
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

GOVERNMENTAL CENTER



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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October 1, 1998

Agenda: October 20, 1998

Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

SUBJECT: PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER APPLICATION NO. 98-0121, A PROPOSAL TO AMEND SUBDIVISION PERMITS 90-1245 AND 97-0909, FOR GRAHAM HILL ESTATES, TO ALLOW A SECOND ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF SEWAGE DISPOSAL, THAT BEING THE CONSTRUCTION OF A RAW SEWAGE PIPELINE LINKING THE PROJECT TO THE CITY OF SANTA CRUZ EXISTING WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT; PROPERTY LOCATED ON THE WEST SIDE OF GRAHAM HILL ROAD, WEST OF ITS INTERSECTION WITH SIMS ROAD. APPLICANT: STANDARD PACIFIC CORP., APN: 061-321-44

Members of the Board,

On November 26, 1996, your Board granted final approval to Subdivision Map 90-1245, for Graham Hill Estates, Tract No. 1339. This approval included a 60-lot single-family residential subdivision with a 118-acre Common Area, a 20-acre future park site, a 0.5 acre site for a sewer treatment package plant, an equestrian trail system, and authorized the on-site relocation of the existing equestrian facility. As part of this project, your Board approved the requested Subdivision, a General Plan Amendment, a Rezoning, and a Roadway Exception. An amendment to Subdivision Permit 90-1245, Permit 97-0909, was approved by your Board on February 24, 1998, to allow phasing the subdivision and recording of multiple final maps.

The current owner of the Graham Hill Estates project, Standard Pacific Corporation, has submitted an application to amend Permits 90-1245 and 97-0909 to allow a second alternative method of sewage disposal. The current conditions of approval for the subdivision require the construction of an on-site community wastewater system (package plant) to treat domestic sewage generated by the project. The proposed second alternative would allow construction of a raw sewage pipeline linking the project to the City of Santa Cruz wastewater treatment plant. This pipeline would serve the 60 single-family homes, the future park site, and the equestrian facility, which have been approved.

Background

The approval of Subdivision Permit 90-1245 includes a condition which requires that lots be connected for sewer service to an on-site package treatment plant. Also included is a requirement that the development approval holder obtain approval from the City of Scotts Valley for effluent discharge to the Scotts Valley - Santa Cruz wastewater treatment plant transmission line. The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the subdivision, prepared by Environmental Science Associates, Inc., and revised in June 1995, addressed three alternatives for treatment and disposal of wastewater generated by the development, all of which were based on the use of a community wastewater treatment plant located on the project site. These alternatives included discharge into the Scotts Valley effluent line; secondary treatment with on-site denitrification, with effluent discharge to a subsurface leachfield in the north central portion of the property; and effluent reuse. The option including effluent reuse would have consisted of an on-site treatment plan with disinfection, a storage reservoir, an irrigation pump station, and a sprayfield area. Two locations were identified for potential irrigation with reclaimed effluent; two fairways on the Pasatiempo Golf Course, and the northeast portion of the Graham Hill Estates development.

Alternative 1, use of the Scotts Valley effluent pipeline, was identified by the EIR as the preferred effluent disposal method. It was determined to be preferable for three principal reasons, Nitrate additions to the San Lorenzo River watershed would be eliminated; potential nuisances, hazards and maintenance requirements associated with an on-site wastewater storage reservoir would be eliminated; and the potential for accidental discharges of treated effluent to the San Lorenzo River from spray field or reservoir problems would also be eliminated. This alternative, however, is dependent on approval from the City of Scotts Valley and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). Because this method of sewage disposal is subject to a negotiated agreement with, and approval by, the City of Scotts Valley, the applicant has requested that your Board approve a second alternative method of sewage disposal. This alternative would allow for the construction of a raw sewage pipeline linking the Graham Hill Showgrounds project with the existing City of Santa Cruz wastewater treatment plant.

Because this request would modify a condition of approval that was a matter of discussion at the public hearing before your Board, it is considered a major amendment to the original permit. County Code Section 18.10.134(C)(iii) requires that any major amendment that was a matter of substantial controversy at the public hearing, at which the original planning approval was given, must be referred to that approving body. Because the method of sewage disposal was a matter of substantial controversy at the public hearing, it is appropriate that this proposal now is considered by your Board.

Description of Proposed Alternative

The proposed alternative would include a sanitary sewer pipeline that would extend from the subdivision site on Graham Hill Road to a point of connection with an existing 1 S-inch sewer located in River Street, at Golf Club Drive, in the City of Santa Cruz. The proposed pipeline construction is described in the Preliminary Project Report, prepared by C + D Consulting Engineers, included as Attachment 3. The proposed pipeline would begin at Graham Hill Estates opposite Deer Path Road and continue along Graham Hill Road for about 6,000 feet to a point where it would intersect with

intersect with Ocean Street Extension. It would follow one of two possible routes to reach the San Lorenzo River at the north end of the I.O.O.F. Cemetery. Although two possible routes for crossing the San Lorenzo River are suggested in the Preliminary Project Report, one of those routes was determined to be undesirable during Environmental Review, due to its proximity to three domestic water supply wells and a surface water intake operated by the City of Santa Cruz Water Department.

The river crossing would be accomplished by directional drilling to either the driveway of the City meter shop or the parking area of the County transit facility. The proposed pipeline would then travel down River Street to Golf Club Drive, where it would connect to an existing 18 inch sewer pipeline. From that point, the effluent would travel through the existing City of Santa Cruz sanitary sewer system to the Santa Cruz Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility with disposal to Monterey Bay.

Environmental Issues

An Environmental Review Initial Study was prepared for the proposed alternative method of sewage disposal on July 20, 1998. The Initial Study was conducted, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), to decide if the project could have a significant effect on the environment. It was determined that the project, if conditioned to comply with required mitigation measures or conditions of approval, would not have a significant effect on the environment, and a Negative Declaration and Notice of Determination was approved by the Environmental Coordinator on September 3, 1998. A copy of the Negative Declaration and Notice of Determination, Negative Declaration Mitigations, and the Environmental Review Initial Study are included as Attachment 4. The Initial Study did, however, identify several key environmental issues and impacts that could potentially be significant if not mitigated.

Erosion Control and Dust Suppression

Most of the proposed construction would take place within the roadway for Graham Hill Road, where erosion potential is reduced. However, one proposed route from Graham Hill to Ocean Street would cross over Assessor's Parcel Number 008-1 3 1- 17, which contains approximately 2: 1 slopes, and would require special construction considerations. In addition, construction activities throughout the proposed routes could potentially generate dust and affect air quality. To mitigate these potential impacts, a condition of approval is recommended to require an erosion control plan that includes dust suppression measures. This plan would be required to be in conformance with County Code Chapter 16.22, and would require review and approval by the Planning Department before issuance of an Encroachment Permit.

Traffic Related Impacts

A portion of the proposed location of the sewer pipeline would be within the travelway for Graham Hill Road, Ocean Street Extension, and River Street. Traffic control will be required to accomplish the work. It is estimated that installation of 6,000 feet of pipeline will require 15 to 20 working days for installation with additional time needed for installation of manholes, finish paving and striping. To reduce the effects on traffic, the construction time when traffic control would be in effect should be limited to a time period that least impacts traffic. Before setting specific times for construction, traffic counts should be taken to determine the traffic use patterns and peak time period. A condition of approval is recommended to require a complete traffic management plan be prepared and submitted to the Department of Public Works for review and approval before issuance of an

Encroachment Permit. The traffic management plan would be required to include suggested alternative routes for detouring traffic around the Graham Hill Road construction zone; provisions for keeping one lane of traffic open at all times throughout the construction zone (including River Street); and provisions for keeping both lanes of traffic open throughout the construction zone on holidays, weekends, and during the morning and evening peak traffic periods.

To ensure that the project does not result in impacts to Graham Hill Road, Ocean Street Extension or River Street, a condition of approval is recommended that requires design specifications and construction practices to conform to the backfill and compaction standards contained in the County of Santa Cruz Design Criteria, and the design criteria used by the City of Santa Cruz public Works Department.

Public Health and Safety

Existing underground facilities in Graham Hill Road include a 20-inch waterline for untreated water and a domestic waterline. The separation between the domestic waterline and the proposed sewer line would be a minimum of ten feet, with the possible exception of two areas; an area between Westwood Drive and the water treatment plant driveway and possibly on Tait Street, in the City of Santa Cruz. In the Westwood Drive area, the sewer line would be required to be at a grade lower than the water lines and placed in a double wall pipe, or other measures determined to be necessary to prevent contamination of domestic water supplies.

Proposed alignment alternative 3A, as described in the Preliminary Project Report (Attachment 3) could result in impacts to public health and safety if a break or leak was to occur. Under this alternative, the raw sewage pipeline would follow Tait Street to the directional bore under the San Lorenzo River. The City of Santa Cruz operates three domestic water supply wells in the immediate vicinity of Tait Street, as well as the river intake that collects surface water from the San Lorenzo River. The City of Santa Cruz Water Department has indicated that they are considering replacing the surface water diversion with an infiltration gallery, which pulls water from the alluvium underlying the San Lorenzo River. Due to the existence of these public water facilities a condition of approval is recommended that would prohibit the use of alignment alternative 3A.

A condition of approval is also recommended that would require the applicant to retain the services of a soils engineer to determine the minimum depth for the pipeline under the San Lorenzo River, to provide protection from potential scour-related damage and to address slope stability concerns for the proposed trenching along alternative Route 2B, if this route is selected.

Biotic Resources

No biotic assessment has been completed for the proposed path of the wastewater pipeline. Although much of the excavation will occur in the roadbed for Graham Hill Road and River Street, in the City of Santa Cruz, the portion of the proposed pipeline that would connect the Graham Hill Road segment to the River Street segment will cross over an undeveloped parcel and below the river channel for the San Lorenzo River. Although the proposed alternative would use directional drilling under the river and adjacent riparian corridor, a unique or fragile biotic community, prohibition on disturbance outside the paved travel way and areas that do not currently support vegetation will

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ensure that the project does not affect these biotic resources. Several special status species were found on the Graham Hill Subdivision parcel, and it is possible that they may exist elsewhere in the vicinity. A condition of approval is recommended, if alignment Route 2B is selected, that would require the applicant to retain the services of a qualified biologist to prepare a biotic assessment of the alignment. The presence of unique or listed species would subject this portion of the project to additional environmental review.

General Plan Consistency

The application for the Graham Hill Estates subdivision was submitted and determined to be complete before adoption of the 1994 General Plan. Findings for approval of the subdivision, relating to General Plan consistency, were made in relation to the 1980 General Plan, which was in effect when the application was deemed to be complete. Although the approved subdivision was consistent with the 1980 General Plan, it is not consistent with the 1994 General Plan. Specifically, because a General Plan amendment was required for approval of the subdivision, it is inconsistent with 1994 General Plan policy 2.2.1, which requires General Plan amendments to comply with standards for public facilities without exception. These standards include the provision of public sewers for new development located within the Urban Services Line. The approved subdivision would also be inconsistent with 1994 General Plan Objective 7.19, *“to provide necessary and adequate sanitation services to areas of urban development within the Urban Services Line based on a trunk-line sewage collection, treatment and disposal system.”*

The proposed second alternative method of sewage disposal would be consistent with these General Plan policies. The proposed pipeline alternative would serve the approved Graham Hill Estates Subdivision and the Equestrian Center, and would be sized in accordance with Department of Public Works Design Criteria. This design would accommodate wet-weather flows and potential infiltration, and incorporate requirements of the Regional Water Quality Control Board, intended to reduce the possibility of sewage spills. Potentially, the design could result in excess capacity, above that required to serve only the Graham Hill Estates subdivision. To prevent additional connections without a review of the potential growth inducing impacts of new sewer service, a condition of approval is recommended to require a one-foot non-access strip around the raw sewage line before acceptance by the County Sanitation District. This easement would prohibit access and connections to the pipeline until Environmental Review has been completed, including a detailed assessment of any growth inducing potential of the connections. Most areas adjacent to the proposed raw sewage pipeline alternative are, however, located within the Urban Services Line and are designated on the General Plan for development at Urban Very Low Density (1 .0 to 4.3 units per net developable acre). Only a limited number of parcels adjacent to the potential pipeline are located outside the Urban Services Line, along Ocean Street Extension and next to the San Lorenzo River. General Plan policies limit the expansion of services beyond the Urban Services Line. Additional development potential in this area is discussed in the report to your Board from Environmental Health Services. The impact of growth and development in the Carbonera Planning Area, at allowed General Plan densities, was addressed by the Environmental Impact Report prepared for the 1994 Santa Cruz County General Plan and Local Coastal Program update.

Conclusion

All required findings can be made to approve this application. Findings originally made for Application No. 90- 1245 are still applicable, and revised Subdivision Findings, reflecting a second alternative method of sewage disposal, are included as Attachment 1. The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan, in that policies contained in the 1994 County General Plan require sewer service be provided to new development located within the Urban Services Line. The Initial Study, Negative Declaration, and Notice of Determination for the proposed project conclude that all potentially significant impacts can either be avoided or can be reduced to a less than significant level if all mitigation measures are implemented.

Recommendation

It is therefore, RECOMMENDED, that your Board take the following actions:

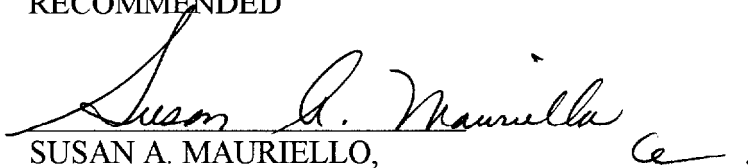
1. Certify the Mitigated Negative Declaration as complying with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (Attachment 4); and
2. Approve Application No. 98-0121, based on the findings, (Attachment 1) and subject to the attached conditions (Attachment 2).

Sincerely,



Alvin D. James
Planning Director

RECOMMENDED



SUSAN A. MAURIELLO,
County Administrative Officer

Attachments:

1. Subdivision Findings, as amended
2. Amended Conditions of Approval
3. Preliminary Project Report, Graham Hill Estates off-site sanitary sewer system, prepared by C + D Consulting Engineers, dated September 25, 1997
4. Negative Declaration, Notice of Determination, and Initial Study
5. Comments received during Environmental Review Period
6. Conditions of Approval for Subdivision Permit 90- 1245
7. Comments received on application from reviewing agencies