

From: [Janet Davis](#)
To: [Janneth Lujan](#)
Subject: Planning Commission Meeting 8/24/22
Date: Thursday, August 18, 2022 7:44:23 PM

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Item 5: The Sin house. This is an utterly inappropriate and hideous structure in a forested area of the county that is in a fire danger zone, with no real evacuation route. To contemplate removing so many trees, grading, and allowing 12,593 sq. ft. of impermeable surface is an abomination. Plus constructing a swimming pool in an RM area is not appropriate. This sort of construction belongs in an urban area such as Atherton, certainly not up near Old La Honda Road.

Item 6: The concept of a bridge over the railroad in NFO is totally ridiculous and would contribute to many safety problems. The obvious solution is to have shuttle buses that would allow women to safely travel with their infants to the stores and back home in relative comfort and safety. These are the people who **actually** walk in NFO. The proliferation of parked cars on ALL the roads makes cycling a hazardous proposition even during the day. At night when there are few lights the danger intensifies. This is a stupid solution to a non-existent problem.



FROM 50 TO FOREVER: CARING FOR THE LAND THAT CARES FOR US

By creating Midpen 50 years ago, our community prioritized clean air and water, healthy habitats for diverse native plants and animals, ecosystems that are resilient to the effects of our changing climate, and places for people to connect with nature — that's what Midpen provides in perpetuity.

Celebrate with us all year long at openspace.org/50-years!

August 23, 2022

Delaney Selvidge, Project Planner
Janneth Lujan, Planning Commission Secretary
San Mateo County Planning and Building Department
455 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063
Email: DSelvidge@smcgov.org, jlujan@smcgov.org

SUBJECT: File Number: PLN 2017-00369, Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

Location: 12660 Williams Ranch Road, North Skyline

August 24, 2022 San Mateo County Planning Commission Meeting (Agenda Item 5)

Dear Ms. Selvidge and Ms. Lujan,

On behalf of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen), I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed residential development project (Project) located at 12660 Williams Ranch Road (File No. PLN 2017-00369) and associated Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND), which will be considered by the Planning Commission on August 24, 2022.

Midpen owns and manages nearly 65,000 acres of open space land in the Santa Cruz Mountains region. Our mission is:

To acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space land in perpetuity; protect and restore the natural environment; and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.

The property is located less than one thousand feet from the La Honda Open Space Preserve, a little over half a mile from the Windy Hill Open Space Preserve, and less than two miles from the Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve. Midpen would therefore like to provide the following comments on the proposed Project and IS/MND.

CEQA Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration Comments:

- 1) The IS/MND should state that the San Francisco Garter Snake (SFGS) is a fully protected species and that no licenses or permits may be issued for their "take," as defined under the State Endangered Species Act. The IS/MND should also note that the property is located within critical habitat for the California red-legged frog (CRLF) and based on nearby observations of both CRLF and SFGS, it should be presumed that they may disperse through the area.

Even if suitable habitat is not determined to be present during the pre-survey for SFGS, it remains appropriate to require a U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) approved biologist to be present during construction to prevent take of the species, as SFGS may disperse across the property to get from suitable habitat on either side (such as moving to and from nearby ponds and streams) from March to June and September to October of each year. SFGS may also be present underground from July to August for birthing and rearing their young as well as during winter months when they gather in hibernaculum to participate in aestivation.

Their primary prey base, CRLF, is also found in nearby streams and moves in a straight line distance, often across unsuitable habitat (such as agricultural fields) when moving to and from breeding ponds, pools in creeks, and surrounding uplands. CRLF move towards water features in the fall and winter where they breed and then disperse into the uplands beginning as early as June/July through September and can be found in rodent burrows or resting below vegetation. SFGS have a wide temperature tolerance and may be present year-round pursuing prey through the uplands and across unsuitable habitat (such as where the property is located).

Another species found in proximity to the site that is not mentioned in the IS/MND is the Santa Cruz black salamander (SCBS), which is a state species of special concern. This animal is a terrestrial salamander that forages on the ground especially in wet weather in uplands near to streams year-round and may also be found underground during dry periods and may be found at the project site.

In addition, the nearby red barn is habitat for both pallid bat and Townsend's big eared bat (both state species of special concern). These bats forage in the surrounding upland areas and may become disoriented by new lighting (especially if upward facing). Trees in the area may also be used by birds and bats for nesting, perching, roosting etc.

Given the above information, the following items are recommended to address wildlife concerns:

- USFWS and CDFW approved biological monitor should be present during construction to prevent take of SFGS, CRLF, and SCBS, which may be present in the area.
- Require the use of non-plastic mesh fiber rolls for erosion control. Plastic mesh is an entrapment hazard for snakes, lizards, and other animals as they can become entangled in the mesh, cannot escape, and perish.
- USFWS and CDFW approved wildlife escape ramps should be installed in all new permanent water features such as pools and ponds to prevent entrapment and death of animals in the new water features.
- Require the use of bat friendly lighting using recommendations from bat conservation organizations, that include reduced intensity, certain lighting types, pointing outdoor lighting downward/shielding etc.

- Prior to tree removal, trees should be checked for nesting birds and roosting bats (if work is to occur during the applicable seasons for these species).
 - Removed native tree species should be replaced by native tree species.
- 2) The IS/MND characterizes the surrounding land use as an “agricultural preserve”, however, Midpen recommends that surrounding land use be described as an “open space preserve.”
 - 3) To appropriately mitigate for the temporal loss of significant native trees, Midpen recommends that Mitigation Measure 6 be updated so that Coast Live oaks be replaced at a 1:6 ratio and the California bays and redwoods be replaced at a 1:3 ratio, with a different species than bay trees due to Sudden Oak Death (SOD) concerns. The remaining trees are either non-native or non-local and should be replaced at a 1:1 ratio with either a native species or drought tolerant, non-invasive species. Midpen recommends that native species should be of locally-sourced seed and that the requirement for 15-gallon size stock should be lowered to one or five gallons to increase the likely future establishment of the trees and lessen the chances of plant pathogen introductions.
 - 4) The discussion in section 4.g. should also list the nearby La Honda Open Space Preserve as a wildlife reserve in addition to the National Fish and Wildlife Reserves.
 - 5) The discussion in section 4.h should clarify that although the project parcel is smaller than the defined “oak woodland” of five acres, the oak woodland on the property extends beyond the project parcel and, thus, the parcel is a portion of the oak woodland area.
 - 6) The IS/MND should mention that the existing well that is shown to be destroyed should first be decommissioned before it is destroyed.
 - 7) Midpen recommends that the project reconsiders the removal of the significant trees that are not shown to impact the proposed house or driveway, do not show a canopy overlay with the proposed residence, or are outside of the development footprint.
 - 8) Midpen recommends that no invasive or non-local plants be used in the project landscaping, as these non-native plants may spread to adjacent properties.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this Project. Should you have any questions about this letter, please contact Planner Brittany Wheatman at (650) 772-3646, or bwheatman@openspace.org.

Sincerely,



Jane F. Mark, AICP
Planning Manager

CC: Susanna Chan, Assistant General Manager, Project Planning & Delivery

To: SMC Planning Commission Meeting #1725

From: Patty Mayall & Ted Rutledge, 12700 Old La Honda Rd.

Re: **Item 5, PLN 2017-00369, Staff Report questions**

Honorable Commissioners and Staff,

We submit these questions after quickly reviewing the Staff Report, so please include them with my earlier email today regarding the mitigated Neg Dec (which we only learned of last week) for this proposed project.

For WATER Supply, the report states that prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant must provide a pump test, etc., :

*Will this be determined BEFORE the removal of the 18 trees ?

If not, please require that, and actually "maintain the scenic and harmonious nature of the rural lands and cause the least disturbance" (Rural Land Use section).

*How can it be determined that this project is "not expected to damage or destroy any environmental resources" if a current assessment of those resources does not exist ? The report states "according to a review of the California Natural Diversity Database" :

*What is the DATE of the database used?

*Is it based on site specific surveys, if so, where are the sites?

For FIRE, it requires "adequate fire flow and water supply" yet this is currently UNKNOWN for this proposed development---Where is the data showing this ?

Murray Engineers in 2017 stated this proposed project area is within "a large older landslide complex" yet deemed it "stable...under current climactic conditions...by geologists working in the area"--- please give the details of this:

*What are the names and credentials of these geologists?

*Where is the REAL scientific data from USGS on past significant landslide events, the current and potential landslide risks of the proposed project area ?

This information is crucial for the homeowners and for everyone downhill from their proposed development, including Old La Honda Rd, the access road for us and other residents. From the El Nino storms of 1998, we witnessed and USGS documented FIVE significant landslides on Old La Honda Rd. (from La Honda Rd. to our property, including the project area). This data needs to be included and considered.

This is also relevant to the statement that "None of the trees proposed to be removed are located adjacent to Old La Honda Rd."--- they are above, UPHILL from this road. Providing the best erosion prevention as established, significant trees, please consider this. The massive removal of and disturbance of soils on the hillside where this project is, along with the destruction of 18 trees, WILL increase the landslide risk on the property there, for the homeowners directly downhill and for Old La Honda Rd.

***For Public Notification** on this project, please POST information on Old La Honda Rd. and Williams Ranch Rd. as the most effective way to notify adjacent residents.

Simply put a one page flier on a post, please, to warn of the tree removal and construction work.

This was required of us when we removed ONE tree for building a garage on our property. Notifying "property owners within 300 feet" in this rural area is NOT notifying most of us who are potentially affected. Posting in the San Mateo Times is NOT effective, so please consider instead the much more local newspapers, like The Half Moon Bay Review and The Almanac.

We hope that our questions will be answered and our concerns considered.

Thank you,

Patty Mayall & Ted Rutledge

12700 Old La Honda Rd., unincorporated SMC
(less than half a mile from the proposed project)
650-851-1902, home landline

To: SMC Planning Commission, Meeting #1725

From: Patty Mayall & Ted Rutledge, 12700 Old La Honda Rd., SMC

Aug. 22, 2022

Re: Item 5, PLN 2017-00369 12660 Williams Ranch Rd.

Honorable Commissioners and Planning Staff,

Please consider that much of the data used in the proposed project's Mitigated Negative Declaration document is extremely outdated, so the correct answers in determining those impacts would be "unknown." Many could be very significant impacts, and we would appreciate your attention and answers to our concerns and questions.

*Regarding Geology and Landslides, data from 1997 is used, and in 1998, on Old La Honda Rd. adjacent to this proposed development, and on all our properties here, we experienced numerous disastrous landslides, as documented by the USGS (see the documentary "Riding the Storm" which is now on YouTube). The owners of this property deserve that crucial information, and those of us concerned with other inadequate assertions of this document deserve better assurance for the potentially significant impacts from this major development.

My husband and I have lived on Old La Honda Rd., up the road from the proposed development since 1989, and we welcome these new neighbors. If this proposed building was within the scope of the existing home on their property, we would not take any issue with this. Right now, you would never know there is a home there, with the mature canopy of trees and existing house, this area is not seen from the Scenic Corridor at all. There is no way that removing 18 large trees and quadrupling the size of the buildings on only 1.4 acres will not be seen, so

*How is this even allowed within the Scenic Corridor?

The mitigation is planting 15 gallon trees which will take many years to grow, so this is ridiculous. We hope that the owners will reconsider the size and scope of this project for many more crucial reasons, such as: the significant water usage during this drought for construction and for a huge home and pool; the destruction of significant trees that provide nesting for birds and unknown significant impacts to birds and wildlife which has not been surveyed in this document; the unknown impacts of the septic leach lines to adjacent neighbors; the unknown impacts of trucks on Old La Honda Rd. which is asphalt and highly susceptible to major damage and is the major connecting road for all of us living here.

While a neighbor is allowing access on a dirt road, this could change, and watering that dirt road twice a day for months seems an exorbitant waste of water during this serious drought, so

*Where is the source of this water, or who is supplying it ?

It could be inevitable that Old La Honda Rd. is needed during the logging and construction, yet there are no mitigations for the significant impact that heavy trucks will

impose on all residents here that depend on this road for emergency evacuations and commutes for work, etc.

*Please include mitigations for the potential impacts of logging trucks and construction vehicles when using Old La Honda Rd.

Regarding the logging of 18 trees, 17 that are significant trees:

*Have there been surveys for nesting birds and other species dependent on these trees?

*Have there been recent surveys for species of special concern, threatened, or endangered species (aka "listed" species) in the area?

This report only mentions the endangered SF Garter Snake which is also dependent on the endangered Red Legged Frog, yet no survey has been done or included. Given the devastating fires of the CZU fire complex in 2020, we need surveys done for other listed species in the area since then. For example, it is known that Golden Eagles are nesting in this area.

With the loss of millions of significant trees and wildlife species, scientists are documenting the devastation, and unfortunately, many local wildlife species are being added as threatened and endangered. We need this crucial, current data with such major developments and logging of significant trees like this proposal. As done in Huddart Park, the county worked with biologists to routinely survey for nesting birds during the tree removal for fire danger, so the county knows how to do this properly. This needs to be included with this project, or sparing the loss of so many significant trees would be the best alternative, please.

*Why is Noise not marked as an impact ?

The logging operation and construction of this major development which will last for months, possibly years, WILL impose significant noise to adjacent neighbors. Please include this information and mitigations, such as the schedule of operations, days allowed, and duration.

*Will more time be allowed for public comment since the staff report was only just available on Friday (Aug. 19), not a full week before the hearing this Wednesday ?

My husband and I want to review the staff report and comment on it. We also would be speaking at the hearing on Wednesday, yet we have to work.

We hope that the owners of the property and Planning Commissioners will consider our serious concerns and answer our questions.

Thank you,

Patty Mayall & Ted Rutledge

12700 Old La Honda Rd., unincorporated SMC
650-851-1902, home landline

August 23, 2022

To: San Mateo County Planning Commission, Meeting No. 1725

From: Jonathan and Kate Buser, 12465 La Honda Road, Woodside, CA 94062, Parcel No. 078-120-060

Re: Item 5, PLN2017-00369

Thank you for the opportunity to publicly comment on the proposed RM Permit, Grading Permit and Mitigated Negative Declaration at 12660 Williams Ranch Road. We welcome full time neighbors in what has been a vacant residence since we moved to our home six years ago. After reviewing the submission, we have the following concerns that we believe warrant further investigation. Please accept these joint comments from Jonathan and Kate Buser for consideration.

Increased and unmitigated runoff. Our 2.3-acre parcel is downhill from this property. Stormwater that drains off the subject property from the driveway and the land around the well flows into a culvert under Old La Honda Road before emptying next to critical infrastructure serving our home including our propane tank, water tank, and continuing below our wastewater drain field. The water flow is already causing destabilization of the Old La Honda roadway (photo 1). Runoff coming from this culvert has also eroded substantial portions of the hillside below our drain field (photos 2 & 3). We feel that the proposed driveway improvements serving this property and increased impervious surface area will increase the runoff onto our property which are not addressed by this submission. The grading and drainage plan does not show the north portion of the parcel (driveway, well area, & William's Ranch access Road) that drains onto our property.

Water scarcity. In a county monitored pump test early this year, we were unable to meet the threshold of 3.0 gallons per minute from the well serving our property to allow us to apply for a second unit permit for our elderly parents to live in. Our neighbors have already had to have water truck deliveries this year due to insufficient well water supply. The submitted plans indicate the existing well will be destroyed but they do not indicate the location of the new well to be drilled which would meet the minimum setbacks of the County Well Ordinance. We are concerned that the water extraction requirements for this project including the landscaped lot with accompanying irrigation plan and to a lesser extent the pool could adversely affect our future water supply which almost certainly draws from the same limited source.

Scenic Corridor. The county tree ordinance for the removal of significant trees states that Coast Live Oaks will be replaced 1:1. The Tree Removal Plan submitted does not show the replacement of any Coast Live Oak trees. The plans also call for the removal of four mature trees ranging from 20 to 45 ft tall between the new construction and Old La Honda Road that serve as a visual screen. The current residence is not visible from the scenic corridor. We believe that the removal of trees # 3, 4, 5, & 6 will cause the new two-story residence and pool house to be visible from the public road which is within the scenic corridor. Additionally, there are two similarly large mature trees (possibly Monterey Pines) in the vicinity of tree # 3 that are not represented on the plans. Maybe these pines were left off the plans because they are on the county property but they are located between the residence and the scenic corridor and we believe they should be included in the Tree Protection Plan due to their close vicinity to the project site. This section of Old La Honda Road is widely considered to be among the most scenic cycling routes in the county. We ask that the plans be revised to preserve the mature trees between the new residence and Old La Honda Road. We also feel that erection of story poles prior to approval would allow the impacts of these plans on the scenic corridor to be better evaluated.

Light Pollution. Item 1.d. of the Negative Declaration Document states that exterior lighting must be dark-sky compliant. The plans as submitted show outdoor landscape lighting including up-lighting fixtures which by definition are not dark-sky compliant. We highly value the limited light pollution that is experienced in our rural neighborhood on the west side of Skyline Blvd.

Noise Pollution. We anticipate that noise from this project will require both work-from-home professionals at our home to relocate for the duration of the construction.

Clerical correction. Please note in the Negative Declaration Document section 1.a. that this property is incorrectly described as downhill from Old La Honda Road and La Honda Road. It is uphill from those two roads. The project will be visible from Old La Honda Road.

Erosion Photos. A vertical yard stick for scale is present in each photo.



Photo 1: Soil destabilization within 3 ft of Old La Honda Road bed from the culvert that drains north portion of parcel 078-120-050 under Old La Honda Road. Collapsed section measures approximately 15' long x 3' wide x 3' high



Photo 2: Erosion on parcel 078-120-060 from another culvert used to deliver runoff from the culvert in photo 1 around the wastewater drain field. Collapsed section measures approximately 18' long x 16' wide x 6' high. Stabilization fencing installed to slow erosion can be seen in the photo.



Photo 3: Erosion on parcel 078-120-060 from runoff of abandoned culvert that previously directed the flow of water from the culvert in photo 1. Damaged area measures approximately 45' long x 10' wide x 7' high.