



COUNTY OF LAKE

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Planning Division

Courthouse - 255 N. Forbes Street

Lakeport, California 95453

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ITEM 6B
9:20 a.m.
January 8, 2026

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Mireya G. Turner, Community Development Director
Prepared by: Mary Claybon, Senior Planner

DATE: January 8, 2026

SUBJECT: Continued Public Hearing from May 9, 2024, November 11, 2025, and December 11, 2025 for Consideration of proposed Major Use Permit Major Use Permit PL-25-13 (UP 21-15), and Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS 21-16), for commercial cannabis cultivation for 19.6 acres of outdoor canopy and a Type 13 Distributor, Self Transport only; Applicant: Rancho Lake, LLC; Location: 19955, 19986, 20110, and 22222 Grange Road, Middletown (APNs 014-290-08; 014-300-02, 03, & 04)

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1a. Planning Commission Staff Report dated 12.11.25
- 1b. Site Plans (updated 8/7/24)
2. Draft Conditions of Approval
3. Property Management Plan (8/9/24)
4. Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
5. Hydrogeological Analysis
6. Drought Management Plan
7. Biological Resource Assessment
8. Agency Comments
9. Tribal Comments
10. Public Comments and Green Sheets
11. Coyote Valley Groundwater Basin 2024 Monitoring Report
12. Technical Memorandum Response to Comments

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The applicant, Rancho Lake, LLC, is proposing a Major Use Permit PL-25-13 (UP 21-15), and Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS 21-16), for cultivation of 19.6 acres outdoor commercial cannabis canopy within a 34-acre cultivation area and a Type 13 Distribution, Self Transport only license located at 19955, 19986, 20110, and 22222 Grange Road, Middletown (APNs 014-290-08; 014-300-02, 014-300-03, & 014-300-04). The proposed cultivation would occur on APN 014-290-08 while additional parcels will be used for clustering.

The project was originally scheduled for review on May 9, 2024. However, the meeting was adjourned due to a lack of quorum among the Planning Commission members. The project hearing was rescheduled for November 11, 2025. At the hearing, the applicant requested a continuance after two commissioners had departed from the meeting. Consequently, the project was continued until December 11, 2025, with a specified date and time for review. During that meeting, several concerns were raised by Commission members and addressed by staff, the applicant, the applicant's consultant, and certified hydrogeologist. The project was further continued to January 8, 2026, by unanimous vote with all Commissioners present.

The concerns raised by the Planning Commission that required additional information and staff's corresponding responses are detailed as follows:

- Impacts on Putah Creek
- Grange Road as an evacuation route

Impacts on Putah Creek

The Planning Commission noted that the Putah Creek Watermaster was not consulted regarding this project. The Watermaster typically provides guidance on matters related to water rights and surface water diversion. However, this project does not involve water rights or surface water diversion. Instead, it involves the enrollment of the site with the California Water Resources Control Board and the submission of a Notice of Applicability dated October 31, 2020, or prior, as required under Lake County Zoning Ordinance, Article 27, Uses Generally Permitted.

The project consultant, Trey Sherrell and Certified Hydrogeologist, Lee Hurvitz of Hurvitz Environmental Services, Inc. provided information that Putah Creek and the project's well do not have direct interference, as further discussed within the Hydrological Analysis (attachment 5). According to the engineered Site Plan (attachment 1a), the irrigation well is located approximately 230 feet from the current Putah Creek channel. The radius of pumping influence suggests that groundwater well use would not have a direct effect on stream flow at this distance.

Grange Road and Evacuations

A Commissioner inquired whether Grange Road is designated as an evacuation route. Director Turner responded that the recently approved Maha Guenoc Planned Development project includes enhancements to evacuation procedures, specifically incorporating access through Grange Road. Staff further clarified that a formal traffic study is not recommended for this project, in accordance with CEQA guidelines. The internal traffic analysis conducted indicated an average of 24 daily trips, with up to 40 trips during peak seasons, which does not meet the CEQA threshold of 110 or more trips to necessitate a detailed traffic study.

A formal request was submitted to the Chief and Captain of the South Lake Fire Protection District on December 19, 2025. On December 20, 2025, Chief Duncan provided a response, indicating that the matter should be directed to the Lake County Sheriff's Office and the Lake Office of Emergency Services. Subsequently, on December 29, 2025, the request for comment was forwarded to the Lake County Sheriff's Office and the Lake Office of Emergency Services. At the time of the posting of this memorandum to the agenda, further comment had not been received.

CONCLUSION

Staff has analyzed the project for consistency with all applicable zoning and environmental regulations. As described in detail within the December 11, 2025, staff report and the draft Initial Study Mitigated Negative Declaration (and associated technical analyses) prepared for the project, the project meet all requirements for cultivation of cannabis and all impacts to the environment can be reduced to a less than significant level with incorporation of mitigation measures.

Staff has also addressed the aforementioned concerns raised by the Planning Commission at the December 11 public hearing and find that all Use Permit and environmental findings can be made. As such, Staff recommends approval of the project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the Planning Commission take the following actions:

- A. Adopt Mitigated Negative Declaration PL-25-13 (IS 21-16) for Major Use Permit PL-25-13 (UP 21-15) with the following findings:
 1. Potential environmental impacts related to Aesthetics can be mitigated to less than significant levels with the inclusion of mitigation measures AES-1 through AES-2.
 2. Potential environmental impacts related to Air Quality can be mitigated to less than significant levels with the inclusion of mitigation measures AQ-1 through AQ-6.
 3. Potential environmental impacts related to Biological Resources can be mitigated to less than significant levels with the inclusion of mitigation measures BIO-1 through BIO-5.
 4. Potential environmental impacts related to Cultural Resources can be mitigated to less than significant levels with the inclusion of mitigation measures CUL-1 through CUL-2.
 5. Potential environmental impacts related to Hazards and Hazardous Materials can be mitigated to less than significant levels with the inclusion of mitigation measures HAZ-1 through HAZ-8.
 6. Potential environmental impacts related to Hydrology can be mitigated to less than significant levels with the inclusion of mitigation measures BIO-1 through BIO-3, HAZ-1 through HAZ-8, and HYD-1 through HYD-2.
 7. Potential environmental impacts related to Noise can be mitigated to less than significant levels with the inclusion of mitigation measures NOI-1 through NOI-2.
 8. Potential environmental impacts related to Tribal Cultural Resources can be mitigated to less than significant levels with the inclusion of mitigation measures CUL-1 through CUL-2, and TCR-1.
 9. Potential environmental impacts related to Utilities can be mitigated to less than significant levels with the inclusion of mitigation measures HYD-1 and HYD-2.

B. Approve Major Use Permit PL-25-13 (UP 21-15) with the following findings:

1. That the establishment, maintenance, or operation of the use applied for will not under the circumstances, be detrimental to the health, safety, morals, comfort and general welfare of the persons residing or working in the neighborhood of such proposed use or be detrimental to property and improvements in the neighborhood or the general welfare of the County.
2. The site is adequate in size, shape, locations, and physical characteristics to accommodate the type of use and level of development proposed.
3. The streets, highways and pedestrian facilities are reasonably adequate to safely accommodate the proposed use.
4. There are adequate services to serve the project.
5. This project is consistent with the Lake County General Plan, Middletown Area Plan, and Lake County Zoning Ordinance.
6. No violation of Chapter 5, 17, 21, 23 or 26 of the Lake County Code currently exists on this property, with a condition of approval implemented.
7. The proposed use complies with all development standards described in Chapter 21, Article 27, Section 1.i.
8. The applicant is qualified to make the application described in Chapter 21, Article 27, Section 1.ii.(g).
9. The application complies with the qualifications for a permit described in Chapter 21, Article 27, Section 1.ii.(i).

Sample Motions:

Mitigated Negative Declaration PL-25-13 (IS 21-16)

I move that the Planning Commission find that potential impacts associated with this project can be mitigated to 'less than significant' through the implementation of the Mitigated Negative Declaration PL-25-13 (IS 21-16), prepared for Major Use Permit PL-25-13 (UP 21-15), for commercial cannabis cultivation, located at 19955 Grange Road, Middletown (APNs 014-290-08; 014-300-02, 03, & 04), will not have a significant effect on the environment, and that the Planning Commission adopt Initial Study PL-25-13 (IS 21-16) with the findings listed in the staff report dated December 11, 2025 and memorandum dated January 8, 2026.

Major Use Permit PL-25-13 (UP 21-15)

I move that the Planning Commission find that the Major Use Permit PL-25-13 (UP 21-15) applied for by Rancho Lake, LLC, for the property located at 19955 Grange Road, Middletown (APNs 014-290-08; 014-300-02, 03, & 04) does meet the requirements of Section 51.4 and Article 27 of the Lake County Zoning Ordinance and that the Major Use Permit be granted based on the findings and subject to the conditions included in the staff report dated December 11, 2025 and memorandum dated January 8, 2026.

***NOTE:** The applicant or any interested person is reminded that the Zoning Ordinance provides for a seven (7) calendar day appeal period. If there is a disagreement with the Planning Commission, an appeal to the Board of Supervisors may be filed. The appropriate forms and applicable fee must be submitted prior to 5:00 p.m. on or before the seventh day following the Planning Commission's decision on this matter.*