



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-19-114
Meeting 19-22
August 28, 2019

AGENDA ITEM 10

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Resolution requesting the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors extend the 4/5ths supermajority vote required to move the Stanford University Academic Growth Boundary for an additional 99 years to protect important open space lands

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION *den*

Adopt a Resolution requesting that the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors extend the 4/5ths supermajority vote required to move the Stanford University Academic Growth Boundary for an additional 99 years to continue protecting important open space lands in the county.

SUMMARY

Stanford University is a private university comprised of more than 8,000 acres, spanning the northwest corner of Santa Clara County and southern San Mateo County. Approximately 4,000 of those acres, of what is commonly considered the core campus area, are in unincorporated Santa Clara County and subject to the land use jurisdiction of Santa Clara County (County). The development on unincorporated County lands is governed by both a General Use Permit and a Community Plan, both of which the County is in the process of updating. About 2,200 of the approximately 4,000 acres of Stanford lands in the unincorporated County are outside of the Academic Growth Boundary (AGB) and have a land use and zoning designation of Open Space and Field Research. The current General Use Permit requires a 4/5ths supermajority of the County Board of Supervisors to modify the alignment of the AGB, providing an extra increment of protection for the open space. The 2018 Supplement to the Sustainable Development Study conducted by the County confirmed that the University could nearly triple in size over the next century and still not expand beyond its current AGB. Based on these findings, County staff and the Planning Commission have both recommended that the 4/5ths supermajority vote requirement be extended for an additional 99 years, thus continuing to provide the extra increment of protection for the open space outside the AGB.

The General Manager recommends the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) Board of Directors (Board) adopt a resolution requesting that the County Board of Supervisors accept the recommendation of staff and the Planning Commission to extend the 4/5ths supermajority vote required to move the AGB for an additional 99 years.

BACKGROUND

Stanford University applied to Santa Clara County for a new General Use Permit (GUP) and associated amendments to the Stanford Community Plan and Zoning Map to authorize new development of academic, housing, and other associated uses on the Stanford campus to meet

facility needs through the year 2035. The application is the largest development application in the County's history. It includes 2,275,000 square feet of net new academic space/support space and 3,150 net new housing units/beds on campus. The application is significant and unique in terms of the amount of development, the extended timeframe of its implementation, and the potential environmental impacts affecting the region.

The Stanford University GUP Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was published by the County in December 2018. It evaluates potential environmental impacts from the proposed Stanford project. Numerous community meetings and public hearings were held for the Project. Primary public concerns of the Project are housing, traffic congestion, and open space protection.

The County has been working with Stanford to implement smart growth strategies, such as balancing job-related development with adequate housing and transportation improvements to fully mitigate the potential impacts on the broader community. The County Planning Commission considered the application at three public hearings in May and June 2019. At its June 27, 2019 meeting, the Planning Commission forwarded a favorable recommendation to the Board of Supervisors regarding Stanford University's GUP Application subject to the Conditions of Approval, the GUP EIR, the Stanford Community Plan amendments, and Zoning Ordinance amendments. The County Board of Supervisors is scheduled to review the application in late summer or fall of this year.

DISCUSSION

The District has been monitoring the development of the Stanford Project. Staff reviewed and provided comments on the Draft EIR in 2017. District comments focused on recreation, where potential environmental impacts may result from increased use of regional trails, open space, and other recreational facilities.

The Stanford Project spans approximately 4,000 acres of Stanford lands, including the main Stanford campus area located generally north of Junipero Serra Boulevard (approximately 1,800 acres), and the largely undeveloped Stanford foothills located generally south of Junipero Serra Boulevard (approximately 2,200 acres). The Stanford foothills are outside of the AGB and have a land use and zoning designation of Open Space and Field Research (Attachment 1). The existing GUP requires a 4/5ths supermajority vote of the Board of Supervisors to modify the alignment of the AGB, thus providing an extra increment of protection for the open space. In 2018, the County prepared the Sustainable Development Study Supplement as a planning exercise to discuss how much Stanford could grow beyond 2035, which is the anticipated year for full buildout of the current proposed GUP. The study showed that the University could nearly triple in size over the next century and still not expand beyond its current AGB (Attachment 2). Based on this information, Santa Clara County staff and the Planning Commission have both recommended that the 4/5ths supermajority vote requirement be extended for an additional 99 years as part of the new GUP and associated Community Plan Amendments.

County staff and the Planning Commission's recommendation related to the AGB is consistent with the District's mission. The General Manager recommends that the Board adopt a resolution supporting their recommendation.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact on adopting the proposed resolution.

BOARD COMMITTEE REVIEW

This item was not previously reviewed by a Committee.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

Approval of the resolution is not a project under CEQA. No further CEQA review is required.

NEXT STEPS

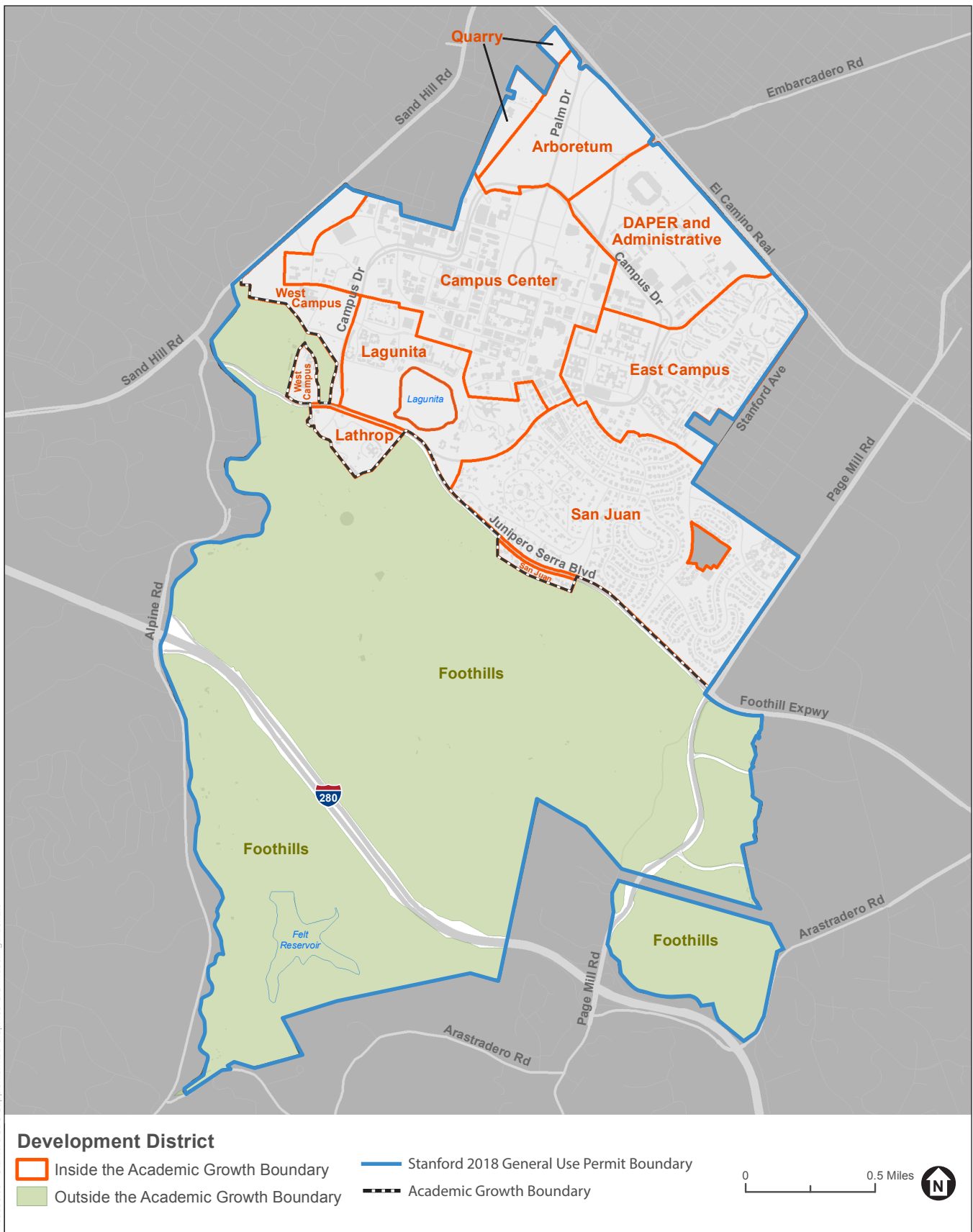
Pending Board approval, the District will forward the resolution to the Santa Clara Board of Supervisors.

Attachments:

1. Academy Growth Boundary Map
2. Sustainable Development Study Supplement Fact Sheet

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SOURCE: Stanford LBRE LUEP; ESA

Stanford SDS Supplement

Figure 2-2
Existing Development Districts under the 2000 General Use Permit



Sustainable Development Study Supplement Fact Sheet

Santa Clara County prepared the Sustainable Development Study Supplement (SDS Supplement) as a planning exercise to discuss how much Stanford could grow beyond 2035, which is the anticipated year for full buildout of the proposed 2018 General Use Permit. It “does not reflect any specific or proposed plans by Stanford.” The report verifies that Stanford can accommodate future academic and residential facilities on its campus over the long term by continuing to prioritize sustainability and employ smart land use practices. Resource constraints would not present an obstacle to Stanford's growth for many years beyond 2035. Such constraints would be re-evaluated before Santa Clara County considered any new development that Stanford might propose in the future.

Background

As a condition of approval for Stanford's current General Use Permit, the university completed and submitted a Sustainable Development Study (SDS) to Santa Clara County in 2008, which was approved by the Board of Supervisors in 2009. The SDS found that future development could be accommodated within the existing Academic Growth Boundary (AGB) on the Stanford campus through 2035. That timeframe was chosen to achieve “a balance between the desire to provide a long-term planning framework and to produce a study that was useful.”

In response to comments on the 2018 General Use Permit Draft Environmental Impact Report about the maximum future building capacity on the Stanford campus, Santa Clara County recently released the SDS Supplement that “assesses the long-term development capacity of the Stanford campus” well beyond the timeframe studied in the 2009 SDS. The SDS Supplement provides a “development capacity analysis [which] describes the hypothetical maximum development capacity of Stanford's lands in unincorporated Santa Clara County...beyond the current planning horizon of nearby local communities, the Bay Area region, and the state.”

Overview

The SDS Supplement confirms that Stanford can accommodate new facilities within the AGB well into the future while maintaining the character of the campus. The SDS Supplement assumes in this planning exercise that there would be no development in existing campus open spaces, including in the Foothills and the Arboretum.

The SDS Supplement “importantly, does not reflect any specific or proposed plans by Stanford or the County.” The report's study horizon is beyond a reasonable planning timeframe (15-20 years), therefore the study applies campus development densities of similar universities to calculate hypothetical development capacity within Stanford's land areas that have potential for infill or redevelopment.

It is not possible to know what the needs of the university and the community will be in the future. Land use is a dynamic and rapidly-evolving field being shaped by advances in knowledge and technology. And given the rapid rate of economic and societal change in the world, the work done by Stanford is likely to continue evolving in the coming decades as new needs and opportunities emerge for the research and teaching missions of the university.

The SDS Supplement quantifies the hypothetical carrying capacity of Stanford's land within the Academic Growth Boundary and describes potential constraints to Stanford development beyond the 2018 General

Use Permit. The study concludes that **“Over the very long-term, it is reasonable to expect that societal and technological change will extend the carrying capacity of existing levels of resources, potentially alter the rates of development and population growth on the campus, and push further out the point at which resource limitations physically constrain campus development.”**

The Community Plan for the Stanford campus is part of the Santa Clara County General Plan, which, similar to other municipal general plans, outlines a blueprint for acceptable land uses over a reasonable duration of time. As communities grow and change, general plans adapt accordingly. Stanford's plan is no different, in that **the land use plans governing the university provide flexibility today and can be amended by the Board of Supervisors in the future to accommodate changing needs and capabilities.**

The zoning of the Stanford campus is, in at least one respect, more restrictive than zoning that applies to many other types of land uses in Santa Clara County and nearby cities. Academic development is not allowed by right and requires a conditional use permit. The maximum limit of allowed campus development is specified through this use permit process. As a result of Stanford's zoning, **future academic development beyond the amount authorized by the 2018 General Use Permit would require new discretionary approvals by the Board of Supervisors.** While the SDS Supplement concludes that more facilities can be accommodated on the campus, the County retains control to decide whether to allow such development through future use permit proceedings.

Key findings of the SDS Supplement

- Using a variety of infill and redevelopment strategies, **there is space to responsibly add density on Stanford's academic campus well beyond 2035 while maintaining the campus character.**
- Between 2010 and 2035, “Stanford's forecasted residential population...indicate[s] that **the Stanford campus is adding housing faster than are surrounding communities and the Bay Area as a whole.**”
- Energy intensity on Stanford's campus is down 25% since 2000. **“Energy does not appear to represent a constraint to future development of Stanford's campus.”**
- Stanford has reduced campus greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 68% from peak levels. “Due to Stanford's sustainability efforts and California's stringent regulations, combined with market- and technology-driven changes, **GHG emissions do not appear to represent a constraint to future development of the Stanford campus.**”
- Stanford has reduced its potable water consumption by 30 percent between 2000 and 2015, despite adding 200,000 square feet of academic facilities and housing each year. Assuming continuation of current consumption rates, there is sufficient water available to serve campus growth through 2060, and through 2038 under drought conditions. The report acknowledges that, while water may serve as a future constraint to development beyond 2035, **“[i]t is equally plausible that water supply will not become a constraint by these dates if campus growth slows, conservation increases, or new supplies are developed through water recycling and/or new contractual agreements with water wholesalers.”**
- “Stanford depends upon regional housing availability to attract and retain high-quality staff and other workers. Regional housing shortages, should they persist, theoretically could make it more difficult for Stanford to attract and retain faculty and staff over the long term.” The report acknowledges that regional housing supplies are not likely to affect student recruitment given the large amount of student housing that Stanford provides on its campus.