

Hodgson Forest to Timberland Production Zone Rezone

PLN24-0156; RZN24-0004

APN: 065-090-004

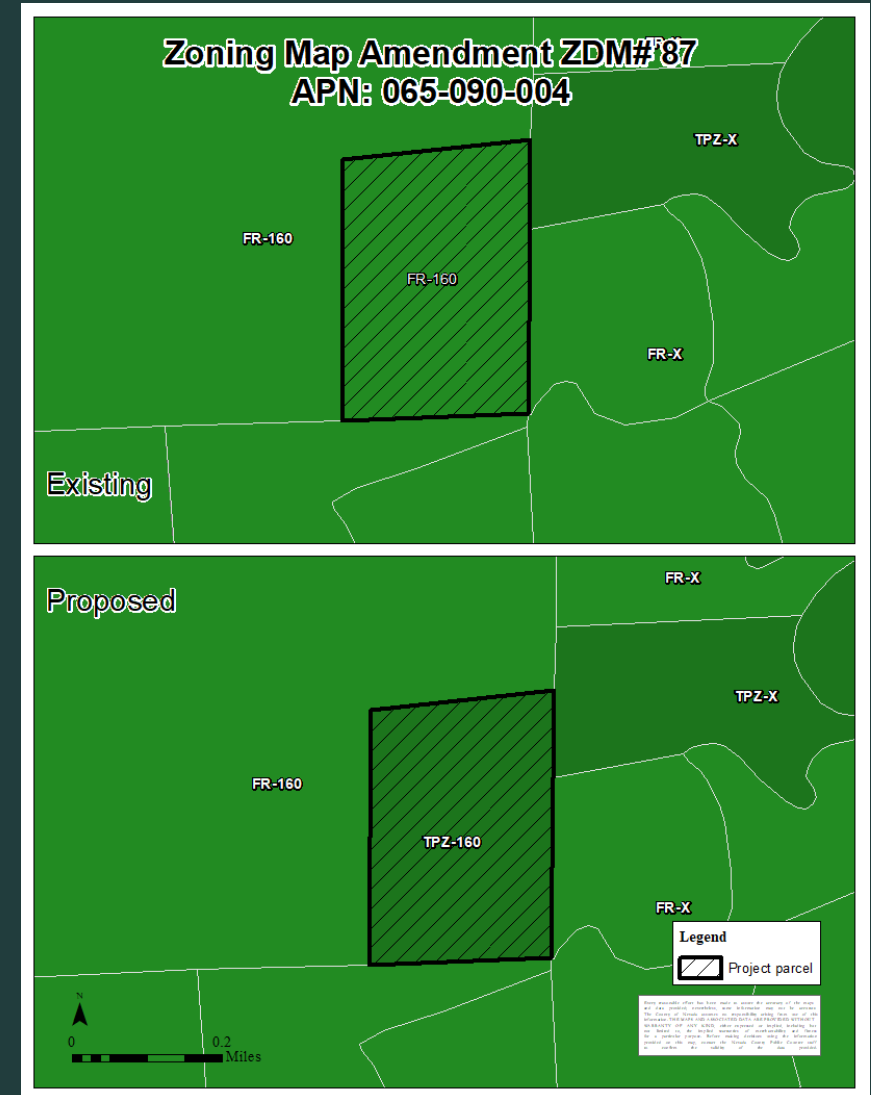
Wilderness Road, Nevada City, CA

Nevada County Board of Supervisors:
February 25, 2025
Project Planner: Aleena Church



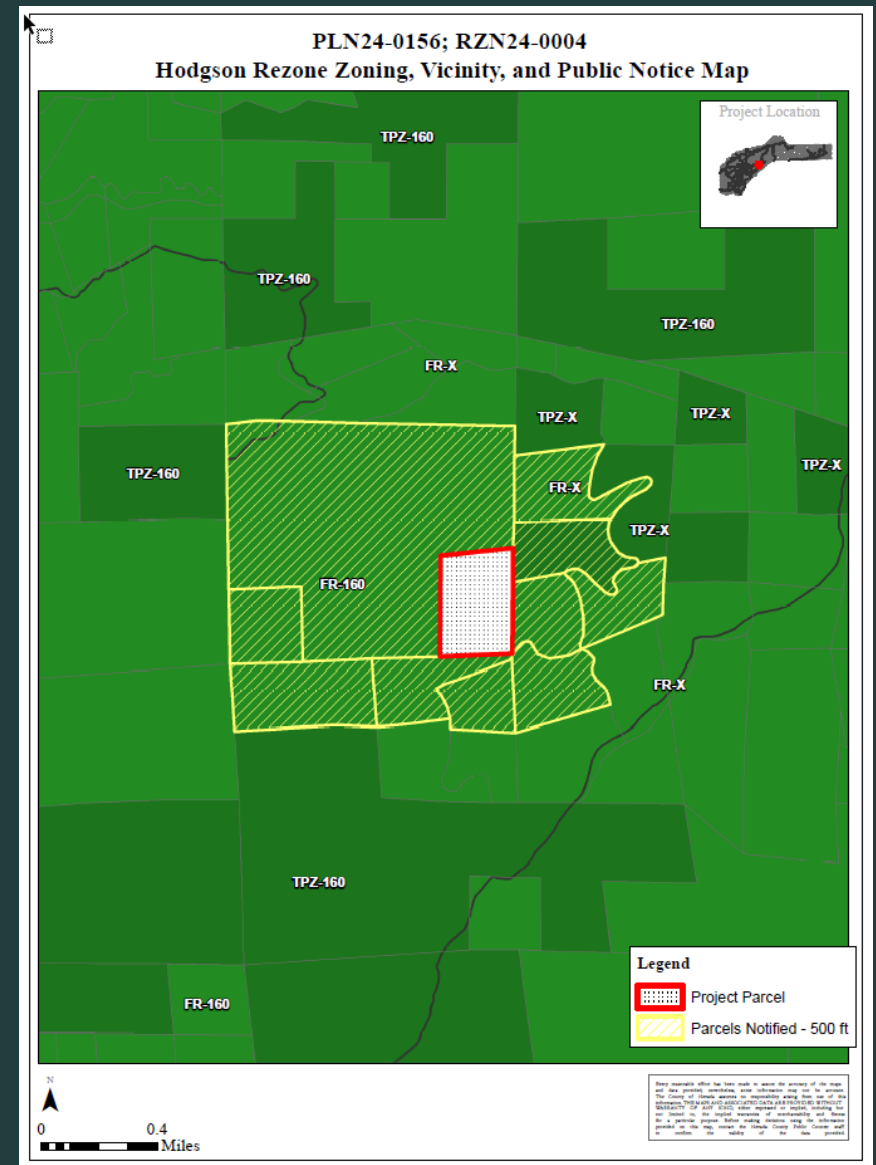
Project Description

- A request to amend the zoning designation of one parcel of 60.00 acres in size for timberland preservation (RZN24-0004).
- Current zoning, Forest (FR), is intended for the protection, production and management of timber and timber support uses.
- Timberland Production Zone (TPZ) is intended to provide for and encourage prudent and responsible timberland resource management.
- The TPZ district is a more restrictive zoning district with fewer potentially allowable uses than the FR zoning district.



Project Site Description

- The project is located approximately two miles southeast of Banner Quaker Hill Road, off Wilderness Road.
- At present, the property has a cabin and a 30” culvert in place on the road system at the point of crossing the unnamed watercourses which is a tributary to Greenhorn Creek.
- The forest stand is composed of Sierra mixed conifer species and the overstory is dominated by Douglas fir, white fir, and incense cedar with minor amounts of ponderosa pine and sugar pine.



Background

- According to the Forest Management Plan, the property was clear cut in around 1993 and was harvested an unknown number of times in the 20th century.
- The cut that occurred around 1993 removed larger trees and provided better spacing of the residual intermediate trees left which did maximize overall growth.
- The current landowners purchased the property in 2023. Between 1993 and 2023, the past land use of timber harvesting can be seen in the range of ages of the tree stumps still visible on the property. The only improvements on the land were the establishment or promotion of a road system on-site.

TPZ Criteria

- The FMP must include a timber inventory that demonstrates the site meets timber stocking standards set forth in PRC Section 4561, proof of regular commercial harvesting operations, disease and/or insect control, a thinning and slash disposal program, a fire protection program, and an erosion control program.
 - The applicant's FMP (Attachment 2) meets the requirements for inclusion into the TPZ District.
- A property must meet the timber stocking standards as set forth in Section 4561 of the Public Resources Code and the forest practice rules adopted by the State Board of Forestry. Additionally, the parcel shall be a Site IV or higher quality class.
 - The timber site class of the project site is Site Class II & III and the parcel exceeds the minimum average point count of 150 per acre.

Taxation

- The benefit to the applicant of rezoning into TPZ is a reduction in property taxes established via a reassessment of the land value based on the growing and harvesting of the timber.
- The current assessed value of APN: 065-090-004 is \$200,000 and \$2,653.96 in annual property taxes as a FR-160 property. Approval of the requested rezone to TPZ is estimated by the Nevada County Assessor's Office to reduce the assessed property valuation to \$47,192 and \$1,059.00 in annual property taxes.
- Approval of the requested rezone to TPZ is estimated by the Nevada County Assessor's Office to result in a \$1,594.69 reduction in annual taxes between the two properties.
- Land approved for the TPZ Zoning District will be restricted to TPZ standards for a minimum of 10 years. After such time, it will continue in perpetuity on an annual basis.

Zoning/General Plan Consistency/Environmental Review

Zoning District - Timberland Production Zone:

- The TPZ zoning district is intended to provide land devoted to the growing and harvesting of timber, and for compatible uses that do not significantly detract from the use of the land for the devoted purpose, through prudent and responsible forest resource management.

Forest Element Goals & Policies:

- Goal 15.1 seeks to identify and maintain sustainable timberlands and resources, consistent with the intended result of this TPZ rezone.
- Policy 15.4 recognizes Forest land use designations as one of the major timber-producing land use designations. This rezone would allow continued use of the property as a timber producing parcel.
- Policy 15.5 encourages providing for the use of the Timberland Production Zone in Rural, Estate, and Forest land use designations on lands with significant commercial timber value. The Hodgson property has a Forest General Plan designation, and the Forest Management Plan states the project area is has Site II production capability, which is moderately high timber productivity.
- Policy 15.6 recognizes the benefits of Nevada County's forests and encourages the use of the TPZ zoning district to provide an efficient and cost-effective means of harvesting and using forestlands.

Environmental Review:

- CEQA Statutory Exemption 15264 Timberland Preserves states that local agencies are exempt from the requirement to prepare an EIR or Negative Declaration on the adoption of timberland preserve zones.

Recommendations

Planning staff recommends the Board of Supervisors to take the following actions:

- I. Introduce, waive further reading and adopt the attached Ordinance amending Zoning District Map (ZDM) No. 87 to rezone 60.00-acres (APN: 065-090-004) from Forest-160 (FR-160) to Timberland Production Zone-160 (TPZ-160) based on the findings contained within the Ordinance (Attachment 1).