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NAPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Letter

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Kim Henderson for Robert Peterson - Director
Public Works
REPORT BY: Don Ridenhour, Asst Director, Public Works/Asst District Engineer, 259-8321
SUBJECT: Balloon Launching Facility

RECOMMENDATION

Discussion and possible direction regarding the development of a balloon launching facility on County owned property adjacent to the Roads Division Corporation Yard on Silverado Trail in Yountville. (Supervisor Luce)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Supervisor Mark Luce has requested discussion regarding the potential development of a permanent balloon launching facility on County property adjacent to the Napa County Corporation Yard on Silverado Trail in Yountville. The balloon industry in Napa County continues to look for adequate launch site facilities to accommodate their operation. Launching sites have become problematic over the past several years since the loss of agreements with Domaine Chandon to use their parking lots for balloon activities. Recently the various balloon companies have been using parking lot facilities within the Town of Yountville and adjacent to the Red Hen Antiques business to begin their flights in the early morning hours. Balloon operators have expressed interest in developing a new launching facility that will accommodate their needs into the future.

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact?	Yes
Is it currently budgeted?	No
What is the revenue source?	There will be an impact to the General Fund If the Board gives direction to pursue development of a balloon launching facility. The extent of this financial responsibility is dependent upon specific direction on how to make this site available.
Is it Mandatory or Discretionary?	Discretionary

Discretionary Justification:	This a policy issue for the Board as to whether it is appropriate for the County to assist in providing a suitable site for the balloon industry.
Is the general fund affected?	Yes
Future fiscal impact:	There will be an impact to the General Fund If the Board gives direction to pursue development of a balloon launching facility. The extent of this financial responsibility is dependent upon specific direction on how to make this site available.
Consequences if not approved:	This a policy issue for the Board as to whether it is appropriate for the County to assist in providing a suitable site for the launching of balloons. At stake is whether the balloon industry will be able to stay in Napa if the County does not assist in the development of a permanent launch site.
Additional Information:	None

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Balloon flight operators in Napa County have had difficulty over the years developing adequate balloon launching facilities that could accommodate the many companies and operators. In years past the parking facilities at Domaine Chandon in Yountville were used for these operations, but due to liability concerns and possibly other factors, Domaine Chandon was not interested in continuing their relationship and agreements with the balloon operators. Balloon operators have pursued other sites including the parking lot adjacent to Red Hen Antiques at 5091 St. Helena Highway and are currently operating under a 1-year use permit at this site as well as utilizing parking lots within the Town of Yountville for their operations. The 1-year use permit at the Red Hen site expires July 31, 2005 but can be extended for one year if the applicant so requests and the Planning Commission approves. The Red Hen site has recently sold and the new owner may not be interested in this continuing activity. The neighbors have made it clear that they do not support an extension.

There has been interest expressed by balloon operators to use the County's property adjacent to the County Roads Division Corporation Yard along the Silverado Trail in Yountville. In order to develop this site into a balloon launching facility there are issues and questions to be resolved.

The primary issue is whether the Board wishes to use the county site for the purpose of development of a balloon facility operation. If the Board gives that direction, there are two scenarios for the development of this site:

1. Development and operation of site by the County - this would place the financial responsibility on the County to develop and operate this facility.
2. Use of Request for Proposal (RFP) process to solicit proposals where the private sector would develop and operate this facility under parameters established by the County.

The following is a list of talking points and areas where County staff would need direction to pursue the development of a balloon launching facility:

- | Improvements necessary for a balloon facility including parking facilities, driveway needs, fencing from County facilities, and possible improvements to Silverado Trail to accommodate the ingress and egress from the site. Insurance and indemnification requirements to protect the County.
- | Would balloon facility operation require a use permit? County operated facilities would not require a Use Permit. A proposal by a private company to operate the facility under a lease from the County would require a Use Permit.
- | Staffing resources to improve the site and manage the balloon facility operation.
- | Balloon launching fees and/or lease of the property for operation.
- | Operation details and requirements to ensure safe and neighbor friendly facility.

In addition, adjoining neighbors of the Red Hen balloon launching site have suggested that if the County moves forward on this issue, that a code of conduct be developed to allow for a thriving balloon industry that protects citizens rights. A code of conduct recommendation proposed by some adjoining neighbors of the Red Hen is attached.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- A . Proposed Balloon Launch Site
- B . Draft Code of Conduct for Hot Air Balloon Operations

CEO Recommendation: Policy Issue

Reviewed By: Michael Stoltz