

BOARD OF APPEALS

**COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
TUESDAY, AUGUST 23, 2011 - 7:00 P.M.**

I. INTRODUCTION

DAN HALLER, et al. (Appellant) - ATI ARCHITECTS (Applicant) & SAN RAMON VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT (Owner), County File #LP092026: A hearing on an appeal of a decision by the County Zoning Administrator to approve a land use permit application for a new 9,400-square foot fire station. The new fire station will replace fire station #32 currently located approximately 0.4-miles west on Stone Valley Road. The new fire station will be constructed on a 1.1-acre site located at 2100 Stone Valley Road in the Alamo area. (Zoning: R-20) (CT: 3461.02) (GP: SL) (APN: 193-130-025)

II. RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the County Planning Commission adopt a motion to:

- A. DENY the appeal and uphold the Zoning Administrator's approval of Land Use Permit #LP09-2026 and adoption of the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Program prepared for the project.
- B. ADOPT County Planning Commission Resolution #15-2011 giving effect to said denial of appeal.

III. BACKGROUND

On July 11, 2011 at a continued public hearing, the County Zoning Administrator approved a land use permit for the establishment of new 9,400-square foot fire station at the corner of Stone Valley Road and Miranda Avenue in the Alamo area. At the hearing ten (10) members of the public provided testimony in opposition of the project and five (5) members provided testimony in support of the project.

Various issues were identified by neighbors providing testimony in opposition to the project. Some of the main issues identified in opposition to the project included; impacts to property values, noise impacts of the facility, traffic safety concerns, compatibility with surrounding residential uses (visual impacts), and parking impacts. Various other issues were expressed in opposition to the project in addition to those previously listed. All of the issues identified in the testimony in opposition to the project were identified in the comments received during the public comment period for the December 2010, Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

prepared for the project. Responses to all of the comments received on the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration were provided in the *June 2011, Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and Final Response to Comments Documents* prepared for the project. The Planning Commission has been provided with copies of the June 2011 Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and Final Response to Comments.

In response to the testimony provided at the hearing, the Zoning Administrator made a number of modifications to the conditions of approval. The modifications to the conditions of approval addressed concerns of the neighbors relating to the height of the tower, noise, building color palette, off-site parking, construction hours, privacy, and construction notification. After making the changes to the conditions of approval the Zoning Administrator approved the land use permit.

On July 18, 2011, within the time permitted by law, an appeal of the Zoning Administrator's decision, along with the appropriate filing fee, was submitted to the Department of Conservation and Development. The appeal was submitted by Mr. Dan Haller on behalf of himself and seven other residents of the neighborhood. In his appeal, Mr. Haller identified a list of impacts that he believes have not been fully addressed in the project mitigation monitoring program or conditions of approval.

IV. SUMMARY OF REVIEW

The proposed fire station is to be located on a 1.1-acre parcel located at the corner of Stone Valley Road and Miranda in the Alamo area. The new fire station will replace the existing Fire Station #32 located approximately 0.4-miles west on Stone Valley Road. Currently an abandoned single family residence is located on the property which will be demolished prior to construction of the fire station.

The proposed project consists of the construction of a new 9,400-square foot Fire Station facility. The main aspects of the facility include the construction of the living area and apparatus bay, with a maximum building height of 32-feet, 6-inches. The project also includes an emergency generator, propane tank and fueling station area, a detached trash enclosure, a secure employee parking and equipment yard and a solid masonry wall along the Stone Valley Road frontage and a portion of Miranda Avenue. Various other improvements are proposed, including significant landscaping throughout the site. The project will also involve the removal of five (5) protected trees and work within the dripline of nine (9) additional protected trees.

The subject property is within the R-20 Zoning District, which allows the establishment of publicly owned buildings, including fire stations, with the approval of a land use permit. The development standards for the fire station are the same for residential structures within the R-20 zoning district, and the proposed Fire Station #32 meets all of the development standards of the R-20 Zoning District, including building height, setback and sideyard requirements.

When the property was acquired by the Fire District in early 2009, it had a General Plan Designation of Single Family Residential-Low Density (SL), but now that it is owned by the Fire District, which is a public agency, the General Plan Designation of the property will be

changed to Public and Semi-Public (PS). The change in the General Plan Designation will be automatic and will occur during the next County General Plan Land Use Element map update.

V. APPEAL

In a letter dated July 18, 2011, Dan Haller, a neighbor of the subject property, filed a timely appeal of the Zoning Administrator's decision to approve the mitigated negative declaration and land use permit application for the new fire station #32. Mr. Haller submitted and signed the letter on behalf of seven other property owners in the vicinity of the subject property.

In the appeal letter, Mr. Haller indicates that the conditions of approval and mitigations for the project do not go far enough to address the following issues:

- Noise levels above the acceptable decibel levels of a residential neighborhood including backup alarms, sirens, idling diesel engines, and a commercial generator.
- Safety concerns surrounding the lack of sidewalks on Miranda (Ave.) leading up to the Middle School with the density of cars, bicycles, and pedestrians during school pickup and drop off.
- Traffic concerns of Fire Trucks and other vehicles entering and exiting the station during excessive high traffic periods.
- Privacy impacts due to the lack of proper neighbor privacy from the commercial facility, mostly due to the lack of installing a 7-8 foot fence around the back of the property.
- Environmental impacts including but not limited to the potential increase in diesel fumes in the area or the loss of protected trees without mitigation for replacement.
- Aesthetic concerns over the metal green screens or the size and ultimate height of the facility in a residential neighborhood.
- Property value impacts for residents whose property values are declining due to the potential development of a loud commercial facility in a residential neighborhood.

VI. STAFF RESPONSE TO APPEAL

Most of the issues identified in Mr. Haller's letter were included in previous comments received in response to the circulation of the December 2010 Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared for the project. In response to the comments received on the Mitigated Negative Declaration, a *Final Mitigated Negative Declaration and Final Response to Comments* was prepared in June 2011. The June 2011 Final Response to Comments prepared for the project included in-depth responses to all of the environmental impact comments received on the December 2010 Mitigated Negative Declaration, including most of the issues identified in Mr. Haller's appeal letter. Comments received on the Mitigated Negative Declaration not related to environmental impacts of the project were addressed by staff in the June 20, 2011 Zoning Administrator staff report prepared for the project.

Staff has provided below responses to each of the issues identified in Mr. Haller's appeal letter. Most of the responses provided below are summarizations of the in-depth responses found in the June 2011 Final Mitigated Negative Declaration and Final Response to Comments prepared for the project.

- *Appeal Point #1: Noise levels above the acceptable decibel levels of a residential neighborhood including backup alarms, sirens, idling diesel engines, and a commercial generator.*

Staff Response #1: The noise analysis in the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared for the project determined that the project would not have a significant impact on noise levels at the site of the new fire station. This determination was made based on two noise studies prepared for the project in March of 2010 and in November 2010. Staff has also concluded that the noise generated by the outdoor activities to occur at the new fire station would be similar to those of a residential use.

Actual noise measurement taken at the existing Fire Station #32 indicated that the level of noise generated by the fire station is within acceptable levels identified in the County General Plan (Figure 11-6, 2005-2020 County General Plan). The new fire station will house the same number of firefighters and equipment as the existing fire station, therefore the no new noise sources will be introduced. As an additional precaution, the County Zoning Administrator included a condition of approval (COA #3) prohibiting the testing of noise generating equipment before 8 A.M. on weekdays and 9A.M. on weekends.

In terms of the specific items identified in Mr. Haller's appeal, the use of back up alarms will be very limited due to the drive-thru design of the fire station. The fire station was specifically designed in this manner to prevent the backing up of vehicles and equipment. Therefore, use of the back-up alarms will be very limited.

As for other noise generating activities, according to the project architect and according to information provided in the noise studies, the design of the fire station, with its enclosed equipment yard, will provide significant noise attenuation for almost all of the operational noise generated at the facility, including noise generated from idling equipment and testing of the emergency generator.

As for siren use, the Fire District has indicated that sirens will rarely be needed for emergency vehicles exiting the site because of the Fire Station's ability to control the traffic signal at the intersection of Stone Valley Road and Miranda Avenue. On average the Fire Station will respond to 1.5 call per day, and according to noise data collected at the existing fire station #32 (see Response to Comment #3-7 in Final Response to Comments Document, June 2011), sirens are used only 25% of the time when leaving the station. At this frequency, staff does not consider siren use by the proposed fire station a significant impact.

- *Appeal Point #2: Safety concerns surrounding the lack of sidewalks on Miranda (Ave.) leading up to the Middle School with the density of cars, bicycles, and pedestrians during school pickup and drop off.*

Staff Response #2: The post project emergency vehicle traffic safety conditions on Miranda Avenue should be improved when compared to the current baseline

emergency vehicle traffic conditions. The number of emergency vehicle trips heading north on Miranda Avenue will remain unchanged before and after project completion because Miranda Avenue is only used to access certain areas of Alamo. Therefore, emergency vehicle use of Miranda Avenue to access emergencies north of Stone Valley Road will remain the same for vehicles leaving from the existing or proposed Fire Station #32.

As part of the required frontage improvements for the new fire station, the Fire District will be required to construct sidewalk along the entire Miranda Avenue frontage area. This will result in safer pedestrian access along Miranda Avenue as opposed to existing conditions without frontage improvements.

- *Appeal Point #3: Traffic concerns of Fire Trucks and other vehicles entering and exiting the station during excessive high traffic periods.*

Staff Response #3: According to Fire District records, Fire Station #32 responds to an average of 1.5 emergency calls a day. This is not anticipated to change with the construction of the new fire station. With an average of two or less emergency vehicle trips going and coming to the site per day, any time of the day, and six (6) firefighters coming and leaving every other day, it cannot be reasonably concluded that the project will have an impact on traffic patterns on Stone Valley Road or Miranda Avenue at any point, event during peak traffic periods.

- *Appeal Point #4: Privacy impacts due to the lack of proper neighbor privacy from the commercial facility, mostly due to the lack of installing a 7-8 foot fence around the back of the property.*

Staff Response #4: The privacy concerns of the adjacent property owner (Haller) north of the subject property was taken into consideration during the design stage of the project and was again addressed by the Zoning Administrator prior to approval of the project.

As part of the landscape improvements, the project includes the placement of eight (8), 8-foot tall, 12 to 16-foot wide “greenscreens”, along the rear portion of the site between the rear of the fire station and the top of the creek bank. The location of the greenscreens can be found on Sheet A1.1 (Site Plan) of the attached drawings. An exhibit demonstrating how the greenscreens will protect the privacy of the Haller property can be found on Sheet A1.2 (Site Sections) of the attached plans.

The greenscreens are 8-foot tall, 12 to 16-foot wide sections of steel tubing and mesh that will be covered with vegetative growth with the purpose of providing privacy screening between the fire station and the Haller property.

In addition to the greenscreens, the Zoning Administrator included a condition of approval (COA #8) that requires window treatment for the windows at the back of the fire station, specifically the day room facing the Haller property. The condition requires the windows to be designed in a manner that will protect the privacy of the

adjacent property owners to the north which may include moving the windows up closer to the ceiling or installing opaque windows.

- *Appeal Point #5: Environmental impacts including but not limited to the potential increase in diesel fumes in the area or the loss of protected trees without mitigation for replacement.*

Staff Response #5: Both the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration and Final Response to Comments prepared for the project address the air quality impacts of the Fire Station. According to those reports, the project will not exceed any of the long term air quality thresholds as established by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District.

The only source of diesel fumes to be generated at the site would be from the emergency vehicles and the on site back-up emergency generator. According to the Fire District, the only time fire trucks run on-site are at the beginning of each 48-hour shift change. At that time the trucks are turned on and checked for 5-10 minutes between 8:00 A.M. and 9:00 A.M. Therefore the fire trucks are tested onsite for 5-10 minutes once in the morning every other day. As for the emergency back-up generator, the fire district has indicated that that piece of equipment is tested once a week for 20-minutes. The generator will be located on the southern portion of the parcel near the corner of Stone Valley road and Miranda Avenue as far away for the Haller residence as possible. Due to the property's proximity to Stone Valley Road and the volume of daily traffic on Stone Valley Road, which is signalized, the amount of exhaust fumes to be generated by the facility is insignificant when compared to the exhaust generated by idling and passing traffic along Stone Valley Road.

As for the proposed tree removal, as part of the project, the Fire District is proposing the removal of five protected trees and work within the dripline of nine protected trees. The five trees to be removed are three oak trees, a queen palm and an almond tree. All of the trees to be removed are located along the Miranda frontage area. No trees within the creek riparian area are proposed to be removed. None of the trees to be removed represent a prime example of their respective species and none of the oaks to be removed are mature oaks.

As identified in the submitted landscape plan (Sheet L1.0), a total of 35 new trees will be planted on the property as part of the project. According to the landscaping plan, three (3) large canopy trees will be planted; four (4) oak trees, nine (9) small flowering trees and nineteen (19) canopy trees will be planted throughout the site, mostly around the perimeter of the facility.

- *Appeal Point #6: Aesthetic concerns over the metal green screens or the size and ultimate height of the facility in a residential neighborhood.*

Staff Response #6: As part of the project, the applicant has identified the installation of eight (8), 8-foot tall, 12 to 16-foot wide, "greenscreens" along the backside of the proposed fire station. The greenscreens are made steel tubing and mesh that will be

covered with vegetative growth for the purpose of providing privacy screening between the fire station and the Haller property to the north.

As for the height of the proposed fire station, the maximum height of the building will be 32-feet, 6-inched at the tower, the apparatus bay will have a maximum height of 27.5-feet and the living quarters will have a maximum height of 19.8-feet. No part of the proposed fire station will exceed the 35-foot height limit of the R-20 zoning district in which the property is located. As recommended by the Zoning Administrator, and per condition of approval #6 of the attached conditions of approval, the fire district must submit plans analyzing the possibility of lowering the tower height 1 to 5-feet at least 30-days prior to submitting building plans for review. If deemed feasible, the fire district will lower the tower up to 5-feet at the discretion of the Zoning Administrator.

- *Appeal Point #7: Property value impacts for residents whose property values are declining due to the potential development of a loud commercial facility in a residential neighborhood.*

Staff Response #7: Staff does not agree with the appellant's determination that the proposed fire station is a commercial facility. The fire station is a public emergency facility, where no commercial activities will take place. The design of the fire station is residential in nature, not commercial.

As explained by the Zoning Administrator at the July 11, 2011 public hearing for the project, the land use permit finding relating to the protection of property values and the County's tax base requires that the hearing body consider a project's impact to the County tax base as a whole, not individual property values. There is no evidence that properties located next to fire stations are worth less than those that are not. Additionally, the added value to the community as a whole that will be created by Fire Station must be considered when making a determination on a project, not impacts to individual properties. Therefore, it has been determined that the new, upgraded and safer fire station will have a positive impact on property values in the Alamo area as a whole.

VII. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

An Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) was prepared for the project in December 2010 to identify potential environmental impacts of the proposed fire station facility. The MND identified potential environmental impacts to the following areas; *aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, hazards and hazardous materials, cultural resources, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, noise, transportation and traffic and utilities and service systems.*

In summary the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration concluded that the proposed new Fire Station #32 would not result in a significant impact to the environment. Per the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) a Notice of Public Review and Intent to Adopt a Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration was posted with the County

Recorder's Office and mailed to all of the adjacent property owners of the subject property. The notice was posted with the County Recorder on December 22, 2010 and a revised notice was posted on January 19, 2011 further extending the public comment period for the MND. Copies of the notice were sent to all adjacent property owners of the site. The public comment period for the IS/MND closed on February 7, 2011.

In response to circulation of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, 13 comment letters were received, with multiple issues identified in each of the letters. Due to the extensive number of issues identified in the comment letters, staff prepared a *Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and Final Response to Comments* dated June 2011. The Final Response to Comments addressed all comments directly related to the adequacy of the December 2010 Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration. No new impacts were identified in preparing the June 2011, Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and Final Response to Comments for the project.

VIII. SITE/AREA DESCRIPTION

The subject 1.10-acre property is located at 2100 Stone Valley Road at the northeastern corner of the intersection of Stone Valley Road and Miranda Avenue in the Alamo area. The property abuts single family residential properties along its northern and eastern property lines, with Stone Valley Creek running east to west along its northern edge.

Currently a vacant, ranch style single family residence is located on the property, along with other improvements such as a swimming pool, walkways and retaining walls. The garage is accessed via a driveway off Miranda Avenue near Stone Valley Road. The residence is situated above the rest of the property on an elevated pad near the center of the site. Other than the existing single family residence and associated improvements, the majority of the site is vacant and open, with fencing located only along a portion of Miranda Avenue. A solid canopy of trees is located in the riparian area adjacent to the creek, with additional trees located sparingly throughout the site.

The subject property is completely surrounded by single family properties, all of which are located within the R-20 single family residential zoning district. The property fronts on approximately 160-feet of Stone Valley Road, which is a main thoroughfare for many of the residents in this part of Alamo. The properties directly opposite the subject property across Stone Valley Road slope upward, with the residences generally located at a higher elevation than the subject property, which is level with most of the properties on the north side of Stone Valley Road.

IX. PROPOSED PROJECT

The Fire District is seeking approval of a land use permit for the establishment of a new 9,400-square foot Fire Station #32 to replace the existing Fire Station #32 located approximately 0.4-miles west of the subject property on Stone Valley Road. The new fire station will be located on the northeast corner of the Stone Valley Road and Miranda Avenue intersection in Alamo. The site address is 2100 Stone Valley Road. The 1.1-acre site is located within the R-20 single-family residential zoning district and is currently occupied with a vacant single family

residence. The project will also involve the removal of five (5) protected trees and work within the dripline of nine additional trees.

The new Fire Station #32 will provide housing for a two-company fire fighting unit which consists of six (6) firefighters. The fire station will also provide an apparatus bay that will provide storage for up to four pieces of fire fighting equipment. The proposed fire station includes the following:

- Visitor parking area (2 spaces) accessed from Miranda Avenue
- Reception area
- Staff offices (2)
- Eight (8) dorm rooms
- Four (4) bathrooms and one (1) public restroom
- Kitchen/Dining area
- Day room and exercise room
- Enclosed apparatus bay for up to four pieces of equipment
- Detached trash enclosure area
- Emergency generator, propane tank and fueling station
- Equipment yard with ten (10) parking spaces

A more detailed description of the various project components is provided below:

- A. Exterior Design: The fire station was designed to be compatible with the surrounding community but also includes some architectural elements that distinguish the building as a fire station. Building elevation can be found on sheet A3.1 of the attached building plans.

The building will be a single story structure with a small tower located near the front of the building. The maximum height of the building, at the tower, will be 32'-6", with the living quarters having a maximum height of 19.8-feet and the apparatus bay having a maximum height of 27.5-feet.

The fire station will incorporate a hipped roof design with faux slate roofing. The building will utilize multiple exterior finishes including stone veneer, horizontal siding and cement plaster. Numerous architectural details will also be incorporated into the design of the fire station including cut stone and composition window trim, single hung windows, metal louver roof vents and beam stubs. Many of these features are found on residential type structures.

Along Stone Valley Road, most of the building will be obscured by a 6'-6" pre-cast sound wall or the access gate. The only un-obscured view of the fire station will be from along Miranda Avenue, where the reception area, tower and apparatus bay doors will be seen from the roadway.

- B. Site Plan: The site plan for the proposed fire station can be found on sheet A1.1 of the attached building plans. The living area and apparatus bay of the proposed fire station

will be located near the center of the 1.1-acre property, with the living area oriented towards the north end of the property, parallel to the creek. The apparatus bay, which is where the firefighting equipment will be stored, is located toward the front of the property. An open area, identified as an "equipment yard" along with staff parking, will be located near the southeast corner of the lot, adjacent to Stone Valley Road. The equipment yard and staff parking area will be accessible from Stone Valley Road and will be secured by an electric gate and pre-cast 6'-6" sound wall.

The public entrance to the fire station will be located off Miranda Avenue. Two public parking spaces will be provided near the public entrance to the building. A separate driveway located on Miranda Avenue will provide egress for the firefighting equipment and crewmember vehicles.

A solid 6'-6" tall, pre-cast sound wall and access gate will be constructed parallel to Stone Valley Road and along a portion of Miranda Avenue. The wall will also be constructed along the eastern portion of the property to provide additional screening and sound attenuation between the facility and the residential property to the east. The wall will also secure the equipment yard and crew parking area and will provide screening of the facility from Stone Valley Road. The wall will be located outside of the R-20 setback areas (20-feet from the Stone Valley Road property line, 25-feet from the Miranda Avenue property line and 15-feet from the eastern property line) so no variances are needed for the height of the wall.

- C. Landscaping: A complete landscaping plan was submitted as part of the application and can be found on Sheet L1.0 of the application drawings. The landscaping plan identifies the location of all proposed landscaping for the entire site. According to the plan, 32 new trees will be planted, most of which will be located along the Stone Valley Road and Miranda Avenue frontage area, at least nine trees will be planted along the eastern property line to provide screening between the fire station and the single family property to the east. A significant number of native oak trees are located in the riparian area along the northern property line which will provide natural screening between the residential property to the north and the fire station.

In order to lessen the visual impact of the fire station, an earth berm will be established near the front of the site at the corner of Stone Valley Road and Miranda Avenue. The berm will be extensively landscaped with trees and shrubs as will most of the frontage of the property, according to the landscaping plan. The landscaping plan also identifies landscaped areas at various locations throughout the site, specifically adjacent to the visitor parking areas, the frontage areas and along the property line between the facility and adjacent property owner to the east. The landscaping plan will be required to be prepared in accordance with the County Water Conservation Ordinance.

- D. Frontage Improvements: Currently, there are only frontage improvements along Stone Valley Road, with no sidewalk on Miranda Avenue. Per the requirements of the County Public Works Department the applicant will be required to repair/replace any cracked or displaced curb, gutter, and sidewalk along the project frontage on Stone Valley Road.

The applicant will also be required to construct concrete curb, gutter, and sidewalk along the project frontage on Miranda Avenue.

- E. Signage: The building plans identify a singular 4.5-foot high by 10.5-foot wide identification sign on the corner of the property located within the required front setback area. Per the requirements of the R-20 Zoning District (Chapter 84-14) and the Outdoor Advertising Ordinance (Chapter 88-6) a sign of this size is not permitted, and variances to this requirement are not allowed. A maximum six square foot identification sign is all that is permitted per the Outdoor Advertising Ordinance and the Fire District will be required to comply with this requirement. Additionally, retaining walls over three feet in height are not allowed within the setback area and a variance to this requirement is not part of this application; therefore, the wall with the monument sign as identified in the plans is also not permitted. A condition of approval requiring the Fire District to comply with the wall and signage requirements has been included in the attached conditions of approval.
- F. Parking: A total of 12 parking spaces will be provided for the entire facility. Ten (10) parking spaces will be located within the enclosed equipment yard area and two visitor parking spaces (1 handicap) will be provided near the public entrance of the facility on Miranda Avenue. The County Off-Street Parking Ordinance does not provide parking space requirements for a use such as a fire station, but based on the actual parking demands of the use, staff has determined that only six (6) parking spaces would be required for the Fire Station since only six fire fighters will be stationed at the facility at any given time. A total of twelve spaces will be provided, including additional unmarked parking spaces within the equipment yard.
- G. Tree Removal/Impacts: An Arborist Report by Timothy C. Ghirardelli dated September 15, 2009 was prepared for the project. According to the report, five (5) trees will be removed, three oak trees, a queen palm and an almond tree. All of the trees to be removed are located along the Miranda frontage area. No trees within the creek riparian area are proposed to be removed.

The report identifies nine (9) protected trees to be impacted by the project. The nine trees to be impacted by the project are located at various locations throughout the site as well as on the adjacent residential property to the east. According to the arborist report, the trees to be impacted are in fair to good condition and should remain healthy if the guidelines identified in the arborist report are followed.

- H. Creek Structure Setback: The applicant is requesting an exception to the creek structure setback requirements of the County Subdivision Ordinance. The creek structure setback line is identified on the project Site Plan (Sheet A1.1). Approximately 5 to 10 feet of the northern side of the proposed fire station encroaches onto the creek structure setback area. The applicant has requested an exception to the creek structure setback area.
- I. Grading: Grading of the site will be required as part of the project. Most of the grading will involve removal of the elevated pad located near the center of the site where the existing single family residence is located. The elevation of the existing building pad is

approximately 346-feet above mean sea level, the proposed building pad elevation for the fire station will be at 335.5'. A small earthen berm will be established in the front of the site near the corner of Stone Valley Road and Miranda Avenue which will be landscaped and used to provide some screening of the facility.

X. AGENCY COMMENTS

A. Alamo Municipal Advisory Committee: At the March 15, 2011 Alamo MAC meeting the Alamo MAC unanimously approved a recommendation to approve the Fire Station. Along with their approval the Alamo MAC provided the following recommended conditions of approval:

- 1) Any major changes to the proposed project be brought back before the MAC for further review.
- 2) A landscape strip shall be installed between the curb on Miranda and the sidewalk fronting the Fire Station to be maintained by the Fire District.
- 3) The Fire District return to the MAC for review of the final landscape plans and building color scheme.
- 4) Recommend County Public Works approval of the exception to the creek setback as set forth in the County Subdivision Ordinance as proposed.
- 5) The MAC supports the proposed project be LEED-Silver certified.

A copy of an email from Jennifer Quallick of Supervisor Piepho's with the MAC's recommendation and conditions of approval is attached.

Staff has included conditions of approval that address the MAC's recommendations with the exception of recommendation #2 and #5. A landscape strip along the Miranda Avenue between the curb and sidewalk would not fit within the future right-of-way and is not required by code, so it will not be required for the project. As for being LEED-Silver Certified, the applicant has indicated that the fire station will be built to LEED Standards. The County Building Inspection Division has adopted the State Building Code, which includes green building requirements, which will be required for the construction of the fire station. Many builders in the County have been building to green or LEED standards on a voluntary basis and continue to do so.

B. Alamo Improvement Association: In a memo dated March 10, 2011 the Alamo Improvement Association recommended denial of the Fire Station land use permit application. The AIA's denial was based on various issues including traffic and aesthetics. A copy of the memo is attached.

C. County Public Works Department: In a memo dated June 9, 2011, the County Public Works Department provided a staff report and recommended conditions of approval for the project.

XI. STAFF CONCLUSION

Staff has determined that the appeal points identified in the appeal letter submitted by Mr. Haller on behalf of himself and other neighbors do not identify any additional environmental impacts that have not been addressed or mitigated in the conditions of approval for the project or with the Mitigation Monitoring Program prepared for the project and adopted by the County Zoning Administrator. Additionally, staff has determined that the findings prepared for the project and approved by the Zoning Administrator are valid.

The new Fire Station #32 will be a facility that will benefit the entire community of Alamo, and will provide the community of Alamo with a modern, safe and needed emergency service facility that will serve the community for decades to come. Therefore, staff is recommending that the County Planning Commission deny the appeal and uphold the Zoning Administrator's approval of the project.

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COUNTY ZONING ADMINISTRATOR
MONDAY, JUNE 20, 2011-1:30 P.M.

I. INTRODUCTION

ATI ARCHITECTS (Applicant) & SAN RAMON VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT (Owner), County File #LP09-2026: A request for approval of a land use permit to establish a new 9,400-square foot, single story fire station on a 1.10-acre property located at 2100 Stone Valley Road in the Alamo area. The proposed fire station will replace the existing Fire Station #32 which is located approximately 0.4-miles west on Stone Valley Road. The project will involve the construction of the fire station along with other related facilities and structures including an equipment yard area, fueling station, above ground propane tank, emergency generator, tool shed and trash enclosure. A 7-foot high precast concrete wall, covered with stone veneer, would be constructed around the equipment yard. The project will also involve the removal of five (5) protected trees and work within the dripline of nine (9) additional protected trees. The project site is located at 2100 Stone Valley Road in the Alamo area. (Zoning: R-20) (ZA: E-15) (CT: 3461.02) (GP: SL) (APN: 193-130-025)

II. RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Zoning Administrator adopt the attached Final Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Program prepared for the project, and approve the land use permit for Fire Station #32 as identified in the submitted plans and subject to the attached conditions of approval.

III. GENERAL INFORMATION

- A. General Plan: The subject property is located within the Single-Family Low-Density (SL) General Plan designation.
- B. Zoning: The subject property is located within the R-20 Single-Family Residential Zoning District.
- C. CEQA Status: A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was prepared for the project on December 22, 2010. The MND was posted with the County Recorder's office on December 22, 2010. The public comment period for the MND was extended beyond the required 30-day time frame and ended on February 7, 2011. Due to the number of comments received during the public comment period for the project, a *Final Mitigated*

Negative Declaration, including responses to comments was prepared and completed on June 6, 2011.

D. Previous Applications: An application (County File #MS07-29) to subdivide the subject 1.10-acre property into two parcels was submitted to the County in 2007 and was withdrawn in 2009.

E. Regulatory Programs:

1. Flood Hazard Area: A portion of the subject property is located within the 100-year flood zone. No part of the proposed fire station structure will be located within the flood zone.
2. 60 dBA Noise Control Zone: The subject property is located within a 60 DNL noise contour as identified in the Noise Element (Chapter 11) of the County 2005-2020 General Plan.

IV. SITE/AREA DESCRIPTION

The subject 1.10-acre property is located at 2100 Stone Valley Road at the northeastern corner of the intersection of Stone Valley Road and Miranda Avenue in the Alamo area. The property abuts single family residential properties along its northern and eastern property lines, with Stone Valley Creek running east to west along its northern edge.

Currently a vacant, ranch style single family residence is located on the property, along with other improvements such as a swimming pool, walkways and retaining walls. The garage is accessed via a driveway off Miranda Avenue near Stone Valley Road. The residence is situated above the rest of the property on an elevated pad near the center of the site. Other than the existing single family residence and associated improvements, the majority of the site is vacant and open, with fencing located only along a portion of Miranda Avenue. A solid canopy of trees is located in the riparian area adjacent to the creek, with additional trees located sparingly throughout the site.

The subject property is completely surrounded by single family properties, all of which are located within the R-20 single family residential zoning district. The property fronts on approximately 160-feet of Stone Valley Road, which is a main thoroughfare for many of the residents in this part of Alamo. The properties directly opposite the subject property across Stone Valley Road slope upward, with the residences generally located at a higher elevation than the subject property, which is level with most of the properties on the north side of Stone Valley Road.

V. BACKGROUND

The fire district acquired the subject property from the previous owner in 2009. Upon acquiring the property, the Fire District submitted a mandatory referral to the County Department of

Conservation and Development and a hearing on the mandatory referral took place before the San Ramon Valley Regional Planning Commission on March 18, 2009.

The subject property is located in a single family residential neighborhood and is currently occupied with a single family residence. The residence is not occupied and has been vacant since around the time the Fire District acquired the property.

The new fire station will replace the existing Fire Station #32 which is located approximately 0.4-miles west of the subject property on Stone Valley Road. The existing Fire Station #32 is a 3,700-square foot structure described by the Fire District as a converted farmhouse.

VI. PROPOSED PROJECT

The Fire District is seeking approval of a land use permit for the establishment of a new 9,400-square foot Fire Station #32 to replace the existing Fire Station #32 located approximately 0.4-miles west of the subject property on Stone Valley Road. The new fire station will be located on the northeast corner of the Stone Valley Road and Miranda Avenue intersection in Alamo. The site address is 2100 Stone Valley Road. The 1.1-acre site is located within the R-20 single-family residential zoning district and is currently occupied with a vacant single family residence. The project will also involve the removal of five (5) protected trees and work within the dripline of nine additional trees.

The new Fire Station #32 will provide housing for a two-company fire fighting unit which consists of six (6) firefighters. The fire station will also provide an apparatus bay that will provide storage for up to four pieces of fire fighting equipment. The proposed fire station includes the following:

- Visitor parking area (2 spaces) accessed from Miranda Avenue
- Reception area
- Staff offices (2)
- Eight (8) dorm rooms
- Four (4) bathrooms and one (1) public restroom
- Kitchen/Dining area
- Day room and exercise room
- Enclosed apparatus bay for up to four pieces of equipment
- Detached trash enclosure area
- Emergency generator, propane tank and fueling station
- Equipment yard with ten (10) parking spaces

A more detailed description of the various project components is provided below:

- A. Exterior Design: The fire station was designed to be compatible with the surrounding community but also includes some architectural elements that distinguish the building as a fire station. Building elevation can be found on sheet A3.1 of the attached building plans.

The building will be a single story structure with a small tower located near the front of the building. The maximum height of the building, at the tower, will be 32'-6", with the living quarters having a maximum height of 20' and the apparatus bay having a maximum height of 28-feet.

The fire station will incorporate a hipped roof design with faux slate roofing. The building will utilize multiple exterior finishes including stone veneer, horizontal siding and cement plaster. Numerous architectural details will also be incorporated into the design of the fire station including cut stone and composition window trim, single hung windows, metal louver roof vents and beam stubs. Many of these features are found on residential type structures.

Along Stone Valley Road, most of the building will be obscured by a 6'-6" pre-cast sound wall or the access gate. The only un-obscured view of the fire station will be from along Miranda Avenue, where the reception area, tower and apparatus bay doors will be seen from the roadway.

- B. Site Plan: The site plan for the proposed fire station can be found on sheet A1.1 of the attached building plans. The living area and apparatus bay of the proposed fire station will be located near the center of the 1.1-acre property, with the living area oriented towards the north end of the property, parallel to the creek. The apparatus bay, which is where the firefighting equipment will be stored, is located toward the front of the property. An open area, identified as an "equipment yard" along with staff parking, will be located near the southeast corner of the lot, adjacent to Stone Valley Road. The equipment yard and staff parking area will be accessible from Stone Valley Road and will be secured by an electric gate and pre-cast 6'-6" sound wall.

The public entrance to the fire station will be located off Miranda Avenue. Two public parking spaces will be provided near the public entrance to the building. A separate driveway located on Miranda Avenue will provide egress for the firefighting equipment and crewmember vehicles.

A solid 6'-6" tall, pre-cast sound wall and access gate will be constructed parallel to Stone Valley Road and along a portion of Miranda Avenue. The wall will also be constructed along the eastern portion of the property to provide additional screening and sound attenuation between the facility and the residential property to the east. The wall will also secure the equipment yard and crew parking area and will provide screening of the facility from Stone Valley Road. The wall will be located outside of the R-20 setback areas (20-feet from the Stone Valley Road property line, 25-feet from the Miranda Avenue property line and 15-feet from the eastern property line) so no variances are needed for the height of the wall.

- C. Landscaping: A complete landscaping plan was submitted as part of the application and can be found on Sheet L1.0 of the application drawings. The landscaping plan identifies the location of all proposed landscaping for the entire site. According to the plan, 32 new trees will be planted, most of which will be located along the Stone Valley Road and

Miranda Avenue frontage area, at least nine trees will be planted along the eastern property line to provide screening between the fire station and the single family property to the east. A significant number of native oak trees are located in the riparian area along the northern property line which will provide natural screening between the residential property to the north and the fire station.

In order to lessen the visual impact of the fire station, an earth berm will be established near the front of the site at the corner of Stone Valley Road and Miranda Avenue. The berm will be extensively landscaped with trees and shrubs as will most of the frontage of the property, according to the landscaping plan. The landscaping plan also identifies landscaped areas at various locations throughout the site, specifically adjacent to the visitor parking areas, the frontage areas and along the property line between the facility and adjacent property owner to the east. The landscaping plan will be required to be prepared in accordance with the County Water Conservation Ordinance.

- D. Frontage Improvements: Currently, there are only frontage improvements along Stone Valley Road, with no sidewalk on Miranda Avenue. Per the requirements of the County Public Works Department the applicant will be required to repair/replace any cracked or displaced curb, gutter, and sidewalk along the project frontage on Stone Valley Road. The applicant will also be required to construct concrete curb, gutter, and sidewalk along the project frontage on Miranda Avenue.
- E. Signage: The building plans identify a singular 4.5-foot high by 10.5-foot wide identification sign on the corner of the property located within the required front setback area. Per the requirements of the R-20 Zoning District (Chapter 84-14) and the Outdoor Advertising Ordinance (Chapter 88-6) a sign of this size is not permitted, and variances to this requirement are not allowed. A maximum six square foot identification sign is all that is permitted per the Outdoor Advertising Ordinance and the Fire District will be required to comply with this requirement. Additionally, retaining walls over three feet in height are not allowed within the setback area and a variance to this requirement is not part of this application; therefore, the wall with the monument sign as identified in the plans is also not permitted. A condition of approval requiring the Fire District to comply with the wall and signage requirements has been included in the attached conditions of approval.
- F. Parking: A total of 12 parking spaces will be provided for the entire facility. Ten (10) parking spaces will be located within the enclosed equipment yard area and two visitor parking spaces (1 handicap) will be provided near the public entrance of the facility on Miranda Avenue. The County Off-Street Parking Ordinance does not provide parking space requirements for a use such as a fire station, but based on the actual parking demands of the use, staff has determined that only six (6) parking spaces would be required for the Fire Station since only six fire fighters will be stationed at the facility at any given time. A total of twelve spaces will be provided, including additional unmarked parking spaces within the equipment yard.

- G. Tree Removal/Impacts: An Arborist Report by Timothy C. Ghirardelli dated September 15, 2009 was prepared for the project. According to the report, five (5) trees will be removed, three oak trees, a queen palm and an almond tree. All of the trees to be removed are located along the Miranda frontage area. No trees within the creek riparian area are proposed to be removed.

The report identifies nine (9) protected trees to be impacted by the project. The nine trees to be impacted by the project are located at various locations throughout the site as well as on the adjacent residential property to the east. According to the arborist report, the trees to be impacted are in fair to good condition and should remain healthy if the guidelines identified in the arborist report are followed.

- H. Creek Structure Setback: The applicant is requesting an exception to the creek structure setback requirements of the County Subdivision Ordinance. The creek structure setback line is identified on the project Site Plan (Sheet A1.1). Approximately 5 to 10 feet of the northern side of the proposed fire station encroaches onto the creek structure setback area. The applicant has requested an exception to the creek structure setback area.
- I. Grading: Grading of the site will be required as part of the project. Most of the grading will involve removal of the elevated pad located near the center of the site where the existing single family residence is located. The elevation of the existing building pad is approximately 346-feet above mean sea level, the proposed building pad elevation for the fire station will be at 335.5'. A small earthen berm will be established in the front of the site near the corner of Stone Valley Road and Miranda Avenue which will be landscaped and used to provide some screening of the facility.

VII. AGENCY COMMENTS

- A. Alamo Municipal Advisory Committee: At the March 15, 2011 Alamo MAC meeting the Alamo MAC unanimously approved a recommendation to approve the Fire Station. Along with their approval the Alamo MAC provided the following recommended conditions of approval:
- 1) Any major changes to the proposed project be brought back before the MAC for further review.
 - 2) A landscape strip shall be installed between the curb on Miranda and the sidewalk fronting the Fire Station to be maintained by the Fire District.
 - 3) The Fire District return to the MAC for review of the final landscape plans and building color scheme.
 - 4) Recommend County Public Works approval of the exception to the creek setback as set forth in the County Subdivision Ordinance as proposed.
 - 5) The MAC supports the proposed project be LEED-Silver certified.

A copy of an email from Jennifer Quallick of Supervisor Piepho's with the MAC's recommendation and conditions of approval is attached.

Staff has included conditions of approval that address the MAC's recommendations with the exception of recommendation #2 and #5. A landscape strip along the Miranda Avenue between the curb and sidewalk would not fit within the future right-of-way and is not required by code, so it will not be required for the project. As for being LEED-Silver Certified, the County has not yet adopted green building standards, but the applicant has indicated that the fire station will be built to LEED Standards.

- B. Alamo Improvement Association: In a memo dated March 10, 2011 the Alamo Improvement Association recommended denial of the Fire Station land use permit application. The AIA's denial was based on various issues including traffic and aesthetics. A copy of the memo is attached.
- C. County Public Works Department: In a memo dated June 9, 2011, the County Public Works Department provided a staff report and recommended conditions of approval for the project.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Numerous public comments were received during the public comment period for the Mitigated Negative Declaration. Responses to the comments for the Mitigated Negative Declaration have been addressed below and within the Final Mitigated Declaration that was prepared for the project.

Comments were also received outside the public comment period for the Mitigated Negative Declaration. One of the more significant comment letters received was from a David Cardiff, who in a letter dated February 25, 2010 identified concerns regarding the project's compliance with fire codes and the County General Plan.

As standard protocol, the application was routed to the County Building Inspection Division and the San Ramon Fire Valley Fire Protection District for comment. No comments were received from the Building Inspection Division and standard comments were received from the Fire Protection District for the project. Typically, the Building Inspection Division will not review building plans for compliance with the fire code until building permit issuance, which will not happen until after a land use permit application is approved. Staff has not been provided with any information, other than the letter submitted by Mr. Cardiff, that the fire station does not conform to fire code.

In response to Mr. Cardiff's letter, the applicant prepared a formal response to his concerns regarding compliance with the various fire codes. The document, identified as "Response to Code Compliance Questions" is dated July 15, 2010. The report addressed the various fire code compliance issues as identified by Mr. Cardiff and provides interpretation and explanation as to how the project complies with the various fire codes, or how the codes identified by Mr. Cardiff do not apply to this project. Overall, the report indicates that the project substantially complies with the various fire codes and requirements.

It should be noted that it is not within the purview of this land use permit application to determine which fire codes apply to this project or to determine compliance with all applicable fire codes or safety regulations. As with all other discretionary applications, the application was routed to the Building Inspection Division and Fire District for comment and no significant comments were received.

Mr. Cardiff also expressed concerns regarding compliance with specific General Plan policies relating to new development projects and fire protection, specifically Policies 7-at, 7-au, and 7-av. The General Plan Policies that Mr. Cardiff identified relate to review of development plans by local fire districts, which has been complied with for this application.

IX. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was prepared for the project and was posted for public review on December 22, 2010. The original 30-day public review period was extended an additional 15-days and the public comment period formally closed on Monday, February 7, 2011.

In response to the circulation of the MND, a significant number of comment letters were submitted to the Department of Conservation and Development. Due to the extensive number of issues identified in the comment letters, staff had a ***Final Mitigated Negative Declaration*** along with Response to Comments, Errata and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) prepared. The Final Mitigated Negative Declaration including the Response to Comments, Errata and MMRP was completed on June 6, 2011.

The Final MND addresses all comments directly related to the adequacy of the environmental review document. The most common issues identified in the comment letters were traffic safety and noise impacts.

The traffic safety comments focused mostly on pedestrian safety along Miranda Avenue during emergency calls, specifically right before and after school hours when vehicle and pedestrian traffic is heavy along Stone Valley Road and Miranda Avenue.

The Final MND determined that this was not a significant impact because the project would not result in any *additional* traffic safety issues. Moving Fire Station #32 to its proposed location on the corner of Stone Valley Road and Miranda Avenue from its current location on Stone Valley Road will not alter the routes of emergency vehicles, specifically in relation to Miranda Avenue. The number of emergency vehicle trips heading north on Miranda Avenue would remain unchanged with the relocation of the Fire Station. Additionally, pedestrian safety on Miranda Avenue during emergency calls may be improved since the Fire District will be required to install frontage improvement along Miranda Avenue, including sidewalks.

Emergency vehicle response would also be improved at the new fire station location due to the fact that the Stone Valley Road and Miranda Avenue intersection is signalized and would be controlled by the fire district during emergency calls. A traffic signal preemption device will be located within the fire station that would provide a green light for vehicles on Miranda Avenue

and emergency vehicles exiting the fire station. This would help clear traffic lanes for emergency vehicles leaving the station.

A number of comments expressed concern about the lack of a complete traffic study for the project, but based on the number of trips to be generated by the project, a Measure 'C' traffic study is not required. Based on the language of the comments, it appears that much of the concern relating to traffic issues are related to traffic safety and not traffic congestion that may result from the project. The Final Mitigated Negative Declaration makes it clear that there will be no traffic safety impacts as a result of the project.

Another common issue found in the comments received on the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is noise. Many of the nearby residents expressed concern regarding the amount of noise that may be generated by the project. The obvious sources of noise would be sirens, diesel truck idling and equipment back-up warning indicators. According to the MND, the main source of noise for the project will be temporary construction noise during the construction phase of the project. Various mitigations have been included to mitigate construction noise to a less than significant level.

As for noise generated during the operation of the facility, the MND indicated that the project will not result in an increase of noise, specifically noise generated by emergency vehicles. The number of emergency vehicle trips along Stone Valley Road is expected to be the same before and after the project since the new Fire Station will replace the existing Fire Station #32 located approximately 0.4-miles west on Stone Valley Road. Other noise generation activities that may take place at the site will likely take place within the enclosed equipment yard which is surrounded by building and a sound wall, which provides significant noise buffering.

Some of the comment letters received by the Department identified issues unrelated to land use compatibility or environmental impacts of the project. Comments relating to financing of the new Fire Station or decisions made by the Fire District relation to the fire station location were included, which are beyond the purview of this application review process.

Based on the comments and responses, staff has determined that the proposed Fire Station #32, as mitigated, will not result in a significant environmental impact.

X. STAFF ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION

- A. Zoning Compatibility: The fire station will comply with all of the development standards of the R-20 Zoning District. All setback and sideyard requirements will be met and the building will not exceed the 35-foot height limit. The monument sign shown in the plans (Sheet A1.3) does not comply with the provisions of the Outdoor Advertising Ordinance (Chapter 88-6) and is not permitted. Per the conditions of approval, any signage for the Fire Station must comply with all of the provisions of the County Ordinance including the Outdoor Advertising Ordinance, which permits an identification sign of no more than six square feet on properties within residential zoning districts.

- B. Appropriateness of Use: Per the provisions of the R-20 Zoning District in which the subject property is zoned, public buildings, such as fire stations are an allowed use upon the issuance of a land use permit. Fire Stations are commonly located in the middle of residential neighborhoods in order to provide adequate fire protection and emergency services to all communities.

The subject property is located at a signalized intersection on a main thoroughfare in the Alamo area which will allow the fire district to improve response times and will provide improved traffic safety for emergency vehicles exiting the station. This will be a benefit to all property owners within the response area of the fire station.

The architecture plans along with the landscaping plans identify an attractive building and site that fits in well with the surrounding neighborhood. Being that it is a public building, the surrounding residents can be assured that the fire station will be well maintained at all times.

- C. Site Plan Analysis: The layout and orientation of the fire station takes advantage of the site's location at the intersection of Stone Valley Road and Miranda Avenue while at the same time conforming to the development standards of the R-20 Zoning District and meeting the 50-foot riparian setback requirement (Policy 8-89) of the County General Plan. The proposed layout allows emergency vehicles to exit safely onto Miranda Avenue with the help of a signal pre-emption device which will allow the fire station to control the traffic signal currently located at the intersection of Stone Valley Road and Miranda Avenue.

The main living quarters of the fire station will be located away from Stone Valley Road and screened from view by a 6-foot, 6-inch solid wall located parallel to Stone Valley Road. The sound wall will also be located along the eastern property line to provide screening between the facility and the adjacent residential property to the east. Riparian vegetation provides natural screening between the facility and the adjacent residential property to the north. The open equipment yard located at the southeast corner of the facility will be fully enclosed, contain noise, and screen station activities from public view.

- D. Building Design: The Fire Station was designed to have a minimal visual impact to the adjacent property owners and the view along Stone Valley Road and Miranda Avenue. The main living area will have a maximum height of 20-feet, the apparatus bay 28-feet and the tower near the public entrance 32'-6".

The main portion of the building is setback significantly from the Stone Valley Road right-of-way and will be screened by a 6'-6" solid pre-cast sound wall. The sound wall will also be located along the eastern property line in order to provide screening between the fire station and the adjacent residential property to the east.

In order to maintain consistency with the character of the surrounding neighborhood, the fire station incorporates numerous residential design features including a hipped roof

with faux slate shingles, multiple exterior finishes including stone veneer, horizontal siding and cement plaster, single hung windows, metal louver roof vents and beam stubs.

- E. Parking: Ten parking spaces will be provided within the secured equipment yard and two additional visitor parking spaces will be provided near the public entrance to the fire station. Six firefighters will be stationed at the facility at all times, which requires providing a minimum of six parking spaces for staff. No additional staff will be regularly assigned to Fire Station #32. The County Off-Street Parking Ordinance does not identify specific parking requirements for a use such as a fire station but does require that the number of required parking spaces be determined using the most similar specified use. Since fire fighters will be sleeping at the facility during their shifts, much like a hotel, staff has determined that providing one space for each fire fighter assigned to the station is acceptable, therefore, only six spaces should be required. A total of twelve (12) spaces are provided. If additional parking is required a significant amount of parking area is available within the equipment yard. Significant parking will be provided at the facility and should not result in any parking related issues.
- F. Tree Permit: The project involves the removal of five (5) protected trees and work within the dripline of nine (9) additional trees. The trees to be removed are located near the Miranda Avenue frontage area and are not of any significant aesthetic or natural value, especially the queen palm and multi trunked almond trees to be removed. The three oak trees to be removed have grown out of the trunks of previously removed trees and are relatively small and located within the future sidewalk area of the project. Removal of the trees for development of the project is justified.

According to the arborist report, the trees to be impacted by development of the site have a good chance of survival if the recommendations of the arborist are followed, which will be required as part of the conditions of approval.

- G. Creek Structure Setback Exception: The applicant has requested an exception to the creek structure setback requirements as required by the County Subdivision Ordinance. Per the site plan, the length of the entire northern end of the fire station will encroach approximately 5 to 10 feet into the creek structure setback area as calculated by the project engineer.

In order to be granted an exception to the creek structure setback boundary, the applicant was required to provide geotechnical evidence to the County Public Works Department that the existing creek bank is stable and will not erode to a point that could harm any proposed structures. The applicant provided a Geotechnical Exploration report, and Creek Structure Setback Recommendation Report prepared by ENGE0, Inc., which were the basis for approval of the exception to the creek structure setback requirement for the project. Additional studies may be required prior to approval of the improvement plans by the Public Works Department.

- H. Access: The fire station will have driveways located on Stone Valley Road and Miranda Avenue. The Stone Valley Road driveway will be used as ingress for fire station staff and

equipment only. There will be two driveways located on Miranda Avenue, one specifically used as egress for staff and equipment and one used for public access to the two visitor parking spaces located at the front of the building. The ingress and egress points for the fire station were chosen in order to provide safe and efficient egress of emergency vehicles from the station (Miranda Avenue) while at the same time result in the least amount of traffic disruption for staff and emergency vehicles entering the site.

XI. CONCLUSIONS

The proposed fire station will be consistent with the development standards of the R-20 Zoning District and with the Goals and Policies as set forth in the County General Plan. The fire station will be compatible with the character of the surrounding residential neighborhood and will provide the community of Alamo with a safe, updated, and efficient emergency service facility. A Final Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared for the project which determined that the project will not result in any significant impact to the environment.

Therefore, staff is recommending that the County Zoning Administrator approve the land use permit for Fire Station #32 based on the attached findings and subject to the attached conditions of approval.

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6/14/11

RLH