

AUGUST 28, 2006

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT



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Marion Pavan
Associate Planner
City of Pleasanton
P.O. Box 520
Pleasanton, Ca 94566

Subject: Oak Grove Planned Unit Development (PUD-33) – Draft Environmental Impact Report

Dear Mr. Pavan:

The East Bay Regional Park District (the 'District') has received and reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Oak Grove Planned Unit Development project. The project proposes a 98-lot custom home development and includes a 6.5 acre public park and 482 acres of protected open space with recreational trails.

The District is interested in the project in that a substantial amount of land will be preserved as open space. Additionally, the project will be developed on open space land and ridgelines in the south eastern portion of the City of Pleasanton.

Open Space and Recreation Land Management and Maintenance

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines state that a project would be considered to have a significant impact if it is determined that it would include recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

The proposed project includes a 6.5-acre park and 482-acres of recreational open space. The project proposes to include a Class A Regional Trail and a number of Class C Trails within the project site. Additionally, three staging areas are proposed on the proposed project site.

Long term funding for the management and maintenance of the park, open space, trails, and staging areas need to be included by establishing a zone of benefit, special assessment, or some other funding mechanism.

A lack of funding for long-term management and maintenance of the park, open space, trails, and staging areas would potentially result in an adverse physical impact on the environment by increasing the management and maintenance demands of the entity that will eventually manage the area, and potentially resulting lack of sufficient funds to

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ensure the proper stewardship of other open space and/or recreational areas managed by the entity.

The DEIR should identify a potentially significant recreation impact and require, as mitigation, that a funding mechanism is established to ensure the long-term management and maintenance of the area in a manner that will not detract from the stewardship of other lands.

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General Plan Consistency

Chapter 4, Section I – Land Use and Planning, of the DEIR fails to identify relevant General Plan policies with which the proposed project may conflict. The City’s General Plan includes a number of policies that development of the project as currently proposed would potentially conflict with.

The DEIR does identify relevant General Plan policies in the appropriate topical section; however, it does not discuss the projects consistency with the policy. Rather, a simple conclusory statement is provided with no supporting statements or facts. The DEIR should not only identify these policies, but also discuss the projects consistency with the goals, policies, and programs included in the City’s General Plan including, but not limited to, the following:

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- Land Use Element, Policy 12 – “Preserve scenic ridges and views of the Pleasanton, Main, and Southeast Hills ridges”.
- Conservation and Open Space Element, Policy 4 – “Protect all large continuous areas of open space, as designated on the General Plan map, from intrusion by urban development.
- Conservation and Open Space Element, Policy 5 – “Preserve as permanent open space all areas of outstanding scenic qualities or areas which provide extraordinary views of natural and man-made objects.”
- Conservation and Open Space Element, Program 4.4 – “Preserve large blocks of open space land by encouraging the clustering of development.”

The proposed project is planned in a manner that would substantially fragment the existing open space and result in significant disturbance of scenic ridgelines in the Southeast Hills. The proposed project would extend access roads through steep hillsides and place home sites on prominent ridgelines, in a manner that would significantly fragment the existing open space. In a number of instances, open space is fragmented and ridgelines comprised to accommodate the home site and access road for a single home.

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The DEIR should thoroughly review the projects consistency with the General Plan goals, policies, and programs, and in instances where there appears to be a conflict, identify mitigation measures to reduce any potential impacts to a less than significant level.

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Fringe Lots

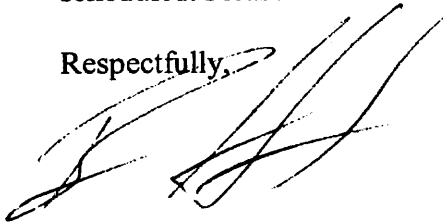
The plan includes a number of home sites that are located on the far fringes of the proposed development area in a manner that needlessly fragments the open space and would result in much greater wildland fire, geologic, aesthetic, and biologic impacts. The increased potential for impacts through development of these “fringe lots” would far exceed the minimal benefits received.

The lots that would be the most egregious examples of these “fringe lots” that the City should reconsider permitting would be lots 23, 24, 44, 65, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, and 98 as shown on Figure 3 of the DEIR.

The City should require that those lots that would require substantial grading on steep slopes and prominent ridgelines for access roads and building pads located on the outer fringes of the development, be removed or clustered in a manner that would decrease the amount of grading necessary, the fragmentation of open space, demands on public safety providers, and impacts to visually prominent ridgelines.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the DEIR and provide comments. We would like to be kept informed as additional project details become available and hearings are scheduled. Please feel free to contact us should you need any additional information.

Respectfully,



Brian W. Holt
Senior Planner

Cc: L. Tong – Interagency Planning Manager (EBRPD)

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