



April 17, 2008

City of Lafayette
Planning Commission
500 St. Mary's Road
Lafayette, CA 94549

Re: GP03-04, RZ02-04, located on Deer Hill Road and Pleasant Hill Road

Dear Planning Commissioners:

Greenbelt Alliance is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting the Bay Area's open space and making its cities better place to live. Over the years, we have been a part of helping Contra Costa County deal with growth in a way that keeps its quality of life high.

Greenbelt Alliance has become aware that the City of Lafayette is attempting to downzone one of its best remaining sites for mixed use and multi-family housing. These sites are identified as: GP03-04, RZ02-04, located on Deer Hill Road and Pleasant Hill Road. There are over 80 acres of largely vacant property with full urban services. We believe such a down zoning proposal is contrary to good planning principles and the compact development policies that provide an alternative to traditional sprawl development.

These properties are the type of close-in locations where compact development should be encouraged. This area is ideal for higher density housing, mixed with appropriate commercial uses. It is close to downtown Lafayette, BART, schools and the Highway 24 on and off-ramps. The traffic generated here would have less impact on city streets than would new traffic generated virtually anywhere else in Lafayette.

Greenbelt Alliance has adopted policies and created a Compact Development Team focused on meeting the area's housing needs while preserving the open space that makes the Bay Area such a special place to live, work and enjoy nature. However, the Bay Area is growing. We need to accommodate new growth in a way that protects open space while creating walkable communities. To do that, we need more compact development. Greenbelt Alliance actively encourages developments that provide affordable housing in the Bay Area, including the Lamorinda area. We are pleased that the City of Lafayette worked on an inclusionary housing ordinance, which we believe keeping these properties zoned as Administrative/Professional/Office/Multifamily compliments the City's effort to comply with their affordable housing needs.

Greenbelt Alliance's Compact Development Team endorses residential, mixed-use, and commercial developments that are pedestrian-oriented, near transit, uses land efficiently, and

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fosters complete neighborhoods. Mixing land uses—like homes, stores, and offices—enables people to shop, commute to work, and run errands without having to use a car. In order to achieve this we need to expand housing opportunities. Providing homes that are affordable to people of all income levels enables workers to live close to jobs and relieves pressure to build on open space. Offering a mix of housing types—such as townhouses, apartments, and condominiums— results in more options for people looking for places to live. Designing development with pedestrians in mind helps to create safe and walkable communities. Maximizing development at close-in sites also minimizes the cost of city services. Encouraging higher densities in new developments takes advantage of existing services and infrastructure.

For these reasons we find that Lafayette’s proposed down zoning of these close-in and fully-serviced properties are contrary to the policies of Greenbelt Alliance. Greenbelt Alliance urges the City of Lafayette to keep the properties zoned as Administrative/Professional/Office/Multifamily.

We encourage you to learn more about Greenbelt Alliance’s compact development programs. Please feel free to call Marla Wilson, Livable Communities Outreach Coordinator at (415) 543-6771 or by e-mail at mwilson@greenbelt.org. Also please visit our website at www.greenbelt.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "CWong". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Christina Wong
East Bay Field Representative

CC: City of Lafayette City Council Members
Marla Wilson, Greenbelt Alliance
Amanda Brown-Stevens, Greenbelt Alliance
Marti Buxton, Contra Costa Housing Trust
Amie Fishman, East Bay Housing Organization