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To Brent Schultz & Jesse Davis,
Mendocino County Building & Planning

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A Status Report on the potential new water and wastewater systems for the Boonville area submitted to Mendocino County related to the development of more housing units in Boonville.
By Anderson Valley Community Services District, Valerie Hanelt, Chair

According to the current Mendocino County General Plan, development of housing units in Boonville is constrained because it does not have public water or sewer service. Boonville's older, smaller lots are out of compliance in this regard and there is documented evidence of failing septic systems and contaminated wells. The Anderson Valley Community Services District (District) is in the process of addressing these issues.
Residences and businesses in the Boonville area currently obtain domestic water from individual wells and dispose of wastewater in individual septic systems. Many of the domestic wells are located very close to on-site sewage disposal systems and appear to be under the influence of subsurface-applied septic tank effluent. Current Mendocino County setback requirements for wells are 50 feet from a septic tank and 100 feet from a leach field making it impractical if not it impossible to meet setback requirements on smaller lots in the area. A 1974 sanitary survey of the central Boonville area by the County of Mendocino Division of Environmental Health found that 11 percent of the properties surveyed had evidence of sewage on the ground surface, 9.6 percent had wells within 30 feet of septic systems, and 27.4 percent had wells between 30 and 50 feet from septic systems (37 percent of the parcels had wells within 50 feet of a septic system).

The private wells and public water systems in the proposed service areas have several documented water quality problems, the most prominent being iron,

manganese, nitrate, and bacteria. Water sampling conducted by the District from private wells within the proposed sewer district in winter of 2016 revealed significant drinking water contamination. Out of 23 samples, 70% contained E. coli, 30% had nitrate levels over 10 mg/L nitrate as N, and 61% had concentrations greater than 8 mg/L nitrate as N. The California Code of Regulations Title 22 maximum contaminant level (MCL) permitted in a public water system for nitrate is 10 mg/L nitrate as N. Detections of fecal coliform (E. coli) are not permitted, as they indicate the presence of fecal matter from a warm-blooded animal in the water supply.

In 2015, the District applied to the State Water Board and was granted $1,000,000 in planning grants to study the development of public drinking water and wastewater systems. As of July 2019, the District is in the final stages of planning the two systems.

The planned public drinking water system would serve Boonville from Hutsell Rd in the southeast, through the densest parts of town including side streets, and out Mountain View Road in order to serve the Junior/High School, the Health Clinic and the Meadow Estates development. Also, Drinking Water would extend northerly in Anderson Valley Way to the Elementary School. The preferred locations of potential public wells and the water tank storage site have been identified. The District is now meeting with parcel owners who have expressed a willingness to consider having their private wells used for public purposes or to allow new public wells to be drilled on their parcels. The water tanks would provide back-up water storage and adequate pressure for fire hydrants to be located throughout the water service area. The water system would also be designed to serve fire sprinkler systems required in new construction.

The proposed wastewater system service area would overlap a portion of the drinking water service area. It includes the main town area, the Jr/High School and the Health Clinic. It would not serve Meadow Estates or the Elementary School. The wastewater treatment plant would be housed in a 50x100 foot building that would include the processing equipment, equalization tank, testing lab and office. The processed solids would be trucked away and the effluent (liquids) would be treated to regulatory standards and then pumped into a subsurface disposal area. The wastewater treatment plant is currently proposed to be located in the back area of the Fairgrounds with sufficient separation from any homes to allay concerns about odor. The proposed technology is a Membrane Bioreactor (MBR) that utilizes an aerobic process.

The District anticipates completing the planning stage for both projects in early 2020, including the environmental review process (under the California Environmental Quality Act), which includes public meetings. At that time, the District will prepare a "rate-payer letter" that will be the basis for the Proposition

218 vote for both the water and wastewater projects. It is anticipated that parcel owners will receive these letters in mid-2020 and will be informed of the actual monthly cost of connection to the systems.

The Proposition 218 vote consists of each parcel in the service area(s) receiving one letter. Each parcel is allotted one vote (for each project). The parcel owner may protest by returning the letter with a no vote. If a simple majority of parcel owners (50% plus 1) protest the rate letter, then the project would not proceed. The water and wastewater projects are voted on independently and may proceed independently. Any letters not returned are considered a favorable vote for the project. At this time, there are approximately 150 parcels in the sewer service area and approximately 300 parcels in the drinking water service area.

If the projects are approved the District can proceed to apply for design and construction funding. At this time, the District plans to seeking grant funding for 100% of the infrastructure for both projects through the State Water Resources Control Board. It is expected that the drinking water project will be approximately $20 million and the wastewater project will be approximately $16 million. The sewer laterals to private residences and non-profits would be included in the construction grant. The District anticipates applying to the Mendocino County Block Grant to assist with drinking water laterals for low-income parcel owners. If the State Water Board is unable to fund the total infrastructure costs for both projects, the District will seek grant funding through other State and Federal agencies.

It is anticipated that completion of both projects could be as early as 2022-2023.

The projects' financing rules allows for current water demands and wastewater generation plus a 10% allowance for future needs.

Providing for public water and/or wastewater services could accommodate infill development within the service areas, consistent with the General Plan, zoning ordinance and other County planning procedures.

Valerie Hanelt

Valerie Hanelt, Board Chair