

## Planning Commission Work Session Staff Report

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April 11, 2007  
Item 6.a.

**SUBJECT:** Scoping Session on the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Staples Ranch Development, PUD-57/PSP-11

**APPLICANT/  
PROPERTY OWNERS:** Alameda County Surplus Property Authority (ACSPA)

**PURPOSE:** Proposal to amend the 1989 Specific Plan to revise planned land use designations for: (1) an approximately 37-acre auto mall, with up to 331,000 square feet of buildings and up to 3,270 parking stalls; (2) an approximately 45-acre senior continuing care community with about 1,400,000 square feet of buildings housing approximately 800 assisted-living units, nursing beds and common facilities; (3) future commercial development of up to 175,000 square feet of retail or up to 280,000 square feet of non-retail office and services uses on approximately 16 acres; (4) future development of an approximately 17-acre community park by the City, which may include lighted sports fields, lighted tennis courts, a dog park, trails, a trail staging area, a pedestrian bridge connecting the north and south sides of the arroyo, a four-rink ice skating facility on up to eight acres, and similar park-related activities; (5) preservation of the Stoneridge Drive extension right-of-way through the project site and connecting to an improved El Charro Road, as envisioned in the Specific Plan; (6) a new two-lane bridge that would extend Stoneridge Drive over the Arroyo Mocho and provide access to the proposed senior continuing care community and community park; and (7) access to the auto mall and future commercial development from a new road off El Charro Road, with no through-connection to Stoneridge Drive except for emergency vehicles and (potentially) buses.

**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

**ZONING:** 122.5 acres of the 124-acre project site are located in unincorporated Alameda County and are currently zoned Agriculture by Alameda County, and 1.5 acres of the project site are located in the City of Pleasanton and are zoned Planned Unit Development-Medium Density Residential (PUD-MDR).

**LOCATION:** At the eastern edge of Pleasanton and bordered by the City of Livermore and El Charro Road to the east; Interstate 580 (I-580) to the north; the terminus of Stoneridge Drive to the southwest; and the Arroyo Mocho on the south.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Exhibit A: Conceptual Plans for the Auto Mall and Senior Continuing Care Community
2. Exhibit B: Initial Study, dated March 2007, including Project Location Map, Proposed Land Use Plan, Conceptual Site Plan for the Auto Mall, and Conceptual Site Plan for the Senior Care Facility
3. Exhibit C: Photographs of the Property, dated April 2006
4. Exhibit D: Verbal Comments, Letters, and Printed E-mail Communications Regarding the Proposed Project
5. Exhibit E: Neighborhood Meeting Notes, dated March 21, 2007
6. Exhibit F: Alternative 17-Acre Community Park Concept Proposed by Logitech Ice Group
7. Exhibit G: Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Land Use Map, dated October 1989
8. Exhibit H: Memorandum of Understanding Between the Alameda County Surplus Property Authority and the City of Pleasanton Concerning Staples Ranch, dated April 18, 2006
9. Exhibit I: Plans from the City of Livermore's El Charro Specific Plan Proposal East of El Charro Road

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**BACKGROUND**

**Subject Property**

Staples Ranch is approximately 124 acres of undeveloped land within the larger 293-acre Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan (SDSP) area which was adopted in 1989. The Staples Ranch property consists of ±112.5 acres that are outside the Pleasanton city limits but within its Sphere of Influence and Urban Growth Boundary.

The project site is bordered by the City of Livermore and the El Charro Road to the east; Interstate I-580 to the north; the terminus of Stoneridge Drive to the southwest; and the Arroyo Mocho to the south (see attached location maps in the Initial Study, Exhibit B). The area immediately west of the site is residential in appearance and is completely

built out with medium density single-family homes. The area immediately north of the freeway is in the process of being developed as part of the Eastern Dublin Specific Plan development. Additional commercial development is currently contemplated east of El Charro Road in Livermore (See Exhibit I). The area south of the Arroyo Mocho is comprised of medium-density single-family homes in Pleasanton, quarry land owned by Hanson Aggregates, and Lake I of the Chain of Lakes.

The project site is currently used for agriculture (dry land hay production). The site is generally flat except for ditches and soil stockpiles. A grove of ornamental and fruit trees marks the former location of the Staples Ranch buildings that were previously demolished.



Figure 1

Per the existing SDSP, the 124-acre Staples Ranch property would be built with retail and service commercial uses, light industrial uses, and an approximately 17-acre community park (see Exhibit G). The existing SDSP depicts Stoneridge Drive extended from its existing terminus to El Charro Road.

The Alameda County Surplus Property Authority (ACSPA) proposes to amend the 1989 SDSP to revise planned land use designations, development intensities, and circulation patterns. Partnering with the ACSPA are the City, which will develop the park, Hendrick Automotive Group, developer of the proposed auto mall, and Continuing Life Communities, developer of the senior continuing care community. Per the proposed amendment and consistent with the Memorandum of Understanding (see discussion below), Stoneridge Drive would only be extended to the senior continuing care community and the community park. Employees and customers wishing to access the auto mall and commercial uses would use El Charro Road.

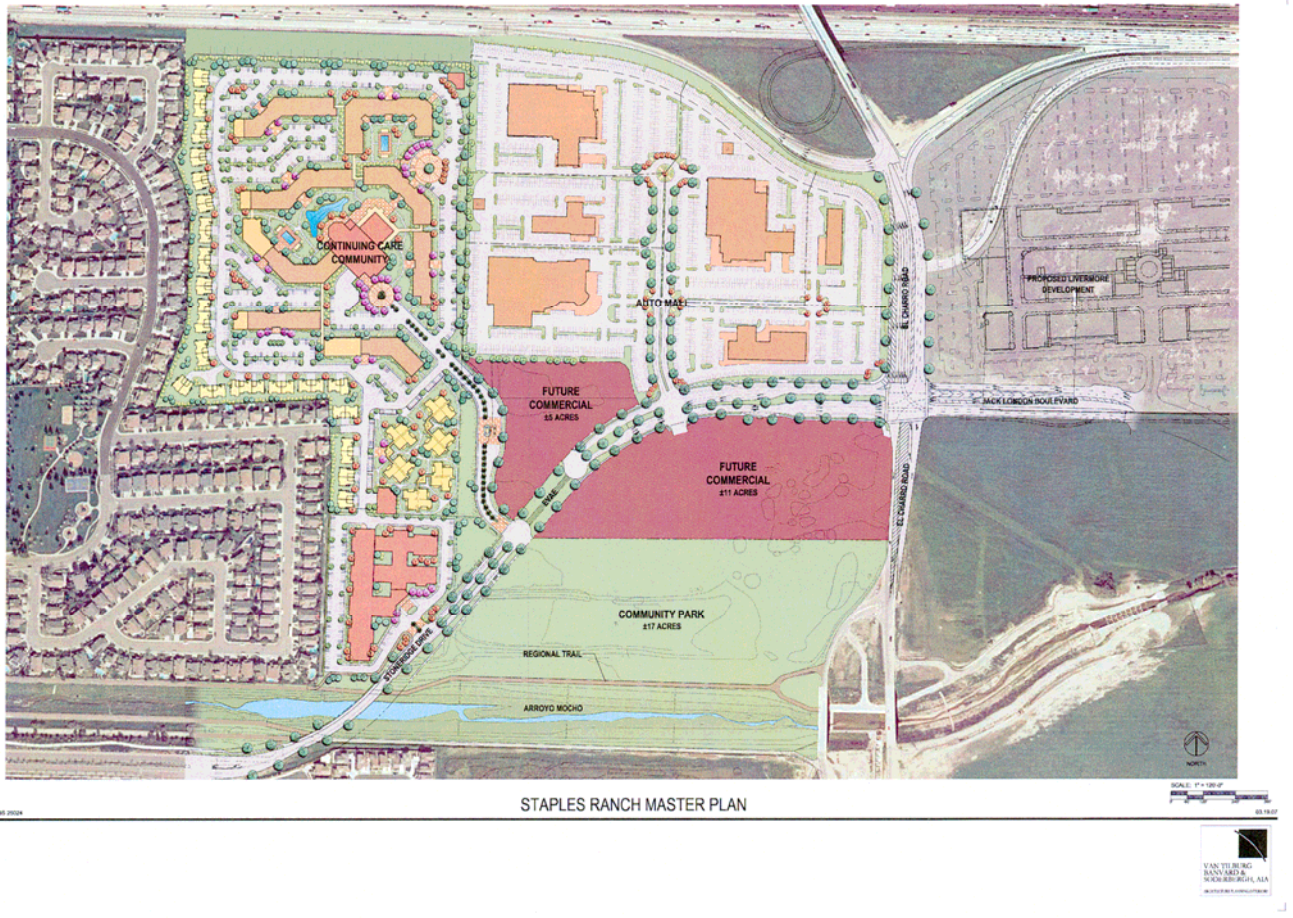
### **Proposed Development**

The Staples Ranch development (proposed project) would include:

- An approximately 37-acre auto mall, with up to 331,000 square feet of buildings and up to 3,270 parking stalls. The dealerships would all include maintenance areas, and several car wash stations are proposed. Roof-top parking is proposed on three of the buildings. An illuminated freeway sign, approximately 50 feet tall, is proposed. For security reasons, the parking areas will be illuminated at night. (Hendrick Automotive Group)
- An approximately 45-acre senior continuing care community with about 1,400,000 square feet of buildings housing approximately 800 assisted-living units, nursing beds and common facilities. The proposed buildings will range from one to four stories, with the one-story units closest to the existing neighborhoods to the west. A berm with an eight-foot tall solid wall on top is proposed along the I-580 freeway frontage to reduce noise from the freeway. (Continuing Life Communities)
- Future commercial development of up to 175,000 square feet of retail or up to 280,000 square feet of non-retail office and services uses on approximately 16 acres.
- Future development of an approximately 17-acre community park by the City, which may include lighted sports fields, lighted tennis courts, a dog park, trails, a trail staging area, a pedestrian bridge connecting the north and south sides of the arroyo, a four-rink ice skating facility on up to eight acres, and similar park-related activities.
- Preservation of the Stoneridge Drive extension right-of-way through the project site and connecting to an improved El Charro Road, as envisioned in the Specific Plan.
- A new two-lane bridge that would extend Stoneridge Drive over the Arroyo Mocho and provide access to the proposed senior continuing care community and community park.



- Access to the auto mall and future commercial development from a new road off El Charro Road, with no through connection to Stoneridge Drive except for emergency vehicles and (potentially) buses.



**Figure 2**

The applicant will apply for annexation and a rezoning of the property. The entitlements required for this project include a Specific Plan amendment, PUD rezoning and development plan approval, tentative subdivision map approval, and final map approval. Implementing an approval may require permits from outside agencies.

**Project History**

In 2005, staff prepared an initial study that indicated that there may be significant impacts as a result of the proposed project.

On October 11, 2005, the City Council and Planning Commission conducted a joint workshop at which the potential development of Staples Ranch was discussed at length.

On April 18, 2006, the City Council authorized the City Manager to execute a contract with EIP Associates to prepare the EIR for this proposal. The next step in the EIR preparation process is the scoping session workshop with the Planning Commission with public comment to discuss the scope and content of the draft EIR. After the work session, the scope of work for the draft EIR will be finalized, and work will then proceed accordingly.

Additionally, City staff had been effecting a collaborative effort with the ACSPA to develop an agreement with regard to the development parameters, process, etc. for this unique site.

On April 18, 2006, the City Council authorized the City Manager to execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Alameda County Surplus Property Authority which established a project concept and timeline for this project's thorough review. While the MOU establishes a project scope and concept, it does not require the City to approve any of the land use applications that will be submitted and does not limit the City Council's discretionary authority when reviewing the applications (see Exhibit H).

In March 2007, staff updated the Initial Study to reflect minor revisions to the project description, such as the additional acre of land for the auto mall, the increase in the maximum square footage of the auto mall buildings, and Wheel's request to allow buses to use the EVA at the terminus of Stoneridge Drive. Staff believes that the project requires an Environmental Impact Report.

## **Community Outreach**

### Parks and Recreation Commission Process

On February 8, 2007, the Parks and Recreation Commission received a request from the City Council to oversee a public planning process to develop a conceptual site plan for the proposed 17-acre Staples Ranch Community Park. On March 2007, the Parks and Recreation Commission held a public workshop and reviewed site information, received public input regarding desired park uses and locations, circulation, etc., and provided staff with direction for conceptual site planning. As part of its review, the Parks and Recreation Commission recommended that an alternative site plan for the park be considered, as proposed by Logitech Ice Group (see Exhibit F). At the workshop, Logitech Ice Group proposed to construct an approximately 134,000-square-foot ice center with four rinks, a brew-pub-type restaurant, a pro shop, and similar amenities on approximately eight acres of the 17-acre community park site. Logitech Ice Group proposed an alternative site plan for the park which would:

- Create a shared parking lot for the community park and ice center; and
- Create a layout in which approximately 90 percent of the vehicle trips to the ice center would access the facility by taking El Charro Road to Auto Mall Place to the ice center's larger front parking lot and approximately ten percent of the

vehicle trips would access the facility by taking Stoneridge Drive to the ice center's smaller rear parking lot.

In addition to the ice center, the Parks and Recreation Commission recommended that the following uses be considered at the park: lighted sports fields, lighted tennis courts, a dog park, trails, a trail staging area, and similar park-related activities.

The Parks and Recreation Commission intends to approve a recommended conceptual site plan at its April 12, 2007 meeting for subsequent City Council review.

### **Neighborhood Meeting**

On March 21, 2007, ACSPA, Hendrick Automotive Group, and Continuing Life Communities presented their preliminary proposal to nearby property owners and other members of the public with an interest in the property. Over 2,900 meeting notices were distributed. At the meeting, no one expressed opposition to the project concept. A few people mentioned that continuing care senior facilities, such as the one proposed, are needed in Pleasanton. Most of the questions and comments were about Continuing Life Communities' preliminary proposal which is in close proximity to the existing homes north of Stoneridge Drive. Questions and comments about the senior continuing care community proposal included the following:

- Can the proposed gates and solid walls be changed?
- Are enough parking spaces provided?
- Will the views of the parking lot by the Health Facility be screened?
- What are the proposed airplane noise mitigation measures?
- How will garbage collection work?
- What will construction hours be?
- What will be the final grade elevation of the site?
- Will the site still be in a flood plain?
- Will the drainage swale by the existing homes be retained or removed?

Several comments were made suggesting that Hendrick Automotive Group's proposed freeway sign be redesigned.

Both Continuing Life Communities and Hendrick Automotive Group will consider the neighbors' comments when preparing their proposed PUD plans. For the Commission's information, meeting notes from March 21, 2007 are attached (see Exhibit E).

### **CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) PROCESS**

The purpose of this work session is to determine the scope and content of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for this project. Per State law, the environmental review process for this project is as follows:

1. Prepare Initial Study
2. Distribute the Notice of Preparation of an EIR to Agencies and Interested Parties

3. Hold Public EIR Scoping Session
4. Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)
5. Allow for Public Comment on the DEIR
6. Prepare Final EIR (FEIR)
7. Hold Public Hearings to Consider Certification of FEIR

### **Scoping**

Attached are the Initial Study and the proposal for the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the proposed project PUD-57/PSP-11 (Staples Ranch). Staff suggests that the Planning Commission use these documents to discuss the final scope and content of the DEIR.

Below is a list identifying areas of likely impact that staff believes should be included in the EIR. As a result of the scoping session, more issues may be developed that could add to the list or replace these:

#### Land Use, Zoning, and Adopted Plans

- Land use compatibility with adjacent land uses;
- Loss of agricultural lands; and
- Consistency with local plans and policies, including the County and City General Plans and the Airport Land Use Commission Height Referral Area for the Livermore Municipal Airport and LAFCO annexation policies.

#### Aesthetics

- Visual setting and potential visual impacts and views from the proposed project at a variety of locations; these locations may include I-580, El Charro Road, the foothills to the east and west, and the adjacent residential neighborhoods (include computer generated visual simulations to illustrate the project's visual impact); and
- Evaluate light and glare impacts associated with the proposed auto mall and possible play fields at the community park on light sensitive receptors such as the proposed senior community and the Livermore Municipal Airport.

#### Population and Housing

- Cumulative growth impacts; and
- Evaluate potential growth inducement.

#### Traffic/Circulation/Transportation

- Total traffic generation entering and leaving the project site, including average daily traffic and trip information in general;
- Traffic circulation changes on nearby roadway segments including potential conflicts with existing truck traffic generated by the quarries on El Charro Road;
- Traffic congestion at key intersections;
- Site access and circulation, including the use of the potential Stoneridge Drive extension right of way as an emergency access route; and



- Transit and bicycle circulation at the project site and the potential for regional trail connections.

#### Air Quality

- Air quality effects caused during construction phases;
- Emissions caused during occupation and operations of the housing and commercial uses;
- Potential sources and effects of odors and toxic air contaminants; and
- Local carbon monoxide impacts (if heavily congested traffic would occur).

#### Noise

- Noise impacts in the project vicinity by using site specific noise data;
- Potential noise impacts from the construction phases of the project components;
- Noise impacts from the project and future traffic levels in the vicinity of the most noise sensitive receptors (senior community and auto mall employees), especially from I-580; and
- Noise levels from the existing Livermore Municipal Airport and from the proposed community park and future commercial activities on the most noise sensitive receptors.

#### Hazards/Risk of Upset

- Air safety and airport land use requirements in relation to the nearby Livermore Municipal Airport.

#### Biological Resources

- Vegetation communities and habitats at the project site;
- Special status plant and wildlife species at the project site;
- Presence or absence of sensitive habitats, including wetlands and waters of the U.S.;
- Presence or absence of heritage trees at the project site; and
- Direct and indirect impacts to sensitive biological species.

#### Hydrology/Water Quality

- Flood potential and adequacy of flood control measures of the major and minor drainages on, and in the vicinity of, the project site;
- Potential degradation or destabilization of downstream channel morphology;
- Potential degradation of surface water quality from site activities, such as increased turbidity from sedimentation, particularly during construction;
- Potential dewatering impacts, such as slope sloughing during construction;
- Change in storm water runoff volumes and characteristics as a result of project implementation;
- Water supply in the area and if it is adequate for this project; and
- Potential of over taxing existing storm drain and flood control infrastructure as a result of increased runoff upon implementation.

After staff receives feedback from the Planning Commission, the EIR consultant will review the proposed issues to be studied with staff and begin the process of research and development of the EIR. The EIR serves several functions:

- The EIR satisfies the CEQA requirements for the project's environmental review. The EIR is the informational document that identifies the environmental impacts of the proposal; the mitigation measures for these impacts; and the impacts that cannot be mitigated, thereby being unavoidable.
- As an informational document, the EIR does not formulate recommendations on the proposal, e.g., approval, conditional approval, or denial.
- Once finished, the EIR would then be circulated for public comment as a draft. Comments received from the general public and from the applicable Federal, State, and local agencies would be addressed in the "Response To Comments" section of the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR). The FEIR would then be forwarded to the Planning Commission for review and the City Council for review. The City Council will determine whether to certify the FEIR as complete according to CEQA requirements.
- Staff notes that the completed FEIR does not compel the City's approval of the proposed project in whatever form. The City can still apply its discretionary ability to approve, conditionally approve, or deny the proposal. However, if the City intends to approve or conditionally approve the proposed project, the mitigation measures identified in the FEIR must then be incorporated in the proposal either as conditions of approval or as revisions to its design.

### **Alternatives**

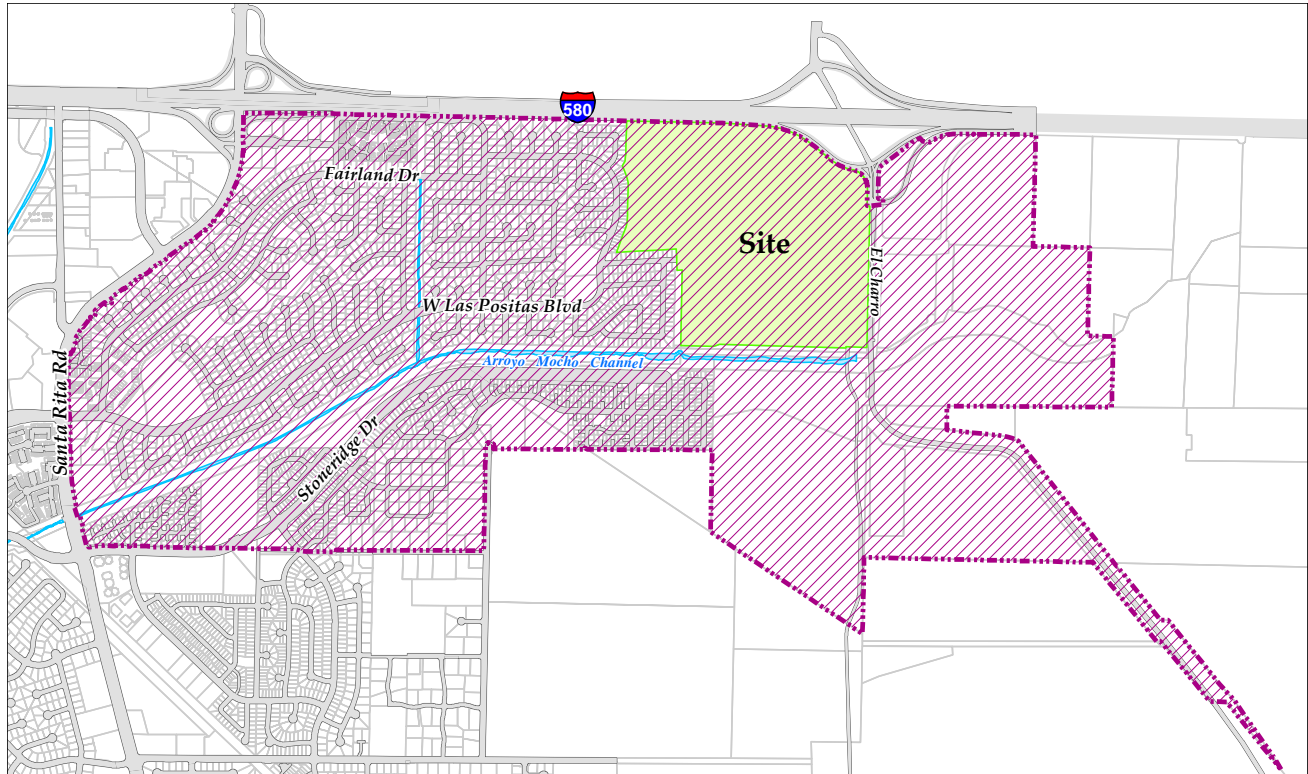
An important function of an EIR is its analysis of alternatives to the proposed project which, as required by CEQA, must include the "No Project" alternative and the "Environmentally Superior" alternative in addition to the applicants' proposal. Staff believes that the alternatives should, at a minimum, include the following:

- Access Alternative—the proposed project with the construction of an extension of Stoneridge Drive to El Charro Road.
- Alternative Park Design—the proposed project with an alternative design for the 17-acre park generally as shown on the draft concept plan proposed by Logitech Ice Group, which is being reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Commission (see Exhibit F).
- Four- to Five-Acre Park/Storm Water Detention Alternative — the proposed project with an alternative land use of park and storm water detention at the four- to five-acre future commercial site located immediately east of the proposed senior continuing care community.

As proposed, the road right of way for the Stoneridge Drive extension would be reserved, and Stoneridge Drive would only be extended as a two-lane road to the senior continuing care community and the park. The access alternative would show the impacts of the proposal if the Stoneridge Drive extension to El Charro Road were constructed as part of the project.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

The scoping session was noticed to 2,952 residents and interested parties (see noticing area in Figure 3).



**Figure 3**

At the time this report was drafted, staff had received comments from 28 individuals/parties, not including comments made at the neighborhood meeting and the Parks and Recreation Commission workshop. Any future letters or e-mails received after April 30, 2007, the end date of the initial scoping period, will be attached and replied to in all future City Council/Planning Commission staff reports on the proposal. Although the comments are predominantly environmental in nature, some comments may be more project-oriented. Project-related comments would be discussed in the project areas of the City Council/Planning Commission staff reports.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission hear all public testimony and related subject matter, and then provide direction to staff and the applicant on the scope and subject matter of the Environmental Impact Report for PUD-57/PSP-11.

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