

Staples Ranch development clears major hurdle

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PLEASANTON -- An auto mall, a retirement community, a San Jose Sharks-backed ice skating complex and more are a big step closer to construction following city council approval of key environmental documents for the 124-acre Staples Ranch development.

With a 5-0 vote Tuesday, the council approved the environmental documents and an agreement with neighbors and Alameda County on extension of Stoneridge Drive.

The vote clears the way for a Sept. 7 meeting in which the council could approve development plans for the 46-acre retirement community, a 37-acre auto mall and a five acre neighborhood park planned for the site.

Staples Ranch, located at the eastern edge of the city just south of Interstate 580 and west of El Charro Road, also includes plans for a 17-acre community park with an indoor public ice skating rink and 11 acres of retail space.

Tuesday's agreement ended years of waiting for the 1,000 or seniors who have signed up to live in the senior community and also ended a lengthy battle with the Alameda Creek Alliance, The Center for Biological Diversity and Safe Streets Pleasanton, who sued over the extension of Stoneridge Drive into the Staples Ranch development.

Problems began in 2009 when the council voted to include the roadway extension into the development. The groups sued the city and Alameda County, claiming proper environmental studies were not done.

An agreement was reached to include additional environmental studies.

The county also agreed to provide up to \$925,000 to mitigate for the loss and restoration of habitat. The neighbors living in the Stoneridge Drive area also receive assurances that Stoneridge Drive would not open to through traffic until Livermore completes construction of Jack London Boulevard from Isabel Parkway and El Charro Road.

If the development plans are approved on Sept. 7, Continuing Life Communities could begin building its 637-unit retirement community complete with independent, assisted living and skilled living, by early 2011. The project still needs to receive approval from the Local Agency Formation Commission, which would then annex the land into Pleasanton.