

Planning Commission Staff Report

June 24, 2009
Item 6.a.

- SUBJECT:** PUD-57
- APPLICANT:** Hendrick Automotive Group
- PROPERTY OWNERS:** Alameda County Surplus Property Authority (ACSPA)
- PURPOSE:** PUD Development Plan to establish allowed uses and the construction of six buildings (for auto sales, service, rental, etc.) and three car wash buildings totaling ±291,750 square feet and related site improvements on ±37 acres
- GENERAL PLAN:** *Alameda County General Plan—Mixed-Use/Business Park*
City of Pleasanton General Plan—Medium Density Residential (2 to 8 dwelling units per gross acre) and High Density Residential (greater than 8 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—Prezoning for the property is PUD-C (Planned Unit Development-Commercial)

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, Draft Project-Specific Conditions of Approval, Draft General Conditions of Approval, and Draft Conditions of Approval – Appendix 1
 2. Exhibit B, Proposed Plans, Preliminary Lighting Analysis, Green Point Checklist, Project Narrative, Tree Report (available at the Planning Division), and Tree Replacement Plan Dated February 2, 2009 and Transportation System

- Management (TSM) Plan, Plan to Reduce Air Pollution from Stationary Sources Dated May 14, 2009
3. Exhibit C, Meeting notes from Joint Planning Commission and City Council Workshop Dated November 8, 2007
 4. Exhibit D, Neighborhood Meeting Notes Dated March 21, 2007
 5. Exhibit E, Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment/Staples Ranch
 6. Exhibit F, Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment/Staples Ranch Environmental Impact Report (available at www.staplesranch.org)
 7. Exhibit G, Correspondence
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BACKGROUND

The Hendrick Automotive Group (Hendrick) Planned Unit Development (PUD) is one of several proposed uses on the Staples Ranch property. On November 8, 2007, the City Council and the Planning Commission held a joint workshop to review the conceptual development proposals for the Staples Ranch site, including the Hendrick proposal. Since the workshop, Hendrick has agreed to several changes to address the Council's and Commission's comments. Hendrick proposes to develop approximately 37 acres of the Staples Ranch property. If the development is approved, Hendrick and Mercedes Benz plan to relocate their existing Pleasanton auto dealerships to the site. Hendrick dealerships include Lexus, BMW, BMW Mini, Acura, Volvo, and Infiniti.

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, including an amendment to the Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan and rezoning/prezoning for the site.

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.

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-C (Planned Unit Development-Commercial) prezoning for the Hendrick Automotive Group 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
- dust and traffic impacts associated with nearby surface mining operations

The petition and complaint also seek to set aside all of the relevant project approvals; nevertheless, the lawsuit does not prohibit the Planning Commission's review of the Staples Ranch PUD's.

Voters Deserve A Voice Initiative

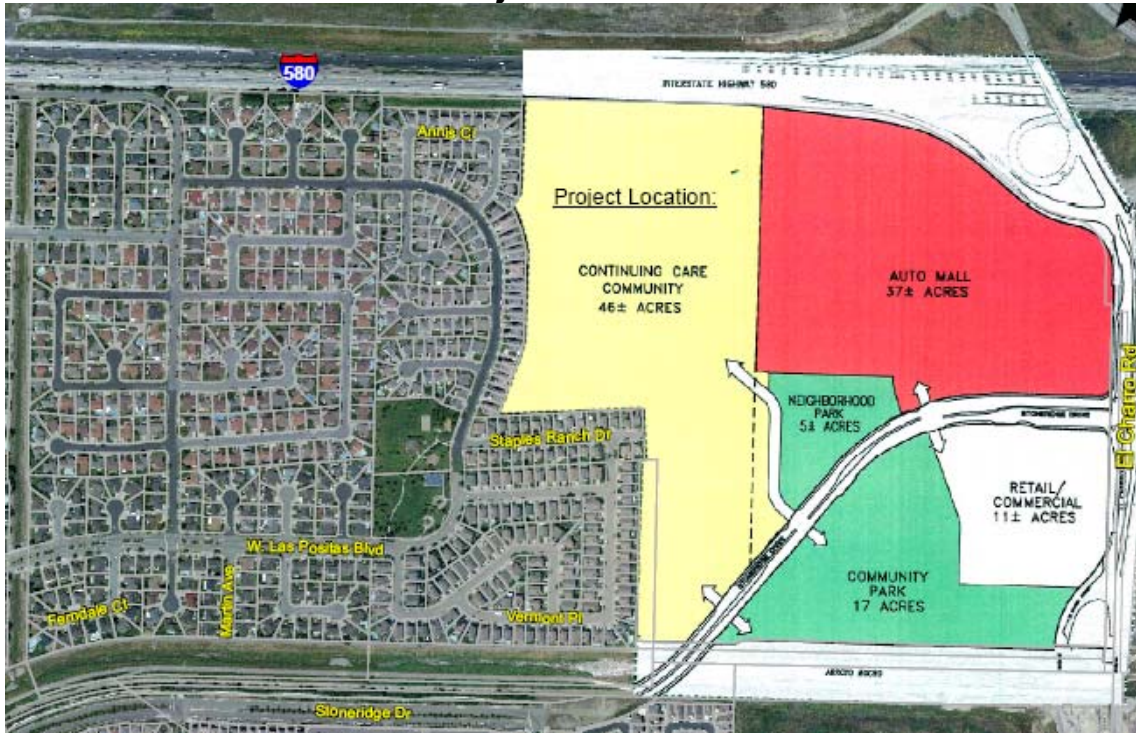
An initiative measure has been filed which could impact the Staples Ranch project if adopted by voters. The initiative would amend the General Plan by adding new policies about certain development projects and road extensions that must be approved by Pleasanton voters. To qualify for the ballot, the initiative sponsors must collect signatures from 10% of the registered voters in Pleasanton—around 4,176 signatures. To qualify for the ballot, the sponsors need to collect the required number of signatures by September 8, 2009. Staff is unaware of any significant signature gathering efforts to date.

Supplemental Environmental Impact Report

Recently, the City Council authorized preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) that will consider the environmental impacts, if any, of a two lane Stoneridge Drive extension as compared to the four lane roadway extension included in the Amended Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan and update certain biological studies. Staff is currently defining the scope of the SEIR. Once the draft SEIR has been prepared and circulated, the Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing to take public comment on the draft document. Staff does not believe the SEIR will not have an impact on either the CLC or Hendrick Automotive PUD's currently being considered by the Planning Commission 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

FIGURE 1
Project Location



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 by I-580, on the east by El Charro Road, on the west by vacant land proposed to be a senior continuing care community by Continuing Life Communities (CLC), and on the south by vacant land planned to be a neighborhood park with a stormwater flow control basin and vacant land planned for retail/office development. Figure 1 (above) shows the project location.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Hendrick proposes to construct an auto mall with 6 main buildings and 3 car washes. 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 as part of the process. It is anticipated that the site will be subdivided later, and building C (Mercedes Benz) will be on its own parcel.

**FIGURE 2
Site Plan**



Project features include the following:

- Approximately 291,750 square feet of building area, thus allowing for a future expansion of 39,250 square feet according to the Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment
- Three car washes
- 2,630 parking spaces total, approximately 2,354 spaces of which will be for inventory parking
- The following building materials: glass, EFIS (Exterior Insulation Finish Systems), also known as a synthetic stucco, stucco, CMU (Concrete Masonry Unit) block, which is characterized by a rough, stone like texture exposing the split aggregate within the block, metal accents (canopies, columns), wood, and concrete, depending on the requirements of the manufacturer
- Windows in all but two of the roll up doors visible from public rights of way
- A floor area ratio of approximately 18%
- Numerous new trees (approximately 400) and the removal of the 3 heritage trees
- Green walls (landscaping) on 5 of the 6 proposed buildings

- Forty six new 24 inch box trees by the western property line
- A new black, decorative open fence along the shared property line with Caltrans if allowed by Caltrans (and the existing chain link fence would be removed)
- A 48' tall pylon sign by the freeway
- Dealership wall signs and 15' tall dealership pylon signs
- Two 8' tall monument signs
- If the service areas are air conditioned, high speed service doors in the car service areas to reduce the exchange of outdoor and indoor air during heating and cooling periods
- Skylights in the auto service and parts areas to reduce the requirement for artificial light
- Energy efficient HVAC systems
- Separated sidewalks along the private entrance road (to encourage walking)
- Customer shuttle services with low emissions

Roof top parking and exterior loud speakers are not proposed.

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

- Automobile motorcycle, boat, recreational and commercial sales, rental, leasing, repair (not including auto body repair), upholstery, touch up painting, washing, and fueling uses of the C-S (Service Commercial) District, accessory uses, and temporary events
- Dry land hay farming on site until occupancy of the first building

The recommended conditions of approval will allow the following subject to the approval of a use permit:

- Painting (more than touch up painting, as determined by the Principal Planner), and auto body repair

The recommended conditions of approval require the following:

- Cool roofs on the 6 main buildings
- Roll up doors to be recessed 2" or more into the building wall
- Lighting on the freeway pylon sign to be halo illumination, to the extent feasible
- Lighting on all monument and wall signs to be halo illumination or top down lighting, to the extent feasible
- A 14' maximum height for the light standards by the CLC project to the west
- Bike racks by each building entrance
- Roof top parking, if proposed later, to be reviewed through a PUD Modification process
- A landscape buffer of fruit trees with large canopies by the Staples Ranch Neighborhood Park
- Six additional evergreen accent/canopy screen trees in the perimeter landscaping east of building F (by El Charro Road)

- Additional large drought tolerant evergreen canopy trees by the western property line, such that there are no visible gaps between the trees (once the trees are mature)
- California native landscaping species and species known to tolerate some aridity in the Caltrans right of way, and the on site landscape buffer adjacent to the freeway
- A street landscaping theme which complements the existing landscaping theme along eastern portion of Stoneridge Drive
- A 7' tall smooth stucco wall by the Staples Ranch Neighborhood Park
- An 8' tall wall by the CLC project to the west
- The auto mall to join the City of Pleasanton's Transit System Management (TSM) program
- A full time manager at the auto mall to be the TSM manager
- The construction of a bus shelter adjacent to the Staples Ranch Neighborhood Park

Additional project details, including recommended conditions of approval are described below. Table 1 below shows the heights, square footages, and the project's proposed minimum setbacks.

**TABLE 1
General Project Information**

Structures	Square Footage	Height¹	Minimum Setback²
Main Buildings			
A (Lexus)	78,330	32'-0"	120'
B (Volvo/Infiniti)	18,500	26'-0"	245'
C (Mercedes Benz)	71,020	39'-0"	80'
D (BMW Mini)	12,000	20'-4"	110'
E (BMW)	74,800	30'-0"	120'
F (Acura)	32,000	27'-0" (at top of parapet) 28'-6" (at top of attached sign structure)	70'
Car Washes			
By Building B (Volvo/Infiniti)	1,700	16'-0"	100'
By Building C (Mercedes/Benz)	1,700	16'-0"	24'
By Building E (BMW)	1,700	16'-0"	90'

Notes: 1. Height is measured from grade to the peak of the structure.
2. The approximate minimum setback is measured from the closest property line.

Hendrick's proposed hours of operation are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Proposed Hours of Operation

Operation	Monday-Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Sales	8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.	9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.	10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Service	7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.	8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.	Closed

As conditioned, an auto sale with a customer can continue after 9:00 p.m., if the customer arrived on the PUD site before 9:00 p.m. The recommended conditions of approval allow the Director of Community Development to allow later hours of operation.

Site Constraints

Two large easements (a Pacific Gas and Electric gas pipeline easement and a Zone 7 water transmission line easement) totaling 55' in width are adjacent to I-580 and limit what tree species and how many trees can be planted near I-580.

Caltrans is planning a high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane in I-580 which is not anticipated to impact the edge of paving adjacent to the Staples Ranch property or proposed landscaping in this area. However, in the future Caltrans may propose to convert the HOV lane into a high occupancy toll (HOT) lane, and the existing BART line in the center of the freeway may be extended to Livermore. If these projects are approved, some or all of the landscaping in the Caltrans right of way adjacent to Hendrick Automotive Group's I-580 frontage may need to be removed. In addition, right of way may need to be acquired on the project site to accommodate freeway widening(s). Caltrans may need approximately 32' (in width) of additional right of way along Hendrick's frontage. For this reason, Hendrick is not proposing any buildings in this area. In the event additional right of way is acquired, Hendrick has agreed to submit an application for a redesign of its frontage which will include new landscape buffer/design treatments by the freeway to soften the visual impact of the widening. The design shall include a 12 foot wide landscape buffer along the frontage of the site by the freeway. A wider landscaping strip may be provided, if so desired by the applicant.

There is a 20' wide Pacific Telephone and Telegraph easement (now owned by AT&T) crossing the southern portion of the project site. Buildings cannot be located within this easement.

Building Designs

The proposed buildings are of a contemporary design and reflect their function for auto sales and service. The entrance elevations are primarily glass. Other building materials may include EFIS (Exterior Insulation Finish Systems), also known as a synthetic stucco, stucco, wood, metal, concrete, and CMU (Concrete Masonry Unit) block, which is characterized by a rough, stone like texture. The proposed building colors will be cool whites, grays, or browns. Bright accent colors will be used on 3 of the buildings: Mercedes Benz (blue), Acura (blue), and BMW Mini (orange). The building designs vary among the dealerships and reflect corporate architectural styles. Staff has worked with the applicant to achieve buildings which are attractive yet functional and staff is generally satisfied with the current proposal.

Landscaping

Stoneridge Drive Landscaping

As conditioned, the street landscaping along new portions of Stoneridge Drive will mimic the street landscaping treatments by the existing eastern terminus of Stoneridge Drive. This includes an offset double row of London plane trees by sidewalks and clusters of decorative shrubs in the parkway and medians. The ACSPA will construct the median landscaping improvements.

El Charro Road Landscaping

Landscaping along El Charro Road will also be coordinated and will include large canopy London Plane trees. According to the Cost Sharing Agreement between the City of Livermore, ACSPA, and the City of Pleasanton, it is anticipated that Livermore will construct the El Charro Road median landscape improvements.

I-580 Landscaping

The applicant proposes to provide trees, shrubs, and decorative ground cover by the I-580. As conditioned, the project will provide California native drought tolerant species, and the design treatments will be coordinated with CLC's landscaping treatments to the west.

Western Edge Landscaping

The applicant is proposing a substantial landscape buffer along the western property line. The buffer will be 22'-28' in width and 1,110' long and will include more than 45 large evergreen trees.

Building Entrance and Façade Landscaping

Around the buildings, the applicant proposes freestanding metal green screens on which vines will be trained to grow. The applicant has strategically located the screens to enhance the appearance of the building elevations which will be highly visible from public rights of way. Examples of green screens can be viewed at www.greenscreen.com. Photograph 1 shows an example of an existing green screen at Chevron's roof top garden in San Francisco. The vines will cover the vast majority of the screen when mature. Accent trees are also proposed by buildings A, B, E, and F.



PHOTOGRAPH 1
Green Screen Example

Signs

There are several signs proposed throughout the site. A freeway sign, approximately 48' tall is proposed. Table 3 below compares the height of this sign to other existing and approved freeway signs along I-580.

**TABLE 3
I-580 Freeway Sign Comparison**

Freeway Sign	Height
Hendrick's Proposed Freeway Sign	48'
Hendrick's Existing Freeway Sign	29'
Rosewood Pavilion's Existing Freeway Sign	34'
Dublin Regal Cinemas Freeway Sign	55'
Dublin Lowes (Approved) Freeway Sign	75'
Livermore Prime Retail (Approved) Freeway Sign	23'

Individual dealership pylon signs, approximately 15' in height, will be located along the entrance driveway to each dealership. As a comparison, Acura's, BMW's, and BMW Mini's existing entrance pylon signs (in Pleasanton) are approximately 25' in height. As requested by the applicant, 2 monument signs, 8' in height, will be allowed.

Lighting

The applicant proposes 24' tall light standards throughout the site. This height is similar to the 25' tall light standard height limit allowed in Hacienda Business Park. Each light standard will have 1 or 2 head lamps. The lamps are proposed to be metal halide which provides a white light source. Metal halide lamps are typically used when the viewing of color (in this case the color of cars) is important.

The maximum foot candle proposed in the Conceptual Lighting Plans is approximately 27.8. As a comparison, at the existing tennis complex on the corner of Hopyard and Valley Avenues, the foot candle level on the courts is at least 30 foot candles at all points and is up to approximately 45 foot candles by the light standards. According to the Conceptual Lighting Plan, the foot candles around the perimeter of the project site will range from 0 to 23 foot candles. The conceptual lighting plan is consistent with the EIR.

As conditioned (and required by the EIR for the project) the light standards by CLC will not exceed 14' in height. The recommended conditions of approval require all exterior lighting to be directed downward and designed or shielded so as to not shine on neighboring properties.

Fencing and Walls

The applicant proposes to remove the existing chain link fence located along the northern shared property line and replace it with an open, black wrought iron fence. A recommended condition of approval will limit the height of this fence to 6'.

The applicant proposes to construct a wall along the shared western property line by the Staples Ranch Neighborhood Park. The wall will be solid with decorative recesses and a

stucco treatment, similar to the existing wall at 325 Ray Street (see the proposed wall in Exhibit B). A recommended condition of approval will require this wall to be 7' in height.

The applicant proposes to construct a solid wall along the western property line. A recommended condition of approval will require this wall to be 8' in height.

Storm Drainage and Utilities

Stormwater treatment on the site will be provided via a series of vegetated bioswales. Treated stormwater will be transported from the site to the stormwater flow control basin proposed in the adjacent Staples Ranch Neighborhood Park.

The applicant proposes to loop the water and sewer utilities, with a connection at Stoneridge Drive and another connection stub at CLC's proposed eastern property line, to increase reliability of these services.

Circulation

One private driveway will connect the project site to Stoneridge Drive. The driveway will have 2 entrance lanes and 3 exit lanes. The driveway intersection with Stoneridge Drive will be signalized. The ACSPA will pay for the signal.

The applicant will provide a bus shelter as part of the project. Staff requests that the shelter be located by the Staples Ranch Neighborhood Park to reduce possible congestion in front of the auto mall. Staff has added a recommended condition of approval to address this. The Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority (LAVTA) has not yet agreed to provide bus service along this portion of Stoneridge Drive. As such, the construction of the shelter may be delayed until LAVTA agrees to provide service.

Separated sidewalks will be provided on Stoneridge Drive. In addition, Hendrick will provide separated sidewalks on both sides of its entrance driveway. Staff recommends that a sidewalk not be installed along El Charro Road, since a sidewalk is not currently proposed on the El Charro Road/I-580 overpass. If a sidewalk were constructed as part of the project, it will not lead anywhere which would likely confuse pedestrians. Staff has added a recommended condition of approval that the City of Pleasanton may construct the sidewalk at a later date, if a connecting sidewalk is approved and funded to be constructed on the El Charro Road/I-580 overpass.

Noise

The City Council approved several EIR mitigation measures related to noise. According to the EIR Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan, a car wash noise study and interior peak sound level study are required prior to the issuance of a building permit. All car washes are required to be located and designed such that noise from the car washes, including the vacuuming areas, will not exceed 60 dBA (Lmax) at any habitable structure on the CLC project site to the west.

The use of exterior loud speakers is prohibited by the Specific Plan Amendment.

Staff has also added a recommended condition of approval requiring compliance with the City’s noise standards except as otherwise conditioned. If the service areas do not adhere to the noise standards, staff has added a recommended condition of approval allowing the Director of Community Development to require the roll up doors to be closed, or require the property owner to implement other noise attenuating measures to reduce noise levels such that the project adheres to the noise levels of the Pleasanton Municipal Code.

Phasing

Construction phasing will be minimal. It is anticipated that once the construction of a building begins, Hendrick will start the construction of the next building a month later, the third building a month after that, and so forth. It is estimated that each main building will take approximately 10 months to a year to construct.

Green Building

The applicant has agreed to achieve a minimum of 26 green building points (equivalent to a LEED certified rating level). A recommended condition of approval has been added to address this.

ANALYSIS

This section addresses how Hendrick revised its proposal to address the City Council’s and Planning Commission’s comments from the joint workshop. The project’s consistency with the General Plan and the Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment are described in the PUD Considerations section below.

In an effort to address the City Council’s and Planning Commission’s comments from the joint workshop on November 8, 2007, Hendrick has revised its proposal. The changes and recommended conditions of approval related to the comments are noted below in Table 4. Staff believes the project, with the conditions of approval recommended by staff, is supportable, and does a sufficient job of addressing the workshop comments.

**TABLE 4
Response to Joint Workshop Comments**

Potential Issue	Workshop Comments	Hendrick Response	Staff Comments
Site Layout	-Move the western car wash away from the CLC development	-No change to the car washes previously shown -A third car wash, by Mercedes Benz (Building C), is now proposed. The car wash will be set back approximately 24’ from the shared property line with CLC	- An EIR mitigation measure was approved by the City Council requiring the car washes (including any vacuuming areas) to be designed such that noise levels from the car washes will not exceed 60 dBA at the closest habitable structure on the CLC project site
Architecture	-Enhance architecture -Add “green screens” on buildings	-“Green screens” have been added on at least 1 elevation of each main building, except the Volvo/Infiniti building (building B)	-Staff added the following recommended condition of approval: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require the roll up doors to be recessed approximately 2”-1’ into the building wall

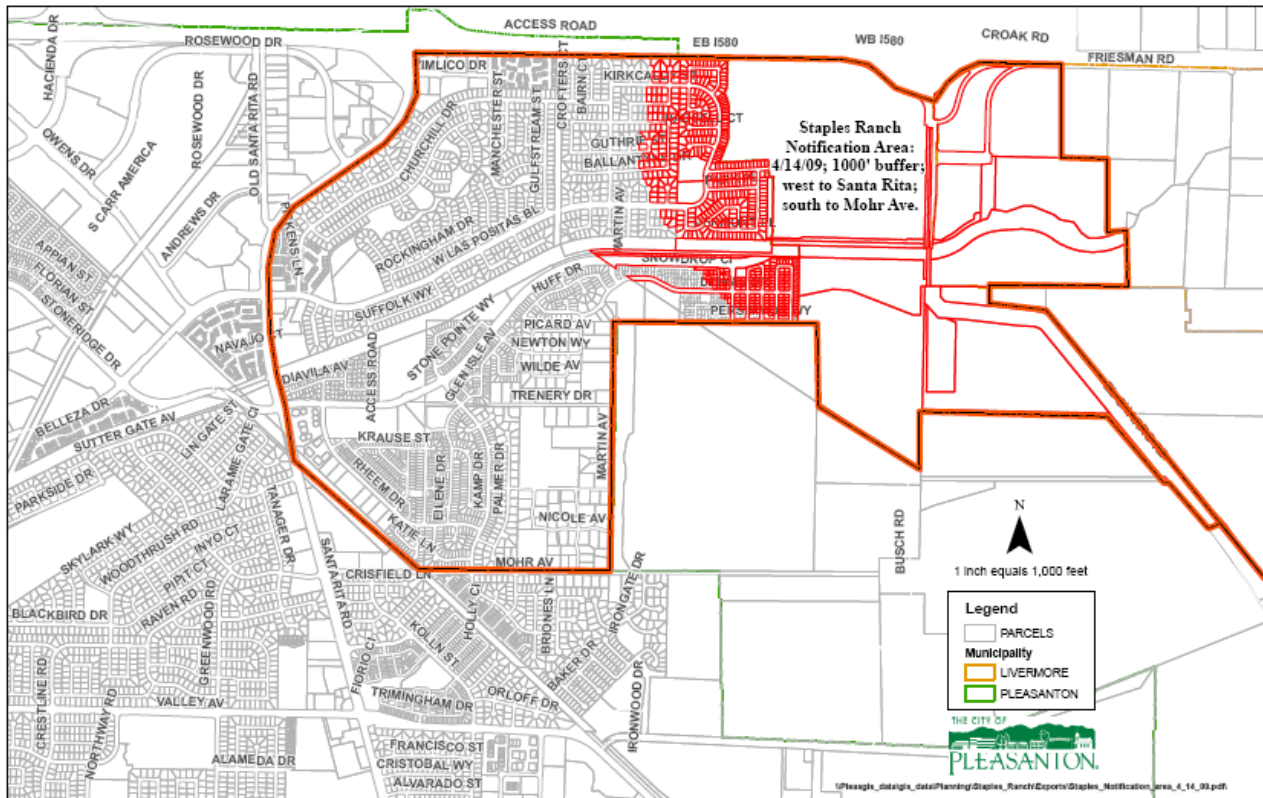
<p>Landscaping</p>	<p>-Add more landscaping, doesn't have to be trees</p> <p>-Add more landscaping around buildings</p> <p>-Add more landscaping by the Staples Ranch Neighborhood Park</p>	<p>-Green screens have been added on at least 1 elevation of each main building, except the Volvo/Infiniti building (building B)</p> <p>-Groundcover and shrubs are now proposed in Caltrans' right of way</p> <p>-A significant cluster of shrubs is now proposed by the intersection of the El Charro Road off ramp and El Charro Road</p> <p>-Eleven canopy trees have been added in the entrance drive median</p> <p>-Accent trees and additional groundcover has been added by building A</p> <p>-Additional ground cover has been added between buildings A and B</p> <p>-Trees have been removed by the Staples Ranch Neighborhood Park</p>	<p>-Staff added the following recommended conditions of approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise the plans such that 6 additional evergreen accent/canopy trees are located in the perimeter landscaping east of building F. • Revise the plans and enhance the landscaping buffer proposed by the southern boundary line. The trees shall be evergreen fruit trees with large canopies. The trees may be fruitless, and shall be spaced such that there will be no visible gaps between the tree canopies once the trees are mature. 50% of the trees will be in the Neighborhood Park and 50% will be on the project site. The applicant shall fund the installation of 50% of the trees to be installed in the Neighborhood Park. • Revise the plans along the western property line such that there will not be a visible gap in tree landscaping (when the trees in the buffer are mature) • Revise the plans and propose landscaping and irrigation in Zone 7's easement by the proposed freeway sign. The landscaping shall be groundcover and decorative shrubs
<p>Paving/Heat Island</p>	<p>-Reduce potential heat island</p> <p>-Provide lighter colored paving if possible</p> <p>-Provide pervious concrete pavers or other pervious paving</p> <p>-Consider providing carports</p>	<p>-Will provide cool roofs</p>	<p>-Staff has added the following recommended condition of approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The auto dealerships shall have white cool roofs which are designed to reflect the heat of the sun away from the building, thus reducing its cooling load. If roof top parking is approved on a dealership building in the future, the roof material on the building may be changed. Photovoltaic panels and screened

			mechanical equipment may be located on roof tops Note: Additional landscaping areas have also been provided
Energy & Photovoltaics	-Consider installing photovoltaics -Consider solar carports	-None proposed -The applicant requests that it not be required to design the roofs to be “photovoltaic ready” for future photovoltaic installations	-Staff has encouraged the applicant to consider photovoltaics. Staff feels that the project is still supportable since it will incorporate green building measures
Signs	-Reduce/consider reducing the freeway sign height	-Reduced from 50’ to 48’ in height	-Staff supports the freeway sign height
Lighting	-Minimize nighttime lighting -Turn off all roof top lighting after business hours	-Rooftop parking is no longer proposed	-The City Council approved several EIR mitigation measures related to lighting including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting fixtures for parking and security purposes within the auto mall that are adjacent to the senior continuing care community shall not exceed 14’ in height to reduce spill light directly on to the residences at the community • During non operational evening hours at the auto mall, all exterior parking lot lighting levels shall be designed such that they do not exceed 10 foot candles • All interior lighting shall be turned off during non operational evening hours, with the exception of lighting needed for security reasons

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’ noticing distance. Staff received comments from Zone 7 and LAVTA. LAVTA requested a bus stop, even though LAVTA is not proposing bus service at this time. The Zone 7 and LAVTA letters are in Exhibit G. At the time this report was written, two comments had been received from Pleasanton residents, both in opposition to the auto mall. The comments express concern about the economic viability of auto dealerships (see Exhibit G).

FIGURE 3
Noticing Area



Note: The properties within 1,000' are shown in red. The project noticing area is substantially greater than the standard 1,000' 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, as conditioned, 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. Two emergency vehicle access points will be provided. 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 (2 to 8 dwelling units per gross acre) and High Density Residential (greater than 8 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 an auto mall. According to the General Plan, commercial development with a floor area ratio of 35% or less can be provided on the site without an amenity.

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 37 acre auto mall on the project site. As conditioned, the project will adhere to the design constraints of the Specific Plan Amendment, includes cool roofs, landscape buffers, green walls, an attractive wall by the Staples Ranch Neighborhood Park, stormwater treatment in landscaping areas, distinctive design treatments (such as expansive glass entry features), and roof parapets which match the building design as required/encouraged by the Specific Plan Amendment. The use of exterior loud speakers will be prohibited, as set forth in the Specific Plan Amendment. Staff believes the plans, as conditioned, will be consistent with the Specific Plan Amendment.

Staff’s analysis indicates the project, as conditioned, is consistent with the City’s General Plan.

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 is currently vacant. An outlet mall has been approved to the east, across El Charro Road in the City of Livermore. The City Council approved the Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment which allows for a senior continuing care community west of the project site, and a neighborhood park (with a stormwater flow control basin) and a retail/office complex south of the site. As conditioned, the project will be designed to minimize impacts on the senior continuing care community and neighborhood park.

For example, to minimize impacts to the proposed senior continuing care community, the project features, as conditioned, will include:

- A 22’-28’ wide landscape buffer with large evergreen trees (and no gaps in mature tree landscaping) by the shared property line
- An 8’ tall wall on the shared property line
- A light standard height limit of 14’ tall maximum by the shared property line
- Downward facing and shielded light fixtures
- Exterior parking lot lighting levels to be designed such that they do not exceed 10 foot candles during non operational evening hours
- Noise from the carwashes will be limited to 60 dBA (Lmax) at the closest habitable structure on the CLC project site

- Exterior loud speakers shall not be used
- The project will adhere to the City's standard noise requirements, except as otherwise conditioned

To minimize impacts to the proposed Staples Ranch Neighborhood Park, the project features, as conditioned, will include:

- An 8' wide landscape buffer with large evergreen trees by shared the property line
- A 7' tall smooth stucco wall by the shared property line
- Downward facing and shielded light fixtures
- Exterior parking lot lighting levels to be designed such that they do not exceed 10 foot candles during non operational evening hours
- Exterior loud speakers shall not be used
- The project will adhere to the City's standard noise requirements, except as otherwise conditioned

The site is predominately flat, with a gradual slope to the west. The site is approximately 355' in elevation at the eastern property line, and approximately 350' at the western property line. There is a large mound on the property which is material imported by KB Homes in 1995 in anticipation of using it for fill material as part of a residential project that was never constructed.

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. Minimal changes in grades are proposed. Steep slope banks are not proposed. The site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. Slides are not anticipated.

The proposed project will require the construction of stormwater 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. Staff has added a recommended condition of approval requiring 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 this year.

To help prevent the erosion and pollution of the Arroyo Mocho, on site stormwater will be treated on site for contaminants and directed into the stormwater flow control basin on the Staples Ranch Neighborhood Park, 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, minimal changes to the natural grade elevations are proposed.

There are 3 existing heritage trees on site which are proposed to be removed. Over 400 new trees are proposed to be planted as part of the project. Shrubs and ground cover, including native California species, will also be planted.

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. As conditioned, the buildings will be equipped with automatic fire suppression systems (fire sprinklers). The project includes 2 points of access for emergency vehicles. 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 5 (below) shows the purposes of the PUD District.

TABLE 5
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

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.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The Environmental Impact Report for the Staples Ranch project has been certified by the City Council. The potential environmental impacts of this proposed project have been addressed in that EIR and no further environmental review is necessary. This is so even though City Council recently directed that a Supplemental EIR be prepared concerning narrowing a portion of the Stoneridge Drive extension to only two lanes and updating studies of certain biological resources. Neither of these issues has any direct impact on the PUD development plan for this project and hence staff believes that the Commission has sufficient and adequate environmental information to make an informed recommendation to the City Council as to this project.

CONCLUSION

Staff believes the project is consistent with the Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment and the General Plan. Staff believes the applicant has revised the project to sufficiently address the City Council's and Planning Commission's previous review comments. 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; and
2. Adopt a resolution recommending approval of Case PUD-57, subject to the conditions of approval listed in Exhibit A, and forward the application to the City Council for public hearing and review.

Staff: Steven Bocian, Assistant City Manager, (925) 931-5005, sbocian@ci.pleasanton.ca.us
Robin Giffin, Associate Planner, (925) 931-5612, rgiffin@ci.pleasanton.ca.us