

## REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

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**DATE: 5 JULY 2017**

**TITLE: Conditional Use Permit (CUP 02-17) and Development Agreement (DA 08-17) for the Development of a 621,920 Square Foot Facility for Medical Marijuana Cultivation, Processing / Manufacturing, Associated Parking and Other Improvements on Four Vacant Parcels Totaling 30.53 Gross Acres Located Northeast of the I-10 Freeway and Indian Avenue, Within the General Plan Light Industrial (I-L) Zone (Applicant: BlackStar Financial, Inc. / Ray Dorame)**

**Prepared by: Craig A. Ewing, Consulting Planner**  
**Reviewed by: Daniel Porras, Community Development Director**

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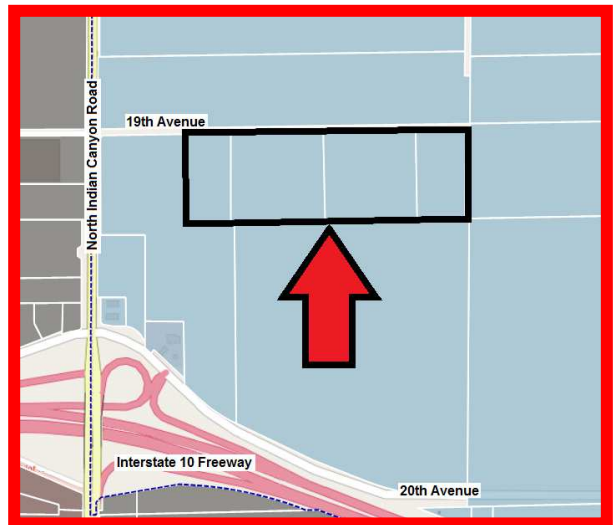
### RECOMMENDATION

- 1) Staff Report;
- 2) Entertain Questions of Staff from City Council;
- 3) Open the Public Hearing;
- 4) Take Testimony from Applicant;
- 5) Take Public Testimony;
- 6) Opportunity for Applicant Rebuttal
- 7) Close the Public Hearing;
- 8) City Council discussion and questions to Staff; and
- 9) Approve Conditional Use Permit No. 02-17 and Development Agreements 08-17; for the development of a 621,920 square foot facility for medical marijuana cultivation and processing / manufacturing on four vacant parcels totaling 30.53 gross acres located on northeast of the I-10 freeway and Indian Avenue, within the General Plan Light Industrial (I-L) Zone (APNs 666-370-012 thru 015).

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sections 5.50 and 17.180 of the Desert Hot Springs Municipal Code (DHSMC), allow medical marijuana cultivation facilities in Industrial Districts subject to a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) approved by the Planning Commission and a Regulatory Permit approved by the City Manager. The applicant, BlackStar Financial, Inc. / Ray Dorame, has filed application to establish a facility for the indoor cultivation of medical marijuana.

The site is located on northeast of the I-10 freeway and Indian Avenue, and is currently vacant. The site is made up of four parcels, is generally flat, and has a gross area of approximately 30.53 acres. A dedication of rights-of-way 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue will be required.



The proposed project includes five free-standing buildings totaling 621,920 square feet of floor area; the buildings are of steel frame and panel construction, and overall building heights do not exceed approximately 27 feet. Parking is provided for 634 vehicles.

The project meets all applicable zoning standards, including height, setbacks and parking.

### **PRIOR ACTIONS**

On 22 December 2016, the City received the application for a Conditional Use Permit for cultivation facilities.

On 9 May 2017, the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing and adopted a motion to recommend to the City Council approval of the Conditional Use Permit and associated Development Agreement.

### **PROJECT PHASING**

The applicant proposes to construct the project in four (4) phases; however, no specific timing for each phase is proposed. Staff has included conditions to assure the construction of necessary public improvements in the appropriate phase.

### **TRUCK CIRCULATION AND ACCESS**

The site plan indicates adequate internal access for truck deliveries, including temporary parking areas between Buildings 2 and 3, and between Buildings 4 and 5. Loading doors are provided on all buildings.

### **EMPLOYMENT**

The proposed project is estimated to staff up to 356 employees for cultivation use, or 622 employees for business park use, depending upon the ultimate use.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The plans show an estimated total cultivation area of 596,920 square feet, which would yield \$6,014,200 annually (\$75,000 + \$5,939,200).

### **ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE**

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"), an Initial Study and draft Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) have been prepared, including certain mitigation measures for Cultural and Biological Resources. The draft Mitigated Negative Declaration has been circulated for comments (comment period ending 05 June 2017). No comments were received. The MND is attached for consideration by the City Council for certification prior to final action on the project.

### **RECOMMENDATION AND REQUIRED FINDINGS**

Staff finds that the proposed project is substantially consistent with the General Plan and meets the development standards of the I-L (Light Industrial) zoning district. Based on the findings below, staff recommends certification of the Initial Study, Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Program, and approval of Conditional Use Permit No. 02-17 and Development Agreement 08-17, subject to the attached Conditions of Approval.

Conditional Use Permits are regulated under Section 17.76 of the Desert Hot Springs Municipal Code and require that certain findings be made by the City Council before granting a CUP request. Staff has developed recommendations for each finding based on the analysis contained in the attached Planning Commission staff report for 9 May 2017, as follows:

1. *That the proposed use is conditionally permitted within the subject land use district and complies with all of the applicable provisions of this Zoning Ordinance.*

The application is for a medical marijuana cultivation facility which is identified in Section 17.180.060 of the City of Desert Hot Springs Zoning Ordinance as permitted within any industrial zone which includes the I-L (Light Industrial) zone, subject to approval of a Conditional Use Permit. The project is proposed to be located within five new commercial / industrial buildings that comply with applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance. Conditions of approval have been prepared and are recommended to assure the proposed use will comply with applicable Zoning Ordinance provisions. Staff recommends this finding.

2. *That the proposed use would not impair the integrity and character of the land use district in which it is to be located.*

Section 17.12.010.B.2 of the Desert Hot Springs Zoning Ordinance identifies the underlying I-L (Light Industrial) zone as intended for, "...*business parks and the development of any and all industrial uses operating entirely in enclosed buildings, and those requiring limited and screenable outdoor storage. Examples include clean manufacturing operations, warehousing and distribution facilities, mini-warehouse storage, and a variety of light manufacturing businesses.*" The proposed medical marijuana cultivation facility qualifies as "industrial uses operating entirely in enclosed buildings" and as "clean manufacturing operations, warehousing and distribution facilities", and will occupy an existing commercial / industrial building similar to other industrial buildings in the area. The proposed use will produce goods and products in a manner similar to other industrial uses and will not introduce any activities that would impair the integrity or character of the land use district in which it is to be located. Staff recommends this finding.

3. *That the subject site is physically suitable for the type and intensity of land use being proposed.*

The site will be developed with five commercial / industrial buildings and will include parking, landscaping and other features and amenities appropriate to the development. The proposed medical marijuana cultivation facility is physically organized in a manner similar to other industrial establishments. The site provides sufficient parking and no expansion of the buildings is proposed. Further, the proposed site plan is similar to industrial development in the vicinity. On this basis, the site is physically suitable for the type and intensity of the proposed dispensary. Staff recommends this finding.

4. *That the proposed use is compatible with the land uses presently on the subject property.*

The site is presently vacant. The proposed medical marijuana cultivation facility is an industrial use and can be considered similar to other industrial establishments allowed in the I-L (Light Industrial) zone, such as plant nurseries, food products, distribution, light manufacturing and wholesaling. The proposed commercial / industrial buildings will be developed to accommodate a wide variety of commercial / industrial uses. The proposed cultivation facility does not appear to be outside the range of activities typical for a commercial / industrial building, and is proposed to entirely occupy the proposed buildings. Staff recommends this finding.

5. *That the proposed use would be compatible with existing and future land uses within the general area in which the proposed use is to be located.*

All surrounding lands within 1/4 mile (1320 feet) feet of the subject property are zoned for light industrial use, so future land uses in the vicinity can be expected to be

commercial / industrial uses similar to the proposed cultivation facility. Lands to the north of the site (north of 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue) are vacant but under development for industrial use. Lands to the west and southwest are developed with commercial / industrial land uses. Lands south and east are vacant. Other developed uses in the vicinity include a variety of light industrial and heavy commercial uses. The applicant proposes to entirely occupy the site, and the proposed use is not directly accessed from surrounding land uses. All activities will be contained within the proposed buildings, and the operation will appear as a commercial / industrial use consistent with the permitted uses of the I-L (Light Industrial) zone. Consequently, the proposed cultivation facility is expected to be compatible with existing and future land uses in the surrounding general area. Staff recommends this finding.

6. *That the proposed use is compatible in scale, mass, coverage, density, and intensity with all adjacent land uses.*

The proposed medical marijuana cultivation facility will be located within five new commercial / industrial buildings. The proposed one-story buildings will be of conventional metal frame and panel construction with appropriate and necessary accessory features (parking, landscaping, etc.) Land uses immediately abutting the site are either existing commercial / industrial uses or vacant land, and most occupy metal frame and panel buildings of similar height and layout. Future commercial / industrial development is currently prohibited by the Municipal Code from exceeding 50 feet in height and 75% lot coverage. The subject 30.53 gross acre site is presently vacant, but would be occupied by five buildings that do not exceed about 30 feet in height and contain a total area of about 622,120 square feet; lot coverage is approximately 50.7%. The scale, mass, coverage, density and intensity of the proposed use will be consistent with general commercial / industrial activities, and the site's location and development plan are compatible with adjacent commercial / industrial uses in the vicinity. Staff recommends this finding.

7. *That there are adequate provisions for water, sanitation, and public utilities and services to ensure that the proposed use would not be detrimental to public health and safety.*

The subject site is proposed to be developed with five commercial / industrial buildings and includes all public services and utilities installed and available. The proposed medical marijuana cultivation facility will not create an extraordinary demand for water, sanitation or other public utilities and services that would result in any detriment to public health and safety. Staff recommends this finding.

8. *That there will be adequate provisions for public access to serve the site.*

The subject site has sufficient on-site parking – 634 spaces provided, 618 required. The Public Works Department is recommending conditions to assure that street driveway access meets current design standards. Staff recommends this finding.

9. *That there will not be an adverse effect upon desirable neighborhood characteristics.*

Desirable neighborhood characteristics include long-range views from existing businesses of surrounding mountains. At build-out the proposed medical marijuana cultivation facility will fully occupy the site within buildings at approximately 30 feet in overall height. The proposal is expected to result in no adverse affect on long-range views from surrounding areas. Staff recommends this finding.

10. *That the proposed use is necessary and essential to the community.*

The proposed medical marijuana cultivation facility can be considered necessary and essential to the community to the extent that it is supported by customers that cause it to succeed as a local commercial / industrial business. Further, the proposed use must also operate under City regulations and conditions of approval so that only the necessary and essential elements of the business – as determined by the City – are expressed over the life of the business. Staff recommends this finding.

*11. That the proposed use is consistent with applicable goals and policies of the General Plan.*

Staff has identified the following General Plan goals and policies applicable to the application and provides responses to each.

*Administration*

*Goal: Comprehensive and integrated administration and implementation of all elements of the Desert Hot Springs General Plan through consistent and effective policies and programs.*

The City has adopted a zoning ordinance to implement the General Plan and provide for review and approval of individual development projects. The proposed medical marijuana cultivation facility will be subject to all requirements of this Conditional Use Permit, as prescribed by the Zoning ordinance and the adopted conditions of approval.

*Policy 7: The City shall encourage in-fill development within already urbanized areas of the corporate boundaries of the City, and expansion of new development shall be logically phased and, as appropriate, guided by the development of existing and new Specific Plans.*

The proposed medical marijuana cultivation facility will be located within proposed commercial / industrial buildings adjacent to an existing industrial development in the I-L (Light Industrial) zone of the City and all public improvements are in place. No specific plan has been adopted for the subject property.

*Policy 8: City shall provide opportunities for review and comment on development proposals through public hearing notices sent to owners of property located at least within 300 feet of development proposal sites.*

Prior to City Council review of the project application, notice of the proposed medical marijuana cultivation facility conditional use permit hearing was provided to property owners within 300 feet of the proposed site. In addition, a public hearing before the City Council has in fact been held where persons were provided a meaningful opportunity to be heard.

*Industrial Land Use*

*Goal: Lands that provide for the development of non-polluting, energy-related and other clean industrial development that broadens the economic and employment base of the City, and assures compatible integration with other, non-industrial land uses.*

The proposed medical marijuana cultivation facility will be a clean industrial development and will expand the economic and employment base of the community by the products it will offer dispensaries within the State of California and the new

employees that will be hired. The only non-industrial uses in the vicinity are heavy commercial businesses which are similar in character to light industrial activities. The proposed cultivation facility will operate with security and environmental measures that will assure its compatibility with all surrounding uses.

*Policy 2: Industrial lands shall be located in areas that maximize all available and planned infrastructures, including but not limited to water and sewer service, electric and natural gas service, and major transportation corridors, and should minimize the impact on public health and safety.*

The proposed site is presently served with necessary utilities and is located adjacent to a Major Collector (North Indian Canyon Road). A review of the project indicates that no significant impact on public health and safety will occur.

*Policy 4: The City of Desert Hot Springs shall seek to attract appropriate industrial users for which the area is particularly suited and encourage those industries to take advantage of the local labor force and markets with which the City has a comparative advantage.*

The City has adopted policies and standards to encourage the development of a medical marijuana cultivation industry. The applicant has proposed a cultivation facility in conformance with these policies and standards, and is expected to take advantage of the local labor force and markets.

*Policy 6: The City shall require adherence to applicable development standards and guidelines to assure aesthetically acceptable industrial developments for all new industrial sites.*

The project has been reviewed against applicable local development standards and guidelines. The proposal has been determined to meet these standards and guidelines or conditions have been imposed to assure that the project conforms.

### Community Design

*Goal 2: Variety of community design, architecture and landscaping compatible with the City's desert setting and surrounding development.*

The project proposes to construct five commercial / industrial buildings with attractive and appropriate colors, materials, architectural features and landscaping. Any changes to the exterior elevations, color / material board, landscape plan or lighting plan will be reviewed by staff to assure compatibility with the City's desert setting and surrounding development.

*Policy 1: Private and public sector development projects shall equally apply City community design standards, thereby protecting the community's scenic viewsheds, providing community cohesion and enhancing the image of Desert Hot Springs as a resort residential community.*

The site is presently vacant, and the applicant proposes to construct five new metal frame and panel buildings at a height not to exceed approximately 30 feet. Therefore, the proposed medical marijuana cultivation facility will not affect the community's scenic viewsheds.

*Policy 9: Signs shall be limited to the minimum size, scale and number needed to provide functional identification and exposure necessary to convey messages, while minimizing impacts on traffic safety, streetscape and scenic viewsheds.*

No signs are approved as part of this Conditional Use Permit. All exterior signs shall reviewed under a separate application and be subject to approval under the Desert Hot Springs Zoning Code, including limitations on size, scale and number. The code does not permit signs to exceed the height of existing construction which will result in no impacts on scenic viewsheds. No exposed neon shall be used for signs or window graphics.

*Policy 10: Lighting shall be limited to the minimum height, number and intensity of fixtures needed to provide security and identification in residential, commercial and industrial development, taking every reasonable measure to preserve the community's night skies.*

The proposed lighting plan appears to comply with the City's lighting standards for industrial development, and appears designed to assure that only the minimum level of lighting necessary to provide the needed security is installed. All proposed exterior lighting shall be reviewed by staff for conformance to the applicable standards. Therefore, the proposed medical marijuana dispensary is taking reasonable steps to preserve the night skies.

#### *Economic Development:*

*Goal 1: A broadly based, healthy and balanced economy that provides a full range of economic and employment opportunities.*

The proposed medical marijuana cultivation facility will expand the type of commercial / industrial services available in the community and provide opportunities for new employment and business support services.

*Goal 2: Continued growth, which assures the maintenance of a revenue base adequate to support present and future public services and facilities needs.*

The establishment of a medical marijuana cultivation facility will provide additional revenues to the City to support present and future public needs.

*Policy 11: Make every effort to expedite the processing of development proposals, which address the economic development goals of the community and take the initiative to incubate new programs and projects.*

The application for a Conditional Use Permit is required by the Desert Hot Springs zoning code to assure compatibility with surrounding land uses and to develop project-specific conditions to assure successful operation in concert with the City's development goals. The application was received on 22 December 2016, deemed complete 19 January 2017 and since then the application has been processed expeditiously.

#### *Hazardous and Toxic Materials*

*Goal: The assured safety of City of Desert Hot Springs residents and visitors through the regulation of the manufacture, transport, use and disposal of toxic and hazardous materials.*

Any hazardous or toxic materials associated with the proposed operation shall be regulated by the provisions of all applicable law, including the Desert Hot Springs Municipal Code, including Section 5.50 (Medical Marijuana Facilities Regulatory Permit), Section 17.40 (Property Development Standards) and Section 17.180 (Medical Marijuana Facilities Location).

### *Fire and Police Protection*

*Goal: A high level of police and fire protection and service.*

The proposed medical marijuana cultivation facility will include security measures, including door locking systems, exterior lighting, camera monitoring and other systems to minimize the impact on police protection services. Fire suppression systems will also be incorporated into the operation to minimize the impact on fire protection service. Consequently, the proposed medical marijuana dispensary is not expected to demand a high level of police and fire protection services.

*Policy 1: All new and improved developments shall be reviewed for their impact on safety and the provision of police and fire protection services.*

The proposed application and associated regulatory permits will include requirements for review of the proposed operation by City police and fire services. Any identified impacts on safety will be addressed by conditions of approval or regulatory requirements.

### *Policy 2*

*Enforce fire standards and regulations in the course of reviewing building plans and conducting building inspections.*

All plans and improvements for interior or exterior building improvements will be subject to review and enforcement under fire codes and regulations.

The project appears to be consistent with the applicable goals and policies of the General Plan. Staff recommends this finding.

### *12. That there will not be significant harmful effects upon environmental quality and natural resources.*

The proposed medical marijuana cultivation facility will occupy five new commercial / industrial buildings, located adjacent to an established commercial / industrial area, and operated in accordance with the City's regulations and conditions of approval. Consequently, no significant adverse or harmful effects on the environment or on any natural resources are anticipated. Staff recommends this finding.

### *13. That the negative impacts of the proposed use are mitigated and/or a mitigated negative declaration may be filed.*

The proposed medical marijuana cultivation facility will be operated as a commercial / industrial use within five new commercial / industrial buildings. It will be operated in accordance with all applicable regulations and conditions of approval. A review of the proposed project has identified the potential for certain environmental impacts; however, mitigation measures have been developed which will reduce all identified



potential impacts to less-than-significant levels. A draft Negative Declaration with Mitigation Measures has been prepared for the project.

- 14. That the proposed location, size, design, and operating characteristics of the proposed use would not be detrimental to the public interests, health, safety, convenience, or welfare of the City.*

The proposed medical marijuana cultivation facility has been reviewed by City departments and other public agencies for any potential detrimental effects on public interests, health, safety, convenience or welfare of the City. Any potential concerns have been addressed by recommended conditions of approval, and no unresolved concerns remain. Staff recommends this finding.

In reviewing this application, plans, documents and other supporting information, staff has determined that the City Council can make these findings.

#### **EXHIBITS**

- 1) Planning Commission Staff Report (May 9, 2017)
- 2) Recommended Conditions of Approval
- 3) Site Plan
- 4) Floor Plans
- 5) Building Elevations
- 6) Color & Materials
- 7) Landscape Plan
- 8) Plant Palette
- 9) Lighting Plan
- 10) Site Photos
- 11) Draft Ordinance for DA
- 12) Draft Development Agreement (Redlined version compared against template DA)
- 13) Draft Development Agreement DA 08-17 (Final Revised)
- 14) Development Agreement Exhibit E
- 15) Draft Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration