

County of Santa Clara

Environmental Resources Agency
Planning Office

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Date: June 29, 2004

To: Morgan Hill Urban Limit Line/Greenbelt Advisory Committee

From: Bill Shoe, *Bill Shoe* Principal Planner

RE: ~~Potential Recommendations Regarding Viewshed Protection Measures
Deriving from Morgan Hill Viewshed Analysis~~

This report outlines potential recommendations for the Committee's consideration on the subject of County policies and regulations for minimizing the visual impacts of hillside development within the viewshed area of the City of Morgan Hill. It is based on previous reports provided for the April 12 and May 10, 2004.

coordination
Each of the potential recommendations will require some degree of evaluation. If policy changes and/or ordinance amendments are involved, the work effort will require a significant amount of time spent coordinating with affected agencies and in actual draft ordinance development. Such projects will also require review and approval by the County Planning Commission, the HLUET (Housing, Land Use, Environment & Transportation) Committee of the Board of Supervisors, and adoption by the full Board of Supervisors.

increase priority
In reviewing potential recommendations with City of Morgan Hill staff, city staff expressed concerns regarding the level of detailed information available regarding these potential recommendations, and whether the Committee will have adequate information on which to decide if it concurs or not with these proposals. County staff expects that the most significant and effective recommendations among those listed will take a significant amount of staff time to develop, at the same time that staff resources are being reduced and assignments increase. Furthermore, ~~the Board of Supervisors has directed that work related to the countywide viewshed analysis, Item 10-19 of the work program, of which the Morgan Hill viewshed analysis is but one part, be a higher priority for the coming months.~~ How County staff will proceed with potential specific ordinance revision efforts will need to be determined.

Attached is a one-page tabular summary of potential recommendations by County staff for further implementing County and City goals and policies regarding visual impacts of development within the viewshed area. These are based on the evaluations and information provided in a report dated May 4, 2004 for the Committee's May 10, 2004 meeting. That report is also attached for your convenience.

cc: W.T. Chow, Director, Environmental Resources Agency
Board of Supervisors' Land Use Policy Aides:
Rachael Gibson, District 1
Javier Aguirre, District 2
Daniel Murillo, District 3
Jean Cohen, District 4
Aaron Starr, District 5

County of Santa Clara Planning Office: Potential Recommendations for Morgan Hill Viewshed Protection, June 2004

General Direction or Strategy	Potential Recommendations	Possible Products/Outcomes
<p>Update and augment County policies, if necessary, and development regulations for individual lot residential site development. For sites within designated city viewshed areas, ensure that both review procedures and standards provide appropriate incentives and adequately control for potential environmental and visual impacts of development.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate existing County development regulations governing individual lot development in hillsides generally, including single building site approval, grading ordinance, and zoning ordinance, to reduce visual and other impacts of development due to building location, access, and terrain alteration factors. 2. Develop and enact process requirements and standards specifically for lot development in viewshed areas to control adequately for visual impacts. 	<p>Amend existing ordinance standards, procedural requirements, and/or criteria/findings to provide improved basis for review and conditioning of hillside development. Address location of building envelopes, length of access, degree of terrain alteration allowed.</p> <p>Alternative: Possibly develop new alternative permit and review procedures based on research and evaluation of methods used by other jurisdictions to regulate hillside development.</p>
<p>Require the colors or light reflectivity values of new structures within designated viewshed areas to blend with natural appearance of hillsides.</p>	<p>Evaluate and enact color (light reflectivity value standards) for new construction independent of Design Review permit requirements</p>	<p>Zoning Ordinance amendment imposing LRV standard of 60 or less for exterior surfaces of new construction in viewshed areas</p>
<p>Improve implementation of current policy to minimize visual impacts of subdivision proposals, including discouraging ridgeline lot locations</p>	<p>Require visual impact analysis for any subdivision application in designated viewshed areas as a basis for project review, conditions, or reduced density</p>	<p>Enact procedural requirement for evaluation of subdivision applications as part of environmental assessment under CEQA or as part of staff review.</p>
<p>Improve coordination with existing City programs and requirements such as Morgan Hill's TDC, Transfer of Development Credits program</p>	<p>Collaborate with City staff to facilitate use of City's TDC or similar programs to achieve viewshed and greenbelt preservation objectives and high priority open space areas</p>	<p>Priority-setting, educational outreach, and other facilitation of use of purchase of open space easements as part of City's TDC program</p>