

## **Mendocino County Cannabis Overlay Community Meetings**

### **Summarized Community Input from Community Meetings**

On July 26<sup>th</sup> and July 27<sup>th</sup>, Michael Baker International (Baker) conducted four community meetings to solicit input from communities in which Cannabis Overlay Zones have been proposed. The format of these meetings included an introduction and overview of the Cannabis Overlay Zone concept, the efforts to date, and an explanation of how the Overlay Zones would affect cannabis regulations in the various communities. Following introductory remarks, Baker staff responded to questions and accepted comments from community members. Community meetings included:

- **Covelo - July 26, Opt-In Overlay Zone**  
Round Valley Public Library , 23925 Howard St, Covelo
- **Mitchell Creek– July 26, Opt-In Overlay Zone**  
Caspar Community Center, South Room, 15051 Caspar Road, Caspar
- **Laytonville and South Leggett - July 27, Opt-In Overlay Zones**  
Long Valley Garden Club, 375 Harwood Road, Laytonville
- **Deerwood and Boonville/Woody Glen - July 27, Opt-Out Overlay Zones**  
County Administration Center, Board Chambers, 501 Low Gap Road, Ukiah

Input received from these community meetings has been summarized and will assist Baker and County staff with completing amendments to the County's cannabis regulations. Included within the meeting summaries are notes taken during the discussion by Baker staff and a distillation of comment cards submitted by meeting participants.

In addition to the community specific comments in the following summaries, several overarching questions and comments were received during meetings that included:

- *How were the communities receiving Overlay Zones selected and how were Overlay Zone boundaries identified?*

The Board of Supervisors directed that at least one community level Opt-In Zone, two neighborhood level Opt-In Zones and one Opt-Out Zone be established within the current process. Laytonville and Covelo were identified early as appropriate communities for Opt-In. The Opt-In Working Group identified South Leggett as another community that would benefit from an Opt-In Zone and Mitchell Creek was identified as an inland coastal community with the goal of testing the Opt-In Overlay concept in a variety of community and geographic settings.

The Opt-Out Working Group identified the neighborhoods of Deerwood and Boonville/Woody Glen as proposed Opt-Out Overlay Zones.

As much as possible, Baker staff relied on the Overlay Working Group members to identify the boundaries of the proposed Overlay Zones. This was most challenging in the Covelo community where Working Group members requested a larger Overlay Zone, but initial concerns related to tribal lands, existing setback regulations, patchwork of zoning and dispersed cultivation was difficult to reconcile.

- *Noticing of the Community Meetings was not adequate to allow many community members to attend.*

Baker staff acknowledge that the notice for meetings should have provided more lead time. Notice was posted on the County website, press releases were issued and e-mails to past meeting participants were distributed. Notices did not reach deep into communities and Baker thanks the individuals that notified and encouraged community members to attend. While additional community members very likely would have attended if more noticing had occurred, Baker received good input from community members that is assisting with further work on the Overlay Zone regulations.

- *Desire to move quickly to complete cannabis code amendments.*

Numerous inquiries were received regarding when regulations would be presented to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors and many participants encouraged Baker staff to move as quickly as possible to complete this effort. Baker has received similar direction from County staff and is working as quickly as possible to finalize cannabis code amendments. It is anticipated that the Planning Commission will consider revised regulations and proposed overlay zones in late September or early October.

- *What mechanism will be used to demonstrate community support for an Overlay Zone?*

Establishment of an Overlay Zone changes the rights to use land and this is a significant action that requires careful consideration. Baker has previously proposed use of a community petition to demonstrate support for the establishment of an Overlay Zone. While a petition is feasible and appropriate in smaller neighborhoods, there are concerns that petitions may not always be a viable test of community support. Baker has developed a community survey tool that will allow property owners within or adjacent to proposed overlay zones to provide input through a digital survey.

- *Will Opt-In Overlay Zones result in More Cannabis cultivation?*

The proposed Opt-In Overlay regulations offer relief to existing growers from regulations that could impact the ability to continue growing. The Overlay Regulations only apply to existing growers and would not provide a path for new growers to secure County cultivation permits.

### **Community Input Summarized**

Baker staff value all input received from the public and will endeavor to respond to community interests. Community input tends to be diverse and broad ranging. The following key themes are intended to capture the essence of comments in a concise form and to reflect the range of comments received during meetings, through comment cards and through follow up e-mails.

## Covelo Community Meeting Notes - July 26, 10:00 a.m. to Noon

Round Valley Public Library , 23925 Howard St, Covelo

18 participants signed in/21 comment cards received.

Comments specific to Overlay regulations:

- Near unanimous support among participants to amend regulations to be more supportive of cannabis growers, some concerns regarding impacts to Native American tribes.
- Generally, the adjustments proposed under the Opt-In Overlay would be very helpful if applied to a broader area.
- Strong consensus that the proposed two small overlay zones are not adequate to help the majority of growers in the Covelo community.
- When sunset occurs, 85% of growers will be excluded from legal cultivation.
- Covelo community is currently facing economic collapse – cannabis is currently the only viable means of income for many residents and local businesses.
- Largest single concern is sunset provision – local community analysis identified 135 growers that would not be allowed under sunset.

Comment Card Summary	Times Mentioned
Need to substantially increase the Covelo Overlay Zone: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Proposed Overlay Zone is inadequate in area and does not help most growers.</li><li>• Zone needs to be expanded to include much more area.</li><li>• Covelo is a patchwork of zoning and land uses and small overlay zones don't address growers issues.</li><li>• Proposed Overlay Zones do not include 90% of growers in Covelo.</li></ul>	18
Concern that cannabis business do not benefit long-time residents. Consider impacts on children, animals and land.	1
Reducing setbacks will make it possible for more parcels to be eligible.	2
Cannabis has contributed to the Covelo economy and helped support businesses and the community. Loss of cannabis income and revenue would be disastrous.	1
The current Overlay Zone approach is ineffective and does not meet the needs of Covelo residents.	3
Would like to see an Overlay Zone for facilities.	1
Reductions in (property line) setbacks are helpful, would like reductions from other setbacks (schools, churches, parks).	1
Overlays are a Band-Aid, the County cannabis ordinance does not work for Covelo.	1
Total Cards Comments	21

**Mitchell Creek Community Meeting Notes – July 26, 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**

Caspar Community Center, South Room, 15051 Caspar Road, Caspar

57 participants signed in (100+ participants?)/31 comment cards received.

- General comment, the majority of meeting participants were supportive of grower accommodations (Opt-In regulations), but the homeowners that were not supportive felt they were under represented in the audience due to lack of meeting notice.
- Meeting discussion was roughly evenly split between individuals supportive of cannabis cultivation and individuals opposed to cannabis cultivation.
- Concerns over cannabis cultivation in Mitchell Creek included:
  - Impacts to water supply; Crime resulting from cultivation activities; impacts to property values; Proliferation of cannabis cultivation; Commercial uses fundamentally incompatible with residential character of the neighborhood.
- Comments in support of Opt-In Overlay:
  - Some long-time Mitchell Creek growers have contributed to overall improvement of Mitchell Creek; Cultivators are also members of the community - own property, raise families, want the Mitchell Creek neighborhood to be a good place to live; If cultivation is banned,; Sunset regulations will force growers to leave and will cause property values to drop.
- Information provided by Baker and County staff:
  - There is a thorough process of evaluating water supply that is conducted by regional and state agencies within the cannabis permit review process.
  - The proposed Opt-In Overlay would not allow for an increase in current cultivation – would only allow existing cultivation to continue.

Master Comment	Times Mentioned
Concerned about sunset and its impact on the economy and community. Supportive of removing sunset provisions.	4
Supportive of Alternative 1, which includes a greater area in the Opt-Out zone.	3
If a Mitchell Creek Opt-In is established, would prefer Alternative 2	4
Cultivation has a negative effect on property values.	4
Supports Alternative 1 - Alternative 2 would be detrimental to local businesses that provide jobs and support the local economy.	2
Supportive of Overlay/Opt-In.	7
Concerned about water use – potential for cultivators to impact available water supplies.	4
If no Overlay is established, some existing growers will be forced to leave Mitchell Creek and this would impact the neighborhood	2
Individual comments contained within comment cards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider limiting cultivation to indoor only</li><li>• Loss of cannabis growers would be detrimental to local economy</li><li>• Cannabis is a highly regulated crop and permitting process addresses environmental (water) issues</li><li>• Rednoud Springs Drive should not be included in the Overlay Zone</li></ul>	
Total Comments	31

## **Laytonville and South Leggett Community Meeting Notes - July 27, 10:00 a.m. to Noon**

Long Valley Garden Club, 375 Harwood Road, Laytonville

15 participants signed in/1 comment card received

- Discussion of the petition process to qualify an Overlay Zone for consideration – comments that petition process is problematic and asked that other options be considered.
- Fence requirements – interest in relying upon exiting perimeter fence as portion of the cultivation area fence.
- Request to expand the Laytonville Opt-In Zone eastward from Branscomb Road to include additional RR-1 zoned land.
- Request for flexibility on the 150-foot separation between cultivation area and adjacent house – no change to this requirement has been proposed under the Opt-In or the Exceptions regulations.
- Discussion of need for transferability of permits – Baker staff responded this is outside the Baker's Cannabis Exceptions work.
- Question regarding how Overlay will affect distribution/microbusiness/other commercial uses – Baker staff responded that Overlay only applies to cultivation.
- Discussion on limitations of personal use cultivation – Baker staff responded this is outside the Baker's Cannabis Exceptions work.

Comment	Times Mentioned
Please include all RRI to protect growers on the larger parcels from sunseting out.	1
Total Comments	1

**Deerwood and Boonville/Woody Glen Community Meeting Notes - July 27, 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**

County Administration Center, Board Chambers, 501 Low Gap Road, Ukiah

29 participants signed in/10 comment cards received.

- Interest/concern regarding timing for new regulations to be considered by the Planning Commission – Baker staff commented that likely three months to get to PC.
- Discussion of the process and implications of an Opt-Out Zone being repealed.
- For Deerwood and Boonville/Woody Glen, a petition process to demonstrate wide community support is feasible.
- Opposition for cannabis operations included that commercial operations in the affected neighborhoods just aren't appropriate.
- Interest in notifying potential property buyers of an existing or proposed Opt-Out Zone – avoid investment based on expectation to cultivate.
- Discussion of water regulations that apply to cultivators – regional and state agencies regulate water supplies and are involved in permitting cannabis cultivation.
- How will an application under review be affected by a proposed Opt-Out Zone?
- Residents in Lower Deerwood (subject to sunset and therefore not in the proposed Opt-Out Zone) are affected by cultivators in Upper Deerwood.
- Substantial majority of meeting participants were in favor of the proposed Opt-Out Zones. Show of hands resulted in the following:
  - 19 participants support Boonville/Woody Glen Opt-Out
  - 12 participants support Deerwood Opt-Out
- No one spoke in direct opposition to the proposed Opt-Out Zones, but comments were made regarding the fiscal impact of eliminating cultivation in Mendocino County.

Master Comment	Times Mentioned
Supportive of Opt-Out to preserve residential neighborhood.	10
Total Comments	10

