

Planning Underway for Housing on 42 Acres of Open Space East of BRECA Area

By Jim Morgan

Just east of the BRECA area lies an open space parcel 42 acres in size that is planned for development in the near future. The parcel, known as the Kassis property (after the owner) is next to Folsom Blvd. on the south and the American River Parkway on the northwest. There are two main parts: the southern part is pasture land and about the same elevation as Folsom Blvd. The northern part is about 20 feet lower in elevation, and has a long stretch fronting the American River Parkway.

This area is a relic walnut orchard, and is reported by neighbors to host a variety of wildlife. It is also reported to have flooded in 1986, and is part of the "flood plain."

For some time now, a developer, Trumark Homes, has been working quietly with the City of Rancho Cordova (the parcel is within Rancho Cordova) as well as other agencies to develop a plan for housing on this parcel. The most recent plan, from May 2020, is for 245 dwelling units. These would consist of townhouses along Folsom Blvd., and large estate type houses along the American River Parkway. In between would be cluster type and small lot single family houses. There would be a 2-acre neighborhood park. There would also be a trail along the American River Parkway that would be accessible to the public. Vehicle access to the parcel would come from an entrance along Folsom Blvd., and another from Stirling Park Dr., which connects to Rod Beaudry.

Concerns from the BRECA area include preservation of open space, possible connection to Mira Del Rio Dr., whether the proposed 2 acre park is adequate, and traffic.

- The parcel is one of the last areas of privately held open space along the American River Parkway, and the Parkway would benefit from adding the northern part of the parcel (assuming funds could be found to acquire the parcel).
- At this point, there are no plans for connection of the streets within the parcel to Mira Del Rio Dr. There are pedestrian pathways within the plan which could be connected to Mira Del Rio Dr. in the future. However, this would have to cross a road that accesses property to the north, a drainage ditch, and also private property in the BRECA area.
- The 2 acre park is smaller than the size required by Rancho Cordova codes of 3.26 acres (the Quimby requirement), but the developer plans to pay "in lieu" fees to make up the difference. Staff with the Cordova Recreation and Park District have agreed to this plan.
- There is also concern that traffic from the proposed development would add to congestion at Folsom Blvd. and Bradshaw Road on the way to the freeway. A traffic study on the impact is pending.

Opposition to the proposal has come from neighbors to the east and the Save the American River Association (SARA). There are a number of particular viewpoints, but most seem to agree that the northern part of the parcel (the relic walnut orchard) should be preserved as open space, while the southern part of the parcel should be developed. Additional information can be found at sarariverwatch.org under Kassis Property.

Stay tuned as this proposal moves ahead.

Aerial View of Kassis Property

