

September 21, 2021

Chair Connie DeGrange
Sunol Citizens' Advisory Council
1221 Oak Street, Suite 536
Oakland, CA 94612

RE: Tyler Ranch Staging Area

Dear Council Chair Connie DeGrange,

The East Bay Regional Park District (Park District) appreciates the opportunity to provide additional information requested during the Sunol Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting on September 15, 2021, regarding the development of the Tyler Ranch Staging Area at Pleasanton Ridge Regional Park.

Providing public access to Pleasanton Ridge Regional Park has been a long-standing goal of the Park District, Alameda County, and the broader community. The East County Area Plan portion of the Alameda County General Plan includes the goal to "promote protection of open space in the Pleasanton Ridgeland Area" and Policy 357, which states:

*Policy 357: The County shall encourage East Bay Regional Park District to provide **public access** to Ridgeland Park from as many points as feasible, including Foothill Road, Palomares Road, and Dublin Canyon Road, in order to maximize public access and to distribute traffic impacts of staging areas among surrounding jurisdictions. (p.91, East County Area Plan, 2000).*

The 1,457 acre Tyler Ranch property was acquired by the Park District in 2007 with the intent to preserve habitat, protect against potential development, and to provide for future public access opportunities.

As requested, a summary of the Pleasanton Ridge Land Use Plan, environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and design and permitting process of the Tyler Ranch staging area is included below and attached as well as responses to other questions received from the public during the September 15th meeting and in subsequent correspondence.

Pleasanton Ridge Land Use Plan (LUP)

The approved Park District Board of Directors approved the Pleasanton Ridge Land Use Plan (LUP) and adopted the accompanying Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) as part of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) on July 17, 2012 (Board Reso. 2012-7-184). The LUP and IS/MND included recommendations to develop a staging area on the flat portion of the Tyler Ranch property, consistent with the policy direction in the East County Area Plan portion of the Alameda County General Plan, with the intent of providing a staging area to serve as the southern gateway for Pleasanton Ridge and its challenging trails.

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During the LUP planning process, public comments were received regarding traffic flow, parking along Foothill Road, and privacy and security of property owners adjacent to Tyler Ranch. Park District fully considered traffic and circulation impacts on Foothill Road neighbors and the staging area was designed to minimize privacy and security impacts.

The Pleasanton Ridge LUP was considered through a number of public meetings starting in June 2009, including:

- Scoping Meeting - June 2009
- Public Presentations (6) between October 2010 and November 2011
- Pleasanton Public Meeting - June 2012
- CEQA Public Review – June 4, 2012 to July 3, 2012
- Board Executive Committee – April 26, 2012
- Park Advisory Committee – May 21, 2012
- Board of Directors Approval of Land Use Plan and MND – July 17, 2012

Following the adoption of the Pleasanton Ridge LUP and IS/MND, the Park District has been working to get the projects permitted through the various regulatory agencies. In early 2021, all necessary permits were issued for the Tyler Ranch staging area and the Phase I trail improvements.

Most recently the Park District Board of Directors received an update on the project in a publicly noticed meeting on July 20, 2021 (that meeting can be viewed here, starting at the 45:00 min mark - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e87Tch3yvBk>).

Parking Capacity and Overflow Parking

As described in the Pleasanton Ridge LUP and associated IS/MND, the Tyler Ranch Staging Area was proposed for parking for up to 90 vehicles. This capacity was based on the results of a 2009 trail use survey that indicated a high demand for adequate parking facilities with access to a variety of trail experiences and to best utilize the developable area of the Tyler Ranch site to accommodate parking demand onsite.

The current Tyler Ranch staging area design has been refined to account for the existing site conditions and environmental permitting considerations to 66 gravel parking spots, 4 ADA parking spots, and 3 spots that can be used for truck, trailer, or school bus parking.

Based on staff experience throughout similar staging areas, the current sizing is anticipated to be sufficient to ensure that overflow parking will not be necessary. Through education to let visitors know about the other staging areas available and through ticketing enforcement via the District's Public Safety staff, the District is prepared should overflow parking become an issue. Further, the Park District is coordinating with Alameda County Public Works on this issue.

Traffic Impact Assessment

Concerns regarding traffic impacts on Foothill Road, a public roadway, were raised throughout the development of the LUP and ISMND. Park District staff did conduct a traffic evaluation and considered transportation and traffic impacts on Foothill Road in the IS/MND for the Pleasanton Ridge LUP. Traffic analysis is included starting

on p. 96 of the attached IS/MND. The analysis found sufficient capacity on Foothill Road to accommodate staging area development in a manner that would not impact level of service on the roadway or at area intersections.

Further, several comments were received at the time of adoption of the Pleasanton Ridge LUP from residents on Foothill Road and responses were provided in the final Board material to those comments (see attached 12-July 17 Pleasanton Ridge LUP Board Report and Resolution.pdf). Comments specifically raised concerns regarding the need for no parking signage and possible installation of traffic calming features (e.g. speed humps) on Foothill Road. This is consistent with comments received during the Sept 15, 2021, meeting. Park District staff is coordinating with Alameda County Public Works staff to consider implementation of such measures, if deemed necessary.

Emergency Vehicle Turnaround

The terminus of Foothill Road would be developed with a turn-around to accommodate emergency vehicles. The Park District determined that there is sufficient room within the length of the entrance driveway before the entry gate for vehicles as large as a firetruck to drive into and back out to turn around. There is also sufficient room within the parking lot for a school bus to park and to make necessary turns within the project site (see attached Staging Area design figure).

In addition to ensuring “No Parking” signs are in place along Foothill Road, the Park District will coordinate with the Alameda County Public Works Department to assess what, if any, additional traffic calming measures and signage is necessary along Foothill Road to address neighbor concerns should they be deemed necessary.

Privacy and Security of Adjacent Property Owners

During the LUP planning process, public comments were received regarding assurances that adjacent neighbors’ privacy and security will be considered. Park District staff had responded in the Response to Comments for the MND that the LUP discusses potential improvements along Foothill Road, such as landscape screening, relocation of the park entryway from the adjacent private parcel, and retention of a private gate that provides access to two private in-holdings. Per the most recent site plan for Tyler Ranch Staging Area, trees will be planted at the staging area to provide a landscape screening for the adjacent property owners and the park entry way will be located over 200’ west of the adjacent parcel.

Relationship to Niles Canyon Trail

A number of public comments and emails inquired on the status of the Niles Canyon Trail and this project. Alameda County is the lead agency for the planning and evaluation of the Niles Canyon Trail. The Park District has worked in partnership with Alameda County in the early planning and will continue to work with the County as the project potentially moves forward in the future. However, the Niles Canyon Trail is outside of the scope of the Tyler Ranch staging area project.

Wildland Fire

A number of comments have been raised regarding fire concerns. The Park District, as stewards of over 125,000, acres share concerns regarding fire and will continue to actively manage the Tyler Ranch property to ensure fuel loads are minimized and fire hazards removed. The Park District has a full-service Fire Department who, in collaboration with our Operations and Stewardship Department, is uniquely qualified to manage natural lands and respond to risks of wildland fire.

The Park District looks forward to working closely with the residents of Sunol to address any concerns during the construction of the Tyler Ranch Staging Area. Construction is expected to begin September 2021 and run through May 2022.

Sincerely,



Brian Holt
Chief of Planning, Trails & GIS

Cc: Ayn Wieskamp, Director Ward 5
Sup. Richard Valle, Alameda County Board of Supervisors, District 2
Sabrina Landreth, General Manager
Kristina Kelchner, Assistant General Manager
Lisa Goorjian, Chief of Design and Construction

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Pleasanton Ridge Land Use Plan (available here: <https://www.ebparks.org/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=23276>)
2. Pleasanton Ridge Land Use Plan IS/MND (sent via email)
3. Tyler Ranch Staging Area Site Plan (sent via email)
4. Pleasanton Ridge Land Use Plan Board of Directors Adoption – Board Report and Resolution July 17, 2012 (sent via email)