



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION

Meeting Date: May 3, 2006

Staff Report for Agenda Item: C-2

Consider Approval of a Revised Application to Remove 46 Heritage Trees and Relocate 4 Heritage Trees Related to the Proposed Residential Development at 75 Willow Road

BACKGROUND

The location of the proposed project by Summer Hill Homes is at 75 Willow Road, west of Middlefield Road. The revised project includes the demolition of office buildings presently on the site and the construction of 33 detached homes, an entry park, and a loop road through the complex. The Environmental Quality Commission reviewed the initial development proposal on September 12, 2005 and made comments.

Subsequently, the project was reviewed by the Housing Commission and the Planning Commission. The revised project is now before the Environmental Quality Commission for approval of the heritage tree removals, relocations and tree replacement plan.

ANALYSIS

The applicant is currently proposing to remove a total of 46 heritage trees (36 of which are eucalyptus) and to relocate 4 heritage trees, out of a total of 199 trees currently on the site. 50 heritage trees will remain in place. The applicant is proposing to plant 69 replacement trees on the site, including 51 large trees (37 24"-box and 14 36"-box trees). Attachment 1 is a letter from the development company, which details the revisions to the project design and the tree proposals.

Attachment 2 is a Tree Summary Table listing all of the trees on the site, indicating their species name, size and condition, whether or not they are heritage trees, and whether they are to be removed or relocated. Every tree has a number, which is used to identify them on site plans and on the trees themselves. On the Table, numbers for heritage trees to be removed are shaded in orange and heritage trees to be relocated are shaded in blue.

The applicant has submitted an existing site plan showing current locations of buildings and trees (Attachment 3), with trees to be removed noted in orange and those to be relocated noted in blue. Trees are numbered to correspond with the Tree Summary Table. Attachment 4 is the Landscape Plan showing existing trees that will remain and locations of relocated trees and new replacement trees. Small symbols indicate locations of trees to be removed or relocated. The Tree Replacement Summary proposes 13 24-inch box trees as Willow Road street trees, 14 36-inch box trees as

screening for homes on the adjacent property, 24 24-inch box trees as interior street trees, and 18 15-gallon trees as interior accent trees.

Attachment 5 provides more information on the Tree Replacement Plan. The Tree Palette details the species, size at installation, size at maturity, and whether the species will become heritage size in the future. Only one of the species proposed is native to California (Buckeye).

The number of replacement trees proposed does not meet the City's usual requirement for a 2 to 1 ratio for replacements for removals in development projects. The developer is, however, preserving 82 trees on the site and planting 69 new trees, which would not allow space for a 2 to 1 tree replacement ratio. In compensation for not meeting the ratio, the developer has offered to plant replacement trees of a larger size than required. They are proposing to plant mostly 24 inch box size and 36 inch box size trees. Many of these large replacements would be used for screening along the edges of the site near existing homes and along Willow Road, with others to be planted in the interior of the site.

Attachment 6 shows details of the entry park and interior street trees in front of homes. It also includes photos of some of the existing trees to be preserved and the trees now located in the building courtyard that will become part of the entry park.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the application to remove 46 heritage trees and to relocate 4 heritage trees at the proposed 75 Willow Road residential development, with the condition that the developer change the Tree Replacement Plan to include more native species, such as valley oaks and coast live oaks.

Dianne Dryer
Environmental Programs Coordinator, Report Author

PUBLIC NOTICE: Public Notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with this agenda item being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Letter from developer detailing revisions to the project
2. Tree Summary Table
3. Existing Site Plan, showing locations of heritage trees to be removed
4. Landscape Plan, showing locations of new trees
5. Tree Replacement Plan and list of species
6. Street tree details and photos of heritage trees to be preserved