



COMMITTEE FOR
GREEN FOOTHILLS

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NEWS RELEASE

Environmental organization calls for strong zoning in Stanford foothills CGF urges citizens to comment on draft regulations

PALO ALTO, CA – When the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors adopted the Stanford Community Plan and General Use Permit nearly two years ago, they granted the University approval for some five million square feet of development rights – and in exchange, committed to measures designed to protect open space and environmental resources. One of the five key environmental conditions included in these agreements was the implementation of hillside zoning for the foothills, among the most visible and popular part of the university's lands. With approval of these agreements, the Supervisors specifically called for protection of the viewshed of the so-called "Open Space and Field Research" lands in the Stanford foothills.

Earlier this month, the County released the draft regulations for this zoning. Leading environmental organization Committee for Green Foothills is calling for stronger visual and environmental safeguards for these valued lands, to ensure the protections called for by the Supervisors.

Zoning should protect environment and view of foothills

Committee for Green Foothills is urging the County to create zoning that ensures long-term protection of these hillsides by establishing strong viewshed protections. Now that the Planning Commission is reviewing these draft regulations, Committee for Green Foothills urges citizens to speak up for the protection of the foothills region.

"The foothills serve as a stunning backdrop that defines both the campus and the entire region. Any development on these lands will have a tremendous impact environmentally, and will affect the viewshed of the entire Peninsula," said Denice Dade, Legislative Advocate for Committee for Green Foothills. "Now is the time to shape the zoning regulating that development."

Regulations should include specific protections

In a letter today to the Planning Commission, Committee for Green Foothills requested specific improvements to the draft regulations, including the establishment of strong viewshed protections consistent with the 2000 Community Plan approved by the Board of Supervisors. The Committee requested limits to development on lands over 200 feet in elevation, more specific findings for development on these lands, and conservation easements on land that is of equivalent conservation value as land being developed.

The Committee asked the County to include the standards from the 2000 Community Plan restricting development at the higher elevations of the foothills, and thus protecting the community's viewshed. Because the zoning

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regulations are designed to guide development of the foothills under the current General Use Permit as well as future development permits, protections in this language will prevent cumulative development that could significantly impact the viewshed.

The environmental organization has also asked the County to ensure that any conservation easements (permanent dedications) are placed on developable lands and thus provide meaningful conservation protection.

Citizen input will help meet the goal of the Community Plan

Because the creation of this new zoning for the foothill lands is meant to provide benefits to the community in exchange for Stanford's having received huge development rights, it is incumbent on the community to provide input on this zoning. With citizen input, we can help ensure that the Community Plan achieves one of its goals: to protect the open space character of this unique resource, the foothills. Committee for Green Foothills is asking citizens to let the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors know that protection of the Stanford foothills is valued throughout the community.

The Santa Clara County Planning Commission will hold a hearing on the draft regulations at their regular December 5 meeting.

About Committee for Green Foothills

Committee for Green Foothills is a regional grassroots organization working to establish and maintain land-use policies that protect the environment throughout San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. Committee for Green Foothills, established in 1962, is a Bay Area leader in the continuing effort to protect open space and the natural environment of our Peninsula and Coast.

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For a copy of the Committee's letter to the Planning Commission, visit www.GreenFoothills.org/OSF.