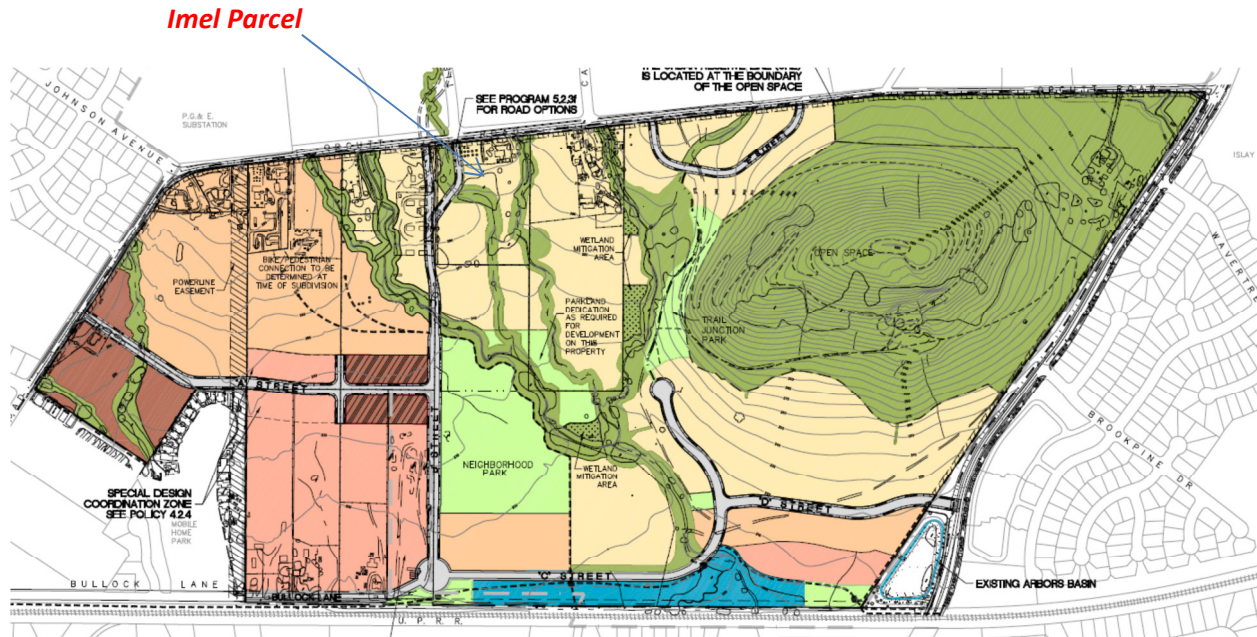


# Imel Ranch Vesting Tentative Tract Map Application

## *Project Description and Statements*



*Orcutt Area Specific Plan*

### I. Project Description

Ambient Communities is requesting the review and approval of a Vesting Tentative Tract Map for the “Imel Ranch” property within the Orcutt Area Specific Plan (OASP). The property and specific plan area were recently annexed into the City of San Luis Obispo.<sup>1</sup> The OASP was approved on March 2, 2010.<sup>2</sup> These actions allocated an estimated 17 single family residential homes on the Imel Ranch property.<sup>3</sup>

The Imel Ranch property is 5.45 acres<sup>4</sup> of gently sloping land traversed by two creeks or seasonal drainage channels. The proposed plan is to build eighteen (18) market rate single-family detached homes on lots that range from 5,000 square feet to 9,700 square feet. Most lots are sized in the 5,000 – 7,000 square feet range and the average lot size is 6,280. The proposed lots meet the lot standard requirements of the specific plan.<sup>5</sup>

The general layout of the proposed map will provide a public street in a looped or horseshoe configuration with a cul-de-sac off the interior lot side of the west arm of the horseshoe. The public street will be designed where the east-west length will provide street parking, but the north-south arms will not. Signs will be posted where there is no parking allowed. Narrower street is one of the ways we

<sup>1</sup> Orcutt Area annexed November 16, 2011

<sup>2</sup> Resolution No. 10154 (2010 Series)

<sup>3</sup> See Table A-2 of the Orcutt Area Specific Plan

<sup>4</sup> Lot Line Adjustment SLAL 15-0104 reduced the property from 6.49 acres listed in the OASP to 5.45 acres now

<sup>5</sup> OASP Policy 3.2.5 and Table 3.1

# Imel Ranch Vesting Tentative Tract Map Application

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are able to respond to the new requirements for storm water and low impact development to reduce impervious surfaces. Parking provided meets the minimum requirements. The narrow street design without on-street parking is encouraged in the OASP.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the Water Quality Control Board Post-Construction Requirements notes, “construct streets, sidewalks, or parking lot aisles to the minimum widths necessary, provided that public safety or mobility are not compromised.”

The Imel Ranch property main natural feature is two creeks or drainage channels, Crotalo Creek and another drainage fork or creek that traverses the property. These areas will be maintained as open space and are protected as valued property features. Appropriate creek setbacks and open space treatment is provided in the site design.<sup>7</sup> Some grading will occur in limited locations of creek setbacks (see below).

The property has trees scattered in several locations. Most of the trees are identified as non-native (e.g. Eucalyptus, Pepper), some are actually a threat to healthy habitat. The project will require the removal of the two large stands of Eucalyptus trees in the center of the property as well as a small stand in the northwest corner of the property. Several other mostly smaller non-native trees scattered around the property will be removed. There is a large sycamore in the drainage channel on the west side of the property that impedes the necessary creek crossing for the roadway. A qualified arborist has determined the tree to be unhealthy and it will have to be removed. Appropriate mitigation will be provided for the removal of this tree. There are two oak trees at the southeast corner of the property that will be retained, but may require pruning. An arborist will provide guidance with respect to tree mitigation and treatment. The arborist report provides more detail on tree identity and removal and mitigation.

Due to the constraints of the creek and drainage locations combined with the topography sloping east to west, a lot line adjustment is needed to push the northern half of the west property line 11 feet further west. This will encroach into the park and occupy about 2,400 square feet. In order to remedy this encroachment, the southern half of the west property line will shift 11 feet to the east and take about 2,400 feet from lots 10 and 11. The end result is no loss of park space. There is currently a lot line adjustment under City review that details this realignment of the west property line.

In order to grade lots 1 – 4, and 10 and 11 to level pads, a fill slope will extend into the park. The fill slopes behind lots 1-4, 10, and 11 have been reviewed and approved by the City Parks department.

The creek and drainage channel that traverse the property will place some housing, particularly lot 10 and lot 11, in a location where the sewer will possibly have to cross the creek. A sewer line will cross the park property with final routing to be determined in conjunction with the design of final park layout. An easement to cross the park will be recorded.

Imel Ranch will create a community that successfully accomplishes the goals and objectives of the OASP. It will provide a new community that brings needed housing to the City while creating a community that

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<sup>6</sup> OASP Policy 5.6

<sup>7</sup> See OASP Figure 2.1 and policy 2.2.1 and policy 2.2.2 and program 2.2.2C et al

# Imel Ranch Vesting Tentative Tract Map Application

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is balanced with the natural setting. The natural beauty will be maintained and protected alongside the new home sites. In addition, Imel Ranch will provide the ability to align “B” Street with Tiburon Road and provide continuity with the neighboring Jones Ranch and Righetti Ranch neighborhoods.

The community protects and emphasizes creeks and riparian areas. By focusing the design on balancing and meeting all of the goals and objectives of the OASP, the Imel Ranch project will provide a livable, walkable, desirable community with a unique sense of place for all to enjoy.<sup>8</sup>

## II. Statement of Existing and Proposed Land Use

The Imel property consists of single family residential zoning established by the approval of the OASP and annexation of the property into the City of San Luis Obispo. The zoning currently established includes the open space zone covering riparian areas including creek setbacks and R-1 low density zoning.

The proposed Ambient Communities Vesting Tentative Tract Map for Imel Ranch will maintain the same zoning and land use as indicated in the OASP.

## III. Statement of Proposed Landscape Improvements

### INTRODUCTION

The project is designed to meet the intent of the Orcutt Area Specific Plan and City of San Luis Obispo standards. The project includes open space adjacent a creek as well as stormwater collection ponds and common landscape areas. The project contains eighteen single family lots. The character of the project is intended to mimic the natural ranch and adjacent creek setting, utilize native and drought-tolerant vegetation, and reduce impacts to the surrounding environment where possible.

### RESIDENTIAL & COMMON LOT AREAS

The landscaping for Imel project area will primarily consist of drought-tolerant trees and shrubs, with riparian species used along the existing creek corridor and within bio-infiltration areas. Turf will be kept within the allowable standards set forth within the City and State of California’s latest Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance requirements. Where possible, turf will only be used on a select number of front yards of residences. The design principles for the Imel Property landscaping includes the following:

#### Shrubs

- Planting will be located with low groundcover and shrubs in the foreground and layered with higher plants behind. Blank walls will utilize taller vegetation to soften expanses, and low planting will be placed along entries, walkways and driveways. Shrubs will be located to maintain views out of windows.

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<sup>8</sup> See OASP Section 1.6

# Imel Ranch Vesting Tentative Tract Map Application

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- Sun and shade preferences will be considered for planting under trees and along building foundations.
- Plants will be placed based on their ultimate width at maturity, and shrubs planted under tree canopies will not grow more than 0.75% of the canopy height.
- Stormwater treatment areas are proposed amongst the private lots. These areas will treat storm water, and shrubs will consist of riparian species that can tolerate periodic flows and standing water.
- Shrub areas adjacent to riparian corridors will transition into each other, and not have abrupt edges designating the zones.

## Trees

- Trees with low root damage potential will be used when planted within 5' of hardscape elements.
- Trees will be placed so that canopies do not extend into buildings or other trees to alleviate the need for future pruning.
- Trees should be utilized to provide shading of buildings and parking areas whenever feasible.

## CREEK OPEN SPACE

A centrally located open space for the existing creek is proposed within the project, and it is approximately 0.45 acres in size. The open space will include a pedestrian trail for pedestrians to walk along the creek bank. Lighting will be limited to primary pedestrian entrances and parking areas as needed for security.

- Pedestrian Paths: Pedestrian pathways will be provided, and they will be 5 feet wide and will likely be constructed of decomposed granite or concrete.

## IV. Exceptions from Design Standards

The presence of Crotalo Creek and the fork of the creek and the associated creek setbacks and open space requirements create difficulty in the design and configuration of lots and the subdivision of the land. The creek meanders and the setbacks are therefore highly irregular and meandering. This presents many challenges and limitations for lot design and site planning. In addition, the site topography falling from Orcutt Road to the west creates grading and design challenges. The required alignment of "B" Street with Tiburon Way also created intersection alignment and stacking difficulty. Thus some exceptions are being requested with the proposed vesting tentative tract map. Granting these exceptions will be consistent with Section 16.23.020 of the subdivision regulations.

# Imel Ranch Vesting Tentative Tract Map Application

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## **A. BUILDING HEIGHT 25 FEET IN R-1 ZONE:**

Building heights in the R-1 zone on the Imel Ranch tract map could exceed 25 feet from existing grade. City ordinance requires height to be measured from the “existing topography” of the site.<sup>9</sup> The City Zoning Ordinance defines “existing topography” to be “the topography resulting from grading activity legally permitted in conjunction with subdivision improvements...” which is design grade in a subdivision.<sup>10</sup>

Additionally, the code allows discretion to the director to allow a house in the R-1 zone to exceed the 25-foot building height limit.<sup>11</sup> The building heights in the R-1 could exceed 25 feet so this application will request an adjustment for Houses in the R-1 zone that exceed the 25-foot height limit. The houses will be less than 30 feet. This provides architecture and design flexibility to better meet the design objectives of the OASP.

This height exception is not requested for lots 14 and 15 where the structure is limited to single story within the sensitive height setback along Orcutt Road consistent with OASP Program 2.4.1d. Any second story will be outside the scenic setback depicted in the OASP

## **B. GRADING WITHIN CREEK SETBACK:**

The creek and drainage channel crossing the property present a challenge to locate useable lots. Creek areas and setbacks will be avoided to the greatest extent possible. Due to topography and creek locations there will be some grading that occurs within the creek setback, but outside the defined creek areas. Once completed, the disturbed areas will be restored to the satisfaction of the City Natural Resources Manager. In addition, there will be portions of drainage basins and stormwater treatment basins that encroach into the creek setback. This approach has been preliminarily reviewed and accepted by the Natural Resources Manager.

## **C. STORM WATER DETENTION**

In order to accomplish the peak flow management requirements in the OASP, detention for Imel is proposed using a combination of the following methods:

- Onsite detention facilities sized for the 10 year storm to satisfy RWQCB post-construction storm water requirements. This will consist of either above ground shallow detention basins or below ground buried detention chambers<sup>12</sup>.
- “Overdetention” within a Regional Basin downstream of Imel located within Tract 3063<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> City of San Luis Obispo Zoning Ordinance Section 17.16.040

<sup>10</sup> City of San Luis Obispo Zoning Ordinance Section 17.100(E) Definitions – “Existing Topography”

<sup>11</sup> City of San Luis Obispo Zoning Ordinance Section 17.24.020(C)

<sup>12</sup> See Included Letter to Hal Hannula dated June 20, 2016 “Imel Onsite Detention Strategy”

<sup>13</sup> See Included Letter to Hal Hannula dated March 11, 2016 “Imel Offsite Detention Strategy and Feasibility”

# Imel Ranch Vesting Tentative Tract Map Application

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## **D. STREET INTERSECTIONS AND TANGENTS:**

Where “I” Street intersects with “B” Street, the centerline tangent is slightly less than the required 50 feet. Given site topography and the locations of the creek and drainages, there was no way to get the necessary two access points and maintain the centerline tangents. The requirement of the alignment of “B” Street to Tiburon Way as a condition of the Jones Ranch tentative map exacerbates the challenge as it adds curves to “B” Street.

Also, where “I” Street intersects with “B” Street, closest to Orcutt Road, is less than 250 feet. The horseshoe street layout presents superior design. However, given the realignment of “B” Street, the topography and creek locations on the Imel property, and the need for two access points, separation distance could not be met. As a result, this particular intersection will be restricted to right turn in and right turn out only to mitigate the reduced distance to Orcutt Road.

## **E. REAR YARD:**

Lots 6, 8, 9 and 10 will require a rear yard setback exception. In each case the reduction is minor and generally only needed for a corner of the home not the entire width of the lot or home.

Lot 6 rear yard is constrained due to the realignment of Tiburon Road curving southward. As an offset lot 6 has a larger side yard.

Lots 8 and 9 are constrained by the creek behind them and the dimension requirements of the cul de sac. “I” Street is designed to the minimum width to help alleviate the lot setback constraint but cannot get all the way while the driveway and garage setbacks are being met.

Lot 10 is pushed back in order to accommodate the turn knuckle on I Street while maintaining front driveway and garage setbacks.

## **V. Low Impact Development**

The project is subject to the RWQCB Post-construction Stormwater Management Requirements and, as such, will include the following LID components:

- Limit disturbance with a 20-foot setback from top of creek banks and riparian vegetation
- Minimize impervious surfaces by using the minimum required travel lane width where possible
- Direct roof runoff into vegetated areas
- Treat stormwater runoff with vegetated biofiltration areas, underground detention chamber filtration (for below ground detention), or Filtterra planter boxes (for above ground detention).
- Manage peak flows with stormwater detention basins

# Imel Ranch Vesting Tentative Tract Map Application

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## VI. Inclusionary Housing

The Imel Ranch vesting tentative tract map proposes eighteen (18) housing units of which sixteen (16) will be market rate units. Thus, Imel Ranch will be required to provide three (3) units that meet the OASP affordable housing requirements<sup>14</sup>. Two units will be provided at moderate income level and one unit at the low income level. These units will be interspersed on the Jones Ranch property via transfer or sharing of units according to the implementation of policy 3.3.3 which allows the cooperation of properties to share the affordable housing responsibility. This will bring the total affordable housing unit sales by Jones Ranch to 20 (9 from Righetti, 3 from Imel and 8 from Jones). The Imel affordable units will be sold throughout the Jones Property with the 8 units Jones Ranch is responsible to provide as affordable and will be located in the R-2 units as two bedroom homes there. The affordable units will be built alongside market rate three bedroom units. The construction and treatment of the affordable units will be the same as the market rate units in the R-2 attached housing product.

## VII. Architecture Review

City subdivision regulations indicate that a Vesting Tentative Tract Map within a specific plan is exempt from the requirement for architecture review<sup>15</sup>. The intention of this application is to comply with the OASP design guidelines. Consistency with the design guidelines and requesting a vesting tentative tract map with a specific plan exempts this application from architecture review.

## VIII. Consistent with Current Zoning

This request for a Vesting Tentative Tract Map is in general conformance with the existing zoning of the OASP and remains the same with the proposed map application. There is no zone change request with this application so the proposed zoning is the same as the existing R1 zoning for the subdivided property.

## IX. Status of Approvals from other Agencies

Applications to the Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Fish and Wildlife have been submitted. We can provide those at your request if needed prior to the CEQA review process.

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<sup>14</sup> OASP Policy 3.3.2

<sup>15</sup> Subdivision Regulations Section 16.12.020(B)(1); Page 32 of City of SLO Subdivision Regulations