TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

DATE: JULY 1, 2002

CMR:318:02

SUBJECT: REVIEW AND COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED SANTA CLARA COUNTY DISTRICT TEXT FOR THE STANFORD OPEN SPACE/FIELD RESEARCH (OS/F) ZONING DISTRICT TO IMPLEMENT THE 2000 STANFORD COMMUNITY PLAN

RECOMMENDATION

Staff and the Planning and Transportation Commission recommend that the City Council forward to the County Board of Supervisors a request to modify the proposed Open Space/Field Research (OS/F) Zoning District text to address projects that exceed the standards allowed by right, and therefore require Architectural and Site Approval (ASA), and require specific findings for those projects.

BACKGROUND

In December of 2000, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors approved the Stanford University Community Plan that provided policy direction for development of unincorporated Stanford lands within Palo Alto’s Sphere of Influence. The Stanford Community Plan designated approximately 2,200 acres of undeveloped foothill lands for Open Space and Field Research (OS/FR) and outlined allowable uses and development policies under this designation. This area is outside the Stanford Academic Growth Boundary that demarcates the urbanized campus proper from areas planned for low-intensity uses. Lands designated Open Space and Field Research in the Community Plan are considered important for their environmental resources and their open space character. They also provide an area for field research and research-related activities that are dependent on the undeveloped foothill environment.

The Community Plan included an implementation recommendation calling for the future enactment and application of appropriate zoning consistent with the OS/FR land use designation. In response to that direction, the County prepared text for the Open Space/Field Research Zoning District (OS/F) for incorporation into the County Zoning...
Regulations. As directed in the Community Plan, this text is modeled on the existing County Hillside Zoning District that regulates development within mountainous areas of the County and establishes a clustering permit requirement for residential development.

Staff reviewed the proposed text and prepared a staff report to the Planning and Transportation Commission (Attachment A) that was discussed by the Commission at four separate meetings in March and May. County Planning staff attended one of those meetings and provided an overview of the Stanford Community Plan and General Use Permit and their interrelationship to the proposed zoning district. The Commission forwarded its comments on the proposed zoning district text in a letter (Attachment B) to the County Planning Commission on May 30, 2002.

**DISCUSSION**

The Commission considered the ordinance to be in need of greater clarity, structure and definition for projects that exceed the standards allowed by right and therefore require Architectural and Site Approval (ASA). The Commission recommended that specific findings be required for those projects similar to the process established in the County Hillside Zoning District for uses permitted subject to securing a special permit. Specifically, the Commission suggested that the zoning district should include criteria for findings that address the following:

- Regulate access to sites.
- Regulate the location, size, capacity and number of utilities to ensure minimal environmental impacts.
- Regulate trails and roads to either limit or prohibit paving or other impervious surfaces.
- Provide development standards addressing architecture, color, materials, siting and orientation sufficient to ensure environmental compatibility but allow flexibility in design review.
- Identify the intensity and range of uses and type of development that could occur in the area.
- Ensure that fences do not impede the migration of wildlife by limiting height and requiring an open design.
- Prohibit development above the 200 foot elevation unless sufficient justification and reasonable findings can be made through a separate permit process involving an advertised public hearing.

The Commission recommended that the County use as a model the City’s Open Space Zoning District for developing standards of review. The City developed the Open Space standards for land that is substantially similar to the Stanford OS/R area; the standards allow a maximum development of two stories with 25-foot heights.
The Commission also recommended that the ordinance text incorporate the General Use Permit restrictions, standards and conditions since the use permit will expire within a ten-year timeframe or can change on application by the County. When either of these occurs, the zoning should continue to dictate parameters for future entitlement and should not be dependent on the new use permit restrictions.

The Commission also recommended an open space requirement for non-clustered development and that for both clustered and non-clustered projects the open space component is not allowed to be transferred to the yet-to-be-established Special Conservation areas, which already prohibit development.

ATTACHMENTS
Attachment A: Staff Report to Planning Commission
Attachment B: Letter from Palo Alto Planning and Transportation Commission to County Planning Commission

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