

Planning Commission Agenda Report

September 26, 2018

Item 6.a

- SUBJECT:** **Spotorno Ranch**
P18-0226/P18-0227/P18-0229/P18-0230/P18-0231/PUD-132
- APPLICANT:** Michael O'Hara/Tim Lewis Communities
- PROPERTY OWNERS:** Alex V. Spotorno Family LTD Partnership
- PURPOSE:** Work session for the Spotorno Ranch Project, a 39-lot single family residential development proposed by Tim Lewis Communities on the approximately 154-acre Spotorno property, to: 1) review and receive comments on the Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR), and 2) review and provide comments on the proposed project.
- LOCATION:** Vacant Lots Adjacent to 1000 Minnie Drive
APNs 948-0015-0002-01 and 949-0016-006-00
- GENERAL PLAN:** Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential and Open Space – Public Health and Safety
- SPECIFIC PLAN:** Happy Valley Specific Plan
- ZONING:** Planned Unit Development – Semi-Rural Density Residential (PUD-SRDR), Planned Unit Development – Agriculture/Open Space (PUD-A/OS), and Planned Unit Development – Medium Density Residential (PUD-MDR) Districts
- EXHIBITS:**
- A. [Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report \(DSEIR\) for the Spotorno Ranch Project](#)
 - B. [Executive Summary of the DSEIR](#)
 - C. [Proposed Site Plan](#)
 - D. [April 26, 2017 Planning Commission Staff Report \(without attachments\) and Minutes \(excerpt\)](#)
 - E. [Public Comments](#)
 - F. [Location and Notification Map](#)

This item was previously schedule for the September 12, 2018 Planning Commission meeting. Due to lack of a quorum, this item was rescheduled to September 26, 2018. The content of this Planning Commission agenda report that was published for the September 12, 2018 Planning Commission hearing remains unchanged, except for the following areas:

1. SEIR Process: The public comment period for the Draft SEIR for this project has been further extended to meet CEQA requirements. It now ends on Friday, September 28, 2018.
2. Public Comments: Public comments received since the publication of the September 12, 2018 Planning Commission Agenda Report have included in Exhibit E, along with comments submitted for the September 12, 2018 meeting.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission: 1) review the attached materials, receive public comments and provide comments regarding the completeness and adequacy of the Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR); and 2) Provide comments on the proposed Spotorno Ranch project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The applicant, Michael O'Hara on behalf of Tim Lewis Communities (TLC), is proposing to develop 39 single-family detached homes, including related on- and off-site improvements on approximately 31 acres of a 154-acre site, known as Spotorno Ranch, located within the Happy Valley Specific Plan (HVSP) area, with the remainder to be preserved as agricultural open space. The project includes amendments to the General Plan and Happy Valley Specific Plan, including: modification of land use designations to allow for increased residential density in the "Spotorno Flat Area" to accommodate the proposed development, and to re-designate portions of the upper, hillside area of the property from residential to an open space land use; and to eliminate the "Bypass Road" from the circulation network identified in the HVSP. A refinement to the mapped urban growth boundary (UGB) is also proposed, consistent with the text of the Pleasanton Urban Growth Boundary initiative in 1996 (Measure FF).

On June 16, 1998, the City adopted the HVSP and certified an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project (State Clearinghouse #97032034). The EIR analyzed the environmental effects of all development under the Specific Plan, including development of the Spotorno property. Therefore, the Spotorno Ranch Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR) has been prepared using the certified HVSP EIR as a foundation while analyzing potential environmental impacts of the proposed development, including proposed amendments to the Specific Plan. To comply with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements, the DSEIR is being circulated for public comments for a 60-day period, which ends on September 18, 2018. This meeting is being held, during the public comment period, to provide an opportunity for the Planning Commission and the public to provide comments on the completeness and adequacy of the DSEIR. This meeting also provides the public and Planning Commission opportunity to comment on the proposed project.

BACKGROUND¹

An application for the proposed 39-lot project was initially submitted in October 2015, under Case No. P15-0564. It was determined, based on the scope and nature of the project that a Subsequent EIR (SEIR) should be prepared for the project, and on April 7, 2017, the City published a Notice of Preparation that was distributed to interested parties and agencies, that also invited comments on the scope of topics and issues to be addressed in the SEIR.

¹ Prior to the 2015 application by TLC, a proposal for a 79-unit single-family development was proposed on Spotorno site in 1999; this application was later withdrawn. The city-approved Happy Valley Specific Plan contemplated 97 houses on the property.

On April 26, 2017, the Planning Commission held a work session on the SEIR scoping and the proposed development. In the SEIR scoping discussion, the Commission requested that the transportation section of the SEIR include analysis of impacts to the Happy Valley area with and without the Bypass Road, and consider changes in the traffic volumes with the proposed development. The Commission also requested that the SEIR and/or the project review process address pedestrian and bike safety concerns and consider provision of trails that would be interconnected, including connections with the recently approved Lund Ranch.

With respect to the proposed development, the Commission stated that the proposed development should conform to the Happy Valley Specific Plan (HVSP) in terms of density and maximum allotted number of units for the Spotorno Flat Area (see Figure 1). (The HVSP allots 22 residential units to this site). The Commission also stated that they would defer their comments on the retention or elimination of the Bypass Road until the SEIR analysis of traffic and circulation is complete. Please refer to Exhibit D for the April 26th, 2017 Planning Commission Meeting Agenda Report and minutes (excerpt).

In addition to the comments provided at the April 26 meeting, a number of members of the public and two agencies (Alameda County Transportation Commission and the Native American Heritage Commission) provided comments during the scoping phase. These comments are summarized on Pages 1-3 to 1-4 of the Draft SEIR and have been reflected in the scope of the Draft SEIR as appropriate.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Location

Figure 1 shows the project site and its surroundings. The approximately 154-acre project site is largely undeveloped and has historically been used for grazing. The site is adjoined by Alisal Street (to the west and south), single-family residential uses (north, south and west), and Westbridge Lane and Faith Assembly Chapel of God (south). Callippe golf course lies to the southeast of the site. The western portion of the site is relatively flat while the eastern portion of the site includes steep hillsides.

Figure 1: Aerial of Project Site and Surrounding Uses



Project Description

The most recent proposed development site layout and landscaping plan are shown in Figure 2. As shown, the project would be located within the Spotorno Flat Area, the approximately 31-acre western portion of the property, with 39 one- and two-story homes sited on lots ranging from approximately 15,000 to 39,000 square feet; a minimum of eight Accessory Dwelling Units would also be constructed among the proposed single-family lots. The remaining 123 acres are proposed to remain as permanent agricultural open space. As shown, a connector street (labelled as an extension of Clubhouse Drive) would connect between Alisal Street and Westbridge Lane, and would provide access to and through the project. Westbridge Lane would be closed to through traffic, with traffic to and from Callippe Golf Course instead using the new connector street. On-site improvements would include grading, installation of utilities, creation of bioretention areas, and landscape and hardscape installation

Figure 2: Proposed Site and Landscaping Plan



As noted, several amendments to the HVSP and General Plan are included in the overall scope of the project analyzed in the Draft SEIR. These include modifications to the development density in the General Plan and HVSP, as well as changes to reflect the subsequent Save Pleasanton’s Hills and Housing Cap Initiative and the Pleasanton Ridgelines Protection and Growth Control Initiative Measure. Key among these amendments are modifications to the HVSP land use designations to allow the proposed development densities and open space; these changes are shown in Figure 3 and include re-designation of the Spotorno Flat Area from PUD-Single Family Residential Density (PUD-SRDR), to PUD-Low Density Residential (PUD-LDR), so as to provide a density that would accommodate the proposed 39 residential lots; and, within the hillside portion of the property, re-designation of property designated PUD-Medium Density Residential (PUD-MDR) to PUD-Agriculture/Open Space (PUD-A/OS).

Other proposed HVSP amendments include elimination of the Bypass Road from the circulation diagram, since it would not be constructed with this project; and refinement to the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) line to reflect the text of Measure FF.

Figure 4 shows proposed trail connections, which include a trail paralleling the Clubhouse Drive extension, along Westbridge Lane, and within the Callippe Open Space Preserve to connect to a potential future trail on the adjacent Foley property.

Chapter 2 of the Draft SEIR describes the above elements of the project in more detail.

Figure 3: Existing and Proposed Land Use Designation

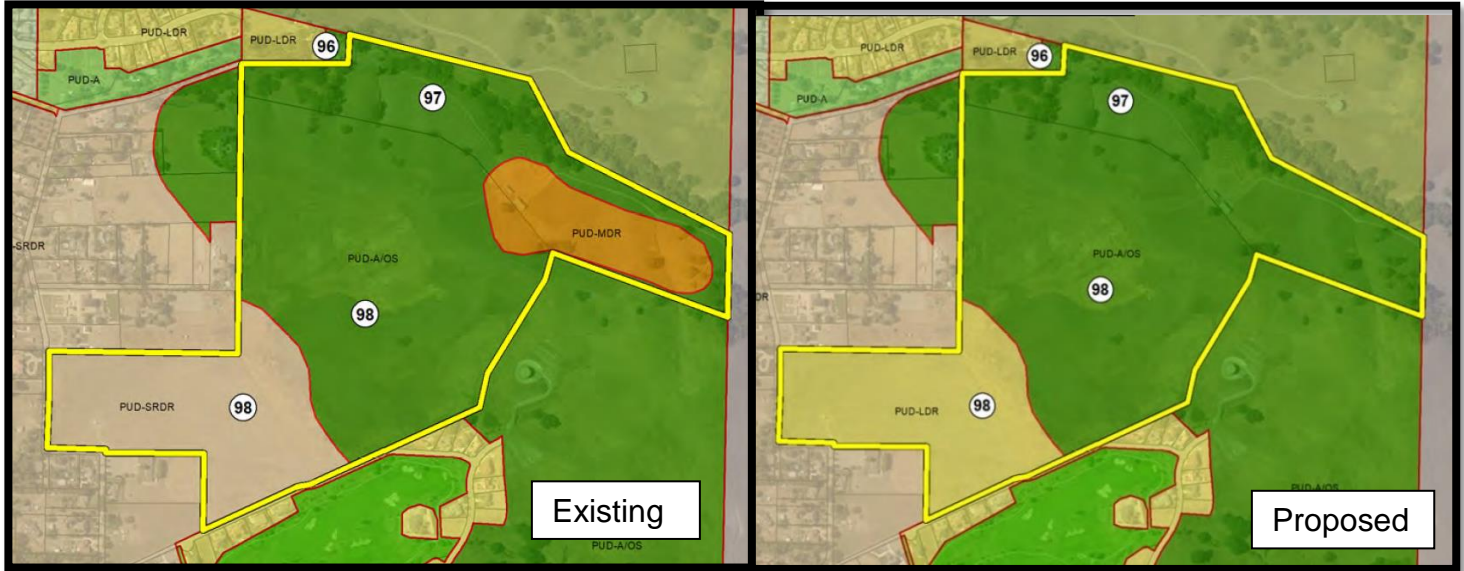
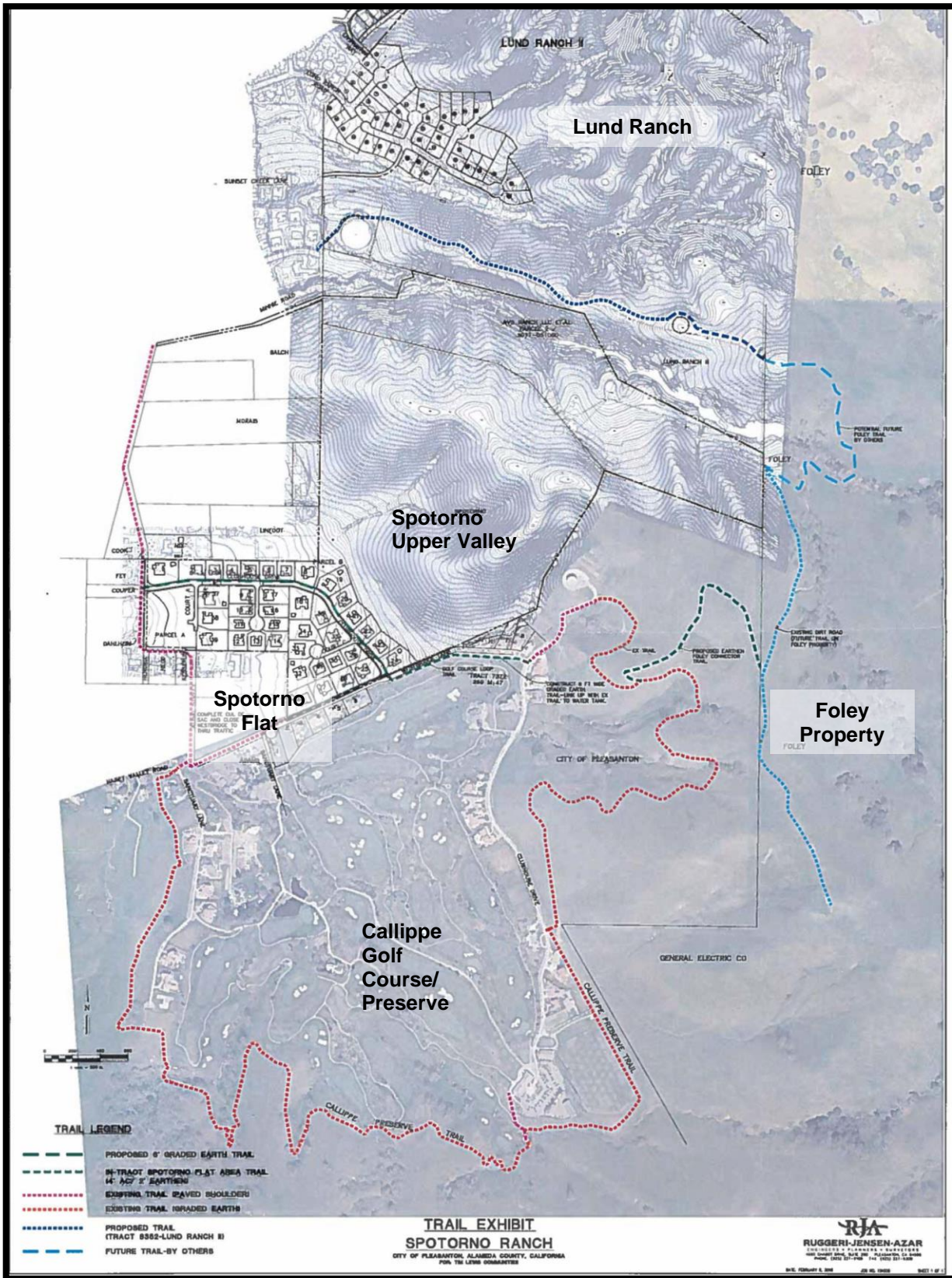


Figure 4: Proposed Trail System



DISCUSSION: DRAFT SUBSEQUENT EIR

The Draft SEIR provides the City, public agencies, and the public with detailed information about the environmental effects of the proposed development, examines and institutes methods of mitigating any adverse environmental impacts should the proposed development be approved. The following sections outline the key elements and findings of the Draft SEIR. The Executive Summary chapter of the Draft SEIR is attached as Exhibit B. The entire Draft SEIR is available at: www.cityofpleasantonca.gov/PDF/SpotornoSEIRJuly2018.PDF

SEIR Process

The process for requiring, preparing and adopting a SEIR is outlined in the CEQA Guidelines. It consists of the following primary steps that have either been conducted to date by the City or are scheduled for the future:

- Distribute the Notice of Preparation of a SEIR to agencies and interested parties – Comment period: April 7, 2017 through May 8, 2017 (Complete)
- Prepare the Draft SEIR – April 2017 through July 2018 (Complete)
- Publish the Draft SEIR – July 16, 2018 (Complete)
- Public and Agency Comment on the Draft SEIR – July 20, 2018 through September 28, 2018
- Public meeting to receive comments from the public and the Planning Commission on the Draft SEIR – September 26, 2018
- Prepare Final SEIR – To be determined (TBD)
- Hold Public Hearings to consider certification of the Final SEIR and take action on the proposed project – Planning Commission recommendation and action by the City Council – TBD

The comment period for agencies and members of the public to submit written comments on the Draft SEIR has been extended to September 28, 2018. Responses to all verbal comments received at the Planning Commission meeting and all written comments will be addressed in the Final SEIR, which will be published prior to the Planning Commission and City Council hearings.

Scope of the Draft SEIR and Relationship to Happy Valley Specific Plan EIR

The DSEIR provides project-level analysis of the environmental effects related to implementation of the project. The document addresses the potentially significant adverse environmental effects that may be associated with the planning, construction, and operation of the project, and identifies appropriate and feasible mitigation measures and alternatives that may be adopted to significantly reduce or avoid these potential impacts.

Because the City certified an EIR for the HVSP (1998), the SEIR evaluates whether the project as currently proposed would result in new or more severe potential impacts than were evaluated and disclosed in the HVSP EIR. The mitigation measures from the HVSP EIR, where applicable, are carried forward and would be applied to the project if approved.

As noted, the proposed development would amend the HVSP to increase density on Spotorno Flat Area from the quantity allotted by the HVSP (22 homes) to the proposed number (39 homes); and to eliminate the Bypass Road, which would modify the circulation patterns from those anticipated in the HVSP EIR. The project would also re-designate 15 acres within the

Spotorno Upper Valley area from PUD-MDR and allotted for up to 75 units by the HVSP, to PUD-A/OS, a change that would preclude any residential development from occurring in this area. With these land use changes, there would be a net reduction of 58 units in the total anticipated buildout of the Specific Plan area.

While much of the analysis in the previously certified HVSP EIR would not need to be changed and the proposed development does not require a major revision to the previously certified EIR, staff determined the proposed development may result in new and/or substantial effects in specific topic areas, compared to the impacts identified in the HVSP EIR. Thus, this SEIR was prepared to analyze these impacts. The remainder of the HVSP would remain in effect as previously adopted.

The Draft SEIR evaluates the environmental impacts that would result from the proposed development. It includes analysis on a range of topics including:

- biological resources*;
- geology and soils*;
- land use and planning*
- traffic and circulation to and from the project area*; and
- aesthetic environment*.
- air quality resulting from construction;
- noise impacts from construction*;
- agriculture and forestry resources;
- cultural resources;
- greenhouse gas emissions;
- hazards and hazardous materials;
- hydrology and water quality;
- mineral resources;
- population and housing;
- public services and utilities systems*; and
- recreation.

Topics marked with an asterisk (*) were those where the project was determined to have the greatest likelihood of potentially significant impacts, and which were therefore analyzed in the greatest detail in the EIR.

The City of Pleasanton is the public agency that will consider approval of the project. CEQA provides that public agencies should not approve a project until all feasible means available have been employed to avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effects of the project. "Feasible" means capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social, and technological factors. The City will use the SEIR, along with other information and public processes, to determine whether to approve, modify, or disapprove the proposed development, and to specify any applicable environmental mitigations (such as mitigations to protect special-status plant and wildlife species, remove and repair existing landslide debris based on the geotechnical report, etc.), or other conditions of approval as part of the consideration of the proposed development.

Impacts Found to be Significant

The Draft SEIR identifies that the proposed development would have less than significant impacts, with mitigation measures, for the following:

- air quality and noise mitigations during construction;
- biological resources mitigations to protect special-status plant and wildlife species, and wetlands;
- soils mitigations to stabilize areas where grading would be performed; and
- traffic mitigations including a traffic management plan during construction, paying the required traffic mitigation fees, installing traffic calming measures within the project area, reducing the number of direct private driveway connecting to the proposed Clubhouse Drive, and conforming to the Draft Trails Master Plan and HVSP in terms of trail design and trail connections.

All other project impacts were found to be less than significant. There were no significant unavoidable impacts found to occur as a result of the project.

Bypass Road

The Draft SEIR included analysis of the project both with and without the Bypass Road, which would connect Westbridge Lane to Sycamore Creek Road. Both scenarios included the closure of Westbridge Lane to through-traffic. Results of the Level of Service analysis show that the project, in general, would contribute to a slight worsening of already deficient operations for side-street movements at both the Sunol Boulevard northbound and southbound ramp intersections, with all other intersections continuing to operate at the City's level of service standard.

Without the Bypass Road, the project is expected to increase traffic volumes on several roadway segments by between 10 vehicles and 240 vehicles per day, with the larger increases expected on Alisal Street north of the new project street; Sycamore Creek Way east of Sunol Boulevard; and Sycamore Road east of Sycamore Creek Way. With the Bypass Road, project traffic would be concentrated on fewer roadways, particularly Sycamore Creek Way, that would accommodate all project traffic. The EIR notes that there is no standard of significance for daily traffic volumes on residential streets, but that typical volumes considered to be reasonable for such streets range from 1,500 vehicles per day for local streets; and 3,000 vehicles per day for residential collector streets. With one exception (Sycamore Creek Road, which already carries close to 3,500 daily vehicles), traffic volumes would remain below those levels, both with and without the Bypass Road.

In addition to the traffic analysis, the EIR alternatives analysis concludes that elimination of the Bypass Road would likely reduce other environmental impacts, since the extensive grading and ground disturbance necessary to construct the roadway would not be necessary, thereby lessening potential effects on biological and visual resources, and construction-related effects on air quality and water quality, among other.

Alternatives

As required by CEQA, Section 5 of the Draft SEIR analyzes three alternatives to the proposed project as follows:

Alternative No. 1: No Project/No Build Alternative

Under this No Project/No Build Alternative, the proposed project would not be constructed and the project site would remain undeveloped. No new housing, roads, or trails would be developed on the 154-acre site. This alternative would not advance any of the project objectives. The project site would maintain its current status.

Alternative No. 2: 22 Lot Development on Spotorno Flat Area

Under this alternative, the project would develop 22 residential units, instead of the 39 units proposed, on the Spotorno Flat Area portion of the project site, consistent with the allowed density of the current HVSP. All other aspects of the project would remain the same as the proposed project, including trails, and also excluding the construction of the Bypass Road. With fewer residential units, this alternative would have reduced impacts to transportation and utilities when compared to the proposed 39 units, but similar impacts with mitigations as the proposed project in other areas.

Alternative No. 3: 39 Units with Construction of the Bypass Road

Under this alternative, the project would be developed with 39 residential units on the Spotorno Flat Area portion of the site and construct a Bypass Road as proposed in the HVSP. The Bypass Road would be constructed in the alignment recommended by the Blue Ribbon Committee in April 2007 to link Westbridge Lane and Sycamore Creek Way. In addition to having similar impacts as the proposed project, this alternative would have greater impacts in other areas, i.e. aesthetics, air quality and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, geology and soils, biological resources, cultural resources, and land use and planning, principally associated with the construction of the Bypass Road.

DISCUSSION: PROPOSED SPOTORNO RANCH PROJECT

As discussed, the Planning Commission previously reviewed and provided initial comments on the proposed project at a study session in April 2017, based on an initial site plan illustrated in Figure 2. At that time, the Planning Commission indicated support for density of the Spotorno Flat Area to remain as currently designated, but also sought additional information from the EIR before offering direction on whether the Bypass Road can or should be eliminated. The Planning Commission also provided input on some other aspects of the project as it was then designed, including circulation, trails, and community benefits/amenities proposed.

The applicant has made revisions to the proposed development plan based on the comments from the last work session, including revisions to the site plan/circulation and trails, and there has been preliminary discussion of potential community benefits, to help support the proposed request for increased density on Spotorno Flat. Other aspects of the plan, including total project density/number of lots, average lot size, and range of home types, sizes and styles, remain as previously proposed.

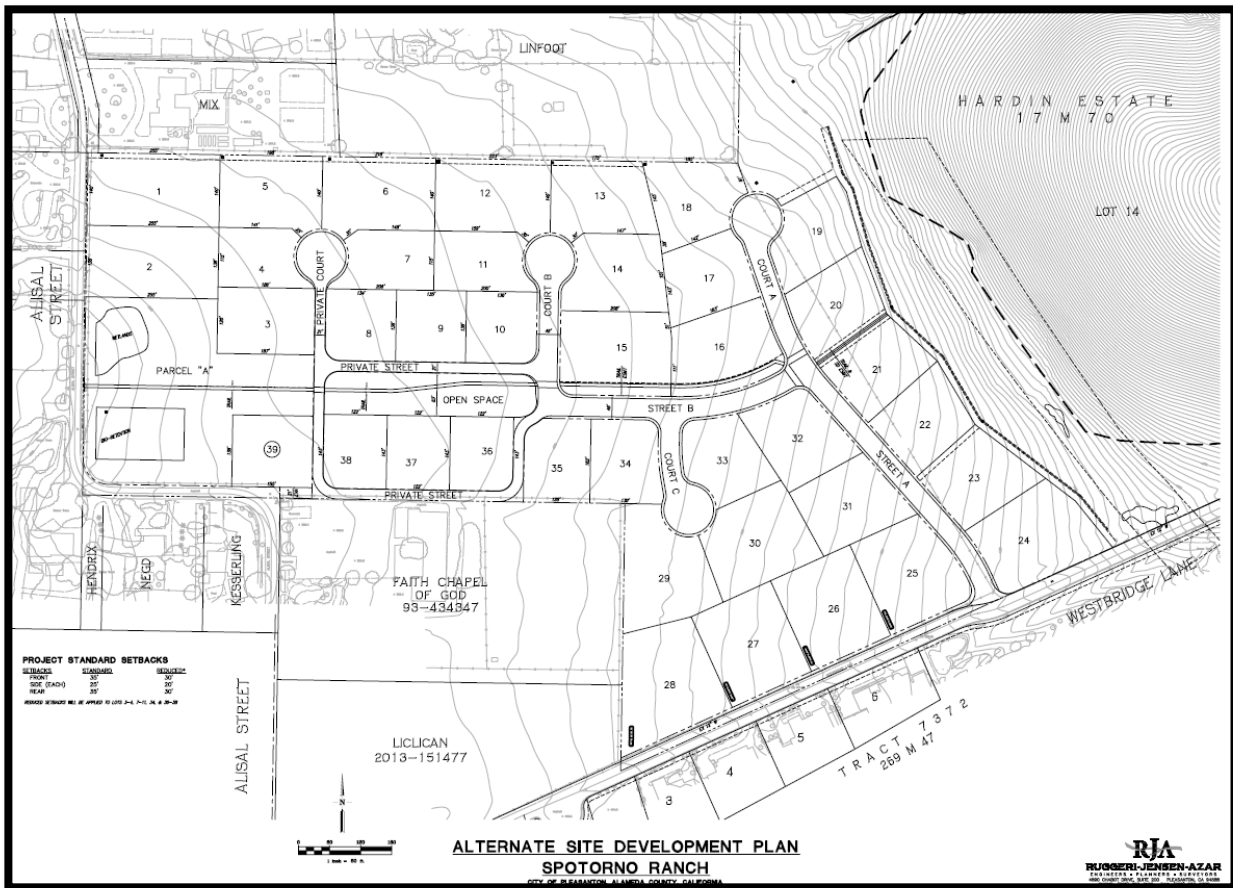
Site Plan/Access

The prior site plan is shown in Figure 5, and included a single access road from Westbridge Lane, which would have remained as a through street. Most lots would have been served from this internal street and a series of branching cul-de-sacs, with two lots having direct access from Alisal Street.

The current plan, shown above in Figure 2, includes a through connection between Alisal Street and Westbridge Lane, and closure of Westbridge Lane to through traffic, with one lot having direct driveway access from Alisal; four lots from Westbridge Lane, and the remainder from the interior project street. Both the prior and current plan excluded the Bypass Road.

Staff believes the new site plan and circulation is a considerable improvement over the last version, particularly with respect to the new through connection between Alisal and Westbridge, and closure of Westbridge Lane, as called for in the HVSP. There may be opportunities for further improvement/refinement of the plan, such as providing additional pedestrian connections through the site; and modifying the configuration of lots along Alisal Street to allow for a larger building setback and lot size more consistent with the adjacent rural residential properties to the immediate north.

Figure 5: Previous Site Plan



Trails

The prior plan included a conceptual trail alignment connecting from the subdivision to the north, intended as a similar but revised alignment to the “Bypass Road trail” shown in the HVSP. A trail was also proposed within the development.

Since the last Planning Commission meeting, the trails plan was revised as shown in Figure 3, above. The plan no longer includes a trail to the north through the hillside area, based on several concerns expressed by the applicant, including potential interference with grazing activity; reduction in habitat value of the property subject to a conservation easement; and steep topography and creek crossings that would make the trail difficult to construct.

Instead, the trail would include a connector within the Callippe Open Space preserve to the Foley Property to the east; a trail that would run parallel to the Clubhouse Drive extension through the project, connecting Alisal Street and Westbridge Lane; and an on-street pedestrian connection along Westbridge Lane, beyond the (to be closed) cul-de-sac.

While staff believes the proposed trails would enhance connectivity through and adjacent to the property, staff believes additional consideration should be given to a possible connection to the north that would be more direct, and not necessarily rely on future development of the Foley property to the east, to complete a connection between Callippe and the Lund Property. If, however, such a connection is determined to be infeasible, the proposed trail network appears to meet the intent of the HVSP and City Trails Plan, in terms of the overall network.

Public Amenities/Benefits

As noted, the applicant has requested modifications to the Specific Plan (and related General Plan and Zoning Map amendments) that would increase the allowable density and allotment of units on the Spotorno Flat portion of the property from 22 to 39 lots, while at the same time re-designating the Upper Spotorno property to eliminate the existing PUD-MDR designation, thereby precluding any residential development on this portion of the site, previously allotted for up to 75 units.

The City has discretion over whether to permit the requested amendments and additional density, and may consider whether it is appropriate for the project to provide additional community amenities or benefits to help support such a request. Staff has had preliminary discussion with the applicant concerning such benefits, including the following:

- Dedication or permanent preservation of the hillside portion of the property, outside of the 31-acre Spotorno Flat as open space, meaning that no residential development would be permitted in this area.
- Provision of trails, either as proposed, or with the addition of a north-south connector that would connect more directly to the Lund Ranch trails.
- A substantial financial contribution, to be used to support either the provision of upgraded water supply infrastructure in the Happy Valley Specific Plan Area; or extension of recycled water to Callippe Golf Course. The need for both improvements has been identified in the HVSP, although no viable funding for either is available.

Staff believes, notwithstanding adjustments to the site plan, density or trails network, that a set of amenities including the above elements are reasonable amenities to consider supporting the request for additional density, from 22 up to 39 residential lots.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Notices of this application were sent to surrounding property owners and tenants within Happy Valley Specific Plan area and within a 1,000-foot radius of the site. Staff has provided the location and noticing maps as Exhibit F for reference. In addition, notices were sent to interested parties that requested to be notified of the Draft SEIR availability. Public comments received as of the date this Agenda Report was prepared are attached as Exhibit E.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission take the following actions:

1. Receive comments from the public and provide Planning Commission comments regarding the adequacy and completeness of the Draft SEIR; and
2. Consider revisions to the project made since April 2017, receive public comments and provide Planning Commission comments to the applicant.

Primary Author:

Jenny Soo, Associate Planner, 925-931-5615 or jsoo@cityofpleasantonca.gov

Reviewed/Approved By:

Ellen Clark, Planning Manager

Larissa Seto, Assistant City Attorney

Gerry Beaudin, Director of Community Development