

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION
FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
FOR THE FINGER AVENUE RESIDENTIAL PLANNED DEVELOPMENT**

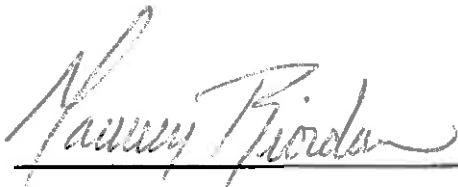
PROJECT APPLICANT: Kirk McGowan, McGowan Development

As the Lead Agency, the City of Redwood City will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Finger Avenue Residential Planned Development project, and would like your views regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be addressed in the EIR. This EIR will be used by the City of Redwood City when considering approvals for this project.

The project description, location, and the probable environmental effects are contained in the attached materials. A copy of the Initial Study is not attached.

The purpose of this Notice of Preparation (NOP) is to solicit input from the public and agencies about the scope of analysis to be included in the EIR. According to State law, the deadline for your response is 30 days after receipt of this notice, which establishes a response deadline of the close of business on February 23, 2011. The City of Redwood City would appreciate an earlier response, if possible. Please identify a contact person, and send your response to:

City of Redwood City
Attn: Maureen Riordan, Senior Planner
1017 Middlefield Road
Redwood City, CA 94063
Phone: (650) 780-7236
Email: MRiordan@redwoodcity.org



Maureen Riordan
Senior Planner, City of Redwood City

Date: 1/21/11

NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE CITY OF REDWOOD CITY – FINGER AVENUE RESIDENTIAL PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

January 21, 2011

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is to inform decision makers and the general public of the environmental effects of a proposed project. The EIR process is intended to provide public agencies with the environmental information required to evaluate a proposed project, establish methods for reducing adverse environmental impacts, and consider alternatives to a project prior to the approval of the project.

The EIR for the development of the project site with a nine-lot single-family subdivision in Redwood City will be prepared and processed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended. The EIR will include:

- A summary of the EIR
- A project description
- A description of the existing environmental setting, potential environmental impacts, and mitigation measures
- Alternatives to the project as proposed
- Environmental consequences, including: (a) any significant environmental effects which cannot be avoided if the project is implemented; (b) the growth-inducing impacts of the proposed project, (c) effects found not to be significant, and (d) cumulative impacts.

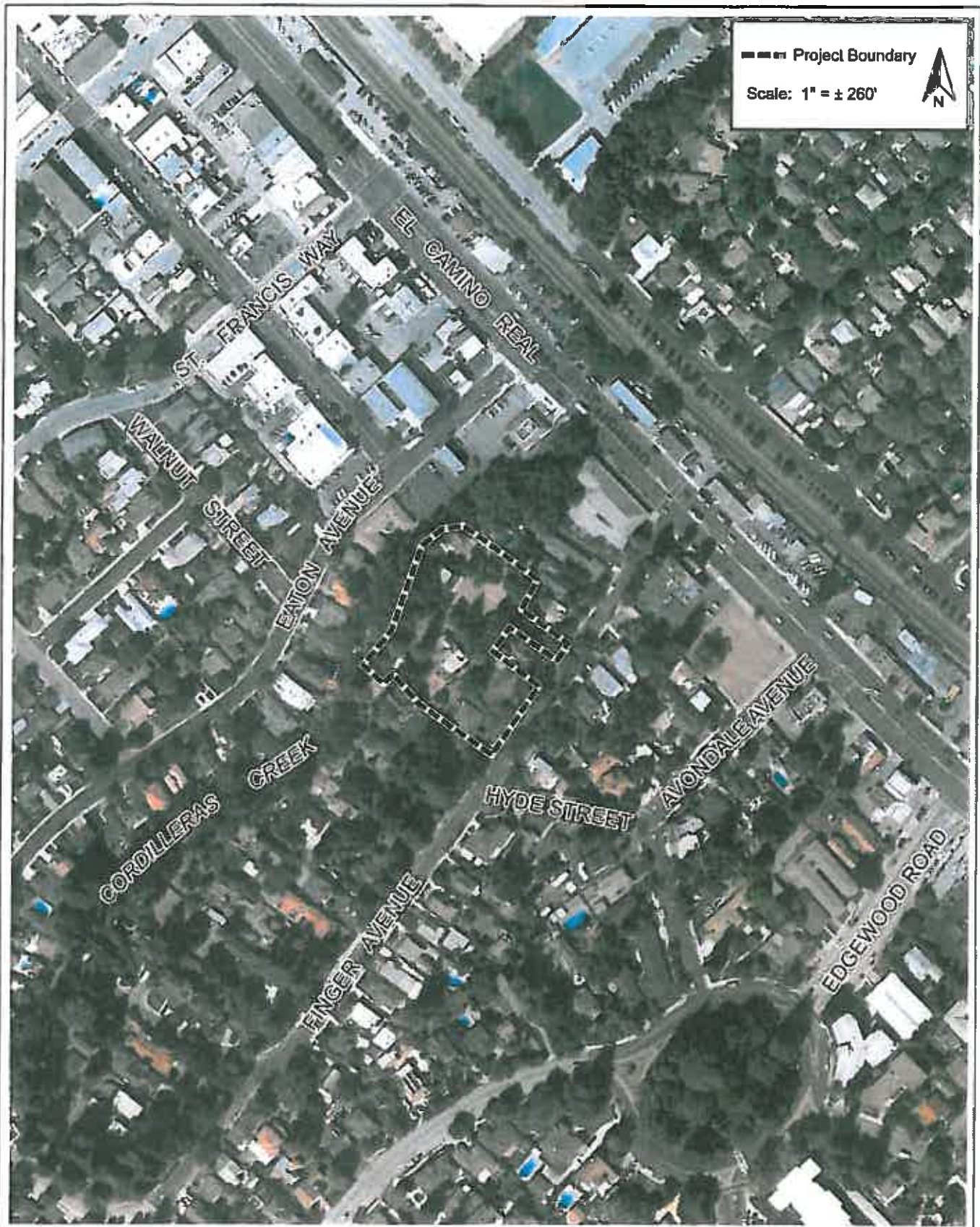
2.0 PROJECT LOCATION

The project site is located at 50, 80, and 88 Finger Avenue (APNs 052-61-170, -180, -200) in the City of Redwood City north of Whipple Avenue and west of El Camino Real on the north side of Finger Avenue adjacent to Cordilleras Creek and the City of San Carlos. The project site is surrounded by residential uses to the east, south, and west, and to the north across Cordilleras Creek. Figures 1, 2 and 3 show the regional and vicinity maps and an aerial photograph of the land uses surrounding the project site.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The project site is 1.69 acres in size, generally level and is currently developed with six dwelling units: three primary single-family homes and three subordinate cottage-type dwelling units. The project involves the removal of all existing structures and re-subdivision of the three existing parcels into nine lots to construct nine, two-story, single-family homes. The homes would range in size from 2,725 to 3,500 square feet with attached two car garages ranging in size from 441 to 576 square feet. Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site would be via a private street off of Finger Avenue.

The project site is designated *Low Density Residential* on the City's General Plan Land Use Map. This designation allows development of single-family dwellings with densities up to seven units per net acre. The site is zoned *Residential-Single Family (R-1)*. The R-1 Zoning District



AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH

FIGURE 3

requires lot sizes to be a minimum of 6,000 square feet. The proposed lots would range in size from 6,000 to 8,214 square feet. See Figure 4 Site Plan. The two smallest lots (Lots 7 & 8) will be adjacent to Finger Avenue. The R-1 Zoning District controls the size of the homes by a lot coverage maximum of 40%, a maximum height of 28 feet, and a formula for second story setbacks.

In 2006 Redwood City adopted the Stormwater Treatment Ordinance to "(m)inimize the discharge of pollutants in stormwater runoff and to reduce erosion and sedimentation in existing streams, lagoons, and wetlands." (Section 32.12 Purpose) Section 32.12 (F)(3) provides that no structures are allowed in the setback area of 25-feet from the top of bank unless it is proven

1. the development will not disturb riparian vegetation
2. the development will maintain the stability of the slopes of the creek bank
3. the development will be designed to avoid discharge of pollutants directly to the watercourse.

Portions of the proposed homes on Lots 1 – 4 are within the 25-foot setback. The closest of the proposed units would be sited within 15 feet of the top of bank of Cordilleras Creek.

The applicant, McGowan Development, requests exceptions to the Subdivision Ordinance to allow seven parcels to front on a non-conforming, horseshoe shaped, private one-way street rather than directly on a public street. The applicant proposes that the private roadway be 22-feet wide, where a minimum 25-foot wide street is normally required in Redwood City.

The proposed project density and lot sizes comply with the site's General Plan designation and zoning regulations, which would allow up to 10 units. The applicant has filed applications with the City for a Planned Development Permit, a Use Permit for a reduced setback from top of bank of a protected waterway, and a Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map. The City has determined that no separate Use Permit pursuant to Article 32.12 of the Zoning Ordinance is required and that consideration of the reduced setback from top of bank will be considered and decided as part of the Planned Development Permit as provided for in Redwood City's Zoning Ordinance, Section 46.7 (D). The Planned Development Permit allows the Planning Commission to grant variability from the R-1 Zoning District development standards, such as relaxation in front and side setback requirements, when approving the project.

The private roadway would also have a pedestrian walkway on one side incorporated into the roadway's 22-foot width. Parking would not be allowed on either side of the street. Each of the proposed residential units would include a two-car garage, and also allow for two additional uncovered parking spaces on individual driveways in tandem with the garage spaces. There are five guest parking spaces proposed in grass-crete or comparable turfed parking bays off of the private street. In total, there would be 18 covered parking spaces for residents and five spaces for guests, plus additional parking on the individual driveways. The proposed development would remove three existing driveways on Finger Avenue and add the entrance and exit connections to Finger Avenue in accordance with Fire Safety standards. The north side of Finger Avenue would lose a net of three on-street parking spaces.

The proposed on-site storm drainage system would filter and treat storm drainage to satisfy the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements and the San Mateo Countywide C3 permit requirements after which it would be conveyed into a storm water system in Finger Avenue that will run into the City's storm drain system at El Camino Real. The proposed drainage plan for the project site is designed to clean the stormwater and discharge it into the stormwater system at discharge rates and duration to match pre-project rates.

The project site currently contains 44 mature trees, including 26 native trees such as coast live oak, valley oak, bay, redwood, and elderberry trees. The applicant proposes to remove 8 trees from the project site and plant 52 replacement trees. Four of the remaining trees will be relocated on site.

Project Background

On October 26, 2009, the City adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and approved the Finger Avenue Residential Planned Development. On November 10, 2009, the Friends of Cordilleras Creek and Finger Avenue Pride Committee, unincorporated associations, filed a lawsuit with the San Mateo County Superior Court, Case No. CIV489446, seeking to set aside the City's adoption of the MND and approvals of the Project, alleging in the lawsuit violations of CEQA.

In a Settlement Agreement entered into July 26, 2010 between the City of Redwood City, McGowan Development, and the Friends of Cordilleras Creek and Finger Avenue Pride Committee, the City has agreed that an EIR is necessary to identify, evaluate and mitigate potential environmental impacts that could be associated with the proposed Finger Avenue Residential Planned Development project. The City Council, at a public hearing in February - March 2011 (date to be determined), will rescind the October 26, 2009 actions approving the project.

4.0 POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT

As stated in Section 1.0 INTRODUCTION, the EIR will include all sections required pursuant to CEQA. As indicated in the Settlement Agreement, the Parties agreed that the EIR need only evaluate the following potential environmental impacts related to the Project:

- (i) aesthetics,
- (ii) cultural resources,
- (iii) Cordilleras Creek impacts relating to stormwater runoff, geology, water quality, biology, erosion, and bank stability (including impacts to the potential restoration of the creek related to the City's allowance of development within 25 feet of the creek bank pursuant to section 32.12 of the City's Municipal Code),
- (iv) traffic safety,
- (v) parking, and
- (vi) land use/neighborhood compatibility.

The Parties further agreed that the 2008 Initial Study associated with the MND sufficiently evaluated the Project's remaining potential impacts and that, absent the identification of new potentially significant impacts due to project changes or changes in circumstances or new information not known at the time of the Agreement, the EIR need not evaluate potential impacts other than those listed in (i) through (vi) above.

Accordingly, the Initial Study will be included as an appendix to the EIR, and the EIR will be focused to address the specific environmental impacts referenced in the Settlement Agreement as identified above, with two additional environmental topics discussed below. Additionally, since preparation of the 2008 Initial Study, the applicant made several project refinements responding to Council direction, which will also be addressed in the EIR. The project refinements (as reflected in the Project Description above) consist of:

1. **Private street:** modified from two-way to one-way, and 22-foot cross-section now includes to 4 foot wide paver pathway raised 3 inches.
2. **Parking:** off-street parking spaces reduced from 7 to 5, a parking space was eliminated: next to Lot 6 and between Lots 1 and 2.

3. **Creek Setback:** Lot 2 setback increased from 5 feet to 18 feet, Lot 3 setback increased from 10 feet to 20 feet, and Lot 4 setback increased from 7 feet to 20 feet.
4. **House sizes:** homes on Lots 2, 3, 4, 7, and 8 reduced by 895 sq.ft. in the aggregate.
5. **Lot Coverage:** originally proposed homes on Lots 6 and 7 exceeded 40% coverage, now they are under 40%.
6. **Storm Drainage:** project initially drained into Cordilleras Creek via a new outfall, now would drain to the storm drain system in Finger Avenue.
7. **Trees:** initially 13 trees were to be removed, now 8 trees would be removed and 4 trees relocated on site.

A brief discussion of the anticipated environmental impacts to be evaluated is presented below.

Visual and Aesthetics: The EIR will describe the existing visual character of the project site, Finger Ave, and the immediate surrounding vicinity and will include photographs to illustrate the text. The EIR will evaluate the aesthetic changes that will result from implementation of the project. Project-specific mitigation measures will be identified to reduce significant visual and aesthetic impacts, as appropriate.

Air Quality/Greenhouse Gases: While not identified in the Settlement Agreement, the EIR will update and revise as necessary the 2008 Initial Study's discussion of the project's potential air quality and greenhouse gas/climate change impacts to reflect the March 2010 amendments to the statewide CEQA Guidelines and the updated Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) Guidelines adopted in June 2010, both of which provide new guidance for consideration of air quality impacts including greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. Project-specific mitigation measures necessary to reduce significant air quality impacts will be identified, as appropriate.

Biological Resources: A description of the biological conditions on the site and the impacts of the project will be evaluated in the EIR. The EIR will address the presence/absence of special-status plant and animal species and sensitive habitats on the site. A survey of the existing trees on the site will also be included in the EIR. Project-specific mitigation measures will be identified to reduce significant impacts to biological resources, as appropriate.

Cultural Resources: The EIR will evaluate the project's potential to impact historic resources within the vicinity of the project site, including the project's relationship with the adjacent historic Finger Farm House at 90 Finger Avenue. The EIR will describe the potential for prehistoric (Native American) cultural resources to be present on the site and the project's potential to impact those resources. Project-specific mitigation measures will be identified to reduce significant impacts to cultural resources, as appropriate.

Energy: While not identified in the Settlement Agreement, the EIR will, in conformance with March 2010 amendments to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(c) and Appendix F, examine the potential for the proposed project to result in excessive or inefficient use of energy and will discuss the energy conservation measures included in the project. Project-specific mitigation measures will be identified to reduce significant impacts, as appropriate.

Geology and Soils: The EIR will describe the geologic setting and will address the impacts associated with developing the site. The suitability of the soils on-site to support the proposed structures will be evaluated. The EIR will evaluate effects of grading, cut, and fill on Cordilleras Creek and evaluate development impacts on Cordilleras Creek top of bank slope stability. Project-specific mitigation measures will be identified to reduce significant geological impacts, as appropriate.

Hydrology and Water Quality: The EIR will describe the changes in site drainage and hydrological conditions resulting from the project. The EIR will identify the capacity of existing and planned storm drain systems to accommodate storm water runoff from the proposed development, and will discuss methods for draining the project site. Water quality impacts and conformance with City of Redwood City and Regional Water Quality Control Board requirements will be addressed. Project-specific mitigation measures will be identified to reduce significant hydrologic impacts, as appropriate.

Land Use: The EIR will evaluate potential land use conflicts between the proposed land uses and the existing land uses in the project area. The EIR will describe the project's consistency with the City's General Plan policies and Zoning Ordinance. In addition, the EIR will identify land use impacts and conflicts from nearby land uses, as well as impacts upon nearby land uses resulting from the project based on the relationship of the density and scale of proposed homes to existing homes in the neighborhood. Project-specific mitigation measures will be identified for significant land use impacts, as appropriate.

Transportation: The EIR will evaluate the traffic safety and parking impacts of the proposed development on Finger Avenue and the intersection of El Camino Real and Finger Avenue. The adequacy of the site's proposed access and circulation will also be evaluated. Project-specific mitigation measures will be identified to reduce significant transportation impacts, as appropriate.

Cumulative Impacts: Cumulative impacts are the combined effects of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. The cumulative contribution from implementation of the project will be evaluated to determine if there are new cumulative impacts when considered with other past, present or reasonably foreseeable projects in the area.

Alternatives to the Project: The alternatives discussion will focus on those alternatives that could feasibly accomplish most of the basic purposes of the project and could avoid or substantially lessen one or more of the significant environmental effects. This section will evaluate the impacts of each alternative, as required by CEQA (Guidelines Section 15126.6) and based on the "rule of reason." The alternatives discussion will describe the environmental impacts and benefits of the alternatives, compared with the proposed project. In accordance with CEQA, the EIR will identify an environmentally superior alternative, based on the EIR analysis.

Among the range of alternatives to be evaluated, including the No Project Alternative, the EIR will analyze two alternatives per the Settlement Agreement:

- (i) **Four or Five Unit R-1 Zoning Alternative.** Development on the Project site consisting of four or five single-family dwellings plus accessory dwellings as allowed under the existing R-1 (Residential- Single-Family) District zoning standards without a Planned Development Permit or Use Permit;
- (ii) **Nine Unit Standard Setbacks Alternative.** Development on the Project site with a Planned Development Permit under Article 46 of the Redwood City Zoning Code that includes residences set back a minimum of twenty-five feet from the top of the bank of Cordilleras Creek (as "top of bank" is defined by Section 2.101.5 of the City's Zoning Code), a private roadway designed to City standards with a single entrance onto Finger Avenue, and rear and side setbacks compliant with R-1 District standards where the Project parcels directly adjoin parcels in the existing neighborhood.

In conformance with the CEQA Guidelines, the EIR will also address other information typically required for an EIR. These other sections include the following: 1) Consistency with Local and Regional Plans; 2) Significant Unavoidable Impacts; 3) Growth Inducing Impacts; 4) Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes; 5) EIR References and Organizations & Persons Consulted; and 6) EIR Authors.