



Planning Commission Staff Report

February 13, 2008
Item 6.d.

- SUBJECT:** Work Session for PREV-570
- APPLICANT:** Hamid Taeb, Century Land Corporation
- PROPERTY OWNER:** Mabel E. Lester
- PURPOSE:** Work session to review and receive comments on a preliminary application for a 42-unit single-family residential development on the approximately 116-acre Lester property located at 11021 and 11033 Dublin Canyon Road in Unincorporated Alameda County.
- GENERAL PLAN:** The General Plan Land Use designations for the parcels are: Low Density Residential; Open Space - Public Health and Safety; Open Space - Agriculture and Grazing; and Open Space - Parks and Recreation.
- ZONING:** Unincorporated (prezoned Agriculture zoning district)
- LOCATION:** 11021 and 11033 Dublin Canyon Road
- ATTACHMENTS:**
1. Location Maps
 2. Exhibit A, Preliminary Development Plans and Slope Classification Map
 3. Exhibit B, Planning Commission Work Session Discussion Points
 4. Email from Bob McCoy, dated February 6, 2008
 5. General Plan Land Use Designation Map for the Lester Property
 6. Aerial Photograph with General Plan Land Use Designations
 7. Community Trails Master Plan
 8. Photographs of the Site

I. BACKGROUND

Hamid Taeb with the Century Land Corporation submitted a preliminary application for a 42-unit residential development on the Lester property on Dublin Canyon Road. Staff had

reviewed a prior development plan for the project and identified preliminary issues which were communicated to the applicant last year. The applicant has subsequently made some modifications to the proposed development plan. Staff has scheduled a Planning Commission work session in order to receive early input from the Planning Commission and public regarding the proposed development.

II. SITE DESCRIPTION

Subject Property and Surrounding Area

The subject project is located on three contiguous parcels on the south side of Dublin Canyon Road. The 11033 Dublin Canyon Road property, which is the easternmost parcel, measures approximately 0.7 acres in size and contains an approximately 1,850-square-foot home and accessory buildings. The 11021 Dublin Canyon Road property measures approximately 15 acres in size and contains an approximately 900-square-foot home and accessory buildings. The vacant, westernmost parcel (no address) measures approximately 100 acres in size. The project site abuts Dublin Canyon Road only at its northeast corner. The remainder of the property is separated from Dublin Canyon Road by unincorporated, steeply sloped terrain including single-family homes on large parcels and the Jehovah's Witness Church.

The topography varies with a main ridge rising from the northeast corner to a small knoll approximately 160 feet above the project's Dublin Canyon Road elevation. A ridge runs westerly from the knoll, varying in height to a high point at the northwest corner of the property approximately 130 feet above the easterly knoll. The southern portion of the parcel slopes down into the heavily treed Devaney Canyon which contains Devaney Creek, running in a southwest to northeast direction across the property. Another heavily treed canyon branches off Devaney Canyon at the western portion of the parcel.

The property is bordered on the north by single-family homes on large parcels, a large vacant parcel, and the Jehovah's Witness Church. The Westbrook property (proposed site of the MTO Church), Canyon Creek single-family homes, Canyon Meadows Condominiums, and single-family homes on large parcels are located further north of the subject site, between Dublin Canyon Road and Interstate-580. The Preserve, Oak Hill Estates, and Kolb Ranch Estates single-family home developments are located to the east and southeast. East Bay Regional Park District's Pleasanton Ridge Regional Park is located to the south. This northernmost portion of Pleasanton Ridge Regional Park is not yet open to the public. Agricultural and grazing lands on very large lots are located to the west.



Lester property as viewed from City water tank parcel off Detjen Ct. (in The Preserve neighborhood)



View from the knoll near Lots 3 and 4 looking towards the southwest

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Proposed Plan

The applicant proposes to build 42 single-family lots on approximately 17 acres of the property. The existing residences and accessory structures would be demolished. Remaining land area would become permanent open space, either as common open space area owned/controlled by the development's homeowners association or dedicated to the EBRPD as public park/open space area. Production homes would be constructed on all 42 lots. The project features are summarized below:

- All 42 lots would be clustered in the Low Density Residential-designated portion of the property. Lot sizes would range from a minimum of 6,500 square feet to over 20,000 square feet.
- A single entry road from Dublin Canyon Road would provide access to the development. The main entry road would end in a cul-de-sac approximately 240 feet from Dublin Canyon Road. A 34-foot wide, gated road would extend beyond the cul-de-sac and cross Devaney Creek via a bridge. Beyond the bridge, a looped street with a single cul-de-sac would provide access to the lots.
- Street sections with houses on one side of the street would measure 28-foot wide (curb-to-curb) with street parking and a sidewalk on the house side of the street. Street sections with houses on both sides of the street would measure 32-foot wide (curb-to-curb) with parking and sidewalks on both sides of the street.
- Because there are no flat areas on the property, substantial grading would be required to accommodate the development. Most of the lots would be created where the existing slopes range from 10 to 25 percent. Small portions of some of the lots (Lots 1-5, 7, 11, 12, 17-19, and the private park) would be created where the existing slopes exceed 25 percent. The proposed building pads on the lots would be graded with flat pads (34 lots) and front-to-back split pads (eight lots). The existing ridgeline along the northern side of Lots 1-9 would be cut up to 50 feet and reshaped. The existing slope bank at the western edge of the development would be cut up to 34 feet and reshaped to create Lots 14-19. Fill would be added to the slope bank on the south side of the loop road. Due to drafting errors, the pad elevations for Lots 9, 14, and 32 are incorrectly noted on the plans: the pad elevation for Lot 9 should be 592.5 feet; the pad elevation for Lot 14 should be 595.4 feet; and the pad elevation for Lot 32 should be 560 feet.
- A staging area with approximately 13 standard and 16 equestrian-trailer parking spaces would be located south of the cul-de-sac off the main entry road. The staging area would provide access to future trails in the northern portion of the Pleasanton Ridge Regional Park

that has not yet been opened to the public. These future EBRPD trails would connect to the existing publicly accessible trails in the Pleasanton Ridge Regional Park, which also connect to the trails in the City's Augustin Bernal Park. Facilities for the staging area have not yet been determined, but could include a drinking fountain, a water trough for horses, and restrooms.

- A private neighborhood park would be located on an approximately 21,000-square-foot lot at the eastern end of the development where the loop road splits. Park amenities have not yet been determined.
- In conjunction with the proposed development, the project developer would be required to construct Dublin Canyon Road improvements at the project entrance, including an eastbound right-turn/deceleration lane into project, an eastbound acceleration lane out of the project, and a westbound left-turn lane into the project. Street improvements may be needed at other locations (e.g., Dublin Canyon Road @ Foothill Road), which would be addressed with the traffic study that will be required for this project.
- A detention basin would be installed south of the private park parcel to address urban clean water run-off requirements. Other stormwater treatment measures may be required for the project, such as using pervious paving for the driveways and connecting roof drains to pop-up emitters.
- An unknown quantity of trees would be removed to accommodate the proposed development, but tree loss would be minimal given that the most of the development is located in a relatively treeless area of the site. A tree removal plan and tree report would be submitted with the PUD application.
- Because the site is located in a high fire hazard area, fire sprinklers will be required for all homes and a wildland interface/management plan will be required for the development.

Development Process

The development of the Lester property would require the following City actions:

- Rezoning the properties to Planned Unit Development – Low Density Residential/Open Space (PUD - LDR/OS) district.
- PUD Development Plan approval which would establish density, lotting pattern, building design, development standards, grading, circulation system, landscaping, etc.

- Annexation of the site from Alameda County to the City of Pleasanton. Annexation approval by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) will also be required.
- Tentative map approval.
- Final subdivision map and improvement plan approvals.

An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be required for the PUD rezoning and development plan. Some of the items that will need to be addressed in the EIR include: impacts on flora/fauna, including habitat areas such as wetlands/creeks and tree removal; impacts to Devaney Creek and alteration of existing tributaries that feed Devaney Creek; circulation/traffic; noise; grading, drainage, and stormwater runoff/quality; visual impacts of the homes and the modification of natural terrain due to grading; archaeological sites; geotechnical/geologic; public facilities, including parks and schools; public safety, including emergency vehicle access and wildland fire hazards to the proposed homes; loss of productive agricultural land (if any); hazardous materials (if any); and growth inducing impacts. Public scoping session(s) will be held for the EIR prior to Planning Commission and City Council review of the PUD application.

IV. CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE WORKSHOP

This workshop is the Commission's opportunity to direct the applicant and staff as to issues it wishes to be addressed. The areas noted below are those on which staff would find the Commission's input most helpful.

Density

Although the properties are unincorporated, they are located within the City's Sphere of Influence and Planning Area Boundaries. The General Plan Land Use designations for the parcels are Low Density Residential (LDR), Open Space - Public Health and Safety, Open Space - Agriculture and Grazing, and Open Space - Parks and Recreation. The LDR portion of the property is developable at a density of less than two dwelling units per acre (<2 du/ac). The General Plan also indicates that residential projects proposed for land designated as LDR should propose densities generally consistent with the average densities assumed for buildout of the General Plan. For the LDR land use designation, the average density is one dwelling unit per acre (1.0 du/ac). Residential projects which propose densities greater than the average density should be zoned PUD and contain sufficient public amenities. Examples of amenities which might qualify a project for density bonus include the provision of affordable housing and dedication and/or improvement of parkland, open space, and/or trails beyond the standard City requirements.

There is a total of 39.9 acres of LDR-designated land on the two largest parcels, which equals a maximum density of 79 units and an average density of 40 units. Also, the smallest existing

parcel at the northeast corner is designated as Public Health and Safety by the General Plan. The General plan indicates that no development is allowed in Public Health and Safety designated land other than one single-family home on existing lots of record as of September 16, 1986. According to the applicant (which staff will later verify), the smallest lot existed prior to 1986, so one additional unit could be developed, for a total average density of 41 units.

The applicant is proposing 42 units, one unit over the General Plan average density. Proposed public amenities include the staging area for public access to Pleasanton Ridge Regional Park, and possibly dedicating the open space to EBRPD for public park/open space area.

Discussion Points

- *Does the Commission support the proposed density? Are the public amenities sufficient to allow the additional unit?*

Urban Growth Boundary

The General Plan Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) bisects the site as shown on Exhibits 4 and 5. The proposed development would be located on the east side of the UGB. Program 11.4 of the General Plan Land Use Element encourages that lower intensity uses be located immediately inside the UGB, as necessary, to prevent potential land use conflicts with outlying non-urban uses.

Staff notes that the UGB shown on the proposed site plan should be shifted slightly to the east. Future development plans will need to include this adjustment.

Discussion Points

- *Should fewer lots be located adjacent to the UGB with additional/larger open space breaks between lots?*
- *Should all lots be located inside the loop road with an open space buffer between the UGB and the westernmost portion of the loop road?*

Pleasanton Ridglands Initiative/Measure F

The UGB coincides with the easterly boundary of the Pleasanton Ridglands Area, the boundary of which was established with the voter approval of Measure F in 1993 and implemented through a Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Pleasanton, City of Hayward, and Alameda County. Development outside of the current boundary line is not allowed. Land use within the Ridglands Area in this location is limited to large parcel agriculture which has a base density of 100 acres per building site.

The proposed developed portion of the property is outside of the Pleasanton Ridglands Area as required. Although most of the policies/programs of the Pleasanton Ridglands Initiative wouldn't apply to this project since there is no development proposed in the Ridglands Area, there are a few applicable policies/programs:

- Program 3.2 – New development adjacent to or within the Plan Area should provide pedestrian access and/or staging area(s) to enable present or future connections to the Pleasanton Ridglands Park.

The proposed plan would create a staging area that would connect to the planned EBRPD trails.

- Policy 4 – Encourage the establishment of permanent protection for open space uses through the use of fee purchase, agricultural/open space easements, subdivision exactions, or other means.

The Pleasanton Ridglands Area on this property would be designated as open space. The open space in this development would be permanently protected by dedicating it to EBRPD with a conservation/open space easement or by retaining it as homeowners association-owned/controlled common open space with a conservation/open space easement.

Site Plan

Discussion Points

- *Are the lot locations acceptable?*
- *Are the lot sizes acceptable? Staff notes that the largest lots (14-21 and 34-36) have large portions of their rear yard areas in slope banks.*
- *Does the Commission have a preference whether the open space and staging areas are dedicated to EBRPD or become common area owned/controlled by the development's owners association? EBRPD has indicated that it would like to have the open space area and staging area dedicated to them.*
- *Is the staging area acceptably located? The City's Community Trails Master Plan shows the staging area being located further into the site (see attachment #6). However, placing the staging area closer to Dublin Canyon Road as shown on the proposed plan would prevent potential construction impacts to Devaney Creek and eliminate vehicular disturbance to the wildlife along the creek. EBRPD and the City's Ad Hoc Trails Committee support placing the staging area closer to Dublin Canyon Creek as proposed.*
- *Is the private neighborhood park parcel acceptably located? Is the size of the park acceptable? Should the park have play equipment? Staff recommends that the park include*

some play equipment given that the development is over ½ mile from the nearest neighborhood or community park.

Traffic and Circulation

Discussion Points

- *Is the proposed on-site circulation acceptable?*
- *Does the Commission support a gate at the project entrance? The General Plan discourages the development of further gated communities which inhibit the sense of greater community and make City utility and emergency services more difficult to provide.*
- *Is the emergency access acceptable for this development? The General Plan indicates that more than one access road (including emergency vehicle routes) should be provided to new developments. Due to the topography of the site, staff believes that the only feasible location for an emergency vehicle access (EVA) road would be at the northeast corner of the site, tying into the existing Jehovah's Witness Church driveway. However, the applicant was unable to secure approval from the church to use a portion of its driveway. Since a second access point to the development was infeasible, the Fire Department indicated that emergency access to the development would be acceptable provided that the project entry road between Dublin Canyon Road and the private park was widened to 16 feet in each direction and that the bridge be constructed as two separate structures that are located adjacent to each other. The proposed plan reflects these requirements.*

Grading

Discussion Points

- *Thirty-four lots would have flat pads and eight lots would have front-to-back split pads. Is the amount of stepped and flat building pads acceptable? The proposed grading is predominately flat-pad grading. Flat-pad grading in hillside areas raises potential issues pertaining to the quantity of grading (e.g., surface area, volume of cut and fill, etc.), character of grading, and City policy which encourages limited, specialized grading (e.g., stepped house designs, split pads, contour grading, etc.) on hillside areas. However, in some cases, stepping a home on a hillside can make it more visible and the City has made such a trade-off elsewhere in the City.*
- *The General Plan indicates that development is restricted in areas prone to landslides, slope instability, or with slopes of 25 percent or greater. Does the Commission support Lots 1-5, 7, 11, 12, 17-19, and the private park being partially located in areas with slopes exceeding 25 percent?*

- *Does the Commission believe that the proposed grading has been adequately located out of sensitive areas such as stream courses/swales and trees?*
- *The proposed cut on the ridge north of Lots 1-9 could make the homes more visible from views to the north and increase noise levels to the new homes. Should the applicant generally maintain the existing height of the northern ridgeline across from Lots 1-9?*

House Design

Production homes are proposed, but house sizes and designs have not been provided at this time.

Discussion Points

- *Does the Commission wish to make any suggestions regarding the house sizes and design?*

Affordable Housing

The City's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance (IHO) requires new single-family projects of 15 units or more to provide at least 20 percent of the units affordable to very low, low, and/or moderate income households. If 42 units are allowed for this project, then eight affordable units are required. While the primary emphasis on the IHO is to include affordable housing units within a market-rate unit project, the IHO indicates that it may not always be practical to require that every project satisfy its affordable housing requirement through construction of affordable units within the project itself. In these cases, the IHO allows other methods to satisfy the affordable housing requirement, such as constructing off-site affordable units or paying the Lower Income Housing Fee. The applicant proposes to pay Low Income Housing Fees for this project.

Discussion Points

- *Does the Commission support the payment of Lower Income Housing Fees to meet the affordable housing requirement for this project?*

Noise

A noise study will be required for this project. The homes on the northernmost parcels would face I-580, which should help the homes comply with the General Plan noise policy requiring that the rear yards not exceed 60 dBA L_{dn} . However, the proposed cut on the ridge north of Lots 1-9 could increase noise levels to the new homes and trigger noise mitigation.

- *Should the project be designed to avoid the use of any soundwalls? The General Plan encourages the use of increased building setbacks, earth berms, and other non-soundwall design solutions.*

Visual Analysis

A visual analysis with photomontages will be required for this project. Staff believes that the following viewpoints should be included in the visual analysis (assuming the proposed development would be visible from these areas): I-580; Canyon Creek neighborhood; Canyon Meadows neighborhood; and the Preserve, Oak Hill Estates, and Kolb Ranch Estates neighborhoods.

Discussion Points

- *Does the Commission wish to see any other viewpoint locations?*

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public notices were sent to all property owners and tenants within a 1,000-foot radius of the subject property plus all of the property owners and tenants in the Preserve development. At the time this report was written, staff had received an email from Mr. Bob McCoy, 9469 Blessing Drive and president of the Preserve Homeowners Association, indicating that the applicant had attended a recent homeowners association meeting to present the proposed plan. Mr. McCoy indicated that there were no negative comments at the meeting and that the association believed that a traffic signal would be needed at the Lester project entrance. The applicant indicated that he also met with other nearby neighborhoods to discuss the proposed project.

VI. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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

For questions or comments about this proposal, please contact: Steve Otto, Associate Planner at 925-931-5608 or sotto@ci.pleasanton.ca.us.