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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE
701 OCEAN STREET, ROOM 312 SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA 95060

October 15, 1998

AGENDA: October 20, 1998

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

SUBJECT: GRAHAM HILL ESTATES PROPOSED SEWER LINE CAPACITY

Members of the Board:

On September 22, 1998, your Board directed Environmental Health and Public Works to provide a report regarding the potential use of a proposed Graham Hill Estates sewer line to eventually serve additional parcels in the Greater Pasatiempo area. Specifically your Board requested a discussion of the capacity of the proposed line and the potential for additional development if the area were sewered.

Background

The Greater Pasatiempo area includes some 780 homes in the neighborhoods of Pasatiempo, Rolling Woods, Orchard Drive/Sims Road, and Beulah Park. All of the area is within the San Lorenzo River Watershed and is subject to the provisions of the San Lorenzo Wastewater Management Plan and the San Lorenzo Nitrate Management Plan, which were adopted by your Board and the State Regional Water Quality Control Board in 1995. Provisions of those plans are such that most existing sewage disposal systems in the area will require substantial upgrade to meet current standards. The area is currently subject to scattered septic failures and nitrate contamination. Over ninety percent of the parcels are within the County Urban Services Line, with the exception of the Beulah Park area which is subject to major septic problems. Ninety percent of the parcels in the entire area are developed.

During 1996, your Board authorized a feasibility study of various alternatives for upgrading sewage disposal in the Greater Pasatiempo area. Results of the study were presented to your Board on June 10, 1997. Connection of all parcels in the area to the Santa Cruz City Treatment Plant via a Graham Hill Road sewer line was identified by the report as the least costly alternative. Environmental Health staff have been discussing options with the community and conducting further evaluation of the alternatives. No formal action has been taken to proceed with a project, and no significant action can be taken unless assessment district boundaries are established and assessments to fund a project are approved by a vote of the property owners pursuant to Proposition 218. We will provide your Board with a more detailed status report on the possible next steps for project development on November 10, 1998.

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The undeveloped Graham Hill Showgrounds property is located within the Greater Pasatiempo area. A subdivision of 60 lots was approved by your Board on November 26, 1996. Under the permit conditions of that approval, sewage from the 60 lots is to be treated by a new onsite treatment plant, with disposal of secondary effluent to the City of Scotts Valley treated effluent line which runs down Graham Hill Road. The current owners of the project are now requesting approval of a permit amendment to allow a second possible option for sewage disposal: construction of a raw sewage line down Graham Hill Road with connection to the City of Santa Cruz sewer system and treatment plant. Planning department staff have recommended that your Board approve this amendment, with the strict conditions that no other properties could connect to the line unless authorized by your Board after thorough evaluation of the potential impacts of such connections.

Sewer Line Sizing Capacity

General Plan Policy 7.19.3, under Sanitation Facilities Within the Urban Services Line, states: "Require developers, including public agencies, to locate and size new collection systems to best serve all areas inside the Urban Services Line." Initial calculations by the engineering consultant for the feasibility study for the Greater Pasatiempo Area estimated that an 8 inch line would be adequate to serve the entire area. While that size could theoretically transport the sewage, principles of prudent engineering design which are incorporated in the County's Design Criteria require that the line be sized larger to accommodate anticipated increases in wet weather flow, reducing the potential for blockages and spills that occur as a sewer system ages. The consulting engineer recently recalculated the pipe size to conform with the County's Design Criteria and determined that a 12 inch line would be needed to serve the Graham Hill Estates project.

Potential for Additional Development

There is potential for either the approved Graham Hill Estates treatment plant or the proposed sewer pipeline to eventually be used as a part of a future project to sewer surrounding areas. Both of these options were identified as feasible alternatives in the Greater Pasatiempo sewer feasibility study. Accordingly, some potential for eventual sewer service and additional development in surrounding areas already exists with the approved project.

Environmental Health staff conducted an initial analysis of the potential for additional development if the Greater Pasatiempo area were sewered. This analysis took into account, soils, parcel size, General Plan use designations, and current septic regulations. Within the previous sewer feasibility study area, there are approximately 745 developed lots, 35 vacant lots which could probably be developed with septic systems, and 45 vacant lots which could probably only be developed if they were served by sewer (map attached). Of the vacant lots, only about 15 are larger than 40,000 square feet and could potentially be split if there are no other limiting factors. (These figures do not include the Graham Hill Estates property which will be developed with 60 new residences.) This analysis did not evaluate the potential for land divisions or development of second units on approximately 100 larger lots which are already developed. Much of the area is on steeper slopes which would limit potential for division on many lots.

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The Environmental Impact Report for the 1994 General Plan Update described the potential impacts from the development of an additional 138 to 218 units that could be allowed at build out of the urban portion of the Carbonera Planning area. That report indicated that the higher level of development could only take place if the area were sewerred. Recommended mitigation measures were adopted as a part of the 1994 General Plan.

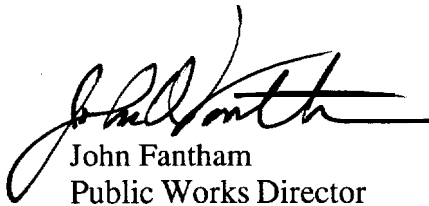
There are a number of ways that your Board may regulate the level of additional growth in this area. Current limits include the allowed General Plan and zoning densities, the Urban Services Line, and the septic system requirements. If your Board approves a sewer line to serve Graham Hill Estates within a non-access easement as proposed, all of these restrictions would remain in force until there was a comprehensive evaluation of potential for increased growth and identification of appropriate mitigation measures. If a sewer system is ultimately considered to serve a larger area, current General Plan and zoning restrictions would remain in force and could be tightened if desired by your Board. Any sewer system development would also be accompanied by a set of additional measures to mitigate the effects of increased development potential.

Recommendation


It is RECOMMENDED that your Board accept and file this report.

Sincerely,


for Charles Moody
Health Services Agency Administrator

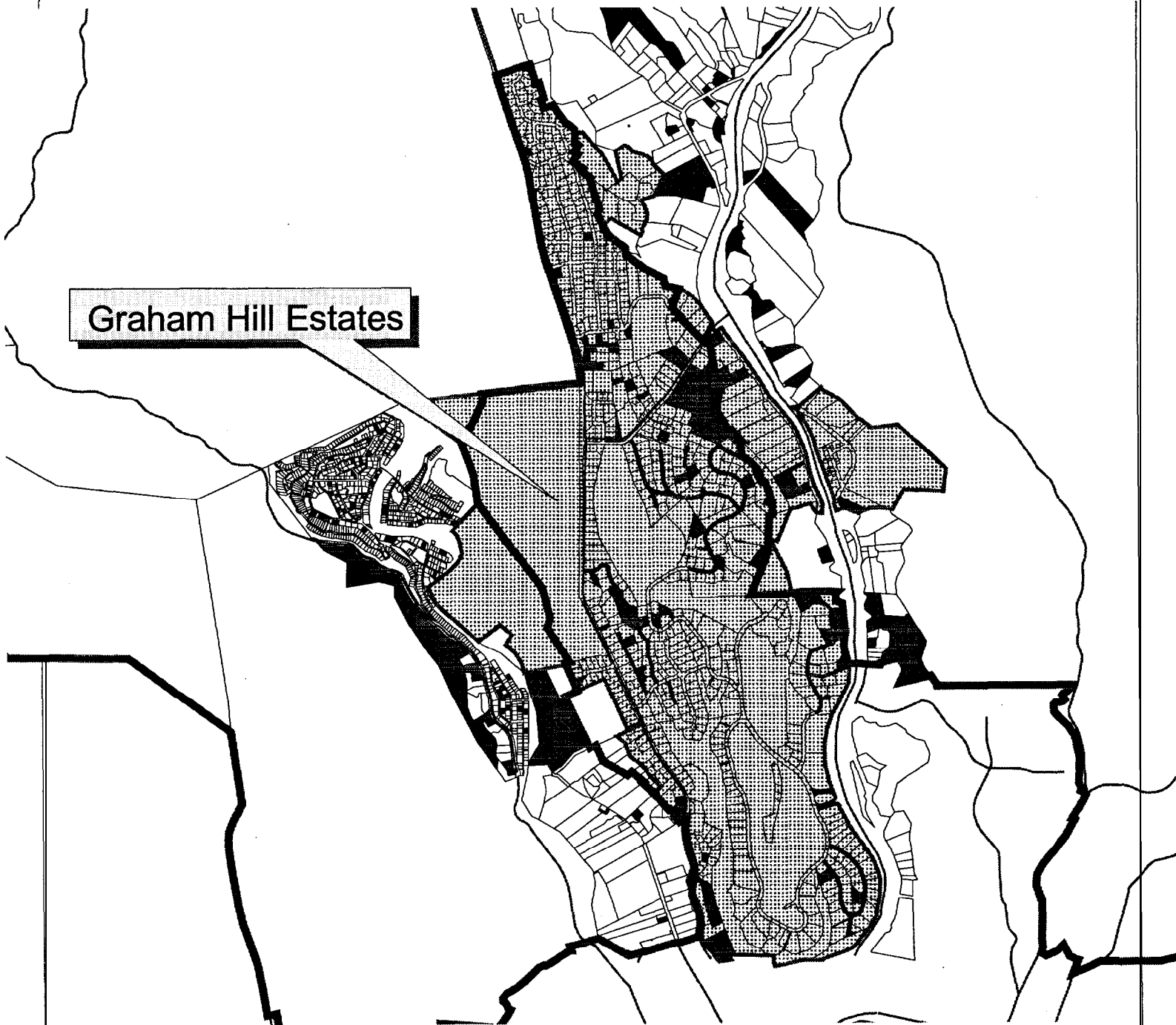

John Fantham
Public Works Director

Recommended:


Susan A. Mauriello
County Administrative Office

cc: CAO
County Counsel
Health Services Agency
Environmental Health
Public Works
Planning

Greater Pasatiempo Sewer Study Area Urban Services Line and Vacant Parcels



Graham Hill Estates

-  Urban Services Line
-  Sewer Study Area
-  Major Roads
-  Undeveloped Residential Parcels

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