

(Distributed at
hearing)

PC 1/14/16
#4
4 pages

January 13, 2016

County of El Dorado Community Development Agency
Development Services Division – Planning Services
2850 Fairlane Court
Placerville, CA 95667

RE: General Plan Amendment A15-0001/Rezone Z12-0010/Planned Development PD12-0002/
Tentative Subdivision Map TM12-1510/Piedmont Oak Estates Phase 1

Planning Commission,

We are the owners of a 10 acre parcel adjoining the proposed Piedmont Oak Estates housing and commercial development. It is our understanding that this project has been in the planning stages for several years already and that it is planned to be built out in two phases, including commercial development in both phases. We only recently learned of this when we received a letter dated December 14, 2015 from the County of Eldorado Planning Commission.

After doing a little research on the El Dorado County websites, we were quite surprised to find how far along this project has gone without our knowledge, especially since our property is so very close and this proposed development will obviously have a large impact on our property. It seems to us that to first notify us at this late date must have been an omission on the part of the county government and related development agencies. As recently as this past November 19, 2015, there was a meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission also discussing Piedmont Oak Estates, and for which there was no notice to neighbors. Obviously having learned about this proposed project so late, we have had little time to review it in great detail before submitting comments. Regardless, we think it is our duty to submit our comments regarding this project moving forward.

When we purchased our property in 1994, it was disclosed to us that there was a tentative plan for a housing project east of Highway 49 and north of Black Rice Road on 43 acres. There was no formal plan, and we were not able to obtain any detailed documents through title companies, the planning department or the assessor's office. Also, it was disclosed to us that there was also a proposed reservoir site called "Texas Hill." It was our understanding that this reservoir was going to be built at least partially to supply water to the proposed housing. To our knowledge, the Texas Hill water project never happened, which brings us to our first point, which is our alarm over even considering adding to the water deficit burden with this high density housing project when we have a statewide drought and the county is under strict water conservation measures.

Also as mentioned above, our initial understanding of the development, which was a consideration in the purchase of our property, is that this development would be compatible with our neighboring properties and not a huge departure from the rural atmosphere we so appreciate and value. Now,

however, we are discovering that over time, and unbeknownst to us, the plans have evolved to 104 residential plus 2 commercial lots on only 25 acres, the majority of which will have "cluster" homes only 10 feet apart. This is clearly not in keeping with a rural atmosphere such as we expected and understood it would be when we purchased our adjoining property.

Additional concerns from this large influx of residents and commercial activity include noise, traffic and increased crime. It is already difficult to turn onto Highway 49, even at non-peak times, from surrounding roads, let alone if we have several hundred more cars going to and fro from this development all day long. The crime in our area is already on the rise as well, and trespassing is a serious problem. Weber Creek runs through our property and attracts a variety of trespassers. This became a noticeable problem when the Piedmont Oak Estates owners cleared and cut in rough roads on their property. While the development will do away with the rough roads, it will increase the number of people traipsing through surrounding private property to reach the creek.

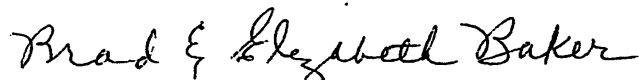
An additional concern is runoff and subsequent pollution of Weber Creek from this development. There are fish and frogs as well as other wildlife that depend upon the creek.

The environmental impacts are not just limited to runoff issues. We regularly see a variety of birds and other animals, especially deer and turkey, and their habitats will be disturbed and potentially vanish.

In summary, based on the current plan, we urge you to withhold approval. This high density housing and commercial development is not in keeping with the rural nature of our neighborhood. Further, as we understand it, the Piedmont Oak Estates property is currently up for sale, and hence the developers could walk away from this project at any time with no concern for the future. This rezoning request seems to be an effort to make the property more saleable. See listing attached.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Brad and Elizabeth Baker

AP# 051-550-54

/enclosure

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Piedmont Oak Estates

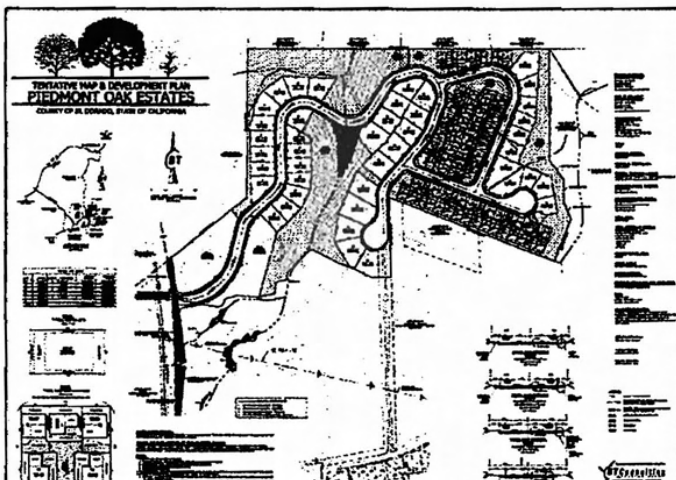
Black Rice Road-Highway 49, Placerville, CA 95667

\$5,000,000

25 AC | Land

[Request Additional Information](#)

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Piedmont Oak Tentative Map Submittal

Land For Sale

Price:	\$5,000,000	Property Sub-type:	Residential (land)
Lot Size:	25 AC	Listing ID	19516039
Property Type:	Land	Last Updated	62 days ago

[Find Out More...](#)

Utilities

- Electricity/Power - PGE
- Telephone - your choice
- Gas/Propane - Private
- Water - EID
- Cable - uncertain

1 Lot Available

Black Rice Road-Highway 49, Placerville, CA, 95667 - Residential (la... <http://www.loopnet.com/Listing/19516039/Black-Rice-Road-Highway...>

Lot 104
Price: \$5,000,000
Lot Size: 25 AC
Price/AC: \$200,000
Lot Type: Residential (land)
APN / Parcel ID: 051-550-47,48,49,51
Commission Split: 2.5%

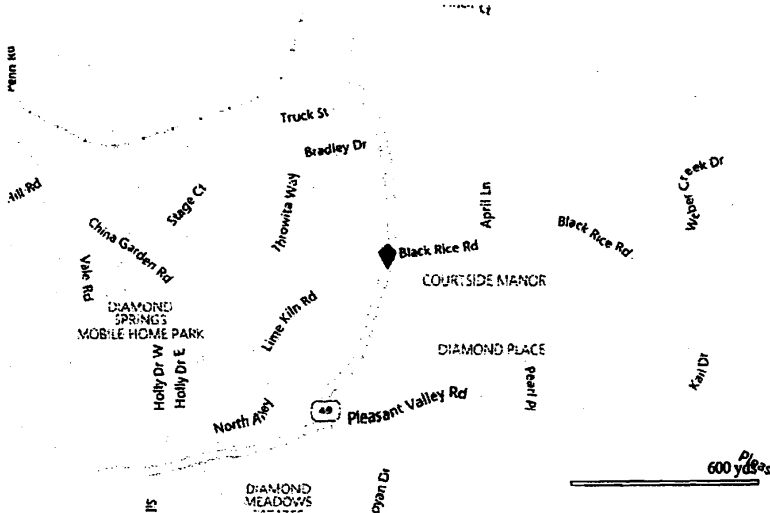
Description

25+ acres available, tentative map approval expected in January 2016. This property available as a whole or in parcels with possible joint venture with the owner

3 miles south of Placerville on Highway 49 near Black Rice Road. 104 unit subdivision plan with greenbelt and possible commercial.

Map of Black Rice Road-Highway 49, Placerville, CA 95667 (El Dorado County)

Hide Map



Research for Black Rice Road-Highway 49, Placerville, CA 95667 (El Dorado County)

Demographics - Population, income & other demographics near Black Rice Road-Highway 49

Research Price - Recent sales of similar properties

Contact Listing Broker to find out more details.

(Distributed at
hearing by
Katie Elder)

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#4
5 pages
Katie Elder
P.O. Box 985
Placerville, CA 95667
January 14, 2016

Planning Commission
County of El Dorado
Building C Hearing Room
2850 Fairlane Court
Placerville, CA 95667

Re: General Plan Amendment A15-001/Rezone Z12-0010/Planned Development PD12-0002/Tentative Subdivision Map TM12-1510/Piedmont Oak Estates Phase 1

Commissioners:

The purpose of Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is to support a project that has no significant impact on the people/area in which it is being built. That is not the case with this project. The following is a discussion of major impacts that must be discussed and mitigation put forward by a full Environmental Impact Report.

Project Site Description

The description of project site is flawed and misleading. The description would have you believe that all of the property to the west of the site is currently industrial. This is not the case. The bulk of the property to the west is a single family home on 13+ acres, with General Plan Land Use of Low Density Residential, RE-5. In fact, the properties surrounding the majority of this project site are single family homes on 5 acres or more, with one exception which is a home on a 1 acre parcel. I refer you to the parcel maps for this area and aerials available on Google Maps.

There is a discrepancy in the stated project. In parts the MND it describes the project 62 cluster homes and 21 single family homes, and in others it says 62 cluster homes and 20 single family homes. Which is it?

Traffic

Four intersections in the project vicinity will operate at level "F" with the addition of the traffic from this development. None of these intersections are included in the General Plan list of acceptable LOS F. This must be mitigated by something more than fees paid against future signalization. I refer you to the Traffic Impact Analysis included in the MND, General Plan, Transportation and Circulation Element and case law disallowing use of future resources to mitigate a current project.

The Traffic Impact Analysis also discusses the Diamond Springs Parkway as alleviating congestion from this project. The Analysis states that the Parkway will be completed in 2035. This is not the case. This project is not "programmed" for State and Local Partnership funding until 2036, which means it will probably not be in place until 2038 or 2039. Again, I refer you to case law disallowing use of

future resources to mitigate current projects.

Project maps show the future Diamond Springs Parkway in an alignment with the entrance to this project which leads you to believe that the project entrance will eventually be signalized. This is not true. The future Diamond Springs Parkway is in alignment with Black Rice Road to the south of the project site.

Fire

The Fire Safe Plan in the MND includes in part “Fuel Hazard Reduction Zones (FHRZ) of at least 20' in width shall be installed around the perimeter of the project.” This is one among many other setbacks prescribed by the Fire Plan. The proposed project ignores all of these requirements. As stated earlier, the properties surrounding this project are homes on acreage and, as is common with this type of development, there is a lot of wild land. Without adequate defensible space all of the residents in the area are endangered.

I have a number of large pines at the back of my property close to the property line (see attached photo). Fire safety requires that no dwelling be built within 30' of a pine tree. This requirement is also ignored. We are concerned that, potentially, property owners adjacent to this project could be forced to remove trees on their property to maintain a defensible space. The developer should be limited to 1 acre lots in order to address proper fire safety set backs of at least 30' as required on all the surrounding property.

El Dorado County Code requires that all developed properties have two means of ingress/egress. Finch Road and Finch Court dead-end at Weber Creek. Weber Creek is in a 100' deep gorge in this area. If in a fire situation we are not able to use our Road, the only other egress we have is through the proposed project. Based on the plan included in the MND, no provision is made for this fire road. In fact, there will literally be a wall of tightly packed houses across any point that we can realistically use as egress thus trapping the residents of Finch Road and Finch Court.

Aesthetics

While the MND discusses views from Highway 49 it does not discuss views from the existing long standing community surrounding this project. For example, from my property rather than a view of the existing natural flora, I will now have a view of the back of five clustered houses 10' from my property line staring down on top of me. I refer you to the attached photo. The pine with the arrow is more or less at my property line. The picture was taken from the second floor back deck of my house. The home on one acre will have nine cluster homes 10' from its western property line. How does this comply with the stated goal of the General Plan to “preserve the rural nature of our community?”

The County's finding that this development “is compatible with the existing and planned residential and commercial uses” is also not true. This project is very much incompatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

The density requested for this project is extreme for a “rural” area. With 2,000+ square foot lots and 70% lot coverage, this density is triple the density of most of the housing in Downtown San Jose, an urban area with a population of close to 3,000,000 people. Diamond Springs has a population of approximately 11,000 people. How can this be justified especially in an area that is predominately low density rural? The project must mitigate the transition from low density rural to high density housing.

Additionally the project must provide some type of visual barrier/greenbelt between this development and the existing homes to maintain the character/value of the existing neighborhood.

General Plan Goal 2.5, Community Identity states, “carefully planned communities incorporating visual elements which enhance and maintain the rural character and promote a sense of community.” Policies 2.5.1.1 through 2.5.1.3 deal with the physical and visual separation in order to comply with Goal 2.5 of the General Plan. This has not been addressed in this project.

Drainage

It appears that this project is relying on adjacent property for their drainage. Given the level of ground coverage the project proposes, 70% impervious surface area, the runoff from this property on to the surrounding properties will increase dramatically. Since a lot of the properties affected by this project are downstream, we are concerned about erosion and contamination, the proposed project is on an old placer mine site. Drainage impacts must be further studied and soils testing done.

Water

The project proposes open bottom culverts as a way to deal with drainage. All the properties adjacent to this project are on wells. Since this is an old mining site, soil testing must be done to insure that this drainage will not contaminate our wells.

EID remains under a mandatory 28% reduction in water usage. Where is the roughly 10,000,000 gallons of water per year that phase 1 of this project will require coming from?

Cultural Resources

In reviewing the planning file we came across two Cultural Resource Studies. One dated February 2006 and another dated April 2006. The February 2006 study states under “Recommendations, Given the site's previous importance to Gold Rush Era surface gold mining in Diamond Springs, the features along the drainage cut within the project area should be preserved as a reminder of the importance that Diamond Springs once had within the larger Mother Lode region of California.” In the subsequent April 2006 “Updated” study under “Recommendations, None.” Shortly after the initial report was submitted the developers hired Veerkamp Engineering to scrape the majority of the site down to bare dirt evidently obliterating any artifacts in the area along with plants on EPA's watch list.

There is a discrepancy regarding the mineral resources. The Environmental Checklist states, “There are no known MRZ-2X classified mineral resources on the site” so there is no impact. However, as evidenced by the Cultural Resource Studies, this site was formerly a mine. More research is needed to determine the significance of the loss of a mining resource.

I purchased my property in 1999. Around 2004, when I first began to hear rumors of this project, I met with the planning department staff. They assured me that I would be notified if this project were to move forward. The notice I received on December 18, 2015, is the first notice I have received regarding this project. Given the timing of this notice, the Christmas holidays, I have had little time to thoroughly examine the project documents and associated regulations. The MND does not provide

adequate information to determine the overall environmental affects of this project. Given that this property is up for sale and promises made by the current owner/agent could be lost, any mitigation measures must be included in the environmental document to insure that CEQA guidelines are met.

I find that the proposed project as designed may have a significant affect on the environment and an Environmental Impact Report is required. Therefore, I am asking the Planning Commission to deny A15-0001/Z12-0010/PD12-0002/TM12-1510/Piedmont Oak Estates Phase 1 until a proper environmental review is in place that assures the community that the negative impacts of this project will be mitigated.

