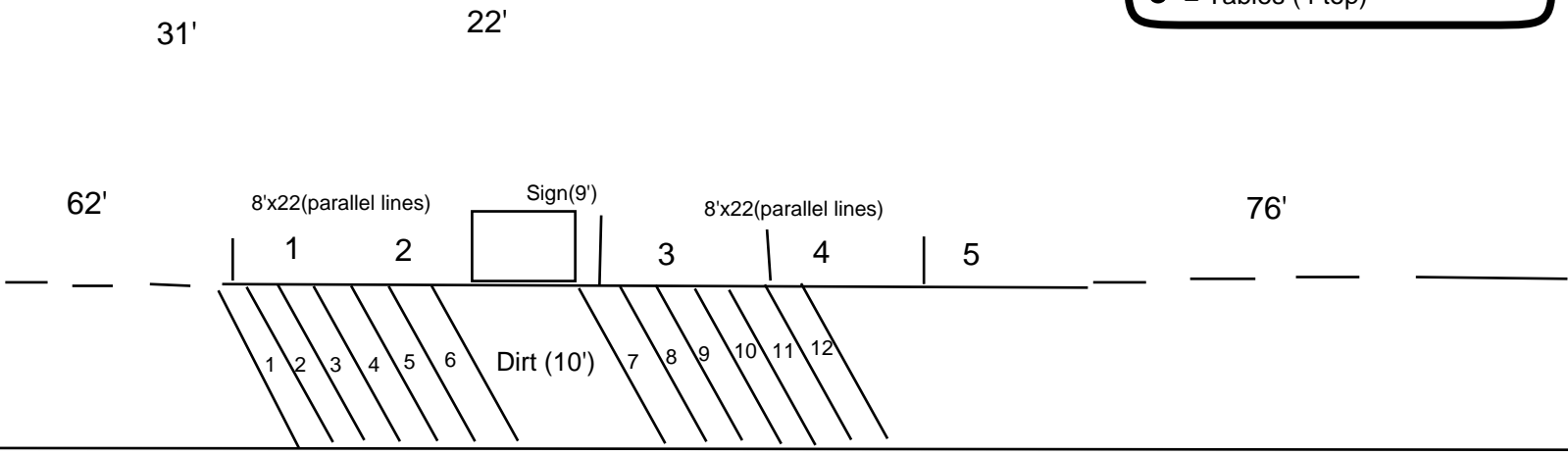
**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

**ATTACHMENT D**



X = Parking for other businesses

● = Tables (4 top)



La Honda Road



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

**ATTACHMENT E**

INTERIOR PHOTOS







OUTDOOR PATIO PHOTOS



