



Planning Commission Staff Report

November 5, 2009
Item 6.b.

- SUBJECT:** PUD-80
- APPLICANT:** City of Pleasanton
- PROPERTY OWNERS:** Alameda County Surplus Property Authority (ACSPA)
- PURPOSE:** Application for Planned Unit Development approval to establish allowed uses and the construction of neighborhood-park-related improvements including a storm water detention basin on approximately five acres.
- It is anticipated that when the City Council considers this application, Council will have considered an Environmental Impact Report Supplement, a draft of which has been released. Nothing in that draft Supplement directly bears on this application.
- GENERAL PLAN:** *Alameda County General Plan – Mixed-Use/Business Park*
- City of Pleasanton General Plan – Medium Density Residential (two to eight dwelling units per gross acre) and High Density Residential (greater than eight dwelling units per gross acre); Parks and Recreation; and Retail/Highway/Service Commercial, Business and Professional Offices*
- SPECIFIC PLAN:** Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan, as amended
- ZONING:** *Alameda County – Agriculture*
- City of Pleasanton – Pre-zoning for the property is PUD-P (Planned Unit Development – Park)*
- The project site is currently located in unincorporated Alameda County.
- LOCATION:** Southwest of the intersection of I-580 and El Charro Road (Staples Ranch)

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Exhibit A, Recommended PUD Conditions of Approval
 2. Exhibit B, Development Plans, Project Narrative, Bay-Friendly Scorecard, LEED Project Checklist, Preliminary Hydrology Information, Restroom Plan and Elevations, and Tennis Court Lighting Specifications dated “Received October 6, 2009”
 3. Exhibit C, Illustrative Site Plan from the Staples Ranch Neighborhood Park Master Plan dated “August 27, 2009”
 4. Exhibit D, Parks and Recreation Commission Staff Report and Meeting Minutes dated “August 27, 2009”
 5. Exhibit E, Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment/ Staples Ranch (available at www.staplesranch.org)
 6. Exhibit F, Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment/ Staples Ranch Environmental Impact Report (available at www.staplesranch.org)
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BACKGROUND

In November 2007, the City Council directed staff to initiate a master plan process for the proposed 17-acre Staples Ranch Community Park, consistent with a Joint Policy Statement developed by Friends of Pleasanton and Pleasanton First, two local advocacy groups. The process contemplated a number of public workshops designed to solicit broad community input concerning the overall appearance and suggested amenities for the park. Three workshops were conducted, and a master plan for the park, including an initial concept plan for the Staples Ranch Neighborhood Park Master Plan was approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission in April 2008. On May 14, 2009, the Parks and Recreation Commission approved a Staples Ranch Neighborhood Park Master Plan process with a goal of further refining the design concepts and amenities for the Neighborhood Park. The Staples Ranch Neighborhood Park was approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission on August 27, 2009. The illustrative site plan from the Staples Ranch Neighborhood Park Master Plan, and the Parks and Recreation Commission staff report of August 27, 2009, and Parks and Recreation Commission meeting minutes of August 27, 2009 are attached (please see Exhibits C and D).

The Parks and Recreation Commission will review the final plans and details for the Neighborhood Park before it is constructed. The plans before the Planning Commission are conceptual.

Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment/Staples Ranch EIR

On February 24, 2009, the City Council certified the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Staples Ranch Project.

Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment/Staples Ranch

On February 24, 2009, the City Council approved a Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment (Specific Plan Amendment) for the Staples Ranch project. The Specific Plan Amendment includes an extension of Stoneridge Drive to El Charro Road contingent upon the adoption of a regional traffic policy statement. The City Council also adopted the Ice Center Alternative, including the four-rink ice-skating center as part of the Staples Ranch Community Park.

Staples Ranch Rezoning and Prezoning

On March 3, 2009, the City Council adopted the rezoning and prezoning for the Staples Ranch project, including the PUD-P (Planned Unit Development-Park) prezoning for the Staples Ranch Neighborhood Park Site.

Legal Challenge to Project Approvals

On March 27, 2009, a petition and complaint was filed in state court by Safe Streets Pleasanton, Center for Biological Diversity, Alameda Creek Alliance, Mark Emerson, and Matt Morrison challenging the adequacy of the EIR, namely, (1) the review process for the Stoneridge Drive extension; and (2) the disclosure/analysis/mitigation of the following:

- cumulative noise impacts,
- impacts to sensitive species,
- impacts on climate change, and
- dust and traffic impacts associated with nearby surface mining operations.

The petition and complaint also sought to set aside all of the relevant project approvals; nevertheless, the lawsuit did not prohibit the Planning Commission's review of the Staples Ranch Planned Unit Developments (PUDs).

This lawsuit was recently settled. The settlement agreement allows the Planning Commission to continue to review PUD development plans for the site.

Supplemental Environmental Impact Report

Recently, the City Council authorized preparation of a Environmental Impact Report Supplement (SEIR) to consider the environmental impacts, if any, of a two-lane Stoneridge Drive extension as compared to the four-lane roadway extension included in the Specific Plan Amendment, and of the following: (1) Updated biological surveys; (2) Updated analysis of potential impacts to the environment resulting from the production of greenhouse gas emissions; and (3) The Proposed Project's contribution to cumulative biological resources impacts, cumulative noise impacts, and cumulative impacts in conjunction with nearby quarry operations.

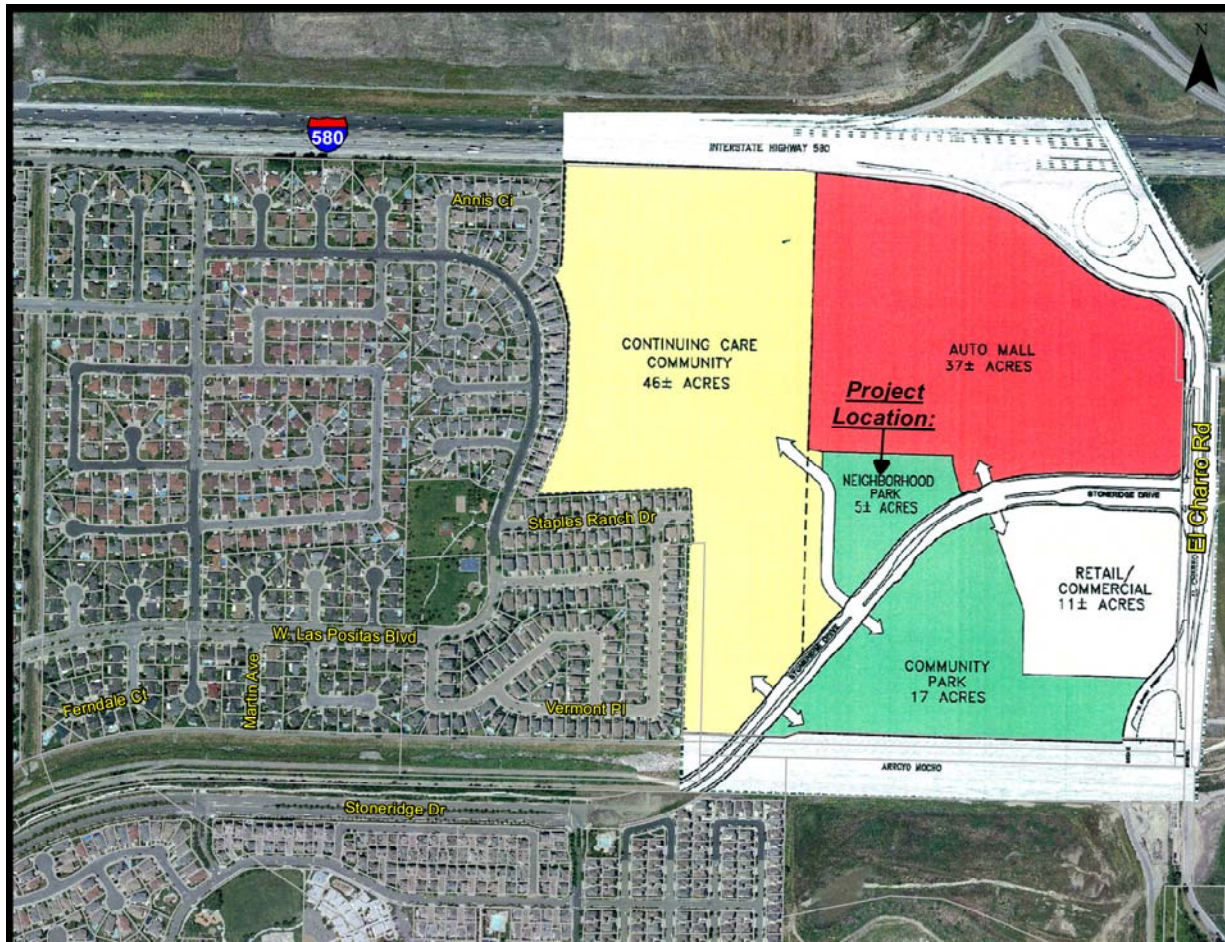
The Draft SEIR has been released. It will have a 45-day public review period. A Planning Commission hearing to hear comments on the Draft SEIR has been tentatively scheduled for December 9, 2009.

Staff does not believe the SEIR will change the mitigations related to the Neighborhood Park and hence believes the Commission has sufficient and adequate environmental information to make a recommendation on this PUD development plan to the City Council.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The project site is vacant and is within Pleasanton's Sphere of Influence and Urban Growth Boundary. The development site is bounded on the north and east by vacant land planned to be an auto mall by Hendrick Automotive Group, to the west by vacant land planned to be a senior continuing care community by Continuing Life Communities (CLC), and to the south by vacant land planned to be a Community Park with an ice-skating center. Figure 1 (below) shows the project location.

FIGURE 1
Project Location



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The PUD development plan, in conjunction with the conditions of approval, will establish the allowed uses, structures, and site improvements for the project site. The entitlements required for this project include a development agreement, tentative subdivision map approval, final map approval, and building permits.

The project site will need to be annexed into Pleasanton.

FIGURE 2
Neighborhood Park Site



Project features include the following:

- A floor area ratio of less than one percent
- A landscaped storm water detention basin (basin) which will be approximately 15 feet deep
- Drainage swales in the basin to provide more visual interest in dryer months
- A weir (which is an overflow structure tied directly into a drainage pipe to the Arroyo Mocho) in the event of a clog in the basin's primary drain
- A four-foot tall black vinyl-coated chain-link fence near the basin's top of bank

- A future boardwalk (for observation/picnic) in the basin
- A pedestrian loop around the park, including a separated sidewalk by Stoneridge Drive, a sidewalk by the proposed on-street parking, and a two-foot wide decomposed granite walking/jogging path by the proposed sidewalks
- Observation benches adjacent to the basin
- Over 100 new trees – there are currently no trees on the site
- Lighted tennis courts
- Shade structure with picnic tables
- A bike rack
- Low stone walls for visual interest
- A public restroom, with restroom doors facing east
- Green screens with vines to soften the appearance of the public restroom
- A bus stop and bus shelter with seating, lighting, and wheelchair access, which is proposed to be funded by the auto mall developer (Hendrick Automotive Group), as part of its PUD (PUD-57)
- Ten parking spaces, including one ADA space
- A standard City of Pleasanton park sign

The recommended conditions of approval will allow the following as a permitted use:

- Parks, playgrounds, open space, and related uses
- Storm water detention basin and related uses
- All permitted uses of the Public and Institutional district of the Pleasanton Municipal Code
- Dry land hay farming until commencement of grading for the storm water detention basin

The recommended conditions of approval require the following:

- Bay-Friendly landscaping which is less water and maintenance needy
- Wildflower hydroseeding in a portion of the basin to provide visual interest
- Some large boulders in the basin and by the tennis courts to provide visual interest
- One more stretch of waterway (running north) to be added in the basin to provide more visual interest
- The additional stretch of waterway to be landscaped in a manner similar to the other waterways in the basin
- The weir to be faced with a natural color of rip rap (which is stone)
- Plant species from the Forage and Shelter Plant List (for the Community Park, PUD-70) to be planted at the Neighborhood park
- The trees in the northern buffer by Hendrick Automotive Group to be evergreen trees, but may be other than fruit trees (additional discussion with Hendrick Automotive Group will be required to find a tree species which works for both the City and the auto mall developer in this area)
- The landscape buffer and pedestrian paths on the northern and eastern sides of the basin to be a minimum of eight feet in width unless otherwise determined by the City Engineer

- A seven-foot tall stucco wall north and east of the basin to be completely screened with landscaping to deter graffiti tagging
- One tree (by the on-street parking) to be relocated such that it will not create a line of sight obstruction
- The women's and men's restrooms to each have more than one stall
- Photovoltaic panels may be flat mounted on the roof of the restroom without additional Planning Division review
- The restroom and any pathway lighting to adhere to Energy Star standards
- The decomposed granite trail to be a light sand color, to help reduce the sun's heating of the site
- Low-flow toilets and automatic shut off valves on the restroom faucets to be installed as part of the project
- The parallel parking spaces to be 23 feet in length, unless otherwise determined by the City Traffic Engineer (it is anticipated that a shorter length will be allowed, since extra space is proposed for maneuverability)
- The City of Pleasanton may consider adding a stop sign at the end of the parking aisle
- The tennis court lighting levels to be reduced to approximately 40 foot-candles, similar to the lighting level of the courts at the Pleasanton Tennis and Community Park

Storm Drainage and Utilities

Storm water treatment on the site will be provided via a series of bioswales. Treated storm water will be transported to the basin. Storm water from the surrounding Staples Ranch sites will be treated and will also be transported to the proposed basin. Final utility plans will be subject to the review and approval of the City Engineer.

Green Building

The project will achieve a minimum of 26 green building points (equivalent to a LEED-certified rating level), and efforts will be made to try and achieve a minimum of 33 points (equivalent to a LEED silver rating).

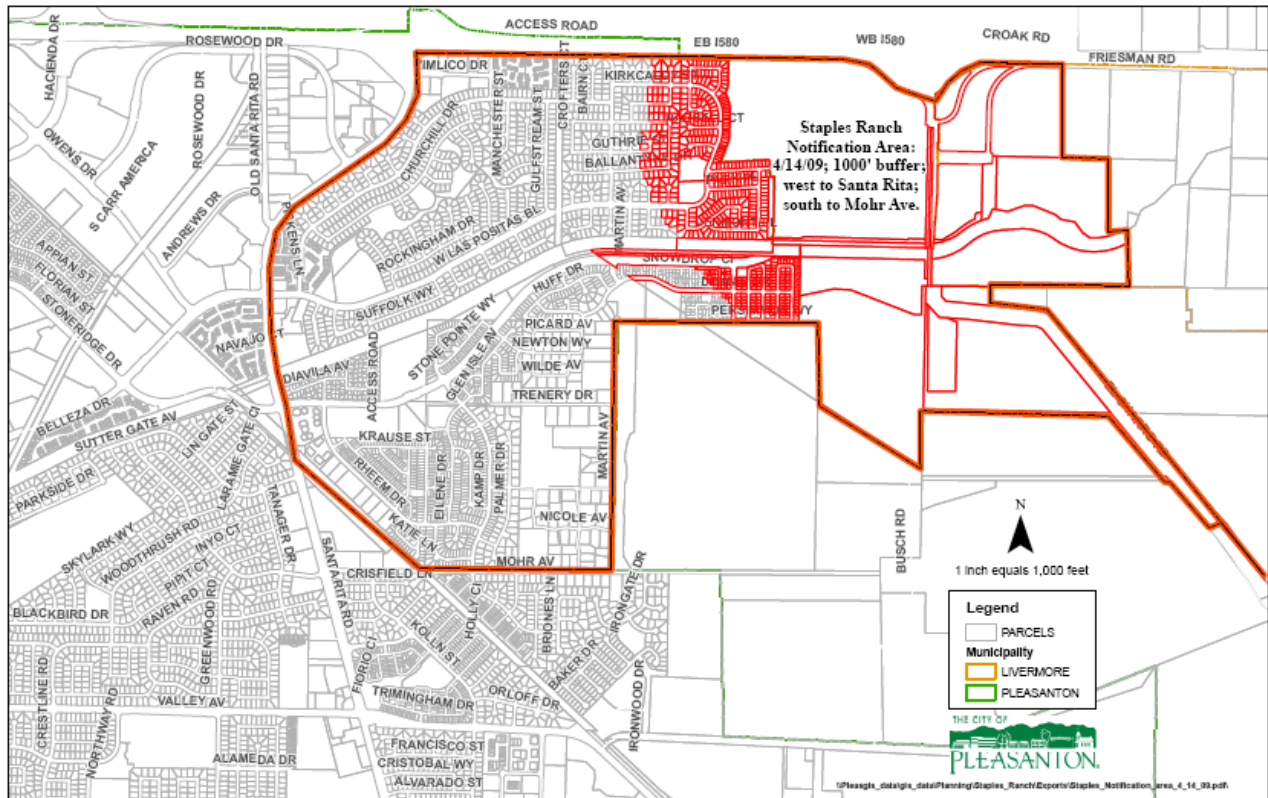
ANALYSIS

Staff believes all outstanding issues have been addressed.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notices were sent to all property owners and residents as shown in Figure 3 below. The noticing area is greater than the standard 1,000-foot radius noticing distance. At the time this report was written, no comments had been received specifically related to the PUD application.

**FIGURE 3
Noticing Area**



Note: The properties within 1,000 feet of the project site are shown in red. The project noticing area is substantially greater than the standard 1,000-foot radius noticing area.

PUD CONSIDERATIONS

The Pleasanton Municipal Code sets forth the purposes of the Planned Unit Development District and “considerations” the Planning Commission and City Council should consider when reviewing a PUD development plan. These considerations are typically used as PUD findings. The considerations and staff’s response are below.

1. Is the plan in the best interests of the public health, safety, and general welfare?

The project will adhere to all applicable City standards concerning public health, safety, and welfare. The subject development will include the installation of all required on site utilities with connections to municipal systems in order to serve the project. The structures will be designed to meet the requirements of the Uniform Building Code and Fire Code. As described in consideration number 3 (below), staff believes the proposed development, as conditioned, is compatible with adjacent uses.

Staff’s analysis indicates the project, as conditioned, is in the best interest of the public health, safety, and general welfare.

2. Is the plan consistent with the City's General Plan and any applicable specific plan?

The site's General Plan Land Use designation Medium Density Residential (two to eight dwelling units per gross acre) and High Density Residential (greater than eight dwelling units per gross acre); Parks and Recreation; and Retail/Highway/Service Commercial, Business and Professional Offices allows for a mix of uses on the Staples Ranch site including a Neighborhood Park.

Development of the proposed project will further the implementation of the Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment, as approved by the City Council on February 24, 2009. The Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment anticipates an approximately five-acre Neighborhood Park with a storm water detention basin on the project site. In the Specific Plan Amendment, the overall design standard for the Neighborhood Park states:

- Incorporate a storm water flow control basin into the Neighborhood Park design to provide adequate storage for the entire Staples Ranch development to meet hydromodification requirements. Design the basin so that it can be used for passive, casual recreational uses during dry weather periods, to the extent feasible.
- Provide other recreational facilities outside of the basin area, such as tennis courts, bocce ball, dog park facilities, or other uses as determined by the Pleasanton City Council.

Staff believes the project adheres to the Specific Plan Amendment. The Park will provide for a stormwater flow-control basin which will have public access and an accessible boardwalk in dry weather periods. Tennis courts will be provided outside the basin. In staff's opinion the site has been well designed.

Likewise, staff believes the project will adhere to the General Plan. Staples Ranch is planned to have a public park in the Specific Plan Amendment, and this is noted in the General Plan. Several conditions of approval have been added to the project to address the new greenhouse gas best management practices in the General Plan.

Staff believes the project, as conditioned, is consistent with the City's General Plan and Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment.

3. Is the plan compatible with previously developed properties in the vicinity and the natural, topographic features of the site?

The project site and surrounding land are currently vacant. The City Council approved the Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment which allows for a senior continuing care community west of the project site, an auto mall north and east of the project site,

and a community park south of the site. As conditioned, the project will be designed to minimize impacts on surrounding uses.

For example, to minimize impacts the project features, as conditioned, will include:

- Over 100 trees to soften the appearance of the site
- A weir, which is a secondary safety drain for the basin
- On-street parking, sufficient to accommodate the proposed uses based on staff's experience
- The tennis court lighting fixtures which are downward facing and shielded
- The tennis court lighting levels reduced to approximately 40 foot-candles
- No truck deliveries, parking lot sweeping, or leaf blowing between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m.

The site is predominately flat and approximately 350 feet in elevation at all points. Soil removed to construct the basin will be used as fill on the Staples Ranch sites.

Staff's analysis indicates the project, as conditioned, is compatible with previously developed properties in the vicinity and adjacent proposed projects, and the natural, topographic features of the site.

4. Does grading take into account environmental characteristics and is it designed in keeping with the best engineering practices to avoid erosion, slides, or flooding to have as minimal an effect upon the environment as possible?

The natural topography of the site is relatively flat. Minus the grading for the basin, minimal changes in grades are proposed. Relatively steep slope banks (2:1) are proposed in the basin. Additional slope stability information will be subject to the review and approval of the City Engineer prior to construction. As conditioned, the basin's slope banks will be revised to have a 3:1 slope, unless otherwise determined by the City Engineer. Based on basin modeling information provided to date, the City Engineer believes the entire basin can have a 3:1 slope, which is gentler than the 2:1 slope proposed for portions of the basin.

The site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone.

The proposed project will require the construction of storm water detention facilities to contain the 100-year flood. An EIR mitigation measure for the project requires the site to be removed from the flood hazard area prior to occupancy. However, this is a City park and the Engineering Division will require this to be completed prior to the issuance of a building permit. Engineering modeling indicates that implementation of the Livermore flood protection improvements, as part of Livermore's approved El Charro Specific Plan, will provide sufficient detention to prevent inundation of the Staples Ranch site for the 100-year storm event. It is anticipated that Livermore will begin the construction of these improvements next year.

To help prevent the erosion and pollution of the Arroyo Mocho, on-site storm water will be treated on site for contaminants and directed into the basin, before being released into the Arroyo Mocho.

On-site erosion control and dust suppression measures will be documented in the improvement plans and inspected by the Building and Safety Division during construction.

Staff's analysis indicates the grading, as conditioned, takes into account environmental characteristics and is designed in keeping with the best engineering practices to avoid erosion, slides, or flooding to have as minimal an effect upon the environment as possible.

5. Have the streets and buildings been designed and located to complement the natural terrain and landscape?

As stated above, minus grading for the basin, minimal changes to the natural grade elevations are proposed.

There are no trees on site. Over 100 new trees are proposed to be planted as part of the project. Shrubs and ground cover, including native California species, will also be planted. As conditioned, the project will adhere to Alameda County Waste Management Authority's Bay-Friendly Landscape Guidelines, and landscaping species from the proposed forage and shelter plant list (from PUD-70, Staples Ranch Community Park) will be incorporated into the final plans.

Staff's analysis indicates the project, as conditioned, has been designed and located to complement the natural terrain and landscape.

6. Have adequate public safety measures been incorporated into the design of the plan?

The project, as conditioned, will be consistent with City safety standards. The project contains a loop trail around the site which can also be used for emergency vehicle access. The project will be required to comply with all Building and Fire code requirements.

Staff's analysis indicates the project, as conditioned, will include adequate public safety measures.

7. Does the plan conform to the purposes of the PUD District?

Table 1 (below) shows the purposes of the PUD District.

The primary purpose of the district is to allow flexibility in the development of projects that the City determines are in its best interest. Staff believes that the proposed project

implements a key component of the Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment which was approved by the City Council on February 24, 2009. The project is also consistent with General Plan. The PUD process allows for ample input from the public and for an ultimate decision by the City Council regarding the appropriateness of the development plan.

Staff believes the project, as conditioned, conforms to the purposes of the PUD District.

**TABLE 1
Purposes of the PUD District**

- To encourage imagination and housing variety in the development of property of varying sizes and topography in order to avoid the monotony and often destructive characteristics of standard residential, commercial and industrial developments
- To provide a development procedure which will insure that the desires of the developer and the community are understood and approved prior to commencement of construction
- To insure that the goals and objectives of the city's general plan are promoted without the discouragement of innovation by application of restrictive developmental standards
- To encourage efficient usage of small, odd-sized or topographically affected parcels difficult for development by themselves
- To accommodate changing market conditions and community desires
- To provide a mechanism whereby the city can designate parcels and areas requiring special consideration regarding the manner in which development occurs
- To encourage the establishment of open areas in residential, commercial and industrial developments and provide a mechanism for insuring that said areas will be beautified and/or maintained;
- To complement the objectives of the hillside planned development district (HPD) in areas

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The Environmental Impact Report for the Staples Ranch project has been certified by the City Council. As stated above, a Draft SEIR for the Staples Ranch project has been released and will have a 45-day public review period. A Planning Commission hearing to receive comments on the Draft SEIR has been tentatively scheduled for December 9, 2009.

Staff does not believe the proposed mitigations in the SEIR will have an impact on the Neighborhood Park PUD design and hence believes the Commission has sufficient and adequate environmental information to make a recommendation on this PUD development plan to the City Council.

CONCLUSION

Staff believes the project is consistent with the Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment and the General Plan. Staff has added several conditions of approval which it believes will improve the project. Staff believes the project, as conditioned by staff, is supportable.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

1. Make the PUD findings (“PUD Considerations”) for the proposed development plan as listed in the staff report;
2. Adopt a resolution recommending approval of Case PUD-80, subject to the conditions of approval listed in Exhibit A, and forward the application to the City Council for public hearing and review.

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