

**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

DATE: September 9, 2009

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Planning Staff

SUBJECT: Consideration of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), for the proposed Ascension Heights Subdivision located in the unincorporated San Mateo Highlands area of San Mateo County. The project includes the subdivision of the 13.25-acre subject site into 25 legal parcels for development of 25 single-family dwellings with a main private access road, and an Emergency Vehicle Access road to provide additional fire access. The project site is accessed from Bel Aire Road north of Ascension Drive.

County File Number: PLN 2002-00517
(O'Rourke/San Mateo Real Estate and Construction)

PROPOSAL

The proposed project is to subdivide six legal parcels, which make up the project site situated on a hillside, into 25 parcels for the purpose of developing single-family residences, as allowed by the existing R-1/S-8 zoning district. The proposed new parcels would range in size from 10,120 sq. ft. to 17,590 sq. ft. and would be orientated along both sides of a new private main access road in a loop configuration.

The project will also include a "tot-lot," an 8,365 sq. ft. playground facility located near the subject site's main entrance. A 19,602 sq. ft. area at the southwest corner of the subject site, adjacent to Bel Aire Road and Ascension Drive, is proposed as a protected area through the implementation of a conservation easement in order to contain and address the existing erosion located in that area. The remaining 4.12 acres will be allocated for additional conservation regions utilized as common areas, which will surround the southern and western portions of the subject site. Two trails are also proposed as part of the project, one on the north portion of the subject site, and the second near the southwest corner.

Due to the design of the subdivision and topography, an Emergency Vehicle Access (EVA) road is required in order to provide secondary emergency fire access within the subdivision. This EVA, to be used only by emergency vehicles, would connect the interior private street loop with Ascension Drive. The 20-foot wide roadway requires a maximum 20% slope and multi-level retaining walls in order to negotiate the hillside down to the egress point on Ascension Drive.

The specific applications which will require Planning Commission recommendations include:

1. Subdivision of the six parcels that make up the subject site to create 25 new residential parcels in accordance with the proposed tentative subdivision map contained in Attachment B.
2. Issuance of a grading permit for the EVA road, new private street, and site preparation in anticipation of the issuance of building permits for development of the 25 residential lots.
3. Removal of four significant eucalyptus trees required for the installation of the EVA road.

In addition to the consideration of the above applications, an environmental review of the project is required in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Based on the nature of the project, it was determined that the proposed project would necessitate an Environmental Impact Report to analyze the potential impacts of the project. A Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) has been circulated for public review. The required public comment period commenced June 22, 2009 and ends on September 9, 2009. The Planning Commission received copies of the DEIR on June 25, 2009. Following the close of the public review period, Christopher A. Joseph and Associates, in consultation with Planning staff, will review and prepare responses to comments received during the public commenting period, as well as those presented at the September 9 Planning Commission meeting. Comments and responses will be included in a Final EIR document; to be presented to the Planning Commission at the time the project is considered. Staff anticipates a tentative hearing of December 9, 2009.

RECOMMENDATION

Receive staff and applicant presentations and open the public meeting and accept comments and testimony on the Draft EIR.

BACKGROUND

Report Prepared By: James A. Castañeda, Project Planner, Telephone 650/363-1853

Applicant: San Mateo Real Estate and Construction

Owner: John O'Rourke

Location: Six contiguous parcels of property (APN 041-111-130, 041-111-160, 041-111-270, 041-111-280, 041-111-320, and 041-111-360), consisting of a total of approximately 13.25 acres (gross), located in the unincorporated area of San Mateo County known as the San Mateo Highlands. The subject site is bordered to the west by Bel Aire Road, Ascension Drive to the south, and existing single-family development to the north and west.

Parcel Sizes:	041-111-130:	16,117 sq. ft.
	041-111-160:	10,890 sq. ft.
	041-111-270:	70,567 sq. ft.
	041-111-280:	61,855 sq. ft.
	041-111-320:	194,278 sq. ft.
	041-111-360:	229,997 sq. ft.

Existing Zoning: R-1/S-8 (Single-Family Residential/7,500 sq. ft. minimum lot size)

General Plan Designation: Medium Low Density Residential (2.4 – 6.0 dwelling units/acre).

Setting: The subject site is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Bel Aire Road and Ascension Drive. It is situated on a hillside with average slopes of 40%. The subject site is surrounded by single-family dwellings, including the Baywood Park neighborhood to the northeast, the Enchanted Hills neighborhood to the southeast and southwest, and the Starlite Heights neighborhood to the northwest. The College of San Mateo campus is located less than 1/4 mile northeast of the subject site via Parrott Drive. At the center of the subject site is an existing potable water tank owned and operated by the California Water Service Company located on a separate 22,500 sq. ft. parcel. The water tank is also used for mounting cellular communication facilities by various operators. This separate parcel is not part of the proposed project. The site was graded over 40 years ago, which consisted of excavating the sides of the hill for the construction of Ascension Drive and Bel Aire Road. Eight-foot wide benches at 30-foot intervals were created along Ascension Drive as a result. Surface runoff from these benches has eroded the slope over the years. The site is predominately characterized by grassland, small brush and trees such as oak, pine and eucalyptus. A small grove of eucalyptus trees is located on the southeast side of the site and pine trees have been planted around the water tank facility.

Existing Land Use: The property is undeveloped.

Water Supply: Domestic water service would be provided to the project site by California Water Service Company (Cal Water). The existing on-site water lines to the existing water tank would be relocated to accommodate the new proposed development. Upon approval of the project, the applicant would be responsible for the installation of the required infrastructure providing water service to each parcel, as well as securing permits with Cal Water to perform installation.

Sewage Disposal: Sanitary sewer service would be provided to the subject site by the Crystal Springs County Sanitation District (CSCSD), with sewage flowing through lines owned by the Town of Hillsborough and City of San Mateo before being treated at the Wastewater Treatment Plant owned and operated by the City of San Mateo. The proposed on-site sewer system would consist of the development of underground sanitary sewer pipelines, gravity lines, risers, clean-outs and manholes. All sewer lines leaving the site would be gravity fed, while the on-site lines would consist of a pressure system. Both of the proposed off-site sewer line extensions would connect into the existing CSCSD system. The sewer ejector pumps would be pre-manufactured, all-inclusive pumps with battery backup, high water alarm, and would have industry-standard holding capacities.

Flood Zone: Zone C (Area of Minimal Flooding); Community Panel No. 060311-0140B, Effective Date: July 5, 1984.

DISCUSSION

The Draft EIR (DEIR) prepared by Christopher A. Joseph and Associates, the environmental consultant retained by San Mateo County, discusses a number of topics and potential impacts generated by the proposed project. Potential environmental impacts fall into the following categories: scenic and visual impacts to the surrounding area, slope stability, health impacts during grading and hauling of soil off-site, construction-related noise levels, hydrology and water quality, soil erosion, construction-related air quality emissions, greenhouse gas emissions, and potential project-related traffic impacts. As part of the DEIR, mitigation measures have been

recommended to address the potential environmental impacts in order to reduce them to a less than significant level. These impacts and potential issues were identified during the EIR public scoping session held December 2003. Various agencies have reviewed the project to determine the project's feasibility. Recommendations and conditions were provided by these agencies to contribute to the proposed mitigation measures included in the document.

The project was revised from the original proposal to provide a secondary access for emergency services. After review by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal-Fire), which provides fire protection to the subject site and surrounding area, it was indicated that the maximum length of a dead-end road with a single ingress/egress shall not exceed 1,000 cumulative feet. To address this fire safety impact, Cal-Fire requires a secondary fire access road into the subdivision. As a result, the project was delayed in order to investigate and propose a feasible means of providing this secondary emergency access.

The applicant has proposed an Emergency Vehicle Access (EVA) road within the southeastern downslope portion of the subject site, which would connect the proposed main private access road to an egress point on Ascension Drive. The EVA road would include a 20-foot wide street surface, a vehicle turnout, multi-level (5 to 10 feet high) keystone block retaining walls, and a maximum grade of 20%. The EVA road would not be allowed for general public access, and is for the exclusive use of emergency services only. The proposed EVA road has resulted in nominal changes to the original project's proposed orientation, which still results in 25 proposed parcels in a ring/loop configuration.

Due to the scope and complexity of the grading and utilities, all work proposed on the Vesting Tentative Map (Attachment A) will be completed in one phase. The grading phase would require approximately 34 to 44 days for completion, with the appropriate utility infrastructure added after this phase. The construction of the new private street would require an additional six months past the grading phase. All utility connections to individual parcels would be completed as part of the one phase tract improvements. The building schedule and phasing of the individual houses has not yet been determined; however, it is assumed for this analysis that buildout of all the individual dwelling units on the proposed 25 parcels could be anticipated within approximately 4.5 to 5 years of project approval.

To date, staff has received several written comments regarding the project. The comments include several of the same issues that were initially raised at the public scoping session in December 2003. These comments are included as Attachment E of this report. In summary, many of the comments provided focus on construction impacts. The exposure to the dust, erosion, noise, pollution and traffic during the construction period is a significant concern to the surrounding area. Other issues raised were related to anticipated buildout time, further traffic impact analysis, geological impacts, and impacts to overall quality of life. Responses to the comments received will be prepared as part of the Final EIR.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this public hearing is to provide interested parties an opportunity to present comments to the Planning Commission regarding the Draft EIR for the proposed Ascension Heights Subdivision. No decision regarding the Draft EIR or the Ascension Heights project will be made at the September 9, 2009 meeting. Following the close of the public review period on September 9, 2009, Christopher A. Joseph and Associates, in consultation with Planning staff,

will review and prepare responses to comments received at the September 9 meeting as well as written comments received by Planning staff during the public commenting period. Comments and response to comments will be included in a Final EIR document. It is anticipated that the Final EIR will be available in November 2009. The Ascension Heights Subdivision project and Final EIR is tentatively scheduled for review and recommendation by the Planning Commission December 9, 2009.

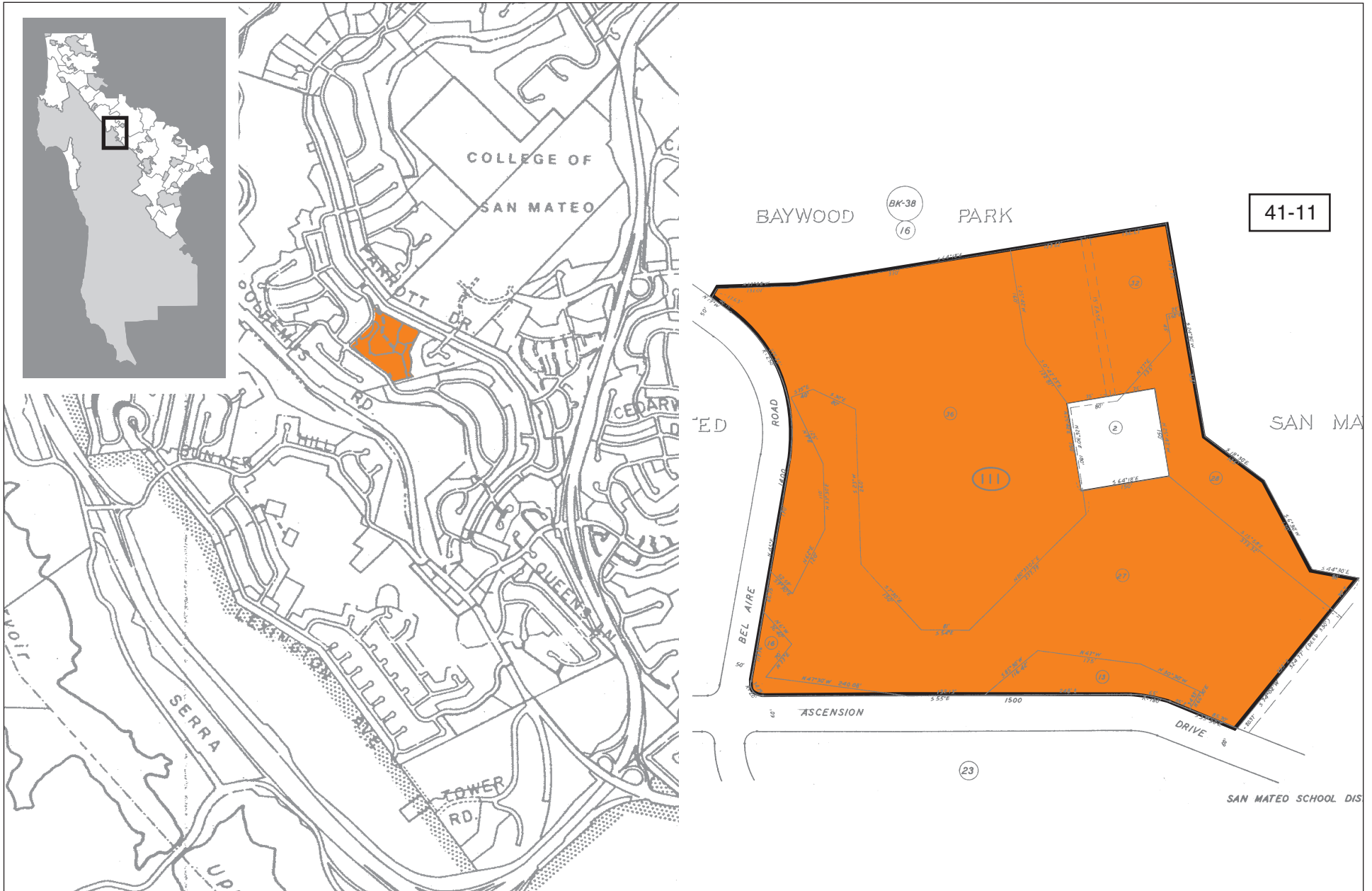
REVIEWING AGENCIES

Bay Area Air Quality Management District
Baywood Plaza Community Association
California Department of Conservation
California Department of Fish and Game
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
California Regional Water Quality Control Board
California Water Service Company
City of San Mateo
Committee for Green Foothills
Crystal Springs County Sanitation District
Highlands Recreation District
Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo)
Los Trancos Woods Community Association
Pacific Gas and Electric Company
Polhemus Heights Community Association
SamTrans
San Mateo County Building Inspection Section
San Mateo County Department of Parks
San Mateo County Department of Public Works
San Mateo County Environmental Health Division
San Mateo County Sheriff's Office
San Mateo-Foster City School District
San Mateo Highlands Community Association
San Mateo Union High School District
Town of Hillsborough

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Vicinity Map for Ascension Heights Subdivision
- B. Proposed Vesting Tentative Map
- C. Aerial Photograph of the Subject Site
- D. Emergency Access Road Elevations
- E. Public Responses

JAC:fc – JACT0776_WFU.DOC

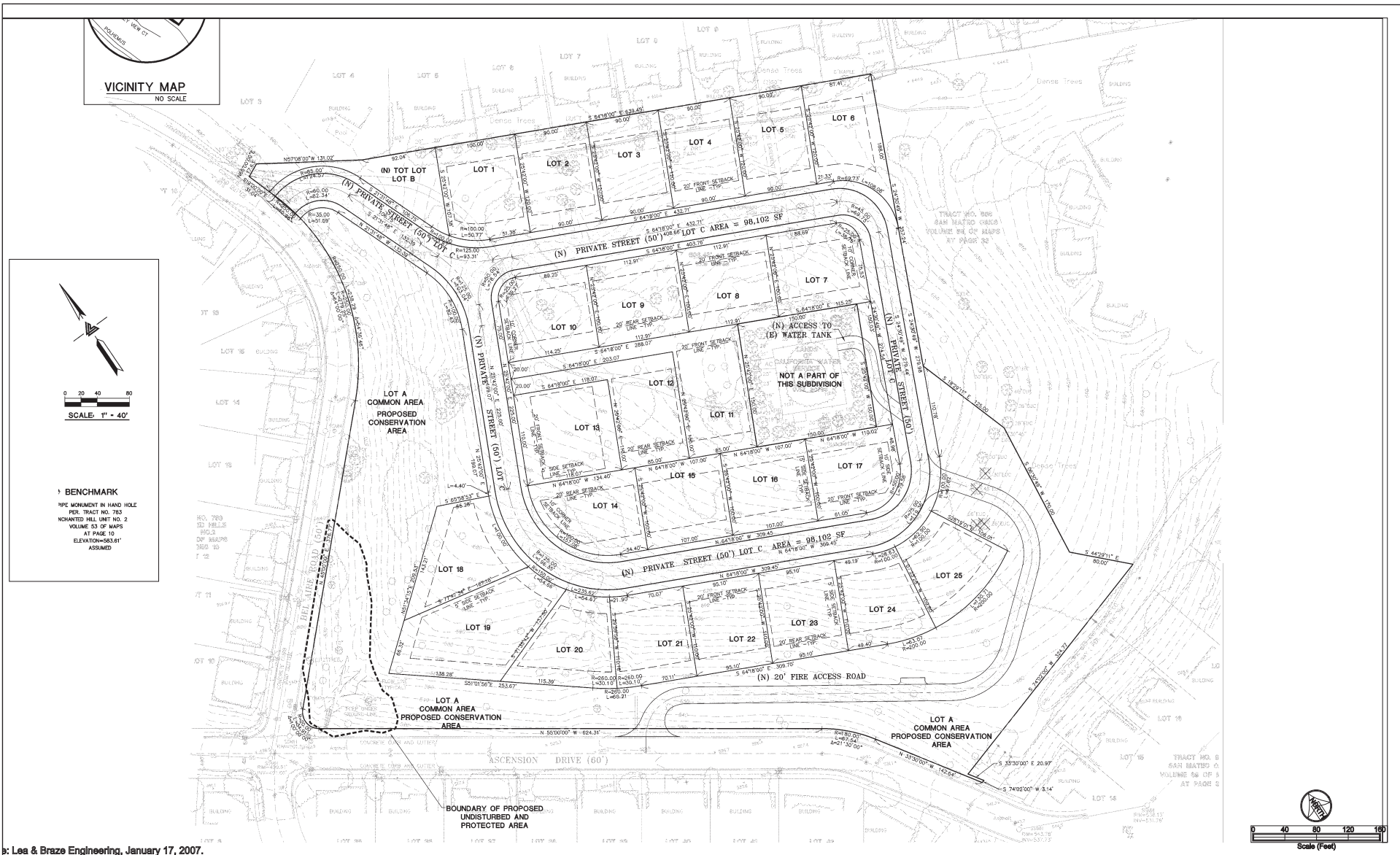


San Mateo County Planning Commission's Meeting

Owner/Applicant: **Orouke John**

Attachment: A

File Numbers: **PLN 2002-00517**



by Lea & Braze Engineering, January 17, 2007.

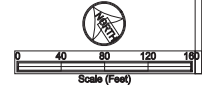


Figure III-12
Vesting Tentative Map

San Mateo County Planning Commission's Meeting

Owner/Applicant: **Orourke John**

Attachment: **B**

File Numbers: **PLN 2002-00517**

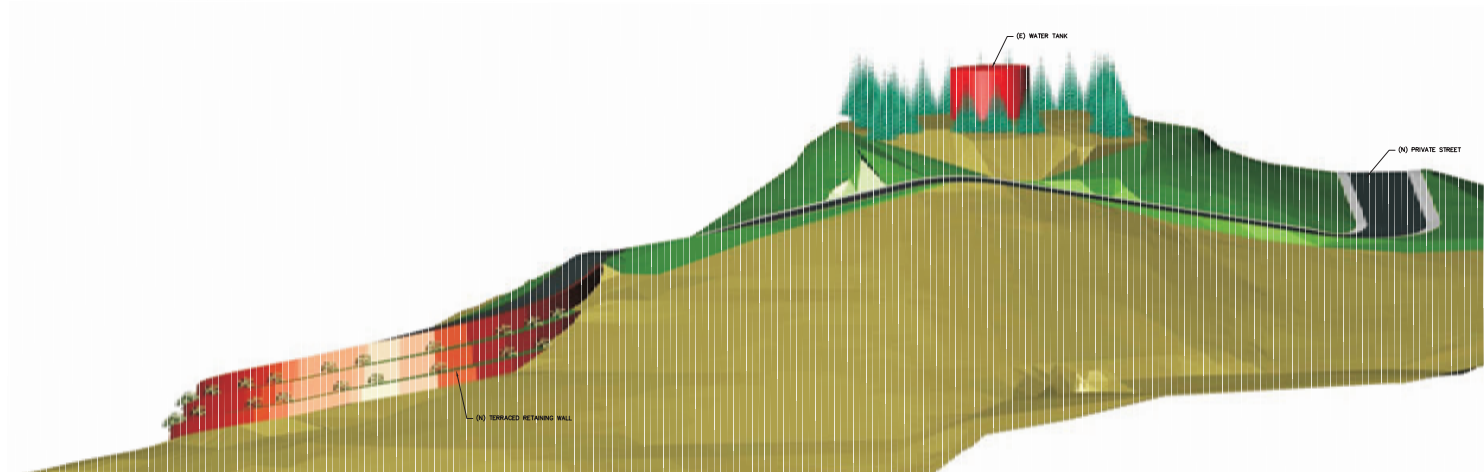


San Mateo County Planning Commission's Meeting

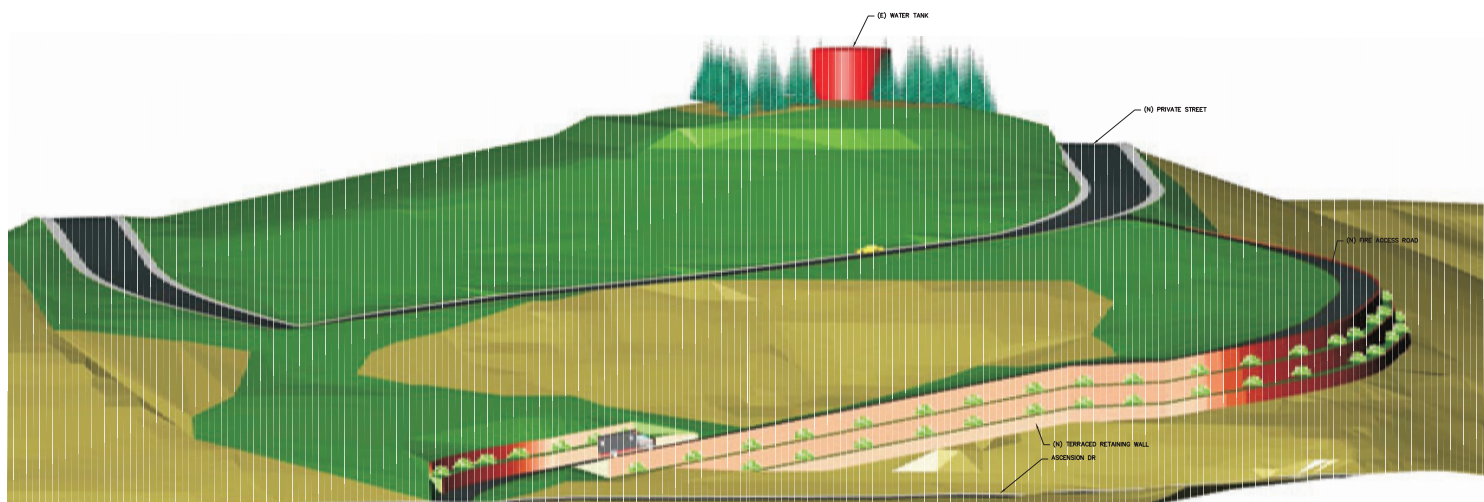
Owner/Applicant: **Orourke John**

Attachment: C

File Numbers: **PLN 2002-00517**



WEST VIEW FROM ASCENSION DR
SCALE: 1" = 20'



NORTH VIEW FROM ASCENSION DR
SCALE: 1" = 20'

Source: Lea & Braze Engineering, Inc. January, 2006

Figure III-16
Emergency Access Road Elevations

San Mateo County Planning Commission's Meeting

Owner/Applicant: **Orourke John**

Attachment: **D**

File Numbers: **PLN 2002-00517**

From: "Peter C. Lawrence" <pdlaw@pacbell.net>
To: "James Castaneda" <JCastaneda@co.sanmateo.ca.us>
Date: 7/4/2009 10:20
Subject: Re: Ascension Heights Subdivision Draft EIR

James,

Thanks for the link and information. I've been studying the report with interest. There are several matters of concern to me and others living on Ascension Drive that I would like to address, but I do not know if either I overlooked them in the document or if there is a special protocol/form for raising issues.

One primary concern is water. I see how plans for water diversion and drainage on the site are described, but I do not see any concerns for ongoing problems that may be exacerbated by construction. Underground water from the hill affects most houses on Ascension from time to time due to storms. Will the developer or HOA be responsible for changes that increase risk of health or safety to existing homes in the 1500 block of Ascension that face the project?

Another concern is the emergency road and the "concrete block walls" along Ascension Drive. Appearance comes to mind. Is there a possibility that the strategy used on Highway 92 West of Half Moon Bay Gap could be used here attempting to make the concrete look more "natural"?

Is a sidewalk planned for Bel Aire Road and Ascension Drive? I cannot determine this from the maps of the site, but perhaps I'm not reading things correctly.

Under "alternatives" I note a 15 unit development. Is there a map/design for this alternative? Would such an option eliminate the need for the emergency road described for this project?

I would appreciate knowing how to appropriately address these matters. And thank you for your time and attention; I appreciate that more is being expected from county employees with fewer resources in economically stressful times.

Peter Lawrence

On Jun 30, 2009, at 11:13 AM, James Castaneda wrote:

> Peter,
> The link for the document is midway through the page as your scroll
> down listed as Ascension Heights Subdivision Draft Environmental
> Impact
> Report (EIR) Documents. The direct link is as follows:
>
>
<http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/portal/site/planning/menuitem.2ca7e1985b6c8f5565d293e5d17332a0/?vgnextoid=1c8357d273fe1210VgnVCM1000001937230aRCRD&cpsextcurrchannel=1>
>
> For obvious reasons, we did not put that link on the mail out, and due

> to county's technical limitation on our website, we could not get a
> simpler, direct web address. Further, we're in the middle of updating
> the departments homepage, where it will be easier to navigate to our
> EIR
> documents. Due to this forthcoming update, we had to make sure we
> put a
> web address that will still lead the public to this new website when
> it
> goes live in a few weeks. I apologize for any confusion, but the link
> provided in the notice to the document is on the department's home
> page.
> Please let me know if you require any further information.
>
> Regards,
> James A. Castañeda
>
> _____
> James A. Castañeda, Planner II
> County of San Mateo
> Planning & Building Department
> 455 County Center, 2nd Floor
> Redwood City, CA 94063
> OFFICE: +1 (650) 363-1853
> FAX: +1 (650) 363-4849
>
>
>
>
> Save Paper.
> Think before you print.
>

July 6, 2009

James A. Castaneda, Project Planner

City of San Mateo, Planning and Building Dept.

Dear Mr. Castaneda,

I am writing you to express my wish that your department not allow any building to take place on the vacant parcel known as The Ascension Heights subdivision.

Our neighborhood cannot sustain the increased traffic or drain on our precious resources such as water and electricity.

I purchased a home here because of the peace and quiet and would like it to remain that way. I will seriously consider moving from this area, if the county allows this project to proceed.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my opinion.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Wendy Woodard', written in dark ink.

Wendy Woodard
1367 Parrott Drive
San Mateo, Ca. 94402

James Castaneda - Ascension Heights Subdisvision

From: "m g" <marvingin@yahoo.com>
To: <jcastaneda@co.sanmateo.ca.us>
Date: 7/24/2009 10:08
Subject: Ascension Heights Subdisvision

County of San Mateo, Planning and Building Department
Attn: James A. Castaneda, Project Planner
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1662

Dear Mr. Castaneda,

I reject the Ascension Heights Subdivision project. I am concern that the Ascension Heights Subdivision project will cause health issues with my 1 year old son. My wife is also pregnant with our second child and I plan to have one more after that. I don't need big trucks running through Parrott Drive all day long. I don't need dust blow toward my house where my son is outside playing and I don't need my wife to breathe all that dirty air. It's going to cause asthma and god knows what else.

It is already known that traffic on Parrott Drive is already too busy. Car's going too fast, children are not able to take walks on the side walk, elderly person's used Parrott Drive as daily walking path for their daily exercises, owner of pet owner's will not be able to walk their dogs. With the health hazards from the Ascension Heights Subdivision project everyone that lives and pay property tax in this area will be affected. Trucks carrying loads of dirt and the dust being kick up will take away from children being able to play outside, elderly people will not be able to take their walks, and pets will also lose enjoyment from this project.

The area is already over build and can not tolerated anymore new housing. I say no to the Ascension Heights Subdivision project. The area should be kept as open space. I'm going to sue the County of San Mateo if anything happen to my son, wife and my unborn baby. I pay property tax within this county and I'm telling you that I don't need someone building 25 houses and taking tons of dirt off the mountain with in eye shot of my house.

Thank you for your time and understanding,

Marvin Gin
1459 Parrott Drive
San Mateo, CA 94402
650.638.1908

July 30, 2009

County of San Mateo, Planning & Building Department

Attn: James Castaneda, Project Planner

455 County Centers, 2nd Floor

Redwood City, CA. 94063-1662

RE: San Mateo Co. 6/25/09 Notice of Availability of Draft Environmental Impact Report:
Ascension Heights plan for 25-lot subdivision.

Dear Mr. Castaneda,

I have lived on the 1400 block of Bel Aire Rd since 1970. I'm writing about DEIR that addresses the Impact TRANS-6: Construction Impacts on Bel Aire Rd. traffic. An estimated 69 round trip heavy haul trucks (138 trips) daily for soil removal & grading Monday thru Friday during the non-rainy season. The 2008 estimated total truck trips is 3,036 round trips to complete the project ~ by 2013. This is only one important item of many concerns.

As Bel Aire Road residents, we will face a "significant and unavoidable daily traffic impact" during the four year construction, and in 2013 an additional estimated 240+ vehicles and 70 residents. Section IV.I Transportation /Traffic of the report mentions "this project can overlap with other projects" e.g., the Crystal Springs Bypass Tunnel and CSM improvements. It is possible that heavy trucks required to import and /or export materials to the related project sites could use roads to be used by the soil haul trucks for the proposed projects." As I understand this, then all of the trucks for Tunnel, Ascension project & CSM could use Bel Aire Road and Laurie Lane. This would be a nightmare, and prevent us from driving out of our driveways or even being in our yards or opening windows with the constant dirt, noise, and air pollution: elevated lead & carbon monoxide. What will happen during very warm days or heat waves/ Spare the Air days? We'll be exposed to additional pollution, noise and grime. We won't be able to open our windows! Bel Aire Rd. will be an unhealthy dust bowl. We will be blocked from Polhemus Rd. and predictably, the alternate, Parrot Dr. to Hwy.92 will be gridlocked.

I called Mr. James Castaneda @ SMC Planning & Building Dept SMC to verify that the Traffic analysis for Bel Aire was limited to (Tuesday) 5/20/08 x 24 hours only. This does not give an accurate data for the weekly traffic volume on this block of Bel Aire Rd. Since 1972 Bel Aire is the main shortcut for CSM traffic to Parrot from north & south Hwy. 92 from Polhemus Rd. or DeAnza Blvd. On Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday there is heavy CSM traffic including late morning, afternoon and evening classes. CSM now has 11,000 students registered each semester. While some may attend on-line, the reality is the Bel Aire/CSM traffic significantly increases during CSM classes late August until the spring sessions end in June and will only increase in volume each year.

We are asking and deserve an accurate, fair and more extensive traffic analysis from SMC for a five day period of 24 hours from Monday thru Friday during CSM's fall or winter class schedule, (omitting scheduled recess, holiday and weekends.) The current draft analysis of actual traffic volume data for Bel Aire is very limited and greatly minimizes the true impact on the 1400 block of Bel Aire.

The planned access road to and from the Subdivision leads directly onto the 1400 block of Bel Aire, this will create more hazardous traffic congestion at the blind curved, and inclined, section of Bel Aire Road. This will further impede current residents from safely entering/exiting our driveways. Currently, drivers speed and even pass cars on this block of Bel Aire, crossing over the center divide. This plan will adversely affect an already dangerous stretch of road for residents and drivers.

I appreciate your assurance on July 30 when I called ^{that} all written comments from affected residents will be carefully reviewed. Thanks for your work and time to consider my valid concerns for my home and immediate neighborhood. I recognize that this project has required much work by you and CSM staff.

Sincerely,



Ms. Geraldine Roach
Parcel No. 041-222-050
1456 Bel Aire Rd.
San Mateo, CA. 04402

August 4, 2009

COUNTY OF SAN Mateo, Planning and Building Department
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1662

Attn: James A Castaneda, Project Planner

Re: Ascension Heights Subdivision, Public Comments

Dear Mr. Castaneda:

I am very concerned about the impact the Ascension Heights Subdivision project will have on my neighborhood and specifically to my property.

Dust and traffic noise will be a serious problem for months while the excavation takes place. Heavy trucks will haul hundreds of truckloads of soil that will expose the neighborhood to constant noise, dust and diesel pollutants.

Construction work and the eventual subdivision will have a huge effect on the wildlife habitat the hill provides. We have families of quail and deer. We have garter, gopher and rattle snakes. We have owls. There are many other species of wildlife too numerous to mention.

Our biggest concern is the potential for earth slides due to the very steep project site. Sliding of the hills in this area is a continuing problem. Our homeowners association, San Mateo Oaks, had a slide that cost our Association \$750,000 which was divided and accessed to each San Mateo Oaks homeowner. A few years later, another slide cost \$30,000 or more. The Rainbow Drive slide closed the Polhemus Canyon road for an extended period of time and required very expensive renovation.. We are concerned that our side of the hill will become unstable due to the construction of this Ascension Heights Subdivision. Who will be responsible for the damages that may occur from disrupting the stability of the hillside above our homes? We have lived in our home since 1977 and have enjoyed a beautiful hillside with lots of wildlife. This project threatens wildlife, stability of a huge hillside and the tranquility of a neighborhood that we have cherished for many years.

Please consider the concerns of our letter.

Sincerely,

 *Barbare Mikulic*

Dr. and Mrs. Stephen Mikulic, 132 CSM Drive, San Mateo, CA 94402 650-574-1923
mikulic@sbcglobal.net

RECEIVED
2009 AUG - 5 A 11: 21A
SAN MATEO COUNTY
PLANNING DIVISION

Aug. 5, 2009

To whom it may concern

We are current residents of 1435 Enchanted Way in San Mateo. We are very concerned about the plans to move ahead with the large Ascension Heights Subdivision.

We feel that the completed project would destroy the existing open land, increase the risk of land erosion by carving into that hillside, disrupt much or all of the natural wildlife that we currently are able to experience (ie, coyotes, hawks, deer, skunks, bobcats, and squirrels). The end result would provide limited housing at a time in which the housing market is impaired. The thought of destroying all of the natural resources and may result in unoccupied housing would be horrific!

The reason many of us live in the county is that it provides quiet, open spaces and a snapshot of a natural, less inhabited environment. If this project is allowed to move forward, the entire community is at risk. The day to day serenity for the next four years would be lost and may not be regained upon completion with the extra

traffic of inhabitants!

SAN MATEO COUNTY
PLANNING DIVISION

2009 AUG - 5 1 P 4: 52

RECEIVED

As residents of this community,
I am hopeful that you will
think long term and continue
to provide us with the peaceful
community that drew us to
live here!! Please consider
putting a stop to this
building plan that will impact
each and everyone of us in
the community — make a decision
on this in good conscience!!

Concerned resident,
Signed Linda & Gary Dobson

August 3, 2009

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO, Planning and Building Department
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1662

Attn.: James A. Castaneda, Project Planner

Subj.: Ascension Heights Subdivision, Public Comments

Dear Mr. Castaneda:

We are very concerned about the impact this project will have on our neighborhood and to our property specifically.

During excavation and removal of material from the site there will be an unusual dust, noise and traffic impact. Our property is directly below the site on the steepest southwest side of the subdivision. We expect serious dust and noise conditions for months. My husband and I are elderly and suffer with respiration problems.

It appears the total construction work will extend over several years, and our careful selection of our property for privacy and quiet, will become totally ruined during our "golden years."

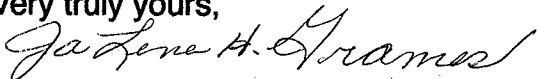
Also, the subdivision will loom over us, severely affecting our precious view, and our quiet due to the housing traffic, once the project is complete. It will also mainly cut off the traffic pattern of deer and other wildlife which has been a huge source of pleasure for us. When we bought this property, we were told nothing would be built around it.

One of our biggest concerns is potential for earth slides due to the very steep project site, especially on our side. Sliding of the hills in this area is a continuing problem. We are part of the San Mateo Oaks Homeowners Assn. where a few years ago a slide cost our Association \$ 750,000 which was divided and accessed to each property involved. Then just a few years later, another slide just below our property cost \$30,000 plus. You may be aware of the serious Rainbow Drive slide which closed the Polhemus Canyon road for an extended period of time and required very expensive renovation.

We have been unable to read the entire DEIR for the subject project, but we are certain all of our concerns have not been addressed.

We will appreciate your careful consideration of our concerns.

Very truly yours,



Ja Lene H. Grames, 140 CSM Drive, San Mateo, CA 94402

August 3, 2009

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO, Planning and Building Department
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1662

Attn.: James A. Castaneda, Project Planner

Subj.: Ascension Heights Subdivision, Public Comments

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We will appreciate your careful consideration of our concerns.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lloyd M. Grames".

Lloyd M. Grames, 140 CSM Drive, San Mateo, CA 94402

August 2,2009

**County of San Mateo,Planning and Building Department
Attn:James A. Castaneda,Project Planner
455 County Center,2nd Floor
Redwood City,Ca. 94063-1662**

Dear Mr. Castaneda:

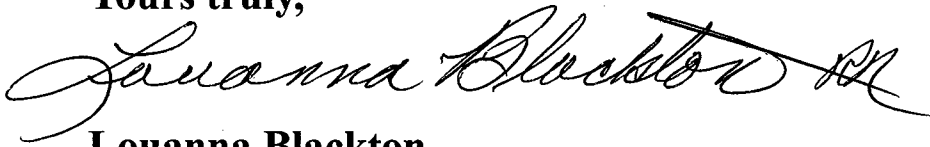
It has come to my attention that the access to the Ascension Heights project will be directly across from my residence. The traffic per day will be constant and dangerous. Bel Aire Road is already a high traffic street due to the proximity of the College of San Mateo. Students travel this street constantly when the college is in session.

I understand a traffic study has been done but for only one 5 hour period when the college was not in session. It is mandatory that a full five day, eight hour study be done when the college is in session.

The constant barrage of heavy equipment is extremely dangerous at the access site proposed due to the blind curve at the intersection of Bel Aire Road and Laurie Lane. The rejected access at the intersection of Ascension and Bel Aire Road is a much safer alternative as the area has clear view and is wider and unobstructed. The other access, which may not be feasible would be to clear a road from the west end of CSM Drive just above the cul de sac at the south end of the hill to the water tank. My driveway is just at the crest of the hill and opposite the access to the water tank. All the equipment will compound an already dangerous situation. I am self employed and in and out of the driveway all day,6 days a week. It should be noted that I own the easement lots directly across the street. The county, years ago, purchased the right to use the drive to

the water tank for access to the tank and for the surveyors' use only. The health and safety of my family are in jeopardy. I have severe allergy to dust as does my toddler grandson who lives with me. I feel that my residence will bear the brunt of all the negative activity. I do not allow off road parking (cars or equipment) on the proximal lot. This area is reserved for my vehicles and those of my friends only.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Louanna Blackton". The signature is written in dark ink and includes a stylized flourish at the end.

**Louanna Blackton
1438 Bel Aire Road
San Mateo, California 94402**

Aurelio & Loretta Pagani
16 Valley View Court
San Mateo, CA 94402

Home: (650) 349-0113

Email: leo@jescomusa.com

August 10, 2009

Office of San Mateo
Planning & Building Department
Attn: James A. Castaneda, Project Planner
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94036-1662

Re: Ascension Heights Subdivision ("Water Tank Hill") Project

Dear Mr. Castaneda,

We live at 16 Valley View Court, west of the proposed Ascension Heights Subdivision project, and have two main objections to this project and questions that require clarification as follows:

- 1) Water Table. There are many underground springs and streams in the area and speaking from personal experience, we have spent a great deal of money and effort to mitigate the problem of water intrusion into our home from underground.

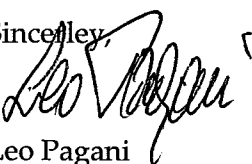
What assurance do we have that this construction will not affect the underground water system?

Are those planning and funding this project taking into consideration possible reimbursement should water problems occur, reoccur or worsen due to this construction?

- 2) Parking & Traffic. How is this going to affect all neighboring streets and not to mention the tranquility that we have enjoyed over the decades of peaceful existence and ownership in our neighborhood?

We sincerely hope this project isn't going to look like a fortress considering it seems like there will be a need for retaining walls at every point in the landscape due to land erosion. You don't have to look far to see the Polhemus Road barrier/wall the stemming from land erosion issues on Rainbow and Starlite Drives. It would be a shame to ruin the aesthetics of our neighborhood to build homes that will likely be vacant and riddled with construction defects, a common occurrence with new construction.

Sincerely,



Leo Pagani

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

111 GRAND AVENUE
P. O. BOX 23660
OAKLAND, CA 94623-0660
PHONE (510) 622-5491
FAX (510) 286-5559
TTY 711



*Flex your power!
Be energy efficient!*

August 6, 2009

SM092150
SM-092-R9.38
SCH 2003102061

Mr. James Castaneda
County of San Mateo
Planning and Building Division
455 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

Dear Mr. Castaneda:

**ASCENSION HEIGHTS SUBDIVISION – DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
REPORT AND TECHNICAL APPENDICES**

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Department) in the environmental review for the Ascension Heights Subdivision project. The following comments are based on the Draft Environmental Impact Report and Technical Appendices. As the lead agency, the County of San Mateo is responsible for all project mitigation, including any needed improvements to state highways. The project's fair share contribution, financing, scheduling, implementation responsibilities and lead agency monitoring should be fully discussed for all proposed mitigation measures. This information should also be presented in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP). The MMRP is an integral and required component of the environmental document and should be submitted with the updated Traffic Impact Study (TIS) discussed below. Required roadway improvements should be completed prior to issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy.

Highway Operations

1. The TIS needs to detail whether the capacity for the arterials, collectors, and residential streets is for all lanes or per directional lane. Also, include posted or free-flow speed for each roadway facility.
2. The TIS should discuss the project impacts on State Route (SR) 92 interchanges and ramps at Polhemus Road, De Anza Boulevard, and Hillsdale Boulevard.
3. Accordingly, provide traffic intersection studies for the following intersections: Polhemus Road/Ascension Drive. Ascension Drive/Bel Aire Road, Parrot Drive/College of San Mateo Drive, Hillsdale Boulevard/College of San Mateo Drive, and De Anza Boulevard/Los Altos Drive.
4. Provide geometric plans showing traffic access to the project from Bel Aire Road and Ascension Drive. Plans should clearly show traffic turning movements, number of lanes,

and volumes. Discuss traffic control, traffic conditions, and level of service (LOS) for these intersections.

5. The summarized traffic results shown in all the tables should be based on the LOS of the facilities in addition to the Volume/Capacity (V/C) ratio. Please modify.

Traffic Impact Fees

Please identify traffic impact fees. Development plans should require traffic impact fees based on projected traffic and/or based on associated cost estimates for public transportation facilities necessitated by development. Please refer to the California Office of Planning and Research (OPR) *2003 General Plan Guidelines*, page 163, which can be accessed on-line at the following website: <http://www.opr.ca.gov/index.php?a=planning/gpg.html>

Scheduling and costs associated with planned improvements on Departmental ROW should be listed, in addition to identifying viable funding sources correlated to the pace of improvements for roadway improvements, if any. Please refer to the state OPR's *2003 General Plan Guidelines*, page 106.

Please feel free to call or email Sandra Finegan of my staff at (510) 622-1644 or sandra_finegan@dot.ca.gov with any questions regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Carboni".

LISA CARBONI
District Branch Chief
Local Development – Intergovernmental Review

c: State Clearinghouse

August 11, 2009

County of San Mateo
Planning and Building Department
Attn: James A. Castaneda, Project Manager
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1662

Re: Project Site – Bel Aire Road and Ascension, San Mateo, CA
041-11-130, 280, 160-270,310,360

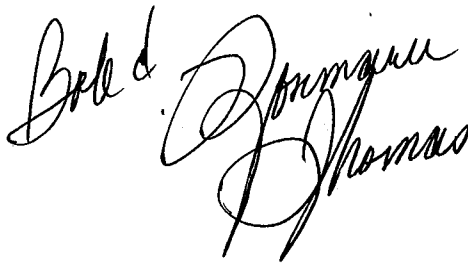
Dear Mr. Castaneda:

Are we going to go through this again??? We thought that this project, due to previous environmental studies that the hillside could be unstable due to underground springs, had been cancelled and here you are again trying to develop an area that is totally unsuitable for additional housing. We have lived here for 20 plus years and this is the third time, to our knowledge, that this project has come up – can't this be left as open space? A park would be more appropriate. Residents of the neighborhood will be impacted by poor air quality due to dirt movement, additional traffic, which during the school year is at its maximum and to the possibility of slides. There have been slides in the area over the years and now you want to come in and add additional risk by trying again to develop this property.

Will the developer be power washing, painting, and cleaning our homes after he moves all of this dirt? Will he be setting traps to stop rodents and other natural animals from invading our property? I don't think so. Will the developer pay for the damage incurred by the residents if slides should occur? I don't think so – he will walk away and leave us all to deal with the mess.

Another point is the current housing market. Look around – there are developments with homes standing vacant – there are homes for sale that have not sold – and this group wants to add an additional 25 to the list – the last time it was 36. What does this tell you – do not let this project go forward. The environment in this State has already been taxed by pollution and use of water that will eventually be gone – we are supposed to protect the environment not cause more damage. We are not environmentalists but it does not take a rocket scientist to see that this is totally unacceptable and that we should not be causing more strain on what we have left.

Thank you,
Concerned Citizens
Robert and Rosemarie Thomas
1480 Bel Aire Road
San Mateo, CA 94402

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob & Rosemarie Thomas", written in a cursive, flowing style.

FAX TO: James A. Castaneda, Project Planner
County of San Mateo
Planning and Building Dept.

FAX NO: 650-363-4849

SUBJ: Ascension Heights Subdivision

DATE: August 6, 2009

FROM: Marie O'Rourke

ADDRESS: 124 CSM Drive
San Mateo, CA 94402

Dear Mr. Castaneda:

We feel the planned Ascension Heights Subdivision will have a negative impact on our property. It is located directly above our home on CSM Drive and will create dust, dirt, noise and traffic problems during its construction.

After completion, noise and traffic conditions will continue, but our main concern is the potential for earth slides, which over the years has been common in our hilly area. The project site is very steep and construction on it will certainly make it more susceptible.

We think that construction, including excavation, could undermine the stability of the existing water tank at the top of the property. We understand the tank will remain as part of our water supply system.

These are only some of our concerns so we will appreciate your careful consideration of all the negative impacts on our existing homes. Thank you.

Very truly yours,

Marie O'Rourke

August 18, 2009

County of San Mateo, Planning and Building Department
Attn: James A. Castaneda, Project Planner
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94036-1662

Dear Sir:

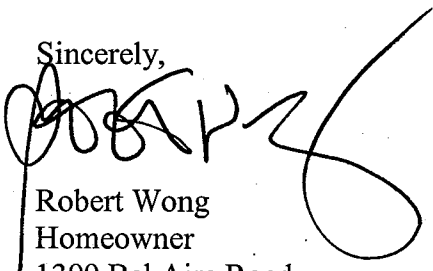
Our house is located at the corner of Laurie Lane and Bel Aire Road. Obviously, we are extremely concerned about the traffic, pollution, dirt and noise that the "Water Tank Hill" project will bring to our otherwise clean and quiet neighborhood.

Approving this project will most certainly endanger our family's health and safety, not to mention our house, and the plants and trees in our property. Multiply this by the families and properties in the area that will all be affected.

Even without this project, we already experience a lot of noise and pollution caused by people who don't live in the area. Students attending College of San Mateo frequently speed through Bel Aire Road and Laurie Lane while using it as a shortcut, dumping garbage along the way. Can you imagine how much garbage there will be with all these trucks driving through especially during the grading period?

We respectfully urge you to consider this and reject this project as unfair to the current residents of the area affected.

Sincerely,



Robert Wong
Homeowner
1399 Bel Aire Road
San Mateo, CA 94402

August 10, 2009

County of San Mateo, Planning and Building Department
Attn: James A. Castaneda, Project Planner
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94036

RE: Proposed Ascension Height Subdivision - OPPOSE

Dear Mr. Castaneda:

As longtime residents of the unincorporated area of San Mateo County and homeowners at 1752 Parrott Drive, we strongly oppose the approval by the County of the Ascension Height Subdivision. We have read the Draft Environmental Impact Report released by the County on June 22 and have a number of serious concerns about this project, which we will outline in this letter. We also plan to attend the September 9 public meeting of the County of San Mateo Planning Commission to register our concerns. Our concerns fall in to three main categories: unstable geology, inappropriate land use planning and county finances.

1. Unstable Geology: We personally know this area well as we walk along Ascension Drive and Bell Aire Road almost every day. The proposed site has an average steepness of 40% according to the DEIR, which will require extensive grading and constructing several large retaining walls. We hope you are aware that over the years there have been several major landslides near the site. There was a major slide above Ascension Drive that required the construction of a very large retaining wall to shore up that hillside. Northwest of the site there was a major hillside slide above Polhemus Road (near Rainbow Drive and Starlite Drive) that required an absolutely enormous retaining wall to be built. As pointed out in the DEIR, the southern slope of this parcel has eroded significantly over the years. The site has many eroded gullies spread across it. Preparing the site for development would require extensive grading – 131,480 cubic yards of earth will be graded and 60,520 cubic yard may have to be removed from the site. The hill is sandstone and even with the proposed construction of retaining walls, once sandstone is exposed to the environment it erodes very quickly. Of all the sites available for housing in San Mateo County, why would the Planning Commission approve 25 lots on this site with such unstable geology? Furthermore, the DEIR makes a number of questionable assumptions about the impact of major earthquake activity along the nearby San Andreas Fault, concluding that this would not be a problem for either the site or the homes on the site.

2. Inappropriate Land Use Planning: San Mateo County clearly needs more affordable housing. One of the primary goals of the County's Vision 2010 and Vision 2025 project was to

build additional affordable housing. However, approving high end housing units that is not close to major transit routes or the urban core violates several of the major goals of the Vision documents, which focused on promoting compact land use planning and transit oriented development. These 25 lots would continue the prior suburban model of planning that is not included in the County's goals.

Vision 2010 Place Goals (approved by the County Board of Supervisors in 1999)

Offer a full range of housing choices.

- Housing exists for people at all income levels and for all generations of families.

Redesign our urban environment to increase vitality, expand variety and reduce congestion.

- Public transportation choices are convenient, affordable, accessible and safe.
- New housing is clustered with jobs and commercial services along transportation corridors.
- Land use decisions consider transportation and other infrastructure needs as well as impacts on the environment and on surrounding communities.

http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/bos.dir/visioning/sv_2010_report5.pdf

Vision 2025 Goals (approved by the County's Board of Supervisors in 2009)

- **Livable:** Our growth occurs near transit, promotes affordable, livable connected communities. <http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/bos.dir/budget/recommend2009/A-17.pdf>

3. County Finances: Current Fiscal Incentives Promote Sprawl At a time when county finances are very constrained, the addition of more housing units in the county not close to jobs and transportation will require additional county services but not generate enough property tax revenue due to Prop 13 limitations to pay for those services. Current fiscal incentives promote sprawl and do not seem like a wise land use choice. Even with high end housing, the service/revenue ratio from additional housing does not work. For example, the following are observations from the Speaker's Commission on State/Local Finance, which can be found at: <http://speaker.metroforum.org/report/report.pdf>

- **Current Fiscal Rules Give the Wrong Land Use Planning Incentives**
Local governments have a fiscal incentive to add major sales tax generating activities and often have a fiscal disincentive to add housing. Fiscal disincentives for housing can reduce a region's housing production or make housing more expensive, as cities place high fees on new housing to make up for lagging revenues from other sources. "Today, however, land use planning no longer creates a healthy balance in California's communities. All too often, communities are forced to make land use planning decisions based entirely on budget decisions. The question of how to create healthy, balanced communities has become secondary to the immediate need to balance the budget." --

Restoring the Balance: Managing Fiscal Issues and Land Use Planning Decisions in
California Planning Roundtable

- **High development fees are a feature of California's post-Proposition 13 local government finance system.** These fees, designed to help revenue-starved communities finance infrastructure and public services; add substantially to the cost of new housing. "Our analysis shows that the fees imposed on new construction are significant, typically falling in the range of \$20,000 to \$30,000 per development. In one community, the fees and assessments totaled 19 percent of the mean sales price." --Who Pays for Development Fees and Exactions Marla Dresch and Steen M. Sheffrin Public Policy Institute of California
- **These fees may encourage sprawl** by leading residents further out into rural areas to find cheaper housing - even though all evidence suggests that residents want to live near their jobs if available housing is close to their price range. "The environment is a big loser in the state's dysfunctional local government fiscal rules. Local communities are forced to focus land use planning on raising revenue through sales taxes. California needs fiscal incentives to reduce sprawl." --Mary Nichols, Now the Executive Director of the California Air Resources Board.

The bottom line is that these 25 units of housing would not only promote inappropriate land use on unstable geology, the price of the housing units after development fees, as a result of the limitations on property tax due to Prop 13, means that these homes will not be affordable and the county will have to pay for their additional public services and infrastructure. The clear alternative is to approve other housing projects, located in compact and transit-oriented development locations, instead of this proposed project.

Sincerely,

Doug Henton and Carol Henton
1752 Parrott Drive
San Mateo, CA 94402
650 571-7563

cc: Supervisor Carole Groom, Supervisor Rich Gordon, Supervisor Rose Gifford,
Supervisor Mark Church, and Supervisor Andrienne Tissier

SAN MATEO COUNTY
PLANNING DIVISION

2009 AUG 20 P 4: 26

RECEIVED

County of San Mateo, Planning and Building Department
Attn: James A. Castaneda, Project Planner
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, Ca 94036-1662

Aug. 19, 2009

Strickley Family
1399 Parrott Dr.
San Mateo, CA 94402

Re: Ascension Heights Subdivision Project

We are the residents at Baywood Park neighborhood. We do not want the developer to build any house at the water tank hill because the construction will cause tremendous dust, traffic congestion and noise at our neighborhood. It endangers our health and decreases the quality of our living.

According to the DEIR, the construction will last for five years. We do not want to raise our children at a dusty and noisy environment for five years. The dust and diesel pollution will cause dangerous health impact to all of us, especially our young children, age 3 and 9. One of our children had asthmatic pneumonia. His lungs are extremely sensitive to dust and diesel smells. He will be at high risk if the construction proceeds. More over, we do not want any heavy traffic at our front door for five years. It is almost impossible for us to get out from our drive way if the large construction vehicles coming up from Laurie lane every 90 – 120 seconds.

We are strongly to ask the building and planning department to consider all of above and to stop the water tank hill project!

Sincerely

The strickley family



Robert Strickley

August 24, 2009

Dear Sir:

As a concerned citizen I'm writing to you today to protest the Ascension Heights Subdivision project - better known as Water Tank Hill. This project - if allowed - would entail undo pain on existing homeowners in the area.

Yours truly,
Donald R. Schoeffner