

## Pomo Rancheria files for trust

Public comment on proposed 92 acre development closes August 31

by Matthew Hall

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The Lytton Rancheria tribe of California has filed paperwork with federal regulators to



**Alternative A** - The proposed project includes 147 housing units and wants to utilize Windsor water, sewer and police services.

begin the process of moving 92 acres of land bordering Windsor into a federal trust and residents have until August 31 to file comment on the proposal.

According to the environmental assessment prepared by the Bureau of Indian Affairs the preferred option includes 147 residential units including 95 single family homes, 24 cottage style houses, 28 high density housing units, a 18,809 square foot community

center, 2,500 foot roundhouse and 2,707 foot retreat.

The site is located approximately 150 feet south of Windsor's town limits but approximately 21 acres fall within the Town's Sphere of Influence, Urban Growth Boundary and Special Planning area E. The proposed project calls for receiving water and sewer services from the Town, something town officials said was unlikely to happen.

Planning & Building Director Peter Chamberlin said even if the council wanted to provide services, several legal barriers exist.

“Because we have something in writing and precise mapping, we’ve recently learned that 21 acres are within our urban growth boundary,” he said. “Our policy is we don’t serve anything outside of the town limits so those 21 acres would have to be annexed into the town.”

Chamberlin said any annexation would probably require voter approval and could still run afoul of county restrictions on urban growth.

Alternative A calls for police services to be provided by the Windsor Police Department and the Sonoma County Sheriff. Fire services would be provided by CalFire.

The proposal also includes an Alternative B and C. The first contains the same quantity of housing, but uses onsite water production and disposal.

Alternative B describes on-site groundwater production wells and a water treatment plant that would dispose of treated effluent via irrigation, drainage into a ditch along Windsor River Road or discharge into a tributary of Windsor Creek.

The final alternative is for a reduced size project containing a total of 55 residential units.

Windsor Mayor Robin Goble said she didn't believe the town had any interest in providing services to the proposed project and said any of the current proposals was of concern. "I don't know that the property can handle that level of development," she said. "I'm not confident that whatever they do in terms of water and sewer will be at the levels of surrounding jurisdictions."

The Council has already expressed opposition to the plan. On May 6, the council took a 4-1 vote to accept a resolution formalizing opposition to the proposal which concluded by saying "the Town will oppose any project on the subject property that is not developed in a manner consistent with the General Plan of Sonoma County or the Town's Urban Growth Boundary."

Councilmember Sam Salmon was the lone opposition to the resolution.

Chamberlin said town staff will work to submit a response to the proposal and that they have already begun to solicit legal advice. He said their first priority is to ask for an extension to the 30 day limit in order to prepare a complete response.

If the request were to be approved, the land would be taken into a federal trust and put outside the jurisdiction of Sonoma County agencies. "What the Lytton Pomos are applying for is to convert the status of a land from private ownership," he said. "This application is about converting that status to federal ownership in trust, in trust means held in trust in perpetuity for this Native American group. At that point they would become a sovereign nation, technically not a political subdivision of the state or county."

Physical copies of the environmental assessment are available for public review at the Lytton Rancheria, Tribal Administration Office located at 1300 North Dutton Ave. Suite A, Santa Rosa, CA 95401, telephone 575-5917, or at the Windsor Public Library located at 9291 Old Redwood Highway #100, Windsor, California 95492, telephone 838-1020. An electronic version is available online at [www.analyticalcorp.com](http://www.analyticalcorp.com). Written comments should be mailed to Dale Morris, Regional Director, Pacific Regional Office, 2800 Cottage Way, Sacramento, California 95825. Call 916-978-6044 for more information. The public comment period for the environmental assessment will end on August 31, 2009.