

Planning Commission Agenda Report

July 11, 2018
Item 6.a.

- SUBJECT:** P18-0075
- APPLICANT/
PROPERTY OWNER:** Alaina Stewart/Bringhurst LLC
- PURPOSE:** Workshop to review and receive comments on a Preliminary Review application for an amendment to the North Sycamore Specific Plan (NSSP) to allow the subdivision of an existing approximately 3.28-acre parcel into five single-family residential lots where three lots are allowed by the NSSP
- LOCATION:** 990 Sycamore Road
- GENERAL PLAN:** Low Density Residential
- SPECIFIC PLAN:** North Sycamore Specific Plan – Planned Unit Development-Agriculture
- ZONING:** Planned Unit Development - Agricultural (PUD-A)
- EXHIBITS:**
- A. [Discussion Points](#)
 - B. [Project Narrative, Plans and Supporting Documents dated "Received March 29, 2018"](#)
 - C. [2008 Planning Commission Work Session Staff Report and Meeting Minutes](#)
 - D. [Land Use and Circulation Plan – North Sycamore Specific Plan](#)
 - E. [Proposed Circulation Plan and Conceptual Design for the Improved Natural Channel of Sycamore Creek – North Sycamore Specific Plan](#)
 - F. [Location and Notification Map](#)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission review the attached material, hear public comments, and provide comments to staff and the applicant. No formal action will be taken on this project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Alaina Stewart, on behalf of the family trust, Bringhurst LLC, is proposing a five-lot single-family residential subdivision on the existing approximately 3.28-acre site at 990 Sycamore

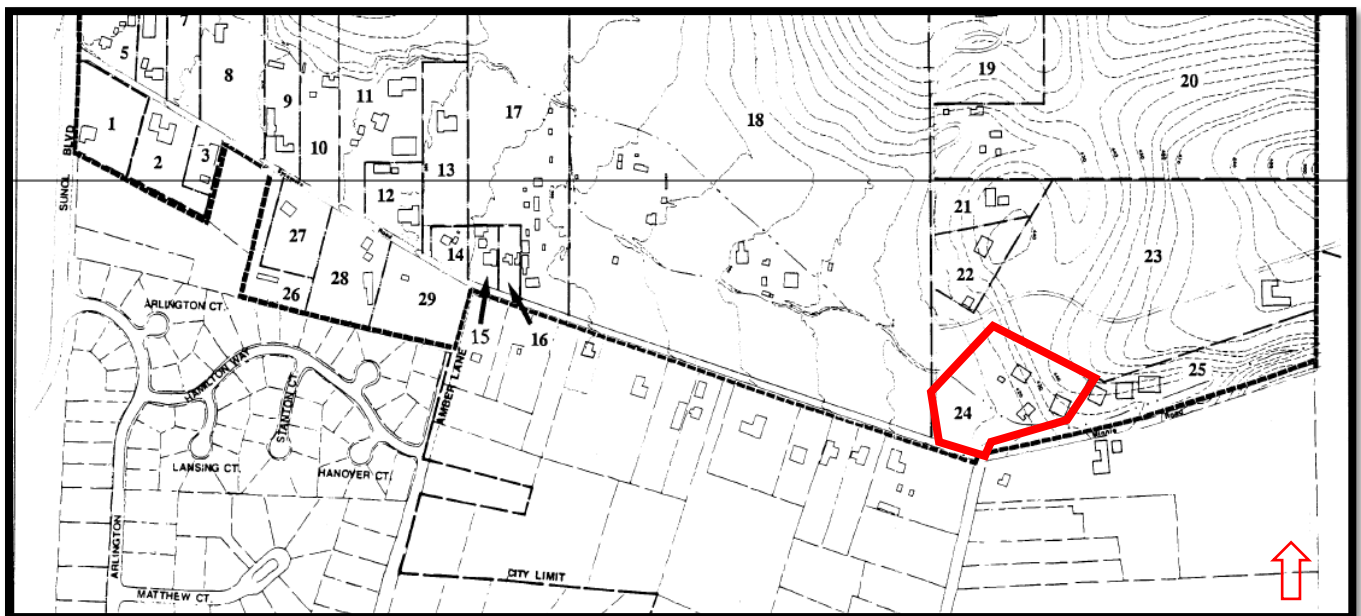
Road. As proposed, the project requires an amendment to the North Sycamore Specific Plan (NSSP) to change the land use designation for the northern portion of the site from PUD-Agriculture (PUD-A) to PUD – Low Density Residential (PUD-LDR) in order to allow two more residential lots than currently allowed by the NSSP. The project is being presented as a workshop item to allow the Planning Commission to provide input and direction to staff and the applicant on the proposed specific plan amendment and development of the site. The workshop also gives the public an early opportunity to review and comment on the proposed project.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

North Sycamore Specific Plan

In June 1992, the City Council adopted the NSSP, which guides future development in the 135-acre specific plan area. The NSSP includes residential, agricultural, and office land uses. The project site, which contains an existing residence, is identified as Lot 24 in the NSSP, and is designated PUD-A, which requires a minimum lot size of one acre. Figure 1 shows the project site location within the NSSP area.

Figure 1: NSSP Parcel Identification Map



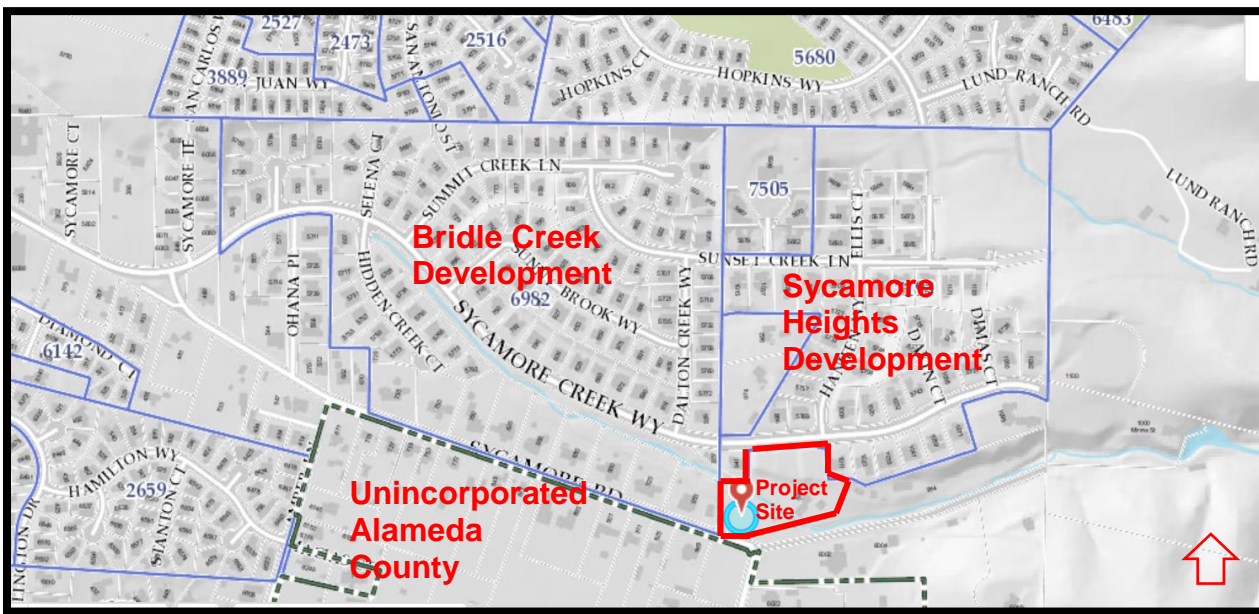
Site and Area Description

The project site abuts Sycamore Road on the south side and Sycamore Creek Way on the north side. The site is irregular in shape and is approximately 3.28-acres in area. Sycamore Creek bisects the existing parcel in an east-west direction. The site presently includes a single-family home, with a detached garage and two outbuildings, located towards the southeast portion of the property. Access to the existing home is provided by a 15-foot wide driveway from Sycamore Road. This driveway crosses a wooden bridge over the creek before it reaches the existing residence. There are a number of mature trees on the property including native valley oak, sycamore, and California black walnut trees; these are generally located in the southern portion of the site and adjacent to the creek. Non-native trees including eucalyptus, acacia and other non-native species, are also located on site, and a variety of shrubs, grasses, and groundcover surround the existing home.

A 25-foot wide existing Public Utility Easement, Transmission Pipeline and Access Road Easement, known as Dale Way, runs north-south along the western edge of the property between Sycamore Creek Way and Sycamore Road. An existing 12-foot wide multi-use trail extends from the west, along Sycamore Creek, and terminates at Dale Way.

The project site is bordered on the west side by the Bridle Creek (Greenbriar) and Sycamore Heights (Summerhill Homes) subdivisions; on the north side by the Sycamore Heights development; on the east by Sycamore Heights and the Jensen property at 994 Sycamore Road (formerly Carlson property); and on the south by the Jensen property and an existing large-lot single-family residence in unincorporated Alameda County. Please see Figure 2 for the Location and Vicinity Map.

Figure 2: Project Site Location and Surrounding Uses



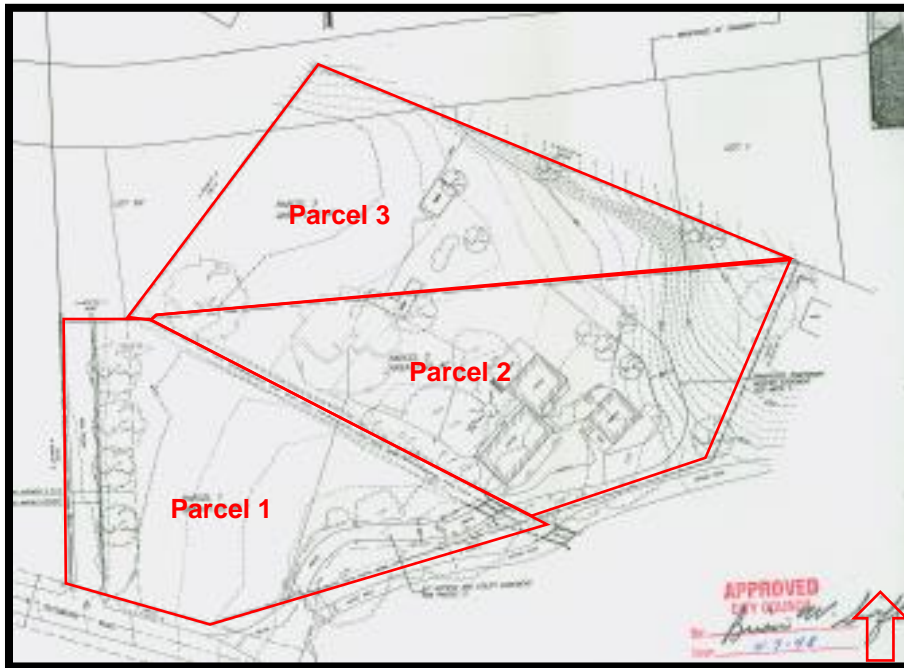
Prior Approvals and Applications

PUD 97-21 Approval (Frost)

In April 7, 1998, the City Council approved a PUD development plan application (PUD-97-21) to subdivide the existing site, then owned by the Frost family, into three parcels of approximately 1.05, 1.21 and 1.03 acres, consistent with the Specific Plan designation (See Figure 3).

Parcels 1 and 2 were intended to take access from Sycamore Road, and Parcel 3 from a new east-west connector street, now known as Sycamore Creek Way. Absent this PUD 97-21 zoning, the NSSP requires all access serving this parcel to be from Sycamore Road. At the time of the approval, Sycamore Creek Way had not been constructed, and the property was not served by City water and sewer. Since the project, by itself, would not construct the necessary access and utility improvements, PUD-97-21 was conditioned to not allow recordation of a final map until the roadway and utilities were installed, with the PUD approval to lapse two years after the utility and roadway improvements were made, unless a Final Map was recorded.

Figure 2: Parcels Approved by PUD-97-21



PUD 97-21 also assumed the relocation of a multi-use trail, shown in the NSSP as following the alignment of Sycamore Creek through the subject property. The PUD approvals described, but did not map, a realignment of the trail to follow Dale Way to Sycamore Road, with the final design and alignment of this trail to be determined prior to recordation of the Final Map.¹ Ultimately, the property owner did not record the Final Map, and the PUD approval expired in May 2000. In 1998 the property was acquired by the current applicant, the Bringhursts.

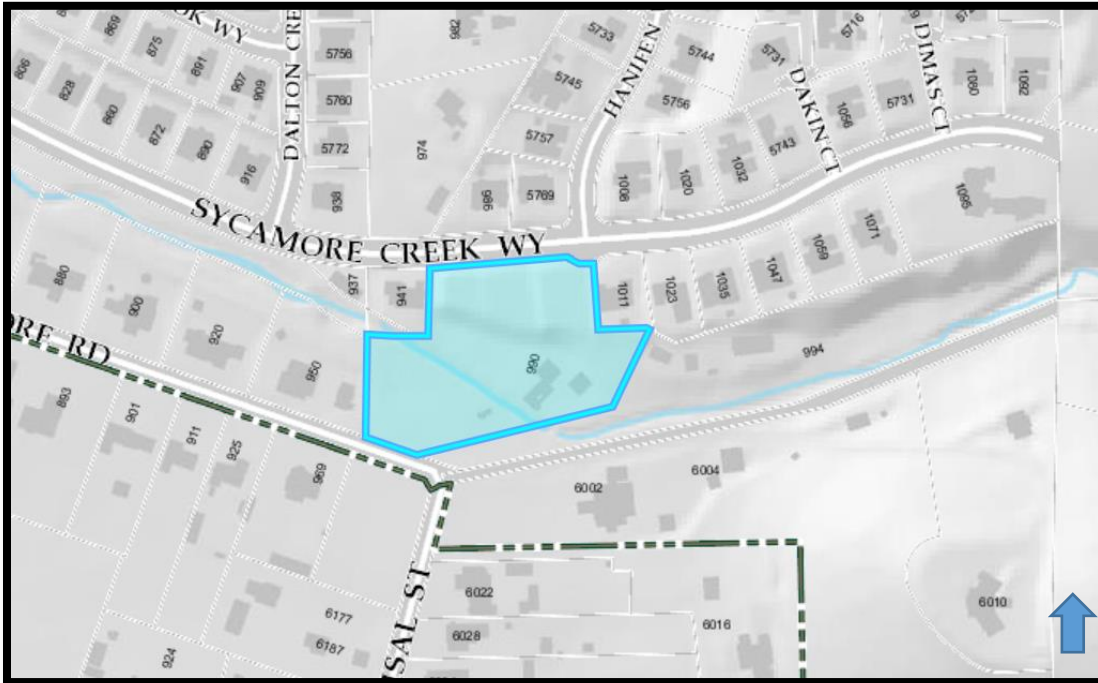
Bridle Creek and Sycamore Heights Developments

In March 1998, the City Council approved PUD 97-03, for Greenbriar Homes' Bridle Creek development, which included 111 single-family homes on a combined 56.2-acre site, west of 990 Sycamore Road (see Figure 1). The project was required to construct sanitary sewer and water line extensions that also benefited 990 Sycamore Road. In October of 1999, the City Council approved PUD 97-12 for Summerhill Homes' Sycamore Heights development, which had 48 single-family homes on a combined 34.65-acre site, located to the north of 990 Sycamore Road.

In November 2002, the City approved lot line adjustments (LLAs) between the Bringhurst property and parcel(s) to the north, then owned by New Cities and later acquired by Summerhill Homes. The LLAs allowed for a more logical parcel configuration and accommodated the proposed alignment for Sycamore Creek Way to be constructed by Greenbriar, discussed in more detail below. The subject lot's current configuration is shown in Figure 4.

¹ At the time, this private road provided access from Sycamore Road to several large lot properties to the north, and to the City's Sycamore water tank to the east.

Figure 4: Current Configuration of the Project Site



In 2003, during the construction of the Sycamore Heights development, the City allowed grading, including placement of fill, on the northern portion of the Bringhurst property; the natural grade in this area was 8 to 10 feet lower than adjacent Sycamore Creek Way. The approved grading plan showed the finished grade of the Bringhurst property to be raised, closer to the elevation of the adjacent road and building pads of the Sycamore Heights development, with the grade sloping gradually uphill, west to east, from an elevation of approximately 417 feet to approximately 436 feet. It should be noted that the actual grading in place today is somewhat different from that shown on the approved plan, with three relatively distinct “stepped” areas at elevations of approximately 424 feet, 427 feet, and 432 feet. At the same time as the grading was approved, the City allowed water and sanitary sewer laterals to be stubbed out along Sycamore Creek Way.²

While the files are not completely clear, at the time the work was proposed, there were discussions between the Bringhursts and Summerhill Homes regarding a potential application to incorporate the northern portion of 990 Sycamore Road into the Sycamore Heights development. It seems likely the City agreed to allow the work to proceed at the request of the developer, anticipating this application, since it would be most cost effective to complete the work at the same time as the subdivision improvements. However, no application was filed by Summerhill Homes and the City did not approve, or otherwise provide any formal guarantee that it would allow, any additional subdivision or development of the Bringhurst property.

² Water and sewer lines are occasionally “stubbed out” to serve future potential development in order to avoid needing to dig up and install water and sewer lateral pipes in a new street. Just because these lines were stubbed out was not a guarantee of future development rights, nor a promise of the location of future driveways or lots (as depending on gravity flows, some lots have utility lines from the rear of their property and not the front).

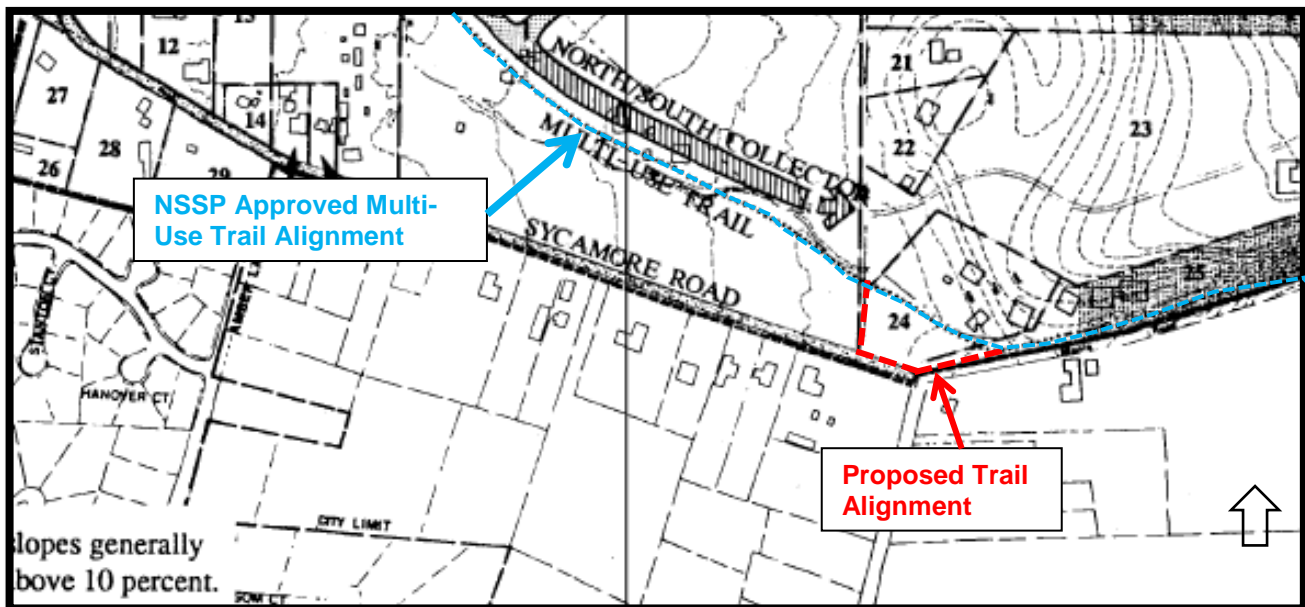
PUD-53: Bringhurst Property Five-Lot Development Plan

In March 2006, the Bringhurst family submitted an application similar to that currently before the Planning Commission, to amend the NSSP for a five-lot PUD development plan (PUD-53). The prior proposal was largely similar to the current proposal, including three lots fronting Sycamore Creek Way, and two lots on Sycamore Road. Also included in the proposal was a request to realign the multi-use trail identified in the NSSP, which was brought to the Trails Ad Hoc Subcommittee and Park and Recreation Commission for consideration in 2006. The Planning Commission considered and provided input on the proposed PUD plan at a 2008 work session.

Trail Realignment – Review by Trails Subcommittee and Park and Recreation Commission

PUD-53 included a proposed realignment that was consistent with that conceptually approved as part of PUD 97-21 (see above), intended to avoid having the trail run along the back of the proposed new private lots. Instead the trail would follow Dale Way to Sycamore Road/Minnie Street, where it would turn and head east along Sycamore Road/Minnie Street to eventually connect to the Happy Valley Loop Trail along Alisal Street (see Figure 5). In September 2006, the City's Trails Ad Hoc Committee considered the proposed trail realignment. The Committee supported the proposed realignment, with the outcome of the Committee's discussion then reported to the Parks and Recreation Commission. The Commission did not take a formal vote on the proposal, but no significant questions or objections were raised.

Figure 5: NSSP Approved and Proposed Multi-Use Trail Alignments



PUD-53 - March 2008 Planning Commission Work Session

In March 2008 the Planning Commission held a preliminary work session on the proposed PUD. (See Exhibit C for the prior Planning Commission staff report and minutes.)

The Planning Commission questioned and was concerned about the City's prior decision to allow site grading and stubbing of utilities prior to receiving project approvals, and that more utility laterals had been allowed than the number of residential lots/homes permitted by the NSSP. Although no formal vote was taken, in discussion, the majority of the Commission was supportive of the potential NSSP amendment and allowing some additional development on

this property, seeing it as a way to logically continue the now-established development pattern along Sycamore Creek Road. The Commission indicated the three lots/homes fronting Sycamore Creek Way would need to have comparable lot sizes and similar setbacks and architecture/design as the homes in the Sycamore Heights development and to provide an appropriate transition between new lots and existing lots fronting Sycamore Creek Way at either end of the site, noting that the lot size and setback varied between the lots to the east and to the west.

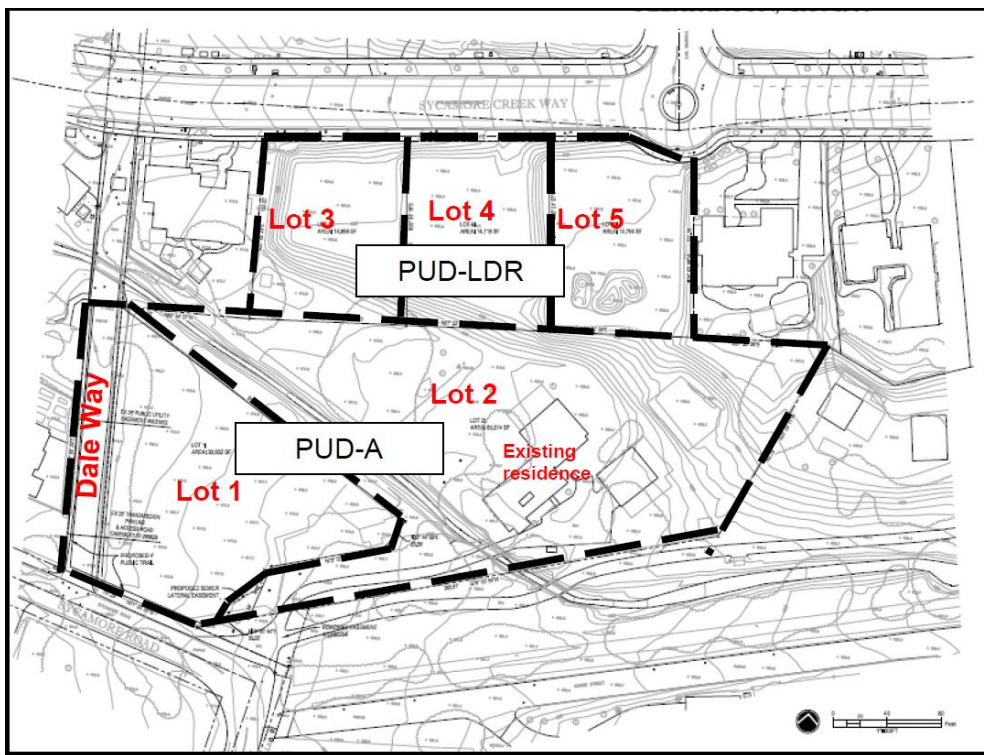
Following the 2008 workshop, no further action was taken by the applicant to pursue the development of the site, until the current preliminary review submittal.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

As noted, the current application is somewhat similar to the previously proposed PUD-53, including an amendment to the NSSP to: (a) change zoning and increase density to allow the existing approximately 3.28-acre parcel to be developed with five single-family residential lots where three lots are allowed by the NSSP; (b) have lots take access on Sycamore Creek Way where the NSSP only allows access via Sycamore Road; and (c) realignment of the trail.

In the proposed development plan (see Figure 6), the southern approximately 2.26-acre portion of the property would retain its existing Planned Unit Development-Agriculture (PUD-A) land use designation, and would be divided into two lots (Lots 1 and 2), with Lot 2 containing the existing single-family residence. The northern 1.02 acres of the property would be re-designated from PUD-A to Planned Unit Development - Low Density Residential (PUD-LDR), and divided into three roughly equal sized lots (Lots 3, 4 and 5).

Figure 6: Proposed Layout



Lots 1 and 2 would have frontage onto Sycamore Road, although access to Lot 1 would be from Dale Way, and Lot 2 would continue to use the existing driveway access from Sycamore Road. Lots 3, 4 and 5 would front on and be accessed from Sycamore Creek Way. At this time, the applicant proposes to retain the existing home and outbuildings on Lot 2, with new homes constructed on Lots 1, 3, 4 and 5.

Table 1: Summary of Existing and Proposed Specific Plan Designation and Lot Size

Existing				Proposed		
Lot No.	Land Use	Minimum Lot Size	Lot Size	Lot No.	Land Use	Proposed Lot Size
NSSP Lot 24	PUD-A	1 Acre	3.3 Acres	Lot 1	PUD-A	33,602 sq. ft.
				Lot 2		65,074 sq. ft.
				Lot 3	PUD-LDR	14,899 sq. ft.
				Lot 4		14,718 sq. ft.
				Lot 5		14,764 sq. ft.

The applicant proposes a set of development standards and some general design guidelines for both the existing and future homes, although no detailed or specific design criteria are included in the proposal.

As before, the applicant proposes to realign the multi-use trail. The proposed 4-foot wide trail would start at the eastern terminus of the existing trail along Sycamore Creek, extend south along Dale Way, to Sycamore Road and along the project frontage. No other details of the trail design (e.g. materials, allowed uses) have been provided, and no details of other frontage or site improvements are included in the application.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE WORKSHOP

Staff is presenting the Commission with the plans for the project site (Exhibit B) for consideration and comments. This workshop will provide the Planning Commission the opportunity to provide direction to the applicant and staff, focusing on the request to amend the NSSP to gain two additional residential lots, the proposed site development standards, and any other items that are recommended to be addressed prior to the project returning to the Planning Commission for action on a formal application.

Land Use and Density

Land use and density are governed by both the General Plan and the North Sycamore Specific Plan.

General Plan

The General Plan designates the entire project site as Low Density Residential – less than two dwelling units per gross acre, with an average density used for Holding Capacity at 1.0 du/acre.

The project site is approximately 3.28 acres in area; the proposed five-lot development would yield a density of 1.5 dwelling units per acre. Although this is within the maximum allowed by the General Plan for the Low Density Residential designation generally, the General Plan recognizes that land uses and densities stated in the General Plan are “conceptual only, while the specific plan provides additional detail.” (General Plan Page 2-12). As discussed below, the NSSP designates this property as PUD-A, with a specific minimum one-acre parcel size. Therefore, under the NSSP a maximum of three units are allowed

In addition, the General Plan Land Use Policy concerning holding capacity states:

Policy 11: Residential density is determined by the General Plan density range or applicable specific plan as outlined below:

Residential projects proposed for land designated as Low- and Medium-Density Residential should propose densities generally consistent with the average densities assumed for buildout of the General Plan, as shown in Table 2-3.

Low- and Medium-Density projects which propose densities greater than the average shown in Table 2-3 should be zoned PUD and contain sufficient public amenities to justify the higher density. Examples of amenities which might qualify a project for density bonus include the provision of affordable housing; and dedication and/or improvement of parkland, open space, and/or trails beyond the standard requirements.

The proposal currently does not include any amenities to justify a density greater than the average density of 1.0 du/acre.

North Sycamore Specific Plan

Land Use Designations: The NSSP land use designation for the site is PUD-A, which allows for a maximum of one dwelling unit per acre, or up to three units on the 3.28-acre site. In addition, the NSSP's discussion of Minimum Parcel Size, this site is one of thirteen where the Minimum Lot Size is also listed as one (1) acre. (See NSSP pg. 29.) As shown in Table 1, the proposed Specific Plan Amendment would change the land use designation of the northern, approximately one acre portion of the site to PUD-LDR.

Per the NSSP, "*Development within [the PUD-LDR] district is generally intended to conform with the provisions and permitted uses contained in the R-1 One Family Residential District of the...Municipal Code, with a minimum parcel size of 12,000 square feet on flat land and 15,000 square feet on sloping land and land which is located south of the east-west collector or adjacent to the northern plan border (gross density of 2 units per acre).*" (NSSP, page 30).

The NSSP also lists and describes the allowable land uses in the PUD-LDR district which include "low density residential at a density of 0-2 units/gross acre." The portion of the site proposed for re-designation is 1.01 acres, resulting in an equivalent density of 3.0 dwelling units per acre, and which is above the allowable density range for the NSSP PUD-LDR district. The PUD process may allow for some flexibility in how conformance to the NSSP required density is calculated (for example, by averaging across the entire property, developed as a single PUD). Otherwise, alternative proposals such as reducing the number of lots from 5 to 4, or designating the entire property PUD-LDR to resolve this apparent conflict may be necessary.

NSSP Buildout: Although not intended as a development standard or "cap" the NSSP includes a calculation of the maximum number of new residential units expected to develop in the Specific Plan area based on available land and allowable development intensities. The PUD-LDR district encompasses Bridle Creek and Sycamore Heights subdivisions, and some other

properties, some of which are subdivided and others which are not. For this area, the Specific Plan identifies a total of 208 units, including 13 existing and 195 new units.

Table 2 shows the breakdown the existing 190 residential units in PUD-LDR of the NSSP. There are three properties that remain to be developed, with a maximum of 12 units estimated. Based on these figures, it appears that three additional units in PUD-LDR could be accommodated on this site, without exceeding the anticipated “buildout” of the NSSP.

Table 2: Breakdown of Units Constructed in NSSP PUD-LDR Area

	Number of Residential Units	Notes
Total Number of New Units Allowed by NSSP in PUD-LDR	208	
Existing Units	190	Breakdown of the 190 units: Bridle Creek = 111 Sycamore Heights = 48 Other Areas = 31
Future Development	12	
Subtotal	202	
Proposed Land Use Change	3	Will add 3 units to PUD-LDR
Total	205	Overall units in PUD-LDR would remain compliant to NSSP

Development Standards

Both the PUD-A and PUD-LDR designations anticipate that zoning of the property will occur through the Planned Unit Development review and approval process specified in the Pleasanton Municipal Code, including adoption of corresponding PUD zoning and a site-specific PUD plan that includes applicable development standards for the property.

Table 3 provides a comparison of the conformance of the project and/or proposed development standards, with applicable standards identified in the NSSP. Key aspects of this conformance are discussed in more detail below. Note that the analysis generally focuses on the proposed land use designations and standards and the project’s conformance to them (i.e. comparing the proposed PUD-LDR parcels, to the PUD-LDR standards), rather than a comparison between the requirements of the PUD-A designation and the proposed PUD-LDR parcels. However, this information can be extrapolated from the tables provided.

Lot Dimensions

Table 3 compares required to proposed lot dimensions. As shown, all of the proposed parcels would conform to the applicable standards, with lots dimensions that meet or exceed those required.

Table 3: Required and Proposed Lot Dimensions

	PUD-A			PUD-LDR			
	Required	Proposed		Required	Proposed		
		Lot 1	Lot 2		Lot 3	Lot 4	Lot 5
Lot Size	1 acre	33,602 sf (0.77 acres)	65,074 sf (1.49 acres)	12,000 or 15,000 sf	14,899 sf	14,718 sf	14,764 sf
Lot Width (min.)	300 feet	Approx. 107'	Approx. 393'	100'	Approx. 117'	Approx. 106'	Approx. 107'
Lot Depth (min.)	Not Specified	Approx. 169' (average)	Approx. 193' (average)	125'	Approx. 136'	Approx. 141'	Approx. 131'

Lot Size

As shown in Table 3, the proposed PUD-LDR lots would range from 14,718 square feet to 14,899 square feet. Required minimum parcel size for the NSSP PUD-LDR designation is either 12,000 square feet or 15,000 square feet. The larger 15,000 square feet lot size is required by the Specific Plan for parcels located “south of the east-west collector” and as shown in the NSSP Land Use Diagram, included as Exhibit C. Note that the ultimate circulation of the NSSP differs from that envisioned in the circulation plan, with Sycamore Creek Way following somewhat of a hybrid between the alignment of the “east-west” collector and a second “north-south” connector, meaning that an interpretation of the NSSP with regard to minimum lot size for this parcel must be made.

In staff’s view, it is reasonable to apply the 15,000 square foot minimum lot requirement, which is closer to the larger parcel size required for the current PUD-A land use designation; is more consistent with the character of the majority of properties adjacent to and across Sycamore Creek Way from the Bringhurst property³; and appears consistent with the intent and mapping of the NSSP. While the deviation from the standard is not substantial, staff would recommend that proposed lot lines be adjusted so that all of the lots are at least 15,000 square feet in size.

For the PUD-A lots (Lots 1 and 2), per the NSSP, a minimum one-acre lot size is required. As proposed, Lot 1 would be less than one acre in size (33,602 square feet, or 0.77 acres) and Lot 2 would be 65,074 square feet, just under 1.5 acres in size. In the previous preliminary application, staff had recommended that the lot lines be configured to include the entire creek on one or other of the two properties so as to clearly assign responsibility for ownership and maintenance of the creek. As proposed, the entire creek would be located on Lot 2, the parcel with the existing residence. Staff believes there is merit to retaining clear ownership of the creek, and thus potentially to provide some flexibility (consistent with the intent of the PUD process) in the lot configuration; however, the Planning Commission should consider this in light of the entire proposal. Since the NSSP requires a minimum one-acre lot size, it would also be necessary to amend the Specific Plan to allow for this deviation.

Other Development Standards

Tables 4 and 5 provide a comparison of the proposed project to standards of the NSSP for the PUD-A lots, and PUD-LDR lots, respectively. The NSSP provides general site, yard, height and setback requirements for development in the PUD-LDR land use, and for the PUD-A district, references the PMC Agricultural (A) Zoning District.

³ Existing lots in the Sycamore Heights development on the south side of Sycamore Creek Way vary from 12,975 sq. ft. (941 Sycamore Creek Way) to 19,237 sq. ft. (1071 Sycamore Creek Way). Across from the project site on the north side of Sycamore Creek Way, existing lots range from 15,033 sq. ft. (5769 Hanifen Way) to 20,313 sq. ft. (1008 Sycamore Creek Way).

Table 4: PUD-A Lots 1 and 2, Comparison of Required and Proposed Standards

	Required	Proposed	
		Lot 1	Lot 2
Setbacks (min.)			
Primary Structure:			
Front	30'	30'	13'
Side (one side/combined side)	5'/50'	5'/40'	5'/50'
Rear	30'	30''	30'
Class 1 Accessory Structure:			
Side	30'	5'	20'
Rear	30'	20'	20'
Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)			
Side	5'	Not proposed	5'
Rear	10'		20'
Height (max.)			
Primary	30'	30'	30'
Accessory	30'	15'	15'
FAR (max.)	none	27%	25%

Table 5: PUD-LDR Lots 3-5: Comparison of Required and Proposed Standards

	Required	Proposed		
		Lot 3	Lot 4	Lot 5
Front	25'	25'	28'	30'
Side (one side/combined side)	5'/30'	5'/30'	5'/30'	5'/30'
Rear	25'	25'	25'	25'
Class 1 Accessory Structure:				
Side	Not specified	3'	3'	3'
Rear	Not specified	5'	5'	5'
Height (max.)				
Primary Structure	30'	30'	30'	30'
Class 1 Accessory Structure	none	15'	15'	15'
FAR (max.)	none	40%	40%	40%

Height and Setbacks: As proposed, development standards for all lots would meet the NSSP setback and height requirements for primary structures. The applicant did not propose development standards for ADU and accessory structures for all of the lots. These standards

would be required to be stated as part of the formal PUD application. Other standards, such as minimum yard areas would also need to be defined in the PUD.

It should also be noted that the Engineering Department has identified the need to dedicate a minimum 60' wide public access easement and storm drain easement centered on the creek centerline, matching the existing 60-foot wide easement in the Bridle Creek development. This may constrain the placement of homes and/or accessory buildings in the ultimate development plan. Irrespective of the easement, the property owner would remain responsible for maintenance of the creek.

The conceptual aerial site plan shows a detached garage for Lot 1, which would be accessed from Dale Way. If the garage faces Dale Way, staff believes it should be set back at least 25 feet from easterly edge of Dale Way to allow parking in the driveway without encroaching into Dale Way.

Floor Area Ratio: The NSSP does not have a maximum FAR requirement for either PUD-LDR or PUD-A. The applicant proposes a maximum 40% for PUD-LDR (i.e. Lots 3-5), and 27% maximum FAR for Lot 1 and 24% maximum FAR for Lot 2. As shown in Table 6, this would allow for building square footage ranging approximately 5,887 square feet on Lot 4 to approximately 15,618 square feet on Lot 2, based on proposed lot sizes.

Table 6: FAR and Maximum Floor Area

Lot No.	Lot Size (sq. ft.)	FAR	Maximum Floor Area
1	33,602	27%	9,072 sq. ft.
2	65,074	24%	15,618 sq. ft.
3	14,899	40%	5,960 sq. ft.
4	14,718		5,887 sq. ft.
5	14,764		5,906 sq. ft.

In evaluating the proposed maximum FARs and their compatibility with the surrounding residential developments, staff reviewed the Sycamore Heights development (PUD-LDR) and the nine PUD-A lots in the Bridle Creek development along the north side of Sycamore Road. The Sycamore Heights development limits the majority of the development to a maximum of 30% FAR; a few lots were permitted a slightly higher FAR of 33% at initial construction. Staff believes Lots 3-5 should have a maximum FAR of 30%, matching the maximum FAR for most of the lots at Sycamore Heights.

Similarly, staff believes that Lots 1-2 should have the same FARs as the Bridle Creek's PUD-A lots, which is 20% excluding up to 600 sq. ft. of garage floor area. The FAR calculation for Lot 2 should be based on the site area excluding the non-developable creek area.

Trail Alignment and Design: The NSSP indicates a multi-use trail extending from the east-west collector along the alignment of Sycamore Creek to Minnie Street (connecting to trails to the east). The NSSP does not include design standards for the creek, but Figure VI-1 in the Specific Plan (see Exhibit E) shows a conceptual design for improvements along Sycamore Creek, including a 12 wide "multi-use all weather accessway." As noted above, the applicant proposes a realigned, 4-foot wide trail. It is staff's recommendation that the proposed trail be modified to match the existing trail that it would be connected to in width and material.

The proposed realignment was previously considered and generally accepted by the Trails Ad Hoc Committee; a similar alignment was also approved as part of PUD-97-21. Staff does not see significant issues with the proposed relocation, which would continue to provide a logical connection between the existing trail terminus and Sycamore Road (and points east), could have fewer environmental impacts to the creek, and reduce potential conflicts between trail users and private property owners. Design consideration would need to be given if there is a driveway access on to Dale Way, to avoid conflicts between trail users and vehicles. Since considerable time has elapsed since this item was taken to the Trails Ad Hoc Committee and Parks and Recreation Commission, staff would recommend that the proposed alignment be considered by both bodies, as part of the PUD plan review.

Architecture: The applicant proposes that the homes on lots 3, 4 and 5 would emulate the architecture of the existing residences in the Sycamore Heights development; four architectural styles that were included in the Sycamore Heights development are included in the preliminary application package for reference. For Lots 1 and 2, the application package notes that the homes will have a “rural feel” similar to those along Sycamore Road. (The applicant currently indicates that the existing home on Lot 2 will be retained; however, staff would recommend that design guidelines address both remodels/additions to the existing home, as well new construction on this lot if the owner decides to demolish and rebuilt the home at some point in the future).

No detailed design guidelines are included in the current submittal; the City would require them to be provided as part of a subsequent PUD application. The design guidelines will need to address aspects such architectural style, window and door details, exterior finishes, colors, etc. An option for this property owner may be to reference or rely upon the design standards for the Sycamore Heights project, since it is the applicant’s intent for the project to integrate with the adjacent subdivision.

Grading: As previously mentioned, the existing grades on the northern portion of the project site differ from those shown on the approved grading plan. The existing grades have three stepped pads that are higher than the adjacent Sycamore Creek Way, especially for Lot 3, where the grades are almost to the first floor ceiling plate of the home located at 941 Sycamore Creek Way. When the application returns for a formal review, a grading plan needs to be included as part of the submittal. Staff would recommend that re-grading of the site be required, to lower the elevation of the pad closest to 941 Sycamore Way by several feet, and avoid a future home “looming” over the existing residence.

Technical Reports: The applicant provided copies of several technical reports for the project site. These include:

- A Hydrologic and Hydraulic study was prepared for the project site in 2000. The study found future residential development of the project site will not result in significant increase in the Sycamore Creek 15-year and 100-year hydraulic grade line elevation of the seasonal creek. However, given the age of the study (more than 18 years old) staff believes an update should be prepared, to confirm that its conclusions are still valid, and would meet today’s design and engineering standards.

- A preliminary arborist report was prepared by HortScience in March 2018. The report surveyed 22 trees; 15 qualify as heritage-sized trees as defined by the Pleasanton Municipal Code. Although several of the trees have potential to be affected by the project, including grading on Lots 1 and 2, installation of retaining walls on lots 3-5, the report concludes that all 22 trees can be preserved.
- A Geotechnical Study and Fault review was prepared in October 2007 for the project site. Based on the result of field studies, the report found the site to be suitable for residential development, and provides a series of recommendations with respect to project design and construction. Again, given the age of the study, staff would require this report to be updated and peer reviewed to ensure that its conclusions remain valid, and that a project would be able to meet the most recent building code standards for seismic safety and other concerns.

Public Amenities/Benefits

If approved, the amendment would confer additional land value to the property owner, allowing for the creation, sale, and/or development of five single family lots, as opposed to the three currently allowed. However, the project does not currently propose any additional public amenities or benefits to the City, beyond the provision of a 4-foot trail easement. (The entire project, or the three proposed lots taking access on Sycamore Creek Way, could also be required to annex into the North Sycamore Maintenance Association, which supports the costs to maintain existing amenities such as the entry area landscaping, trail and creek corridor.) With that, the Planning Commission may wish to consider and/or recommend whether the project should provide additional public benefits, commensurate with the size of the project, but nonetheless above those required for a three-lot subdivision. Concepts could include trail or offsite open space improvements, or enhancements to Sycamore Creek, on or off the project site.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

As discussed above, there are important factors weighing both for and against the proposed NSSP amendment and density increase. There is some logic, as the applicant suggests, to allowing the now-established development pattern along Sycamore Creek Way to continue onto this property. However, in and of itself, amending the Specific Plan is a significant request, not least because granting the amendment may encourage or be seen as setting precedent for other similar requests. And, as noted, staff has concerns that the proposed three lots on the northern one acre of the property may exceed the allowable density range of the NSSP PUD-LDR district, unless an alternative interpretation can be made through the PUD process.

With the above considerations in mind, the following questions are where staff would find the Commission's input most helpful. Please also see Exhibit A.

- A. Would the Planning Commission support the requested NSSP amendments including the following:
 - Amending the land use designation for a one-acre portion of the site, from PUD-A to PUD-LDR, to allow the site to be developed with five lots instead of three;
 - Amending the NSSP text to allow one of the PUD-A lots to be less than an acre in size, so the creek can be located within one of the two PUD-A parcels;

- Allowing three lots to access Sycamore Creek Way, and not just have all take access on Sycamore Road; and
- Realigning the multi-use trail as shown in Figure 5;

If not, is some alternative number of lots (more than three) or lot configuration more appropriate? (Alternatives include, for example, two lots fronting Sycamore Creek Way and two to the south; or three lots along Sycamore Creek Way, and a single large lot to the south)?

- B. If the Planning Commission supports a Specific Plan amendment for a density increase, should the applicant be required to provide additional amenities beyond those required for a three-lot subdivision? If yes, what amenities should be considered?
- C. If the proposed specific plan amendment is supportable, does the Commission support staff's other recommendations with respect to the project including:
- Requirement for PUD-LDR lots to conform to a 15,000 square foot minimum.
 - Reduction of proposed FARs to be more consistent with adjacent development.
 - Re-grading of the site to make future pad heights more compatible with adjacent lots.
 - Modifying the trail design to be a minimum 12 foot-wide, multi-use facility, consistent with the existing trail.
- D. What other information would assist the Planning Commission in its decision on the proposed project (e.g., additional photo simulations, additional technical reports or other information)?

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notices for this workshop were sent to surrounding property owners and tenants within a 1,000-foot radius of the site. Staff has provided the location and notification map as Exhibit F for reference. Harold Roundtree, property owner at 986 Sycamore Creek Way, contacted staff after receiving the notice. Mr. Roundtree asked a few questions regarding the proposal. Staff had not received other public comments about the project.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Since the Planning Commission will take no formal action on the project at the workshop, no environmental document accompanies this workshop report. If the applicant proceeds with a formal application, a determination will be made as to the appropriate level of CEQA review.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission review the proposal, hear all public testimony, and provide comments to staff and the applicant.

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