

## Planning Commission Staff Report

January 13, 2016  
Item 6.b.

**SUBJECT:** Work Session for PUD-114

**APPLICANT:** Guy Houston, Valley Capital Realty

**PROPERTY OWNERS:** Pleasant View Church of Christ

**PURPOSE:** Work Session to review and receive comments on a proposal to construct five detached single-family homes and related improvements on an approximately 4.3-acre portion of the 16-acre Pleasant View Church of Christ site

**GENERAL PLAN:** Rural Density Residential

**ZONING:** A (Agriculture) District

**LOCATION:** +/-16.23 acres located at 11300 Dublin Canyon Road

**EXHIBITS:**

- A. [Planning Commission Work Session Topics](#)
- B. [Project Plans dated "Received, January 4, 2016"](#)
- C. [Preliminary Review Comment Letter dated July 13, 2015](#)
- D. [Public Comments](#)
- E. [Location and Noticing Map](#)

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### BACKGROUND

On May 29, 2015, Guy Houston, on behalf of the property owner, submitted a Preliminary Review application to consider a General Plan Amendment, Planned Unit Development (PUD) rezoning and development plan, and Tentative Map to construct five single-family homes on a 4.07-acre portion of a 16.23-acre site located at 11300 Dublin Canyon Road. After reviewing the preliminary application, staff provided the applicant with the attached comment letter (Exhibit C) discussing concerns related to the project being inconsistent with General Plan goals and policies, the potential for undesirable land use patterns along Dublin Canyon Road, and probable impacts to an environmentally sensitive site. Staff suggested the applicant reduce the number of lots to a level that would not require a General Plan amendment, and make other design modifications, to protect on-site environmental resources and enhance the design quality of the project.

On October 12, 2015, the applicant submitted General Plan Amendment, Planned Unit Development Rezoning and Development Plan, and Tentative Map applications to subdivide the property and construct five new single family homes. This application was nearly identical to the previous submittal and had not substantially addressed staff's comments.

The purpose of the work session is for the Planning Commission to review, comment and provide direction on the applications. The work session also provides the public with an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed plan. The applicant then will have the option to continue to move forward with the current proposal, modify the proposal, or withdraw the application based on the comments received. Should the applicant wish to proceed, the project will require Planning Commission action and a final decision by the City Council. A list of discussion topics and questions are included as Exhibit A to this report.

## SITE DESCRIPTION

The Pleasant View property is located at 11300 Dublin Canyon Road and is currently zoned Agriculture (A) District and is approximately 16.23 acres. The Pleasant View Church of Christ is located at the top of the hill on the property. The property also includes a creek running west to east adjacent to Dublin Canyon Road.

**Figure 1: Vicinity Map**

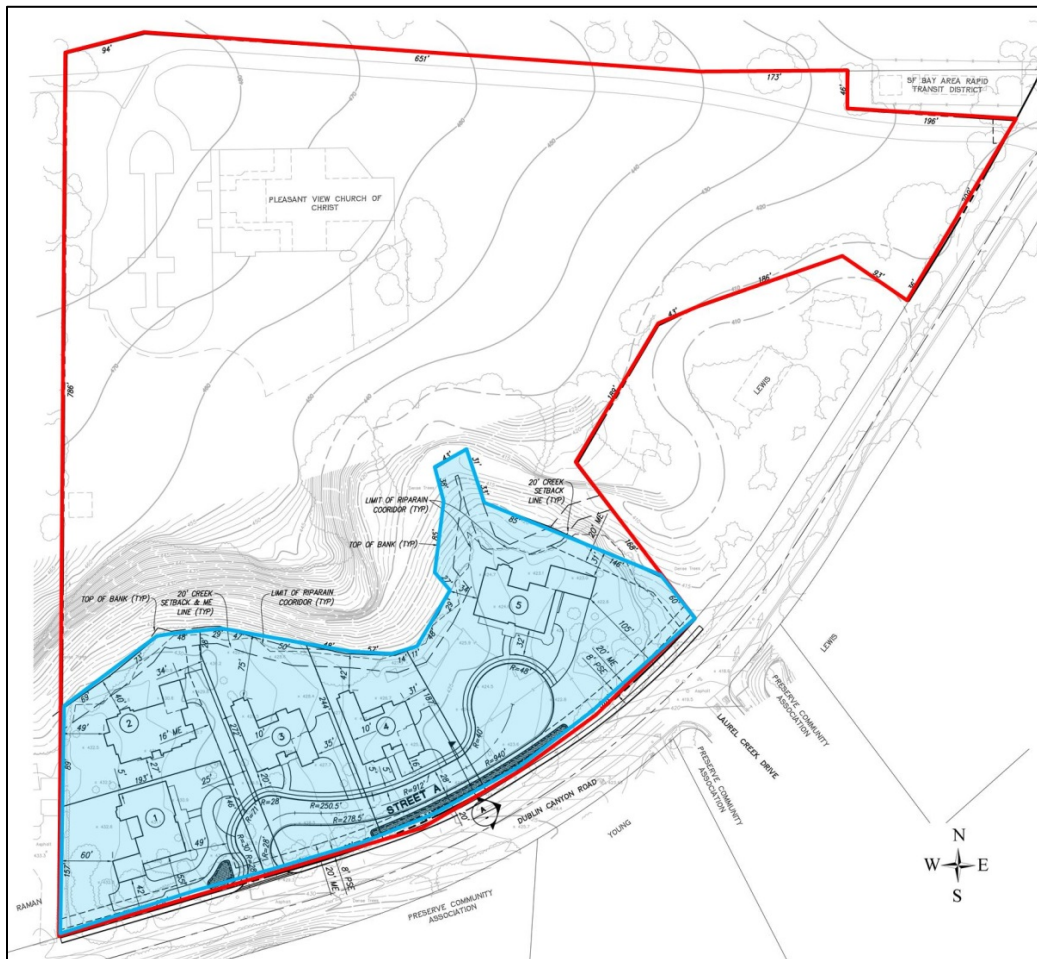


From a high point of 460 to 480 feet in elevation where the church building is located, the property drops steeply down towards the creek and flattens out along Dublin Canyon Road at approximately 420 feet in elevation. The 4.3-acre area of the site proposed to be developed with homes, shown in Figure 2, is located south of the existing creek closest to Dublin Canyon Road. It currently contains a barn, corral, and a water well.

The majority of the site is undeveloped, with predominantly ruderal/non-native grasslands and a mixed oak/bay woodland along the creek. The existing oak woodland provides an abundance of foraging opportunities for a wide range of species making it an important animal habitat.

Surrounding land uses and zoning designations are shown in the *Considerations for Work Session* section of this report.

**Figure 2: Site Plan**



## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

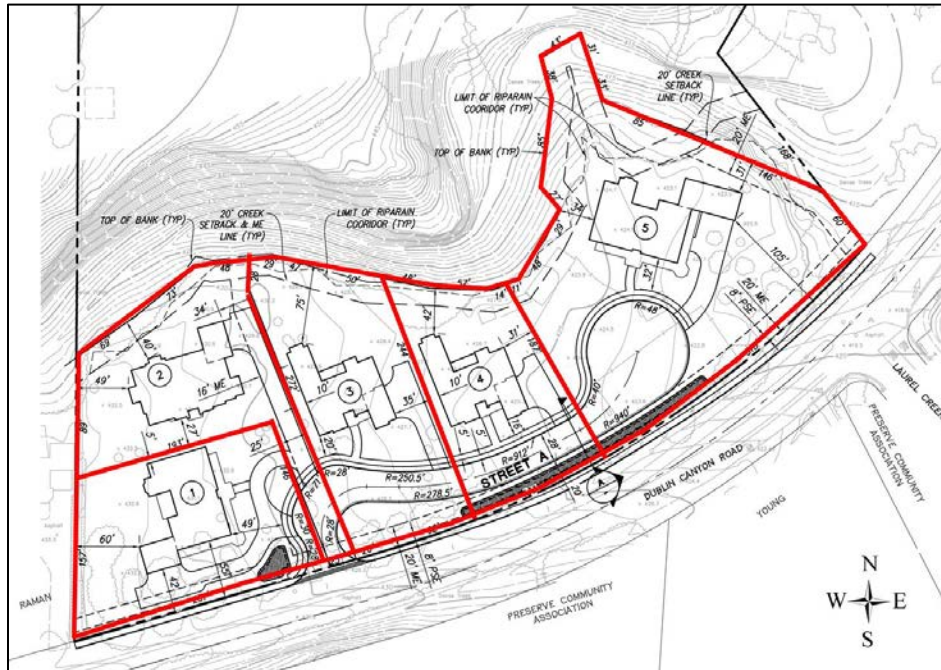
### Site Plan & Access

The applicant proposes to subdivide the roughly 16-acre parcel into six parcels (one parcel for the existing church and five parcels for the new single-family residences). Figure 3 shows the proposed site plan for the homes. The proposed residential parcels will extend from the top of the southern bank of the creek, with the creek and remainder of the site remaining within the church. Each new residential lot will range in size from 25,000 – 67,226 gross square feet and 18,773 - 49,639 net square feet (net area



excludes the street and common area improvements). The parcels will be accessed from a private frontage street with cul-de-sac off of Dublin Canyon Road, just west of Laurel Creek Drive.

**Figure 3: Focused Site Plan**



House Size and Architecture

There are three proposed home model types; front elevations are shown in Figure 4. The homes would range in size from 3,824-square-foot to 4,552-square-foot. Each home is proposed to be single-story with a three-car garage.

**Figure 4: Front Elevations**



## Landscape & Tree Removal

The proposed landscape plan shown in Figure 5 includes a list of plant species including a mix of native and non-native plant species with low water use requirements. The applicant is proposing to remove 10 trees along Dublin Canyon Road, four of which are considered heritage trees. Along the 800-foot project frontage, the current landscape plan includes planting a total of two London Plane trees along Dublin Canyon Road and six Crape Myrtle trees at the project entry. Additional trees will be planted in each front yard. Landscaping to the rear of the homes will be limited to allow for private creek maintenance easements and an access area which will be required to allow for access to the creek from both sides for the church and home owners.

**Figure 5: Landscape Plan**

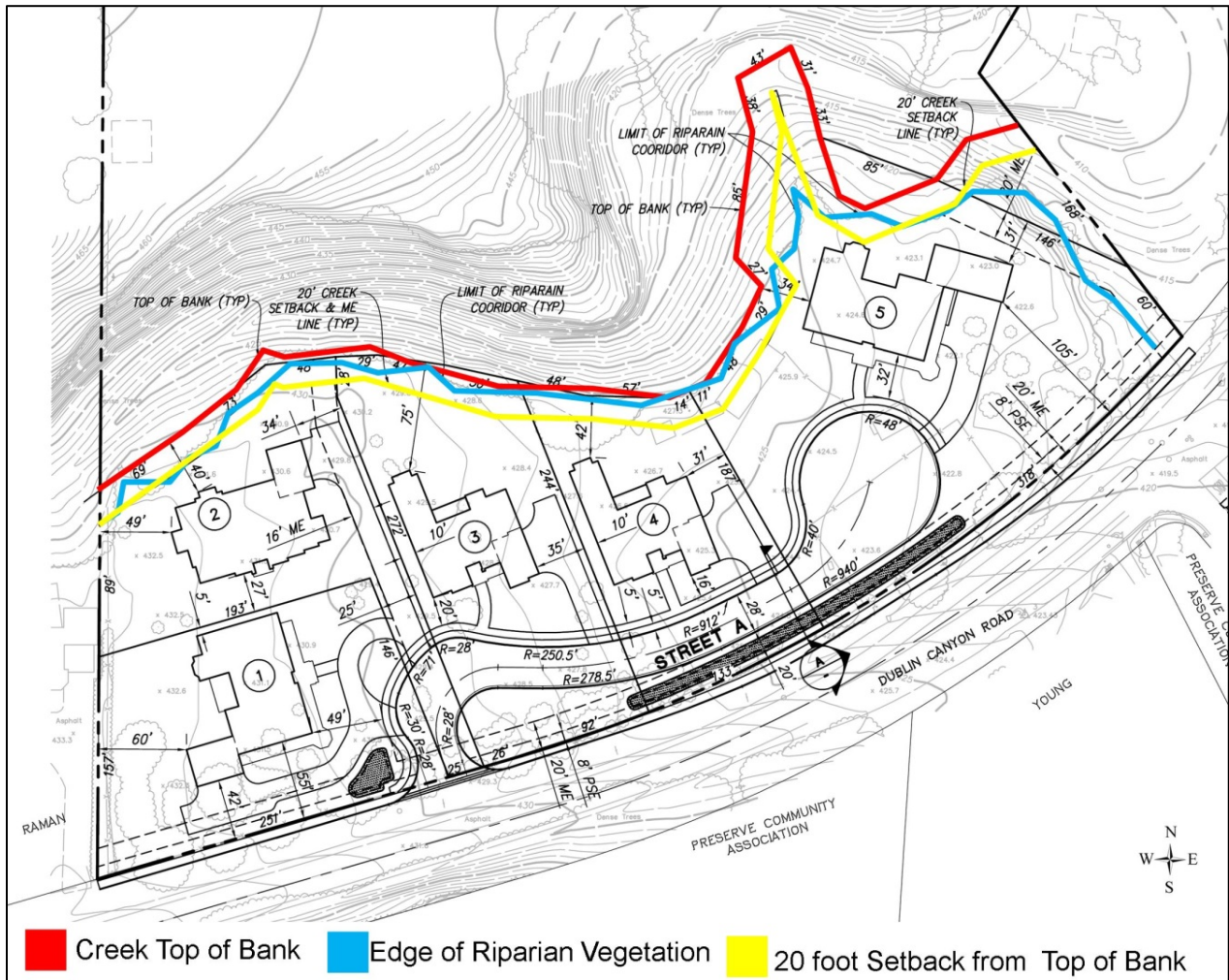


## Creek Setback

The 16-acre property is divided by a creek running west to east that divides the proposed homes from the church site. The project plans identify the top of the creek bank as well as the edge of riparian vegetation (see Figure 6). Although the project currently illustrates a 20-foot creek setback, measured from the top of bank, in which no structures or improvements are permitted, future plans will have to be revised to show that no new grading or development would occur within 20 feet of the edge of riparian vegetation or top of bank, whichever is further from the creek centerline. Although this will further limit the developable area of the site, a more expansive definition of creek setback is consistent with past practice in creek-side developments in Pleasanton.



**Figure 6: Creek Setback**



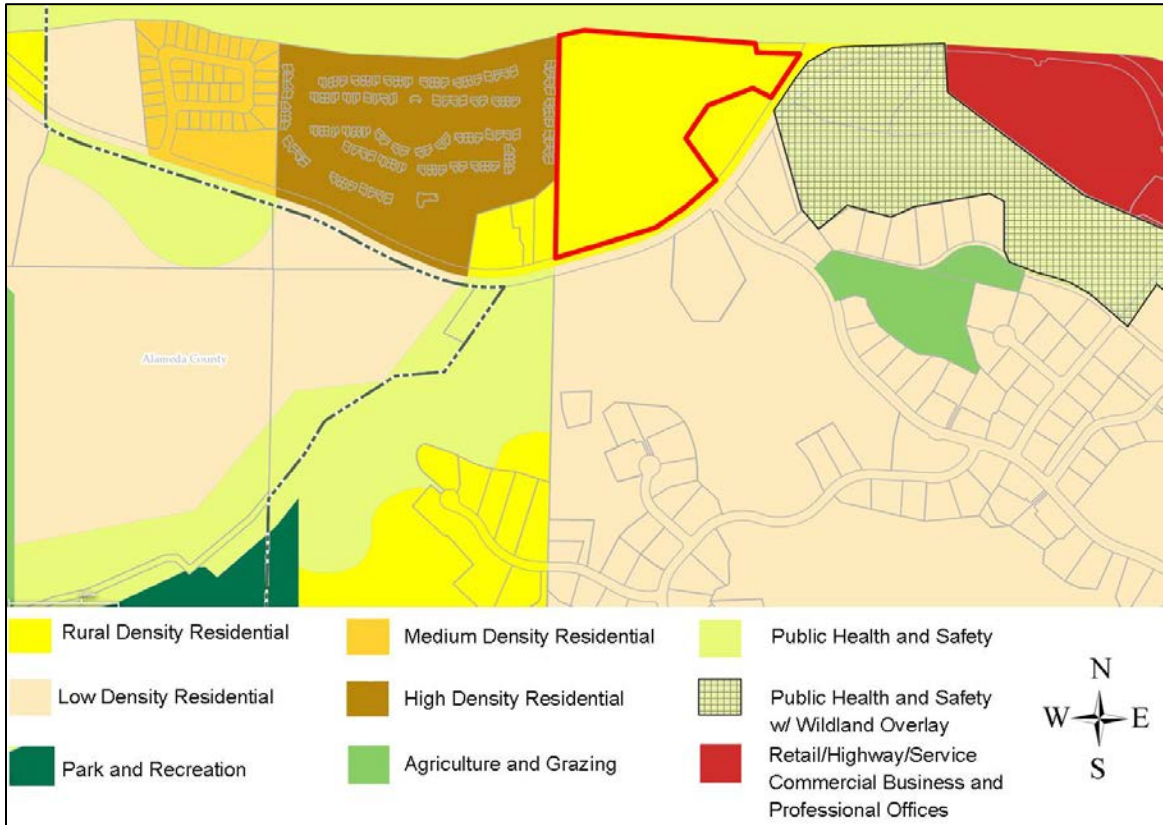
**CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE WORK SESSION**

The following section provides potential discussion topics and analysis of key issues related to the project. This work session will allow the Planning Commission to provide direction to the applicant and staff regarding any issues it wishes to be addressed before the project formally returns to the Planning Commission for a recommendation to the City Council. The areas noted below are where staff would find the Commission’s input most helpful. A list of these discussion topics and specific questions regarding the proposal are attached to this report as Exhibit A for the Planning Commission’s consideration and discussion.

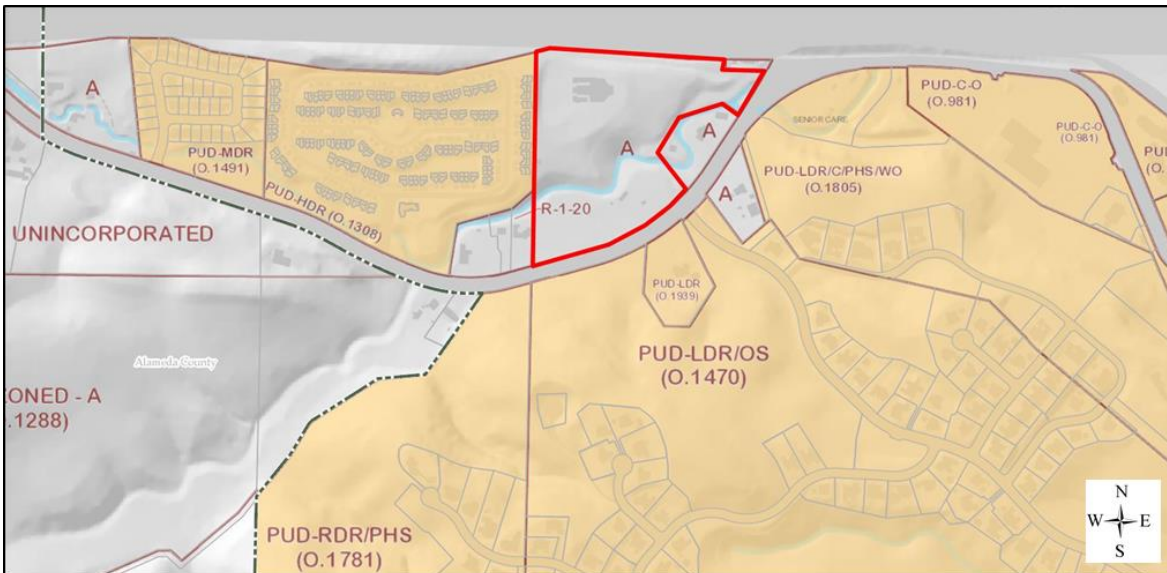
**1. General Plan and Zoning**

The property currently has a General Plan land use designation of Rural Density Residential and a Zoning Designation of A (Agriculture) District as shown in Figures 7 and 8.

**Figure 7: General Plan Designation**



**Figure 8: Zoning Designation**



Both the General Plan and Zoning designations allow for one dwelling unit per 5 acres. If the entire 16.23-acre site is taken into consideration, the current designations would permit a total of three dwelling units. The applicant is requesting a General Plan amendment and Zoning Change to the PUD - Low Density Residential (PUD-LDR)

designation to allow for 1.2 units per acre on the proposed 4.3 acre portion of the site, allowing for a total of five dwelling units. Staff does not support the requested General Plan amendment or Zoning Change to PUD-LDR.

The proposed Low Density Residential General Plan land use designation allows for zero to two dwelling units per acre (DUA) with a midpoint density of 1 DUA. The General Plan indicates that residential projects which propose densities greater than the midpoint should be zoned PUD and contain sufficient public amenities. The proposed development would have a density of 1.2 DUA, which is beyond the midpoint density; thus public amenities are required for this project. The applicant is proposing no public amenities at this time. Beyond not including public amenities in the project, there are other concerns with the project (see remaining discussion points in this report).

In 2009, the City undertook a comprehensive General Plan update, and then evaluated the City's housing stock as well as the City's goals and policies as part of the Housing Element update, which concluded in January 2015. During both of these comprehensive updates, the City concluded that the current General Plan and Zoning designations for this site were appropriate and should not be changed. Staff would like the Planning Commission's input on whether these designations are still appropriate. The current designations allow Dublin Canyon to maintain its unique rural and country character. Although there are various developments that surround the subject property that have higher development intensity, all of the developments were thoughtfully planned to maintain large natural open spaces along Dublin Canyon Road. The adjacent residential lots are obscured from view from Dublin Canyon Road, maintaining the country character of the area. Staff believes the current proposal would compromise the rural character of Dublin Canyon Road.

Staff believes that the development would be more compatible with the surrounding area if the project maintained its current General Plan designation and wishes to get the Planning Commission's input on the proposal. Although the Pleasanton General Plan encourages clustered development of one acre or larger lots on property designated for Rural Density Residential development, staff still has concerns that even three units clustered at the location currently proposed by the applicant would not be consistent with several General Plan policies.

### Discussion Point

1. Does the Commission support a General Plan Land Use Amendment to increase the density of the subject parcel?

## **2. Site Plan**

The proposed five lot subdivision is located just south of a creek. The location and path of the adjacent creek and creek setback has dictated where the homes can be located. Due to the alignment of the creek, the applicant has pushed Lots 3 and 4 closer to Dublin Canyon Road, requiring the proposed frontage street to curve as well. The Traffic Division, Engineering Division, and Fire Department have reviewed the proposed



turning radius of the street and have found it acceptable but not ideal. The street entry and curved design does not allow for easy entry into the project from Dublin Canyon Road which has a speed limit of 45 miles per hour.

In addition to access and circulation concerns, the unusual curve in the frontage road has reduced the width of the landscape area between the frontage road and Dublin Canyon Road to approximately 20 feet between the Dublin Canyon Road property line and the frontage road. Finally, staff does not believe that a frontage road adjacent to Dublin Canyon is appropriate for this location. Staff would like Planning Commission's comments regarding the proposed site plan, street design and landscape setbacks.

#### Discussion Point

2. Are the overall site plan, lot locations and street design layout acceptable?

### **3. Landscape**

Dublin Canyon Road maintains a unique rural character with native trees and vegetation along the majority of the frontage. The current proposal includes removal of 10 trees along Dublin Canyon Road, four of which are considered Heritage Trees. The 800-foot project frontage would be replanted with two London Plane trees along Dublin Canyon Road and six Crape Myrtle trees at the project entry.

Staff seeks the Planning Commission's comments regarding whether the landscape proposal adequately retains the existing country character and adequately screens the proposed development from the road. The current proposal, as discussed previously, maintains an approximately 20 foot wide area between Dublin Canyon Road and the project frontage road, of which 10 feet is designated as a "bioswale" for stormwater management which cannot accommodate large native trees.

Staff would like the project to complement the landscaping within the surrounding area, but seeks the Planning Commission's comments on the landscaping treatment as proposed. In particular, does the Commission believe the proposed landscape plan is adequate in an area where the majority of the projects along Dublin Canyon Road are hidden behind large landscaped setback areas to maintain the rural character of the area.

#### Discussion Point

3. Is the proposed landscaping and planter depth along Dublin Canyon Road appropriate?

### **4. House Size and Design**

The proposed parcels range in size from 25,000 – 67,226 gross square feet and 18,773 - 49,639 net square feet. All of the homes would include a 15-foot front yard setback to

the front porch, a 20-foot front yard setback to the front of the home, 5-foot interior side yard setbacks, a 10-foot street side yard setback adjacent to Dublin Canyon Road, and 30-foot rear yard setback from the property line.

In general staff is supportive of the proposed setbacks except for the street side setback adjacent to Dublin Canyon Road. As stated throughout the report, staff believes that the rural nature of the area should be kept by including large landscaped areas along Dublin Canyon Road. Staff is particularly concerned with the proposed site plan and location of the home and garage located on Lot 1. The current proposal includes a three-car garage that faces Dublin Canyon Road, with the proposed driveway set back approximately 10 feet from the property line adjacent to Dublin Canyon Road. Staff encourages rear or side entry garages to minimize the visibility of automobile-oriented design features from the public right-of-way. Although this garage is located to the side of the front entry of the home, it faces directly towards Dublin Canyon Road, negating the design benefit of a side-entry garage. Staff would like the Planning Commission's input on the proposed setbacks and building positioning.

There are three proposed model types, each with different elevations shown in Figure 4. The homes would range in size from 3,824-square-feet to 4,552-square-feet. The FAR for the development has been calculated to include the proposed habitable area as well as garage area in excess of 600-square-feet divided by the net square footage of each lot. In general the FAR's range between 16-21%, with the larger Lot 5 at 11%. This is similar in size and FAR to the properties located within the Preserve and Kolb Ranch developments across Dublin Canyon Road off of Laurel Creek Drive. Each home is single-story, although the home on Lot 2 includes a staircase to access a large attic with dormer windows. Each home has a maximum height of 30 feet and includes a three-car garage.

The subject proposal would rezone the property to PUD, therefore creating its own site specific development standards. One of the required findings of approval for a PUD is that the project includes superior design that complements the natural terrain and landscape. Staff is seeking the Planning Commission's comments regarding the proposed home designs, area, massing, number of stories, heights, colors, materials and setbacks and whether they are acceptable and compatible with the surrounding area and result in a superior project outcome. In addition, staff has requested that prior to bringing the application forward for the formal hearing, the applicant should provide a visual analysis with photomontages along Dublin Canyon Road. Staff would like the Planning Commission's input on specific viewpoints that it would like considered as part of the visual analysis.

- 4(a). Does the Planning Commission support the proposed building setbacks, building positioning, home designs, massing, number of stories, heights, and colors and materials?
- 4(b). A visual analysis with photomontages will be required if the project moves forward. Are there any specific viewpoints that should be analyzed?

## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice of this workshop was sent to all property owners in Pleasanton within 1,000 feet of the site as shown within Exhibit E. At the time of the report publication, Staff had received one phone call expressing concerns with the potential added traffic on Dublin Canyon Road and the current unsafe traveling speeds along the road as well as one email with similar comments that is attached as Exhibit D. Any additional public comments received after publication of this report will be forwarded to the Commission.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

Since the Planning Commission will take no formal action on the project at the work session, no environmental document accompanies this work session report. After the Planning Commission Work Session, staff will work with the applicant to complete an Initial Study on the final proposal, assuming the applicant intends to advance the application, to determine whether a Negative Declaration or Environmental Impact Report would be required prior to moving the project forward.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission review the attached material, take public testimony, and make suggestions/comments to the applicant and staff regarding the development of the site.

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