

## Memorandum

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**March 4, 2009**

**To:** David Storer, Town of Moraga

**Cc:** Nadin Sponamore, Sponamore Associates

**From:** Phil Erickson

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**Re:** **Rancho Laguna II EIR (CD+A No. 0501)** — *Project Proponent Proposed Visual Quality Mitigation Review and Comment*

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The Rancho Laguna II project proponent has provided the Town of Moraga with a memorandum and attachments regarding “Mitigation of Project Visual Quality Impact at Rheem Boulevard”. This includes changes to the upper valley lots, roads, landscaping, and wetland and biotic mitigations.

CD+A has had a chance to review these materials as you have requested to evaluate the potential for mitigation of visual impacts that were described in our memorandum and attachments of October 27, 2008. The following is our evaluation of the project proponent’s proposed mitigations.

If these mitigations are implemented as designed and maintained as proposed, the visual impacts to views from Rheem Boulevard would be reduced to less than significant given the CEQA guidelines for visual impact assessment and the General Plan Policies of the Town of Moraga.

In addition, we have had the opportunity to review the comments from Michael Wood regarding how these proposed mitigations from a biological resources perspective and in regard to the mitigations that were included in the DEIR. It appears that further refinements to the proposed visual mitigation are needed in order to satisfy both the biological and visual impacts. Further work by the project proponent and their engineering, landscape, and biological consultants should be able to achieve a design that achieves these goals. The following are some issues that should be considered while making these refinements:

- In refining the landscaping between the drainage and Rheem Boulevard give consideration to keeping taller landscaping closer to the drainage and in locations that are lower in elevation compared to the elevation of Rheem Boulevard, and also locate the plantings to avoid a ‘wall effect’ for people traveling southbound on Rheem.
- Select native and “Central Coast riparian scrub habitat” plant species of similar form and characteristic to those proposed in the mitigation while adding some taller and mid-story plantings that satisfy the biological mitigations.

Please let me know if you would like any further clarifications.

