

Bay Area Vipassana Center
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Sunnyvale, California 94085

January 6, 2020

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Planning Office
Santa Clara County Department of Planning and Development
70 West Hedding Street
7th Floor East Wing
San Jose, CA 95110

Re: County File Number: 11244-18P4; 9201 El Matador Drive, Gilroy

Dear Planning Staff:

On behalf of the Bay Area Vipassana Center (BAVC), it is our pleasure to submit this application for a Use Permit and an ASA Permit to the County of Santa Clara for consideration. The project property is identified by the County Assessor as A.P.N. 756-30-024.

We look forward to a favorable processing of this application. Please contact Sandeep Nayyar at (210) 859-1035 or Judith Alper at (510) 410-4782 if you have any questions regarding the submitted materials.

With best regards,



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PART I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The Bay Area Vipassana Center (BAVC) is seeking to establish a retreat center for teaching Vipassana meditation in Santa Clara County near Gilroy. The Bay Area Vipassana Center (BAVC) project will be located at 9201 El Matador Road (A.P.N. 756-30-024) on a 54.59 acre parcel and is zoned HS-sr (Hillside + Scenic Road). A Vipassana meditation retreat center in the South Bay Area will serve a wide variety of people from the diverse community in the region. BAVC is expecting to serve both new meditators of Vipassana and the existing base of meditators predominantly from Santa Clara and surrounding counties.

BAVC is registered as a nonprofit religious corporation with IRC § 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. There are currently three other Vipassana retreat centers in California and 180 around the world. Each retreat center is operated and financed independently by a local community of meditators and a Board of Directors.

Vipassana means insight, or to see things as they really are, and is a word from the Pali language. Vipassana meditation is a technique that fosters wisdom and insight through self-observation. It is taught step-by-step in a non-sectarian presentation during 10-day residential retreats, nine of which the participants maintain complete silence except to speak with the teachers. Vipassana practice fosters positive influences on society and engenders resiliency in work and personal life. The retreat programs are given entirely free of charge, are run by volunteers who have previously completed one or more 10-day retreats, and are supported solely by donations from those who have completed at least one 10-day retreat.

Participants are accepted through a formal application process and numbers are carefully managed according to available accommodations. 120 participants can be accommodated during a retreat along with 15 to 20 volunteers. Participants come to take part in the meditation retreat program, and volunteers come to prepare meals and support the participants during the retreat.

The sole purpose for the proposed center will be silent meditation retreats in this Vipassana tradition. There are never any ceremonies or festivals. Vipassana retreat center guidelines prohibit the renting of the center or use of a Vipassana retreat center for any purpose other than the practice and teaching of Vipassana meditation.

The size and nature of this 54.59 acre property on Redwood Retreat Road is unique because of its close proximity to Morgan Hill and Gilroy while also being located in a beautiful rural setting. The proximity to these cities is an advantage for the participants because of the availability of public transportation by train and bus, as well as for the operations of the retreat center because of the convenient access to large shopping areas for food and other essential supplies. In addition, the peaceful, rural nature of this site will enable BAVC to

develop a retreat center that meets the program requirements for a residential Vipassana retreat:

1. A sufficiently secluded setting where participants are protected from external distractions;
2. An atmosphere of natural beauty where participants can meditatively walk on prescribed paths within the retreat center boundaries;
3. Sufficient developable land to locate buildings away from the roads and create foliage barriers to provide the participants with privacy and a sense of being in nature and away from the outside world;
4. Sufficient developable land for participants to comfortably stay on the premises for the duration of the retreats without coming in contact with the outside world.

For these reasons, the proposed project's vision is strongly aligned with Santa Clara County's General Plan and Zoning Ordinances. BAVC's proposed project and the General Plan and Zoning Ordinances have the same goals, which are to preserve and maintain the natural beauty, resources, and integrity of the hillside setting. BAVC's proposed project is designed to utilize the beautiful rural landscape while enhancing the property with trees and other foliage to screen buildings that are designed to be barely visible from the roads. Buildings have been clustered as much as possible. All buildings are set back more than one hundred feet from the surrounding roads and blend in with the existing landscape or landscaping that will be planted. Landscaping design emphasizes the planting of drought tolerant and fire-resistant native species. The viewshed of the upper wooded hillside will not change. BAVC will set-aside and preserve the forested hillside that comprises most of the retreat center land as open space. Solar panels, low use of water, composting and other environmentally friendly features are incorporated in the project plans to minimize BAVC's impact on County resources and the environment.

These very factors that make the property so useful for a meditation retreat center also mean that there will be little to no impact on surrounding properties or County infrastructure. More specifically, the outdoor activities at a Vipassana retreat center are of a far less intense use and impact than the outdoor activities of other types of camps and retreats. The sole outdoor activity, essential to a Vipassana retreat, is silent walking along designated pathways. On the last day of the retreat participants may speak to other retreat participants but there is no music or singing, no group activities or any other activities that may disturb neighbors. Compared to other camps and retreats that have one or more of the following outdoor activities such as outdoor meetings, sports activities, playground activities, outdoor games, musical performances, campfire gatherings, horseback riding, outdoor swimming, tennis playing, group hikes, target shooting, etc., there can be no question that this silent retreat center must be considered to have very low impacts on the site and the surrounding

neighborhood. While the outdoor environment is essential to the program as a place to walk in quiet contemplation in nature, BAVC's will be an intensely quiet use.

Another important impact to consider is traffic. A Vipassana meditation retreat center has very different traffic patterns than typical recreational facilities. Because 10-day retreats begin every two weeks, this results in two 10-day retreats per month. This means that participants arrive for a retreat only two days per month and then depart from a retreat on two different days. Little to no traffic exists on other days during the month. Participants arrive between noon to 7:00 p.m. in the afternoon of what is referred to as Day 0, for the start of the retreat at 8:00 pm. The final morning of the retreat is twelve days later, the second Sunday. The departure time ranges from 7:00 a.m. to noon. The staggered nature of arrival and departure times is why the impact on traffic will be much less than a more typical recreational facility or a winery. In addition, the retreat center organizes ride-sharing (carpooling) via a website for participants who have been accepted to a retreat. Use of mass transportation is strongly encouraged. An EV group shuttle operated by the retreat center will transport those using mass transportation to and from the retreat center. A parking lot surrounded by vegetation is designed to block the view from Redwood Retreat and El Matador Roads. Vehicles parked in the lot will remain there for the duration of the retreat and participants will not have access to them during that time. This is fundamentally different from typical parking lot usage of most programs and facilities which have daily comings and goings.

As described in Part IV, the BAVC project is a low intensity or low density use which conforms with the language and intent of the General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance.

After several years of searching for the right property, the 9201 El Matador Drive property finally met all the criteria necessary for a Vipassana meditation retreat center serving Santa Clara County and nearby areas. BAVC's extensive search experience suggests that there is no more appropriate location in the region than the proposed site because of its General Plan and Zoning criteria, the availability of developable land, and the proximity to population centers while in a rural setting.

Moreover, it has been over 100 years since the closing of the original Redwood Retreat, which gave its name to the road bordering the property. The Gilroy Gazette reportedly commented that it was one of the best locations "for rest and meditation in the state." What better way to link history to the present? This project will be an oasis of quiet harmony in the community in the decades to come.

PART II. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Bay Area Vipassana Center (BAVC) project will be located at 9201 El Matador Road (A.P.N. 756-30-024) on a 54.59 acre parcel near Gilroy and is zoned HS-sr (Hillside + Scenic Road). The proposed Vipassana meditation retreat center will serve the diverse community of people in Santa Clara and neighboring counties. BAVC is expecting to serve both new meditators of Vipassana and the existing base of meditators in Santa Clara County and neighboring areas. As of October 2019, there were over 3500 residents of Santa Clara County who have taken at least one 10-Day Vipassana retreat since 1999. Over 12,000 people from San Mateo, Alameda, Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Benito Counties have attended a retreat at one of the retreat centers in this tradition.

1. LEGAL AND FINANCIAL STATUS OF APPLICANT BAVC

BAVC is a California Nonprofit Religious Corporation with IRC § 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. There are over 180 meditation centers in the world teaching Vipassana in this tradition. However, like all other centers, BAVC is independently managed by its own board of directors and is independently financed. There are no charges for attending any retreat in this tradition. The meditation teaching, lodging and meals are all provided free of charge to those who come to the center for meditation or volunteer service. All expenses are met solely through the receipt of donations. Donations of volunteer time or money are accepted only from those who have completed at least one 10-day meditation retreat, who feel that they have benefitted from the retreat, and donate so that others may similarly benefit. This practice of not charging for retreats (often referred to as “courses”) has been implemented at all retreat centers in this tradition since the 1970s.

2. PURPOSE OF A VIPASSANA MEDITATION RETREAT CENTER

Applicant BAVC is seeking to establish a retreat center for teaching Vipassana meditation, an ancient practice taught by the Buddha 2600 years ago. Vipassana meditation in this tradition is presented in a non-sectarian retreat format. Vipassana practice fosters the development of wisdom and insight through self-observation. Anyone who develops these qualities will positively influence their work life, personal life and society in general. The technique of Vipassana meditation is taught free of charge on 10-day residential silent retreats in a step-by-step, scientific, and non-sectarian way.

Vipassana appeals to people from diverse backgrounds, cultures, beliefs and traditions. People from a wide variety of communities in Santa Clara and neighboring counties have attended retreats in this tradition. People born in the US meditate side by side with people from all corners of the world who have come to settle in the area. Vipassana retreats reflect a wonderful melting pot of diversity—people from every religious background or tradition,

or no tradition, any gender or no gender identification, any cultural, racial and ethnic background attend retreats in this tradition.

Under the rules applicable to all meditation centers in this tradition, no other activity may take place on center land other than the teaching and practice of Vipassana meditation, and activities in support of maintenance and operation of the center for this purpose. The retreat center is never rented out to any other organization, nor used for any other purpose. BAVC does not sell goods or services of any kind and therefore nothing will be sold at the retreat center.

3. PEOPLE COMING TO THE RETREAT CENTER

Vipassana meditation retreats are open to all people ages 18 and older of any background. It is not a public facility in the conventional sense and all participants and volunteers undergo an application process to be accepted to participate in retreats. Participants come to take part in the meditation retreat program, and volunteers, who have previously completed at least one 10-day retreat come to prepare meals and support the participants during the retreat. The ideal number of volunteers for 120 participants is between 15 to 20. Volunteering is considered a donation of time and donations are only accepted from those having completed a 10-day course. It is for this reason that to volunteer to serve on a 10-day course someone must have completed a 10-day course themselves. Besides the volunteers who come specifically to serve a course and then leave, a small number of volunteers can arrange to stay at the retreat center for specific periods of time in accommodations set aside in the volunteer residences for this purpose, or in the caretakers' cottage. They manage and maintain the retreat center facilities and land. These will include the retreat center caretakers/managers, kitchen manager, landscaping and maintenance manager. Occasionally, meditators who live nearby may fulfill some of these functions and come to the retreat center during the day to volunteer.

4. VALUE OF A LOCAL VIPASSANA MEDITATION RETREAT CENTER

A local Vipassana meditation retreat center will provide a service that has not been conveniently available to people who live in this area. This is especially relevant in light of the difficulty getting into a retreat at the three established California centers, where each retreat center has long waiting lists several months in advance. The best estimates are that over 2,000 people per year who apply for retreats at these three existing retreat centers cannot attend a retreat. In addition, people living in the Bay Area who want to participate in a retreat currently have to travel several hours to one of the established California retreat centers. A location in the South Bay Area will save these people a significant amount of travel time, which is beneficial for them and for the environment. The value of a local Vipassana retreat center is that it will enable more local people to attend courses more conveniently.

5. THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF A QUIET, SECLUDED NATURAL ENVIRONMENT FOR A VIPASSANA MEDITATION RETREAT CENTER

Because of the serious nature of Vipassana meditation retreats and the absolute necessity to provide seclusion for retreat participants throughout the grounds, every effort is made to provide an environment that is free of significant disturbances from the outside world. It is for this reason that land for a center was sought in a rural area, with spacious grounds and a suitable natural setting that provides a significant buffer against external influences.

A location in a rural area is essential to realize the goal of providing a quiet and secluded atmosphere for a Bay Area Vipassana meditation retreat center. The property on which BAVC is seeking a CUP is large enough to provide an effective buffer between meditators and the outside world. The size and nature of this 54.59 acre BAVC property meets several objectives in addressing this goal of creating a quiet and secluded atmosphere for meditation:

- A. It mitigates the impact to meditators from accidental or intentional intrusions from neighbors and others venturing onto the BAVC property without authorization.
- B. It reduces the impact of noise coming from off-site sources, such as would be experienced in a more urban setting. Normal sounds from adjoining rural properties have limited impact on meditators. However, the constant traffic and loud sounds of a more urban setting would not be conducive to meditation.
- C. It facilitates clear boundaries with sufficient buffer areas to support the rules requiring students to remain within the retreat's boundaries (about 10 of the 54.59 acres) for the duration of the retreat.
- D. It allows students to walk in complete privacy within the retreat's boundaries without risking contact (visual or audible) with persons outside of the retreat center compound, particularly neighbors.
- E. The wooded portions of the property that form a major part of the buffer contribute to the visual and auditory seclusion. Apart from fire prevention measures, these wooded areas will be maintained as they are.

The foregoing makes it clear that an essential part of the "use" of a Vipassana meditation retreat center is the provision of a quiet and secluded location in a rural area. The very factors that make the property so useful for a meditation retreat center also means there will be little to no impact on surrounding properties.

6. NECESSARY PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE TEACHING AND PRACTICE OF VIPASSANA MEDITATION

While the following list describes the necessary program requirements under which Vipassana meditation is taught and practiced on 10-day and longer meditation retreats,

many of these conditions are also important to the practice of meditation that takes place at any time on the property.

- A. The meditation retreats are very serious and require that participants (often called “students”) remain in silent seclusion from the outside world during the retreat. As stated on the International Vipassana website, “Continuity of the practice in seclusion is the secret of this technique's success.” (<https://www.dhamma.org/en-US/about/code>)
- B. Silence is maintained for nearly the entire length of the meditation retreat. Except for the last day of a retreat, participants agree not to speak to or otherwise communicate with their fellow meditators. However, they may communicate with management or the teachers at scheduled times as necessary. Participants do not have any contact with persons outside the center during the meditation retreat, except in the case of an emergency.
- C. Participants and volunteers agree to remain at the retreat center for the entire duration of the retreat, and may not leave the grounds for even short periods.
- D. Separation between men and women participants is maintained at all times during the retreat. Consideration is given to accommodating non-binary gender participants.
- E. While at the center all participants and volunteers agree to maintain a strict moral code while at the center. They agree to abstain from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying or the use of intoxicants for the duration of the retreat.
- F. At the retreat center, participants learn and practice Vipassana meditation (<https://www.dhamma.org/en-US/about/vipassana>), a technique that focuses on the deep interconnection between mind and body, which can be experienced directly by disciplined attention to the physical sensations of the body that continuously condition the mind.
- G. Participants meditate in the meditation hall, meditation cell complex (described below in Part III 2A) or in their residences, but during their break periods they may walk in silence in designated areas on the retreat center grounds. At certain points in the meditation training, participants are instructed to maintain their meditation while eating, walking, standing, etc., wherever they are on the retreat center grounds. Thus, at all times they are learning to be engaged in the process of silent self-observation that is at the heart of Vipassana.
- H. During this meditation process the mind becomes very sensitive. To provide proper protection and atmosphere for the meditators it is essential to create a facility where impacts from outside the center are minimized.
- I. The meditation practice gives the participants a means to observe deep mental complexes through the observation of bodily sensations and then retrain the mind to become less reactive. This requires an environment free from outside disturbances

and interruptions, which is a fundamental requirement of a Vipassana meditation retreat facility.

- J. As an essential support to the meditation practitioners, it is very important to have a quiet, secluded and attractive natural environment in which the participants will practice meditation and where they will walk in silent contemplation during break periods.

In the first few years of operation of the retreat center, meditation retreats will be usually 10-days in length with occasional 3-day retreats for students who have completed one 10-day retreat. In the future as the retreat center becomes more established 20-day, 30-day, 45-day and 60-day retreats will be held. During these longer retreats, participants remain on the retreat campus for the entire retreat, just as with 10-day retreats. When these longer retreats are implemented, any impacts will be even further reduced as these long retreats replace 10-day courses on the schedule.

7. THE ATMOSPHERE AND AMBIENCE OF A VIPASSANA MEDITATION RETREAT CENTER

The look and feel of the retreat center will be such that a person walking in the neighborhood or driving by will barely notice the retreat center. Although the teachings of the Buddha are the focus of a Vipassana meditation retreat, it is not presented as a religion. Therefore, no statues, paintings or religious photos are ever displayed anywhere on the retreat center land. Our goal is to create a quiet, simple, pleasing environment with an emphasis on the beautiful rural landscape that causes passersby to notice lovely landscaping and vegetation, with barely visible buildings in the background, well beyond the required standards for a scenic road designation. Skillfully chosen foliage will screen building views from the roads. The buildings are set back at least one hundred feet from the surrounding roads, but generally much more than that to blend in with the existing landscape.

All the measures BAVC will take to buffer the retreat center from the outside world, will at the same time buffer the outside world from the retreat center. No music, loud-speakers, public announcement systems, group chanting, parties, games, sports or dancing will take place at any time on the retreat center land. Likewise, smoking and use of intoxicants are not permitted at the retreat center.

The land, which was used as a motorcycle dirt track by the previous owners (see aerial photo below) will be returned to more natural contours by regrading the moguls, ramps, embankments and other features built for prior dirt bike use. The forested area that BAVC is setting aside for open space, which constitutes the majority and more visible part of the property, will remain undeveloped except for required water tanks mandated by fire regulations and water storage needs.

Aerial photo of previous usage of 9201 El Matador



Buildings and usage are designed to minimize ecological or other impact. Environmentally sensitive techniques and construction materials will be used: solar panels, low use of water, composting and other environmentally friendly approaches will be incorporated into the development plan. Buildings have been clustered as much as possible while trying to balance the need for low density development desired by both BAVC and General Plan policies. Buildings have been situated wherever possible in harmony with the contours to minimize disturbance to the land. The materials for the buildings' surfaces will use fire resistant finishes such as stucco, metal and cementitious materials with earth tone colors. Roofs will be fire-resistant metal with flat-paint finishes with colors which can be viewed in the Color and Material Palette provided with the architectural plans on page 1.

Landscaping design, in addition to minimizing visual impacts from the road, emphasizes the planting of drought tolerant and fire-resistant native species. The view from Redwood Retreat Road of the forested hillside above the proposed project will not change because it will not be developed.

More specifically, the outdoor activities at a Vipassana retreat center are of a far less intense use than the outdoor activities of other types of camps and retreats. Vipassana retreat participants are limited to walking in silence during the retreat. On the last day of the retreat

they may speak to other retreat participants but there is no music or singing, no group activities or any other activities that may disturb neighbors. Compare this to camps that have one or more of the following outdoor activities: outdoor meetings, sports activities, playground activities, outdoor games, prayer sessions, musical performances, campfire gatherings, horseback riding, outdoor swimming, tennis playing, group hikes, target shooting, etc. There can be no question that a silent retreat center must be considered a lower intensity use than the vast majority of camps and retreats. While the outdoor environment is essential to the program as a place to walk in quiet contemplation in nature, BAVC's will be an intensely quiet use.

These are some of the many reasons that the goals and policies of both BAVC and the County's General Plan are in alignment.

BAVC's experience shows there is no better option for a retreat center in the south county than this property. Since large parts of rural areas are zoned for agricultural use, the Hillside Zone is the appropriate zone, as the General Plan makes clear. After several years of searching for a property, this one finally met all the criteria necessary. The most important concept to understand for those scrutinizing this project is that in terms of quiet, low intensity neighborly relationships and line of sight impacts, BAVC's needs and intentions are totally aligned with the community's. Moreover, it has been over 100 years since the closing of the original Redwood Retreat, which gave its name to the road bordering the property. The Gilroy Gazette reportedly commented that it was one of the best locations "for rest and meditation in the state." What better way to link history to the present? This project will be an oasis of quiet harmony in the community in the decades to come.

Artist's Rendering: The buildings will not be in the line-of-sight view from Redwood Retreat Road



PART III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. DESCRIPTION OF ALL PROPOSED ACTIVITIES ON THE SITE

Applicant BAVC is seeking to establish a retreat center for teaching Vipassana meditation. Vipassana is an ancient practice rediscovered by the historical Buddha. Under the rules applicable to all meditation centers in this tradition, no other activity may take place on the retreat center land other than the teaching and practice of Vipassana meditation and activities in support of maintenance and operation of the center for this purpose.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE FACILITIES AND THEIR USES

The following facilities are required to meet BAVC program requirements for a functioning meditation retreat center in this tradition. Descriptions of the buildings and their uses and who will reside in them throughout the year are addressed in this section. The buildings have been clustered into five distinct areas over approximately 20 continuous relatively flat acres of the 54.59 acres of property. In fact, as many of the buildings as possible have been clustered around the naturally wooded peninsula-like hill that is a key feature of the developable portion of the property. This peninsula-like hill limited clustering possibilities but also enabled the clustering of buildings around it to provide increased seclusion. Almost half of the buildings have been sited in the grassy knoll protected from view by this hill. Four of five distinct clusters are contained within this one larger cluster around the wooded peninsula. The total square footage of each building is specified, while an approximation of square footage of some rooms within the buildings is given to provide an idea of the relative size of these rooms to the overall structure.

Cluster I:

A. Meditation Hall and Meditation Cell Complex: a 12,300 sq. ft. single building, with the Meditation Cell Complex having a second story. The ground floor has approximately 9400 sq. ft. and the second floor has approximately 2400 sq. ft.

- i. **Description of the Meditation Hall:** The large meditation hall has approximately 2750 net sq. ft. with a clerestory to allow diffused natural lighting during the day, with two separate entrance foyers for men and women participants, two separate entrance foyers for men and women volunteers, and one entrance for the retreat teachers. The meditation hall is sized to accommodate 120 retreat participants and up to 30 volunteers (the number 30 includes retreat volunteers and retreat center volunteer staff). In the same building there are also:
 - a. two small meditation halls for evening discourses in different languages, one that is approximately 875 sq. ft. and seats up to 65 participants (for bilingual discourses), and the other that is approximately 420 sq. ft. and

seats up to 24. Some participants will leave the main hall and move to these smaller halls at 7:15 PM for the evening discourses, and then return to the main hall after their discourses have finished.

- b. two individual interview rooms each approximately 130 sq. ft. for use at noon daily for scheduled interviews, or upon a participant's request.
- ii. **Description of the adjoining Meditation Cell Complex:** The first floor of the cell area is approximately 5,150 sq. ft. with 90 individual meditation cells, each with its own standard size door for entry. Six of the 90 cells on the first floor will be ADA accessible. The second floor is approximately 2400 sq. ft. with 44 similar cells, accessed from the first floor by two separate stairways.

Hours and Manner of Use of the Meditation Hall and Cell Complex:

Retreat participants will spend the bulk of their waking hours, from 4:30 am to 9:00 pm in this building where they will meditate and receive regular meditation instruction with ample opportunity to practice these instructions throughout the day, moving silently between the meditation hall and the cell area via internal hallways, or external breezeways. The meditation cells are generally reserved for part-time use during specific hours for participants who have completed at least one 10-day course. Some new participants may be assigned cells for part-time use during specific hours on the last couple days of the retreat. Participants may choose to meditate in the cells or remain in the hall for meditation periods. Use of cells is not mandatory but many meditators prefer the increased quiet and lack of distraction that a cell provides for deep meditation. At 9:00 PM participants may ask the teachers questions related to their meditation. After this, the teachers and volunteers gather for a brief meeting, usually ending by 10:00 PM.

B. Bathrooms: two 250 sq. ft buildings, one for men and one for women, sited near the main entrances for each gender. The building for women will contain five toilets, one of which will be ADA accessible. In the men's building, there will be three toilets, one of which will be ADA accessible, and two waterless urinals.

Hours and Manner of Use of Bathroom Buildings:

These will be used during meditation sessions between the hours of 4:30 am to 9:30 PM for students who do not wish to make the walk to their residences to use the facilities there.

C. Teacher's Residence: A single-story 1,800 sq. ft. structure with two apartments separated by a small exercise room and laundry room.

- i. **Description of the residences:** There are two identical apartments with connecting doors that can be closed off to create four separate apartments when needed. When the doors are closed, there will be two larger apartments for the single conducting teachers and two smaller apartments for teacher-trainees when

necessary. Each apartment is designed with a kitchenette, a private bathroom, and a living/dining area.

- ii. **Description of the Exercise Room and Laundry Room:** The exercise room will have two to three exercise machines for the teachers' use only during break periods. The laundry room will have a stackable washer/dryer unit.

Hours and Manner of Use of Teachers' Residence:

The apartments in the teachers' residences are for temporary use for the duration of the retreat. One of the larger teachers' residences will always be used for the duration of the 10-day retreat by the conducting teacher-couple or by a single teacher. The second larger apartment will be used when two single/unrelated teachers are co-conducting. The connecting doors will be closed to create third and fourth smaller apartments to be used for teacher-trainees, estimated to occur on less than 50% of total annual 10-day retreats.

Cluster II:

Artist's Rendering: View of the Dining Hall and patio area (colors are approximations due to digital variations in representation)



A. Dining Hall & Kitchen: A single-story building 6300 sq. ft. and separated into two main areas:

- i. **Description of the Dining Hall Areas:** There are three retreat participants' dining areas: women, men and an optional dining area for participants who are non-binary gender (referred to as Flex Dining) for a combined square footage of approximately 3200 sq. ft. The men's and women's dining areas are each approximately 1400 sq. ft. and each contains identical features: a food service area

with two serving tables, a pre-washing area for dishes and utensils and composting area for food disposal, tables for 60 retreat participants, and handwashing stations at the entrances with two sinks. The Flex Dining area can be accessed from either the men's or women's dining area where participants who identify as gender non-binary may choose to dine.

- ii. **Description of the Kitchen Area:** The kitchen area is approximately 2900 sq. ft. and contains a variety of areas within it:
 - a. Two mechanical rooms;
 - b. Two restrooms, one for men (two toilets, one sink, one urinal) and one for women (two toilets, two sinks) each with access for both participants and volunteers;
 - c. A utility vestibule for storing cleaning equipment, supplies, including a mop sink and a small janitorial room.
 - d. In the kitchen there is:
 - 1. a cooking area,
 - 2. three designated preparation areas with tables,
 - 3. a station for rice cookers,
 - 4. an area for bus carts (for food delivery to the dining and clean up),
 - 5. a dishwashing and pot washing area,
 - 6. separate dining areas for men and women volunteers,
 - 7. a walk-in cooler,
 - 8. a dry storage area,
 - 9. a laundry room specifically for washing kitchen/dining hall towels and rags,
 - 10. an office,
 - 11. a recycling area,
 - 12. a service entry for deliveries (approximately twice during a 10-day retreat--once at the beginning and once in the middle).

Hours and Manner of Use of the Dining Hall and Kitchen:

Only two vegetarian meals (breakfast and lunch) will be served daily. Volunteers follow a set menu ([see Appendix #1, p. 40](#)) with specific recipes, quantities, etc., to avoid wastage. At the retreat center no meat, fish, or eggs are prepared, served.

The meal schedule is as follows:

- i. Breakfast is served from 6:30 to 7:15 AM.
 - a. A standard buffet breakfast is served every day of a retreat and includes cooked oatmeal, stewed prunes, dry cereals, breads, jams and spreads, seasonal fruit, yogurt, raisins, nuts, milk, non-dairy beverages, teas and coffee.

- ii. Lunch is served from 11:00 AM to 11:45 AM (see Appendix #4 for a Sample Retreat Menu).
- iii. Fruit and tea are served at 5:00 PM. Most old student-participants (about 50% of the total participants) do not eat anything.
- iv. It should be noted that breakfast and tea service have a significantly smaller number of dishes and pots to be washed than at lunch.
- v. Hours of operation for food preparation and clean-up for 15 to 20 volunteers are:
 - a. 5:15 AM to 7:45 AM
 - b. 9:15 AM to 1:00 PM
 - c. 3:45 PM to 5:45 PM
 - d. The kitchen is closed after 6:00 PM, though occasionally cookies or muffins are baked or sauces prepared for the next day by a small number of volunteers when necessary.

B. Volunteers' Residences: Two buildings 2600 sq. ft. each, one for men and one for women.

- i. Each building includes 16 single bedrooms two of which are ADA accessible.
- ii. Each single room is equipped with:
 - a. a separate bathroom with toilet, sink, shower and shelving for toiletries and cleaning supplies;
 - b. a separate entrance that opens to a small outside private area;
 - c. A bed, bed stand and storage area for clothing.
- iii. ADA standard single rooms contain all elements of regular single rooms but with ADA accommodations.
- iv. When needed specified rooms will be designated for non-binary gender volunteers upon request depending upon which building they choose.

Hours and Manner of Use of Volunteers' Residences:

The ideal number of volunteers working on a 10-day retreat for 120 students is between 15 to 20. It should be noted that volunteers for a 10-day retreat are rarely divided evenly between women and men. For this reason, extra volunteer rooms have been designed in each residence to accommodate varying numbers and permit flexibility. For example, there may be 10 women volunteers and 6 men volunteers or vice versa for a 10-day retreat. For this reason, approximately 28 of these rooms are intended for use for the duration of a retreat, but not all the rooms will be used. The rooms used will depend on the number of men and women volunteering. Most volunteers come on the beginning day of the 10-day retreat between noon and 7:00 PM and leave at its end between 7:00 AM and noon. In addition, a small number of volunteers can arrange to stay at the retreat center for specific periods of time to help maintain the retreat center facilities and land. Up to four rooms in each residence are allocated for this usage. For these reasons, each volunteer residence has been

designed to have 16 single rooms to accommodate varying numbers of men and women retreat volunteers as well as longer-term volunteers who may stay a number of months. Each single room for volunteers will be used for:

- a. sleeping from around 10:00 PM to around 5:30 AM;
- b. for rest periods during the day as needed;
- c. for bathing and toileting;
- d. occasionally for meditating if a volunteer chooses to do so in their room;
- e. no music, TVs or use of cell phones or parties are permitted in the rooms or at the retreat center.

C. Caretakers' Residence: 1340 sq. ft. building with one apartment and one studio apartment.

- i. The main apartment has two bedrooms, a living room, kitchen and dining area. There is one full bathroom and a second separate toilet. A single person or a couple will reside in the caretakers' residence full-time at the retreat center and will oversee operations there.
- ii. The studio apartment has a small kitchen, a living space, and a full bathroom. A single-person will reside full-time at the retreat center and will oversee operations there.

Hours and Manner of Use of the Caretakers' Residence:

This is the only building on site that will be used continuously throughout the year as a residence for one to three caretakers. This building is necessary for the practical operation of the retreat center, and the occupancy of it shall be limited to employees or designated volunteers of the retreat center.

D. Maintenance building: 2050 sq. ft. building with an open floor plan. Tools, equipment, golf carts, etc., will be stored in this building.

Hours and Manner of Use of the Maintenance Building:

The general hours of use are from around 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM seven days a week. This building will be used to store and maintain the equipment necessary for the maintenance of the retreat center.

E. Covered Cart Storage Structure: 480 sq. ft. open structure with a roof for protection from weather with open storage for carts for participants to hand cart their belongings to their residences. Participants with disabilities will be permitted to drive their car or van with their bedding and bags to their assigned ADA rooms with accessible parking, or they may choose to take advantage of the e-golf cart system the retreat center will have in place for transporting participants with disabilities around the site. This arrangement will continue throughout the retreat for participants with disabilities. They will have a choice of using their own vehicle (i.e., a wheelchair) to transport themselves, or of using the e-golf cart system for transportation. BAVC estimates (based on experience at other retreat centers) that there will be six to seven multi-person e-golf carts for transporting participants who are physically frail

or have disabilities. E-golf carts will be driven by volunteers with scheduled drop-offs and pick-ups based on each participant's needs.

Hours and Manner of Use of the Covered Cart Storage Structure:

The general hours of use for this structure are from around noon to 7:00 PM on the day of arrival and the morning of departure for each retreat, about four times a month.

Clusters III and IV:

A. Participants' Residences: Eight buildings 2600 sq. ft. each.

- i. Six of the eight residences will have 16 single accommodations including two ADA rooms (for a total of 12 accessible rooms).
 - a. Each accessible single room will contain all elements of regular single rooms (see "c" below) but with ADA accommodations.
- ii. Two of the eight residences will each have 13 single accommodations, with a laundry room and a storage room.
 - a. The laundry room will only be used at the end of each 10-day retreat to wash bedding by volunteers.
 1. The laundry room will be equipped with two sets of washers/dryers and shelving for laundry and cleaning supplies;
 2. The storage room will contain shelving for bedding to be loaned when needed.
 - b. Participants are asked to bring their own bedding but some need to borrow bedding and this is washed at the end of each retreat.
- iii. Each single room is equipped with:
 - a. a separate bathroom with toilet, sink, shower and shelving for toiletries and cleaning supplies;
 - b. a separate entrance that opens to a small outside private area;
 - c. A bed, bed stand and storage area for clothing.

Hours and Manner of Use of the Participants' Residences:

All of these rooms are for use only for the duration of the retreat. Participants come at the beginning of a 10-day retreat on Wednesday between noon and 7:00 PM and leave eleven days later on Sunday morning between 7:00 AM and noon.

Each single room will be used for:

- a. sleeping from around 9:05 PM to around 4:30 AM;
- b. for rest periods during the day as needed;
- c. for bathing and toileting;
- d. and for meditating if a participant chooses to do so in their room.

Cluster V:

A. Administration building: A 2100 sq. ft. building with:

- i. A multipurpose room;
- ii. Two bathrooms, one of which is ADA accessible, with a shower;
- iii. Two storage closets;
- iv. An open work area with sub-areas for maintenance, finance, management, etc.
- v. A lunchroom with kitchenette (no stove);
- vi. Two office spaces;
- vii. Laundry room.

Hours and Manner of Use of the Administration Building:

The administration building is sited on the entrance driveway to monitor those entering the property and to provide separation from the main meditation area. It will be used by the caretakers, center management, maintenance volunteers, retreat registrars, and members of the different committees who are volunteers, all on as needed basis. The general hours of use will be from around 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM seven days a week. However, the registrars often work different hours and might be in their office later or earlier on a regular basis. There will be times when no one will be in the office during the general hours or several volunteers might be there at one time. The maximum number of people in the building would likely be during Board of Directors' meetings between six to eight times a year on Sundays where up to 30 people might be in the community room. Much of the work at the retreat center will be done by committees of the Board of Directors. While most committee meetings happen remotely, occasional on-site meetings of committees may use the building though the number of people would likely be under 10 people. While the retreat center is being constructed, this building will get heavy use for meetings with contractors, etc., and for the Board of Directors and committees to meet to oversee the project. No music, parties, alcoholic beverages or intoxicants are ever permitted in this building or anywhere on the retreat center land.

TABLE 1.0—DESCRIPTION OF THE FACILITIES AND THEIR USES

Cluster	Buildings	Summary Description	Square feet	Hours of use
I	Meditation Hall /Meditation Cells Complex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single building with a common meditation hall and an adjoining individual meditation cell complex Common hall for 120 meditators and 30 volunteers 90 individual meditation cells on first floor and 44 on the second floor The only use is for silent meditation, no other uses are permitted 	12,300	4:30 am to 10 pm with some break for rest periods
	Bathrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bathrooms, near each of the meditation hall entrances, one for men and one for women 	250 x 2 = 500	Same as above
	Teachers' Residence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single story with two identical apartments with kitchenettes, private bathrooms, and living areas Common exercise and laundry room Doors between apartments to convert into four smaller separate apartments (typically needed for teacher-trainees) each with kitchenettes and private bathroom 	1800	Typically for rest and sleep periods
II	Dining Hall and Kitchen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single story building with a dining hall and a commercial kitchen Dining hall divided into separate areas for women and men, and an optional area for gender non-binary participants Kitchen with designated areas to cook, dishwash, store, and to prepare meals for retreat participants Only two vegetarian meals are served each day, with lunch being the main cooked meal Optional fruit and tea for evening snack 	6300	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Breakfast served: 6:30 am-7:15 am •Lunch served: 11 am- 12:15 pm •Evening snack: 5 pm •Kitchen closed: after 6 pm
	Volunteer Residences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two single story buildings, one each for men and women volunteer servers Each with a total of 16 single bedrooms with private baths, including 2 ADA rooms Designate rooms for gender non-binary volunteers, as needed No music, TV or parties permitted 	2600 x 2 = 5200	For sleep between 10 pm to 5:30 am and some rest during the day for the retreat period
	Caretakers' Residence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One apartment and one studio apartment Only building on the site with continuous full year use to house long term caretakers for center operation 	1340	Full year use
	Maintenance Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multipurpose building with a small workshop area for maintenance and repair of retreat center equipment; storage of equipment; storage and charging area for electric golf carts 	2050	As needed between 9 am and 6 pm
	Covered Cart Storage Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An open structure with a roof and a cement pad for storing carts, where participants can drop off their bags and bedding and use the carts to take it to their residences, or where to meet the volunteers driving the e-golf carts for participant and belongings delivery to residences. 	480	Arrival and departure days of a retreat between noon to 7 pm
III & IV	Residence for Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eight single story residence buildings Six of which have 16 bedrooms including 2 ADA bedrooms in each Two residences each have 13 bedrooms and laundry/storage facility Each bedroom has a single bed and a private bathroom Use during the retreat period only 	2600 x 8 = 20,800	For sleep between 9 pm and 4:30 am and some rest during the break periods
V	Administration Building	Office space with small eating area, storage closets, and two bathrooms	2100	Typically between 9:30 am to 5:30 pm, as needed
Total			52,870 sf	

3. DESCRIPTION AND SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

A. ANNUAL ACTIVITIES

The only activities that will occur at the retreat center are meditation retreats, maintenance periods (referred to as service periods), and meetings of the Board of Directors; the latter two activities support the operations of the retreat center. There are no visiting hours as the retreat center is not open to the public. Regular maintenance and gardening will be provided by long-term volunteers and caretakers living at the center, with a small number (1 to 6) of volunteers coming from the outside on occasion to assist, some of whom may live in the neighborhood.

TABLE 2.0—ANNUAL ACTIVITIES

Activities per year	Retreat Activity	Duration	Total # attending
18 - 20	10-day retreats	12 day span, begin on a Wednesday PM, end on a Sunday AM	150 maximum
2	8-day old student retreats	10 day span, begin on a Friday PM, end on a Sunday AM	150 maximum (but usually fewer +/-100)
3 - 4	3-day old student retreats	5 day span, begin on Wednesday, end on Sunday AM	Usually less than 100
2 - 3	Maintenance periods (volunteer service)	Between a week and ten days	20 - 40
1	Annual Board of Directors' Planning Retreat & Workshop	3 day span, begin on a Friday PM, end on a Sunday AM	40 - 50
6 - 8	Board of Directors' Meeting	Random Sundays 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM	15 - 30

The main type of retreat that will be held at the meditation retreat center is a 10-day retreat. Each 10-day retreat spans 12 days and typically begins on a Wednesday evening (Day 0) with registration from 2:00 to 7:00 PM. The retreat ends on Sunday morning (Day 11) at 6:30 AM with participants gradually leaving from then up until around noon. Two other types of retreats which occur less frequently are the 8-day and 3-day old student retreats (for participants who have previously completed a 10-day retreat in this tradition). The arrival and departure times are the same for these retreats, but the arrival days may be different (departure is the same day as a 10-day retreat, i.e., Sundays). See the above chart for clarification of these days.

Preliminary landscape plan showing how the retreat center might look in the future. The complete plan has been submitted separately.



B. ANNUAL MONTHLY SAMPLE RETREAT CALENDAR IN EARLY YEARS

A weekly calendar as requested in the Pre-Application summary does not adequately represent the comings and goings at the retreat center due to the nature of the extended program of 10-days. Therefore BAVC includes this sample six month calendar in Table 3.0, which demonstrates how retreat participants will only arrive two times per month and leave two times per month from the retreat center. As noted in Table 2.0 above, other activities with smaller numbers will occur infrequently but with far fewer participants. Per the sample schedule below, arrival days are on Wednesdays for 10-day retreats (Fridays for infrequent 8-day old student retreats). Departure days are on Sundays for all retreats.

Table 3.0—Annual Monthly Sample Retreat Schedule

JANUARY	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	FEBRUARY	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
							01				01	02	03	04	05
	02	03	04	05	06	07	08		06	07	08	09	10	11	12
	09	10	11	12	13	14	15		13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22		20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29		27	28					
	30	31													
MARCH	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	APRIL	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			01	02	03	04	05							01	02
	06	07	08	09	10	11	12		03	04	05	06	07	08	09
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19		10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26		17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	27	28	29	30	31				24	25	26	27	28	29	30
MAY	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	JUNE	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	01	02	03	04	05	06	07					01	02	03	04
	08	09	10	11	12	13	14		05	06	07	08	09	10	11
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21		12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28		19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	29	30	31						26	27	28	29	30		

○ 1st/Last Day of Course/Retreat/
Maintenance Period

C. RETREAT PARTICIPANTS' DAILY SCHEDULE DURING A 10-DAY RETREAT

Each day's schedule begins at 4:00 am and ends around 9:30 pm. Participants on the retreats receive meditation instructions and meditate approximately 11 hours per day of the retreat. The remainder of each day consists of short break periods, breaks for two (2) meals and tea, and for walking, bathing and rest, and an evening talk by the teacher. Audio and video recordings are used for the instruction and the evening talks.

TABLE 4.0—RETREAT PARTICIPANTS' DAILY SCHEDULE

Time	Activity
4:00 AM	Morning wake-up
4:30-6:30 AM	Choice to meditate in the hall or in participant's residence (experienced participants may choose to meditate in a cell in the cell complex)
6:30-8:00 AM	Breakfast break, rest, walking
8:00-9:00 AM	Group meditation in the meditation hall
9:00-11:00 AM	Meditate in the meditation hall, cell if assigned, or in residence according to the teachers' instructions (teachers meet with small groups of participants in the meditation hall)
11:00-12:00 PM	Lunch break, rest, walking
12:00-1:00 PM	Rest and optional interviews with the teachers
1:00-2:30 PM	Meditate in the meditation hall, cell if assigned, or in residence according to the teachers' instructions
2:30-3:30 PM	Group meditation in the meditation hall
3:30-5:00 PM	Choice to meditate in the hall or in student's residence (experienced participants may choose to meditate in a cell in the cell complex)
5:00-6:00 PM	Tea break, rest, walking
6:00-7:00 PM	Group meditation in the meditation hall
7:00-8:15 PM	Teacher's discourse in the hall. Bilingual participants may go to one of the smaller halls for a discourse in their language.
8:15-9:00 PM	Group meditation in the meditation hall
9:00-9:15 PM	Participants have the option to ask questions of the teachers. Retire to residences for the night--Lights out

D. VOLUNTEERS SCHEDULE DURING A RETREAT

The day for the volunteers (between 15 to 20 volunteers for 120 students) begins a little later in the morning (around 5:00 AM) and ends a little later (around 10:00 PM). Volunteers do not maintain silence, that is they are free to talk to each other, except when in the vicinity of retreat participants. Volunteers are asked to maintain a tone of quiet seriousness to protect retreat participants from hearing laughter, loud talking, etc.

TABLE 5.0 VOLUNTEERS' SCHEDULE DAY ONE TO DAY TEN

Time	Activity
5:15 AM	Approximately 5 to 7 volunteers begin preparing breakfast in the kitchen.
6:00 AM	Additional volunteers arrive in the kitchen to assist in setting up the dining hall.
6:30 AM	Remaining volunteers arrive in kitchen for breakfast and to assist in clean up.
7:30 AM	All volunteers start making their way to their accommodations for group meditation.
8:00 AM	All volunteers attend the morning group sitting in the meditation hall.
9:15 AM	All volunteers arrive in the kitchen for food preparation of the main meal of the day.
11:00 AM	Lunch is open to retreat participants via a self-serve system in the dining halls; volunteers eat lunch in their own dining halls.
11:30 AM	Volunteers begin cleaning the kitchen and after the retreat participants leave the dining hall.
1:00 PM	All volunteers have a break until 2:30 PM. They may return to their rooms or go to meditate or quietly walk around the retreat center.
2:30 PM	All volunteers attend the afternoon group sitting in the meditation hall.
3:45 PM	All volunteers return to the kitchen to prepare food items (chopping and prepping for the next day's meal).
5:00 PM	Tea is open to retreat participants via a self-serve system in the dining hall; volunteers eat dinner (left-overs) in their own dining halls.
5:15 PM	Volunteers begin cleaning the kitchen and after the retreat participants leave the main dining hall at 5:30 PM, they clean the dining hall and wash the few dishes.
6:00 PM	All volunteers attend the evening group sitting in the meditation hall.
7:10 PM	Volunteers have free time and may choose to attend the evening discourse in the meditation hall or relax in their rooms. They are not permitted to leave the compound.
9:00-9:45 PM	All volunteers gather in the meditation hall for a meeting with the conducting teachers after participants leave. Volunteers return to their rooms for the night after this meeting.

E. LOCAL VOLUNTEERS

Occasionally a very small number (one to four) of local volunteers (those who have previously completed a 10-day retreat in this tradition), may come to the retreat center during a retreat, by appointment-only, to do some volunteer work for a few hours (helping in the kitchen, gardening, maintenance) and to attend a group meditation.

F. VISITORS

There are no visitor hours at the retreat center. The retreat center is closed to outsiders during retreats. Rarely, someone who is visiting the area or interested in taking a retreat may ask for a tour of the retreat center. This may be arranged with the management during times when there is no retreat in progress. BAVC will likely arrange an open-house for the neighbors before the retreat center becomes operational.

G. CARETAKERS AND LONG-TERM VOLUNTEERS

The retreat center caretakers and long-term volunteers may on occasion leave the retreat center to purchase supplies locally and return the same day.

H. DELIVERIES

Food delivery by truck can be expected on the day of the start of each retreat, and one more time during the middle of the retreat. Occasional deliveries from companies such as FedEx, UPS, etc. can be anticipated.

4. ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE OF BUILD OUT

While BAVC described in its Pre-Application that it expected to begin operations with a facility that accommodates 80 retreat participants plus volunteers, the hope is to build all the buildings as soon as possible to full build-out for 120 participants plus volunteers. The retreat center has been designed for 120 participants based on the experience of thousands of retreats in this tradition, which has shown this to be an ideal number for a retreat center's long-term financial viability. Experience has also shown that the number of participants required to minimally operate a retreat center in the short-term is 80. For this reason, BAVC will be able to begin operations with 80 participants, but the buildings have been designed for 120 participants based on the ideal size.

After careful consideration, BAVC determined that it is financially wasteful and imprudent, and environmentally disturbing and disruptive to the landscaping plan, to phase the construction of individual buildings, such as expanding from a smaller structure to its ultimate requisite size. For the retreat center to be able to function even for 80 participants, most of the buildings will have to be built as designed, without phasing. The exterior of the meditation hall and meditation cell complex will need to be constructed, but internal structures in the meditation cell complex (i.e., cells and small meditation halls) could be left

for future development, if necessary. Also, BAVC may have to delay building some of the residences depending on funding.

5. TRAFFIC

A Vipassana meditation retreat center has very different traffic patterns than typical projects. The impact on traffic will be much less than a more typical recreational program or a winery. The entrance to the proposed retreat center will be on Redwood Retreat Road. The traffic study evaluation (page 6) determined that the current entrance to the property, which is on El Matador Drive, is not ideal. This is due to El Matador Drive's close proximity to the Watsonville Road-Redwood Retreat Road intersection. For this reason, the traffic engineer recommends that the main entrance to the retreat center be on Redwood Retreat Road. When the retreat center is operational the El Matador Drive entrance will only be used for emergency and fire department access. As demonstrated in the Grading Plan, the Redwood Retreat Road driveway entrance-exit design will meet all County requirements.

Based on a review of the existing conditions along Watsonville Road and Redwood Retreat Road, an analysis of the potential trip generation associated with the proposed project operations, and an evaluation of the project access, BAVC's consultant traffic engineer concluded in his analysis that, "This volume (of new trips generated) is very low and would not warrant an analysis at any controlled or uncontrolled intersection near the project following Santa Clara County requirements..." A combination of factors contributes to this finding such as:

- a. As demonstrated in Table 3.0 of this Project Description, there will only be three to five arrival and departure days per month of retreat participants;
- b. On those days, participants will arrive and leave during a range of times, rather than a set time. For the start of a course, participants and volunteers will arrive that day between noon and 7:00 PM. For the end of the course, they will leave between 7:00 AM and noon. Thus, arrival and departure times are staggered due to the nature of the retreat program.
- c. To further minimize traffic impacts:
 - i. An organized ride-share program before every retreat strongly encourages carpooling. Based on experiences at other centers in CA this rideshare program significantly reduces the number of individual vehicles that come to the retreat center and subsequently that park there.
 - ii. The proximity to the Morgan Hill and the Gilroy Caltrain and bus stations along with BAVC's strong support will encourage participants to utilize mass transit.

- iii. A retreat center EV group transport will shuttle participants utilizing mass transit.

Please see the accompanying traffic study: “Traffic Impact Analysis Review for Bay Area Vipassana Center Gilroy” for more details.

6. PARKING

A two-section parking lot surrounded by vegetation designed to block the view from Redwood Retreat and El Matador Roads is planned with 96 spaces including four ADA spots (one for a van) and 10 EV charging spaces. Aisle width for standard parking and EV parking spaces will meet the minimum requirement per the Zoning Code. An additional six van-accessible ADA spaces will be distributed at key places near the residences, the administration building, the maintenance building and the caretakers’ residence. Thus, a total of 96 spaces will be provided, ten of which will be accessible, which is more than double the required amount for ADA spaces.

Based on factors listed in Traffic above, BAVC maintains that per §4.30.100 Parking Exception in the Zoning Code the nature and design of the facility warrants a reduction in required parking. As explained on page 5 of the Traffic Study: “Traffic Impact Analysis Review for Bay Area Vipassana Center Gilroy” accompanying this application, “...96 spaces will adequately meet the needs of the site...”

The number of cars parking for a 10-day retreat will be significantly smaller due to an active ride-sharing program before each retreat.

No off-site parking will be available or permitted.

A parking plan that meets the recommended requirements as defined in §4.30.070 B of Santa Clara’s Zoning Ordinances is provided with this application and shows parking layout including aisle width, dimensions and space numbering. This parking plan can be found in the Grading Plan accompanying this application.

7. SIGNAGE

The BAVC retreat center will have a single freestanding sign at the street entrance on Redwood Retreat, minimally lit with a solar light. The sign will be white with blue lettering on a 30” x 36” board fixed to a 90” post and will be in compliance with § 4.40.060 Nonresidential Uses – Freestanding Signs. The sign will say: “Bay Area Vipassana Center” with a standard blue and white wheel design associated with this tradition. [See Appendix #2, p. 41](#) for an example of the planned sign.

8. SETBACKS

The property is located in the HS-sr zoning district which requires a minimum 30-foot setback from road right-of-way and property lines. Any structure (including fences) within 100 feet of the scenic road (Redwood Retreat Road) right-of-way requires Design Review which will be reviewed through the ASA process. All buildings are designed to be more than 100 feet from either of the two roads that border the project's property. This intentionally provides a greater buffer for the participants as well as for the neighbors. The fence currently existing on site was built by the previous owner. It is white vinyl farming fencing with four horizontal slats inserted into posts approximately 5 feet in height. This fence will be maintained and improved as is.

9. TREE REMOVAL

The BAVC project does not intend to remove any trees for the construction of any of its buildings as shown in the Site Plan and will instead be planting trees. In February 2019, BAVC volunteers planted approximately 200 *Myrica californica*, *Rhus integrifolia*, and *Rhamnus californica* shrubs on its property along the fence line of Redwood Retreat Road and El Matador Road. The shrubs are positioned to grow into part of the visual barriers that are planned throughout the property to create privacy for retreat participants, as well as protect views from the road. Many of them are already three to four feet tall.

10. GRADING

Please see the accompanying Grading Plan. Moguls, ramps and jumps from the previous owner's motocross dirt-bike track on the property will be regraded to a more natural topography.

11. THE BARN

BAVC intends to remove the existing barn and will request a permit to demolish the it in the future. BAVC plans to restore the site where the barn is currently located with trees and native plants before the retreat center is operational.

12. EARLY PUBLIC OUTREACH

BAVC will meet the requirements for Early Notification set forth in this document:

https://www.sccgov.org/sites/dpd/DocsForms/Documents/EarlyNotification_Policy.pdf

PART IV. CONFORMITY WITH APPLICABLE GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING PROVISIONS FOR CAMPS AND RETREATS

APPLICABLE PROVISIONS

The applicable General Plan provisions for this project are R-LU 25, R-LU 26, R-LU 27. The applicable Zoning is Hillside, § 2.20.010 (C). The applicable use regulations are contained in § 2.20.020, specifically Table § 2.20-2. The applicable use classification is Camps and Retreats defined in § 2.10.040 of the Zoning Ordinance.

1. GENERAL PLAN

A. THE PROPOSED PROJECT IS THE VERY ESSENCE OF LOW INTENSITY USE THAT THE GENERAL PLAN ALLOWS IN HILLSIDE AREAS

R-LU 25 (“Development Policies – Non-Residential Development Densities”, Book B, page Q-6)
Non-residential land uses allowed in ‘Hillsides’ areas shall be of a generally low density or low intensity nature, depending on the use, as is consistent with the basic intent of the Hillsides designation to preserve the resources and rural character of the land. Non-residential uses shall:

- a. avoid or minimize any potentially significant adverse environmental impacts;*
- b. provide adequate access to safely accommodate potential traffic without significantly impacting local transportation routes;*
- c. demonstrate no significantly increased risks associated with natural hazards;*
- d. not create adverse visual impacts as viewed from the Valley floor or from adjacent public recreational areas; and*
- e. cause no significant increase in the demand for public services or infrastructure, including potential impacts on school districts.*

The proposed meditation retreat center is exactly the type of low intensity project that the General Plan and Zoning Ordinances contemplate as being appropriate for the Hillsides designated area and Hillside district.

1. THE PROPOSED PROJECT AVOIDS OR MINIMIZES ANY POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Among the criteria to evaluate whether a use is a “low intensity”, “low density” use suitable for a rural area is that the proposed project must avoid or minimize any significant adverse environmental impact. As shown below and throughout the Project Description, there are no significant adverse environmental impacts of the proposed Vipassana meditation retreat center. The specific program requirements for a Vipassana meditation retreat center require participants to remain at the retreat center for the duration of each retreat, to maintain silence throughout the retreat, to have buildings that are shielded from public view for privacy and a sense of seclusion from the outside world, etc. Applicant submits that this is the very essence of a “low intensity” use consistent with R-LU 25 and R-LU 26.

2. VERY LOW TRAFFIC IMPACTS

The Traffic Impact Analysis submitted with the Application concludes, at page 6, that the peak hour traffic volume will be “very low” and that “[t]he project does not negatively impact any of the surrounding roadways.” This conclusion is based on the following key facts:

- a. Retreat participants agree to remain on site for the entire duration of the retreat; each participant thus makes a single trip to the retreat center and then eleven days later a single trip leaving the center.
- b. There are retreats planned every two weeks resulting in retreat participants and volunteers arriving two days each month (typically Wednesday afternoons) and leaving two days each month (typically Sunday mornings). A very limited number of other volunteers, typically fewer than four, will be arriving and leaving the center during non-peak times.
- c. Retreat participants and volunteers will be strongly encouraged to use a web-based ride-sharing service that is in use at other Vipassana centers in order to facilitate carpooling and thus reduce vehicle trips.
- d. Retreat participants will also be strongly encouraged to use the public transportation options readily available to Morgan Hill and Gilroy, reducing the number of cars arriving to and ultimately leaving from the site. The center anticipates purchase of an all-electric van with seating capacity of 8-10 to shuttle participants from and to public transit stops.

3. VERY LOW VISUAL IMPACTS

The Project will not create adverse visual impacts when viewed from the valley floor. To minimize visual impacts, applicant has worked with the natural contours of the land, siting and clustering the buildings well back from the two roads that border the property, far exceeding the setbacks required by the code. Almost half (47.3%) of the buildings have been sited in the grassy knoll protected from view by a naturally wooded peninsula-like hill. This further reduces the visual impact from Redwood Retreat Road and the surrounding neighborhood. More specifically:

- a. The buildings are designed to blend in with the natural environment by generally following natural slope of the property and by choosing earth-tone colors with light reflective values below 45 that blend into the surrounding flora. (Please see Architectural designs for a description and the accompanying 3-D renderings and color samples for visuals).
- b. Buildings have been sited to maintain the natural contours of the land with as little cut and fill as possible, while likewise avoiding the cutting down of trees.
- c. Landscaping is designed to help the buildings recede into the landscape, so that the primary look and feel will become one of buildings discreetly nestled in a

forest-like setting. All buildings and the parking lots will be shielded by heavily planted landscape buffers as shown on the landscaping plan while maintaining defensible space.

- d. Buildings have been clustered within minimum areas possible without creating undue environmental impact while working within the limitations of the elevations and developable space available. The two clusters of buildings at slightly higher elevations are largely blocked from the view of Redwood Retreat Road by a wooded peninsula. This will significantly limit if not totally eliminate off-site visibility of these buildings from Redwood Retreat Road, thus having no impact on the view from the valley floor.
- e. Substantially all building and infrastructure development is on mildly sloping, already disturbed land. There will be no construction on the hillside except for water tanks as necessary. All buildings are one-story buildings with the exception of a portion of the meditation hall, which will not be visible from Redwood Retreat Road.
- f. Because all the BAVC buildings and infrastructure are on mildly sloping land or flat land that has already been disturbed by prior uses, including the recent use by the previous owner as a motorcycle racing circuit, the concern about the impact of development on steep terrain is entirely avoided. (Please see General Plan, Book B, Strategy #3: Ensure Environmentally-Safe and Aesthetic Hillside Development, p. K-7 etc.)
- g. The visible activities occurring onsite are extremely limited. During retreats, outdoor activities consist primarily of retreat participants walking in silence in nature, which is an essential aspect of the program.

These design features, individually and considered together, minimize any adverse visual impact from the Valley floor with a design and appearance that blends harmoniously with the natural setting. Applicant's need to create a private, secluded and beautiful environment for participants attending meditation retreats requires applicant to minimize viewshed/line of sight impacts from within the center, which, by definition, minimize viewshed/line of sight impacts from surrounding roads or properties.

4. VIRTUALLY NO SOUND IMPACTS

As described throughout the Project Description, the sole "use" of a Vipassana meditation retreat center is the holding of silent retreats for the practice of silent meditation. Visual activity will be limited and will be silent except for occasional deliveries of food and supplies. As described in the Traffic Impact Analysis, traffic to the site will be very limited, in large part because retreat participants remain on site for the entire duration of the typical 10-day retreat. Because of these factors, the use of a Vipassana retreat center will result in virtually no sound impacts. In fact, it is extremely unlikely that any sound generated on site will cause disturbance to neighbors, because of the following factors:

- a. During retreats participants remain in silence. While volunteers may quietly converse with each other as necessary, particularly as they prepare meals indoors, they are required to speak quietly so as not to disturb the silent retreat participants with their talking.
- b. The large size of the property and the distances of the proposed buildings and facilities from neighboring properties, as well as landscaping all militate against any sound reaching neighbors.
- c. Other than silent walking, there are no outdoor activities during retreats.
- d. While there will be normal grounds maintenance activities, including mowing, these activities will create no more sound than would be expected in the maintenance of the grounds of any single-family home or other rural use in the neighborhood.
- e. There are no late-night activities at the center. During retreats, participants retire around 9:00 p.m. and are asked to have lights out at 10:00 pm. Volunteers retire for the night at approximately the same time.
- f. Participants may not use, or have in their possession, any electronic devices (phones, laptops, etc.), musical instruments, reading materials, writing materials, or any other devices or materials that may distract them from their silent meditation while at a retreat.

5. NO IMPACT ON PUBLIC SERVICES, INFRASTRUCTURE OR SCHOOL DISTRICTS

As described in the Project Description a maximum of three permanent residents will live on the site as Caretakers. This will not cause an increase in the demand for public services or infrastructure.

- a. Given the silent nature of the retreats and use of the site solely for retreats, there will never be any need for significant police support as would be the case with a use that involved public or most outdoor recreational events.
- b. Alcohol or any intoxicants are not allowed on the property at any time.
- c. Retreat participants do not cook, use wood stoves, have outdoor fires, use candles, or smoke on the property. Consequently the fire danger from the use will be less than just about any other use.
- d. Retreat participants only stay on the property for the duration of a retreat, which will be primarily for ten days. They come for a session and leave, so there is no impact on school districts from the use.
- e. A small number of staff (3) will generally stay on the property to care for maintenance and housekeeping matters; this would have no more effect on public services than a single-family home.
- f. Water for the retreat center will be supplied by a well on the property.

- g. Waste water will be served by an on-site septic system that will be designed and operated to code standards.
- h. Collection of garbage, recyclable materials and compostable materials will be contracted privately.

In short, any demand for public services or infrastructure will be extremely minimal to nil. A more complete review of the very limited environmental impacts of the project is provided in the Environmental Information Form submitted with the Application.

B. CONFORMITY WITH APPLICABLE PROVISIONS FOR USES WITH OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS

R-LU 26 ("Development Policies – Non-Residential Development Densities", Book B, page Q-6)

For recreational, commercial, or other uses which permit or involve overnight accommodations for temporary guests, allowable densities and the design of development shall also adhere to the following principles:

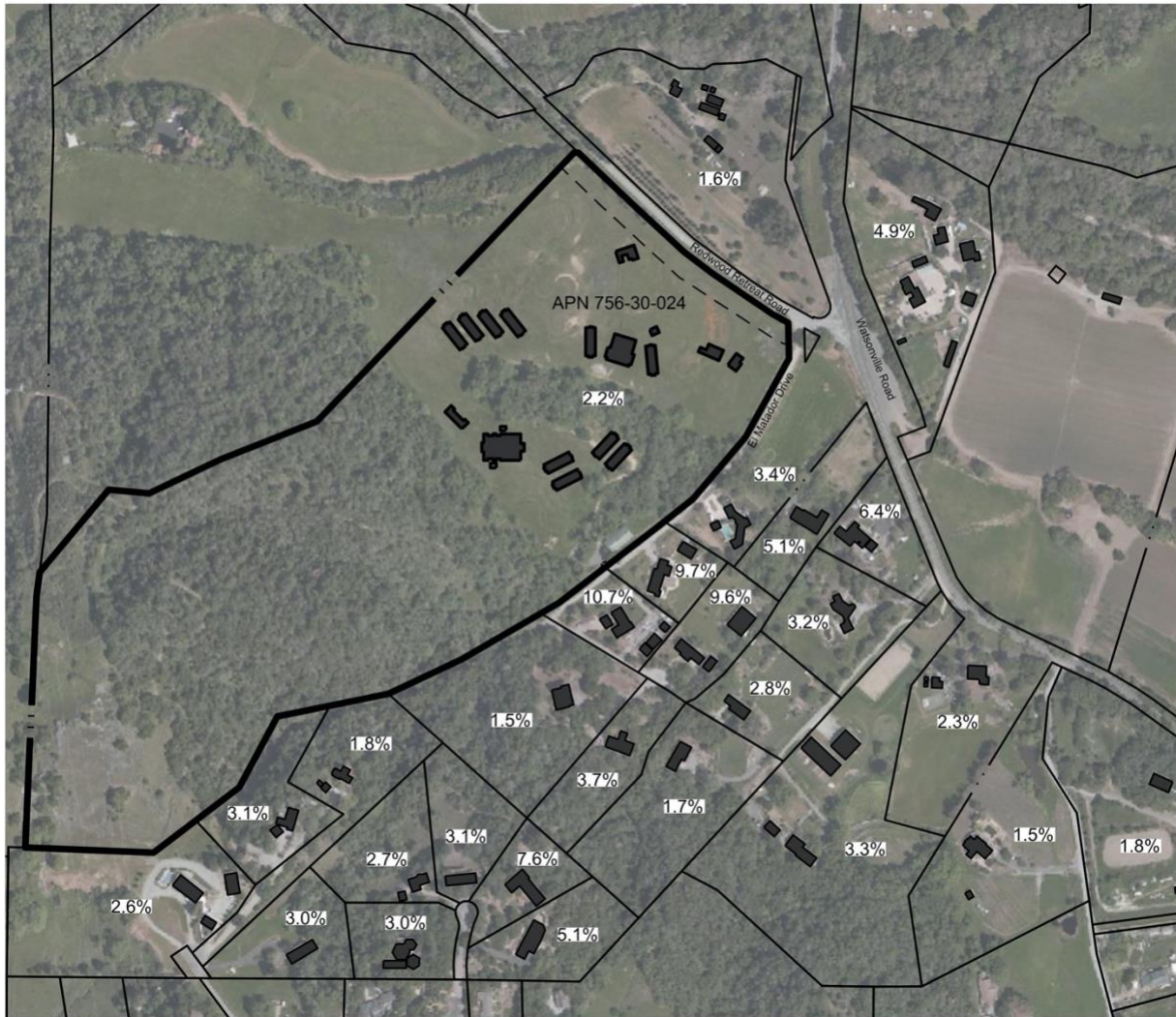
- a. proposed densities must be consistent with the scale of the allowed recreational or commercial use, if applicable;*
- b. design and appearance shall blend harmoniously with the natural setting; and*
- c. development shall be located, and if possible, clustered within the minimum area necessary to accommodate it, in order to avoid or reduce the need for improvements and minimize any potential environmental impacts.*

1. DENSITY CONSISTENT WITH THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The term "low density" is not defined in absolute terms in the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance; e.g., FAR or % coverage. Instead, the appropriateness of a project's density is evaluated in relationship to other allowed uses, conditions in the surrounding area, and other subjective criteria. The project is consistent with the scale of neighboring uses with regard to the number of buildings per acre or the ratio of the square footage of improvements to lot size.

The southeast neighborhood that is directly across the street from the proposed project is bordered by El Matador Drive, Paseo Tranquillo, Watsonville Road, and Pharmer Road. It has approximately 30 homes and structures that are spread across the respective properties. They are of similar or higher density than that of the proposed project. When considering the entire 54.59 acres of the subject property, BAVC's project will be far less dense than neighboring development considered as a whole.

Aerial photo of neighborhood development southeast of proposed project



2. DESIGN AND APPEARANCE BLEND HARMONIOUSLY WITH NATURAL SETTING

As discussed in detail in the above section 1.A.3 Very Low Visual Impacts, the project will blend harmoniously with the natural setting.

3. FACILITIES ARE CLUSTERED, REDUCING THE NEED FOR IMPROVEMENTS AND MINIMIZING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

As discussed in detail in the above section 1.A.3 Very Low Visual Impacts, the buildings have been clustered to reduce the need for improvements, and the project, as a whole, will minimize environmental impacts. Clustering has been maximized to the extent possible consistent with the contours of the land in order to minimize disturbance to the land and avoid cutting trees, while meeting the program requirements necessary for the operation of a silent meditation retreat center. For a discussion of program requirements for the retreat center, please see pages 9 to 11 of the Project Description.

C. EVALUATION OF USE FOR INCLUSION IN HILLSIDE ZONING ORDINANCE PER R-LU 27

R-LU 27 ("Development Policies – Non-Residential Development Densities", Book B, page Q-7)

Land uses proposed for inclusion within the Hillside zoning ordinance may be evaluated for conformity with the intent of this land use designation by various measures of land use intensity, including but not limited to:

- a. waste water generation rates;*
- b. traffic generation rates;*
- c. extent of grading, vegetation removal, drainage modifications, or other alternation of the natural environment;*
- d. noise or other nuisance potential; and*
- e. growth-inducing potential.*

The Project Description, the grading and landscape plans and Environmental Information Form included with the Application, and the above discussion regarding conformity with the General Plan clearly describe a project that will:

- a. Generate no waste water requiring public services;
- b. Generate minimal traffic on only four to five days each month and at exceptionally low levels even on those days;
- c. Involve minimal grading and drainage modifications, no cutting of trees, and significant landscape improvements;
- d. As a silent meditation retreat, create virtually no noise impacts; and
- e. Create no growth-inducing potential.

2. ZONING

The applicable provision of the Zoning Ordinance § 2.20.010 (Purposes), subsection C is defined as:

HS Hillside. *The purpose of the Hillside district, also known as the HS district, is to preserve mountainous lands unplanned or unsuited for urban development primarily in open space and to promote those uses which support and enhance a rural character, which protect and promote wise use of natural resources, and which avoid the risks imposed by natural hazards found in these areas. These lands are watersheds and may also provide such important resources as minerals, forests, animal habitat, rare or locally unique plant and animal communities, historic and archeological sites, scenic beauty, grazing lands, and recreational areas. Additionally, lands zoned Hillside define the setting or viewshed for the urban area of the county.*

Development shall be limited to avoid the need for public services and facilities. Permitted uses include agriculture and grazing, very low density residential use, low density, low intensity recreation, mineral and other resource extraction, and land in its natural state...Clustering of development, particularly residential, is encouraged in order to preserve contiguous open space and achieve efficiency in the provision of access to dwellings. This district is meant to apply to all parcels designated Hillside in the general plan. Note that § 2.20.070 applies to this district.

Zoning Ordinance § 2.10.040 defines the relevant use for BAVC's proposed project as follows:

Camps and Retreats (Recreational) *Outdoor-oriented recreational, meeting, lodging, and associated facilities which have a low population density, are a low intensity use, and which minimally alter the natural environment. Includes, hostels, guest ranches, lodges, and educational and group retreats, but does not include tourist-oriented resorts, or hotels or motels (see Hotels and Motels).*

Zoning Ordinance Table 2.20-2 lists all the permitted non-residential uses in rural base districts, including Camps and Retreats, and defines the code requirements that apply to each. Table 2.20-2 makes clear that “camps and retreats” are a permitted use in the HS district, subject only to a Use Permit and Architecture and Site Approval, which are the subject of this Application.

Comparing the activities of a Vipassana meditation retreat to the types of activities of the previous use of the property (a motorcycle dirt bike track with over 300 motorcycles in the barn) or that are conducted at other facilities classified as “camps and retreats” it is clear that the “use” of a Vipassana meditation retreat must be considered at the very “low” end of “low-intensity uses”. Even compared to other camps, which are also a primary allowed use in the Hillside zone, almost any form of camp, whether a sports camp, music camp, educational camp, equestrian camp or scout camp will have a significantly greater intensity. These will inevitably have more sound generated by the active social and outdoor recreational activities conducted at such camps. Hostels, guest ranches, lodges, and corporate retreat centers, because they typically are not held in silence, will also have a greater intensity, particularly when such uses involve the provision of alcohol, live music, and the use of outdoor sound systems.

The Project Description and the above discussion regarding compliance with the General Plan clearly describe the proposed project as one of exceptionally low intensity, preservation and even enhancement of scenic beauty, preservation of mountainous lands unplanned or unsuited for urban development that will avoid the need for public services and facilities.

3. CONCLUSION

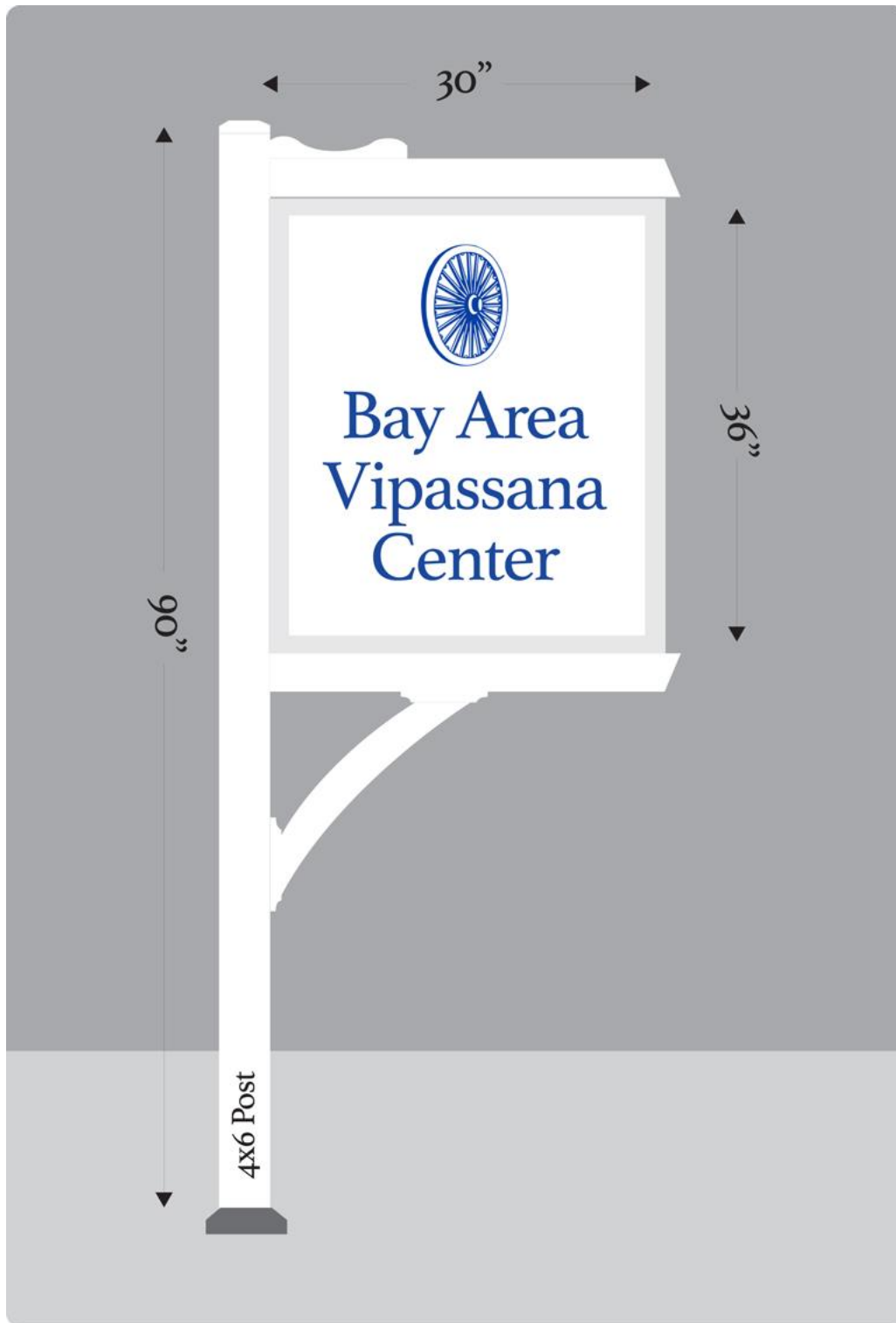
Applicant submits that the proposed BAVC project fully complies with both the letter and spirit of the General Plan’s “low intensity” and “low density” standards applicable to “camps and retreats” in the Hillside designated areas. The density and designs adhere to the principles laid out in the General Plan. For all of the reasons laid out throughout the Project Description and supporting documents, BAVC conforms with the relevant General Plan and Zoning Provisions and will be an asset to the neighborhood and to the community and will provide peace and tranquility for so many people.

PART V. APPENDIX

APPENDIX #1: SAMPLE BUFFET LUNCH MENU

<u>Day 0 - Wednesday</u> Miso Barley Soup White Rice Salad Fresh Fruit	<u>Day 6 - Tuesday</u> Potato Cabbage Curry Red Lentil Dahl Brown/White Rice Salad Peanut Butter Cookies Fresh Fruit
<u>Day 1 - Thursday</u> Pasta in Tomato Sauce Steamed Broccoli Herb Bread White/Brown Rice Salad Bar (romaine lettuce, celery, carrots, beets, cucumber, chickpeas, sunflower seeds, tomatoes, cheese)	<u>Day 7 - Wednesday</u> Macaroni and Cheese Roasted Zucchini Quinoa/White Rice Salad Fresh Fruit
<u>Day 2 - Friday</u> Split Pea Soup Roasted Russet Potatoes Steamed Kale Brown/White Rice Salad Cardamom Almond Cookies Fresh Fruit	<u>Day 8 - Thursday</u> Moong Dal Steamed Kale Brown/White Rice Salad Banana Bread Fresh Fruit
<u>Day 3 - Saturday</u> Black Bean Chili Corn Chips and Salsa Steamed Broccoli Brown/White Rice Salad Fresh Fruit	<u>Day 9 - Friday</u> Tofu Veggie Stir Fry Brown/White Rice Salad Lemon Zest Cookies Fresh Fruit
<u>Day 4 - Sunday</u> Tofu Steak Cole Slaw Brown/White Rice Salad Oatmeal Cookies Fresh Fruit	<u>Day 10 - Saturday</u> Chickpea Masala Steamed Cabbage Brown/White Rice Chocolate Cake and Whipped Cream Fresh Fruit
<u>Day 5 - Monday</u> Bean and Vegetable Stew Roasted Zucchini Brown/White Rice Salad Fresh Fruit Chocolate Chip Cookies	<u>Day 10 Saturday Tea Time (all students)</u> Popcorn Salad Fresh Fruit

APPENDIX #2: EXAMPLE OF SIGN FOR THE ENTRANCE OF THE RETREAT CENTER



Typeface: Athleas Regular
Size: 400pt , (3.67 in/93mm) -30pt Kerning

Bay Area Vipassana Center
Project Description
January 6, 2020