



COUNTY OF MENDOCINO
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 11, 2023

TO: HONORABLE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

FROM: GRETCHEN MCLAUGHLIN, CODE ENFORCEMENT MANAGER

SUBJECT: REPORT OF FINDINGS – REDWOOD VALLEY DIRECTED ENFORCEMENT PROJECT

Background

During the July 25th, 2023, Board of Supervisors (“Board”) meeting, a Redwood Valley Cannabis Prohibition District was considered. Although the Board denied establishment of the Prohibition District (“CP district”), unanimous direction was provided to the Mendocino County Code Enforcement Division (“Division”) to assign all of its available resources to address illegal cannabis cultivation within the Redwood Valley area, as shown in a map provided during the public hearing for the CP district. The purpose of this direction was to address cannabis-related nuisances in the area as demonstrated by numerous constituent complaints of nuisance odor and activities.

Objectives

1. Identify all potential illegal cannabis cultivation sites and related infrastructure.
2. Seek voluntary abatement of confirmed illegal cannabis cultivation.
3. Seek compliance for all non-permitted cannabis infrastructure through applicable building permit requirements.
4. Obtain necessary inspection warrants; issue notices and administrative citations if voluntary compliance cannot be achieved.

Strategy and Implementation

The Division coordinated with Planning and Building Services (“PBS”) staff to obtain GIS data for all marked parcels on the “larger map.” The Division designated identified sites to be investigated into three lists: Primary sites, Secondary Sites, and Tertiary Sites, as part of a phased investigation strategy. These sites were located both within and outside of the proposed CP district. Primary sites were identified as those identified within the referred “larger map.” Secondary sites were additional sites identified of having potential cannabis infrastructure within proximity of the primary sites within the referred larger map, identified via aerial imagery. Tertiary sites were intended for sites identified while field officers conducted inspections of primary and secondary sites. The focus of these sites was to investigate them for all illegal cannabis cultivation and related non-permitted cannabis infrastructure only.

Officers attempted contact at all identified suspected illegal cultivation sites in which officers contacted residents and/or property owners to request permission to inspect the properties to confirm whether cannabis related violations existed. If permission was not granted, an inspection warrant was pursued and obtained through the County of Mendocino Superior Court, signed by magistrate. For sites determined to have illegal cannabis, officers requested the responsible party to voluntarily abate all illegal cannabis. For sites determined to have non-permitted cannabis infrastructure, officers requested the responsible party to immediately obtain a building permit to legalize or demolish the infrastructure.

Field Inspections began on July 31, 2023 and continued through September 7, 2023, to address all primary sites and nearly all of secondary sites. No tertiary sites were identified during field inspections.

Data Collection

The Division tracked a series of data relevant to the Directed Enforcement efforts. The data has been attached to this summary.

Conclusion

In total of 137 primary and secondary sites investigated, a total of 52 sites were determined to have violations of illegal cannabis cultivation and/or related non-permitted cannabis infrastructure. No other violations of Mendocino County Code were investigated or pursued during this effort.