Oakland City Planning Commission

Design Review Committee

STAFF REPORT

Case File Number PLN15-378; ER15-004

December 14, 2016

Project Name and	Oak Knoll Mixed Use Community Plan Project, located on the former Oak
Location:	Knoll Naval Medical Center Property at 8750 Mountain Boulevard, bounded
	by Keller Avenue and Mountain Boulevard. APNs: 043A-4675-003-21, 043A-
l	4712-001 (portion), 043A-4675-003-19, 043A-4675-003-16, 043A4678-003-
	17 (roadway easement), 043A-4675-003- 30 (roadway easement) 048-6865-
	002-01, and 043A-4675-74-01.
Proposal:	Master Planned community on approximately 188 acres consisting of 935
	residences, 72,000 square feet of neighborhood commercial, 14,000 square
	feet of civic use (relocated historic Club Knoll building as a community
	center), open space, creek restoration and trails.
Applicant/Owner:	Oak Knoll Venture Acquisitions LLC, c/o Suncal, Sam Veltri (949) 777-4000
Planning Permits	Rezoning, Planned Unit Development permit (Preliminary and Final
Required:	Development Plans), Tentative Tract Map, and other permits and/or approvals
General Plan:	Hillside Residential, Community Commercial, Institutional, Urban Open
	Space and Resource Conservation Area
Zoning:	RH-3 Hillside Residential Zone -3 and RH-4 Hillside Residential Zone -4
Environmental	A Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) was prepared and
Determination:	submitted for public review on August 29, 2016. The 45-day public comment
	period on the DSEIR concluded on October 12 th .
Historic Status:	The existing Club Knoll building on the project site is a historic resource under
	CEQA, listed on the Local Register, has an Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey
	rating of B+3, eligible for Landmark status with an A rating, and placed on the
	Preservation Study List as a Designated Historic Property.
City Council Distantant	District 7 Deld
City Council District:	District 7 - Reid
Action to be Taken:	Continue preliminary Design Review discussion
Finality of Action:	NA Control of the Con
For Further	Contact case planner Scott Gregory, Contract Planner at (510) 535-6671 or
Information:	by e-mail at sgregory@lamphier-gregory.com

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

The Oak Knoll project applicant (Suncal) is seeking City approval for a number of land use entitlements including a rezoning, Planned Unit Development (PUD) permit (including both a Preliminary Development Plan (PDP) for the overall project, Final Development Plan (FDP) for project site infrastructure, streets, landscaping, and site monuments, a Vesting Tentative Tract Map and other permits and/or approvals. If granted, these approvals would enable development of 935 residential units, 72,000 square feet of primarily neighborhood-serving commercial uses and a combination of commercial (10,000 square feet) and civic (4,000 square feet) uses within the relocated Club Knoll building. The remainder of the approximately 188-acre site would consist of parks, open space and streets.

Staff has brought information about this project to the Design Review Committee (DRC) on two prior occasions;

- On July 27th, staff and the applicant presented overview information about the Oak Knoll project's draft Preliminary Development Plan (PDP) and draft Final Development Plan for master "backbone" improvements, and Staff briefed the DRC on our thoughts regarding overall designrelated issues.
- On October 26th, staff and the applicants addressed a number of questions and comments raised by the DRC in July specifically related to the project's scale and context, relevant examples or case studies, residential densities and affordable/workforce housing, the scale and design strategy for the Retail Village, technical information relative to the Rifle Range Creek Restoration Plan, aesthetic issues pertaining to upper hillside home sites, the rationale for the proposed relocation and restoration of the Historic Club Knoll building, and specific landscape design issues.

At the October meeting, the DRC requested the applicant return to further address two specific design-related topics: 1) the layout, composition and economic feasibility of the proposed retail Village Center; and 2) specific design improvements and standards pertaining to the proposed relocation and restoration of the historic Club Knoll building. The purpose of this hearing is to provide the applicant with an opportunity to address and answer the DRC's questions and comments on these two issues.

PDP VERSUS FDP REQUIREMENTS

At this point in the design review process for both the Village Center and the proposed Club Knoll relocation and restoration, the applicant is currently requesting consideration of their Preliminary Development Plan (PDP). Pursuant to Section 17.140.020 of the Planning Code, the PDP must include a preliminary development plan showing streets, driveways, sidewalks and pedestrian ways, and off-street parking and loading areas; the location and approximate dimensions of structures; proposed utilization of structures; major landscaping features; and relevant operational data. The PDP is intended to establish the scale, character and relationship of buildings, streets, and open spaces.

As Master Developer, Suncal intends to sell the Village Center parcel to a commercial builder, who will subsequently submit a Final Development Plan (FDP) for the Village Center's final design approvals. This subsequent FDP will be subject to individual Design Review, must demonstrate consistency with the overall PDP, and be sufficiently detailed to fully indicate the ultimate operation and appearance of the Village Center. Staff has not yet received an application for the Village Center FDP.

Suncal and their architect, Architectural Dimensions, are also seeking PDP-level approval for the Club Knoll relocation and restoration proposal - scale, character and relationship of buildings, streets and open spaces. Although FDP-level materials have been made available to Staff, we have not yet fully reviewed these FDP materials, and we continue to work with the applicant to identify and prepare additional FDP-specific requirements applicable to this unique proposal. At such time as Staff believes the FDP materials are complete, that FDP will also undergo individual Design Review (though some of that effort has already been conducted), must demonstrate consistency with the overall PDP, and be sufficiently detailed to fully indicate the ultimate operation and appearance of the Club Knoll building and its setting, including a detailed description and itemization of those features of the original building

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that will be salvaged, restored and reassembled in their original locations versus those features that are missing, deteriorated or damaged beyond repair will need to be replaced.

At its November 14th meeting, the Landmark Preservation Advisory Board (LPAB) was presented with information prepared by Architectural Dimensions that updated the proposed Club Knoll Relocation and Rehabilitation Plan. This updated information (which was titled Final Development Plan though as od this writing one has not formally been submitted) included the incorporation of certain mitigation measures from the Draft EIR into their proposal; acknowledged that all mitigation measures will ultimately be incorporated into final plans and/or implemented during the relocation and restoration process; and also include a grading plan, an updated Site Plan, schematic elevation drawings showing materials and finishing (including use of restored elements), a new Landscape Plan and a proposed travel route by which the dismantled and segmented Club Knoll building will be moved to its relocation site. The November 14th LPAB staff report indicated that this updated information did satisfy many of the FDP submittal requirements and was very informative, but that Staff's initial assessment was that it did not yet fully satisfy the unique FDP submittal requirements for this project. Staff anticipates taking the completed FDP proposal for Club Knoll back to the LPAB, along with the Final EIR once completed, for their final recommendations to the Planning Commission.

APPLICANT'S RESPONSE TO REMAINING KEY ISSUES

Village Center

At the October 26th DRC meeting, DRC members questioned the conceptual layout of the Village Center, suggesting that the conceptual design as presented in the PDP did not effectively implement the PDP's intended design guidelines. Specific issues the DRC noted pertaining to the conceptual layout was the manner in which the rear side of the grocery store and it loading docks were oriented such that they faced almost directly onto Creekside Parkway; the nearly direct visibility of parking lots from Mountain Boulevard; the lack of clear design intent for the proposed plaza (specifically its intended pedestrian scale and orientation); and the lack of pedestrian and bicycle connections between the Village Center and the surrounding residential areas. DRC members also expressed concern as to the feasibility of a small retail center at this location, and requested greater assurance regarding the general long-term success of the Retail Village. The DRC also expressed concern about the types of retail tenants that would be interested in this location (particularly, if there a market demand for such a center), and whether expected tenant types could generate long-term success.

Conceptual Design

Suncal and their retail architects have prepared a revised Village Center concept design plan for the PDP intended to directly address comments from the October 26th meeting (see **Attachment A1**). This revised design provides for a conceptual layout that:

- Relocates the grocery to the northwest corner of the retail parcel, masking the loading docks and servicing area against the northern slope bank,
- Reduces the amount of parking visible from Mountain Boulevard and provides a wider landscape area for screening the parking lot along the Mountain Boulevard frontage,

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- Better demonstrates how building placement is intended to reinforce the "main street plaza" with comfortable pedestrian circulation, and
- More directly links the Village Center's 'main street' to proposed pathways, trails and bicycle
 routes, primarily along Creekside Parkway and the pedestrian bridge across Rifle Range Creek. A
 stairway connection is also anticipated to connect the Village Center eastward to the adjacent but
 elevated townhome neighborhood.

Feasibility

Suncal and their associated retail development partner (Mr. Jim Righeimer) believe the PDP design strategy will be successful in attracting a desirable retail tenant mix. The strategy is based on serving the local demand for neighborhood-serving retail uses from the surrounding neighborhoods and the Project's new residents, provided in a "village" design anchored by a small grocery store and including convenience-style retail such as a bank, barber shop, café, dry cleaner, etc. The plaza space is intended to allow the Village Center to also accommodate special activities (i.e., farmer's markets, events, street fairs) that may draw from a larger market area. Suncal and their retail development partner believe that the Village Center will succeed in attracting quality tenants by maximizing visibility and access on Mountain Boulevard, providing adequate parking, and developing the more unique "village concept" as envisioned in their revised site plan. Suncal has also obtained a letter from a professional commercial real estate broker (see **Attachment A2**) indicating that 'it is clear a local grocery and supporting neighborhood retail shopping center is desperately needed."

Club Knoll

At the October 26th meeting, DRC members were presented with the applicants' draft relocation program for the historic Club Knoll building, moving it from its current location to a more central site within the Project. The information included conceptual elevations, sections and renderings depicting the proposed design and layout of this building. DRC members expressed concern over a number of design-related issues including:

- Questions regarding the appropriate orientation of the building at its new site, and concerns pertaining to the amount of and orientation of surrounding parking areas; and the noted lack of a landscape plan for the relocated site;
- Concerns related to removal of the circular staircase and replacement with a more rectangular "winged" design; and loss of the arched window at the existing first level; and
- Questions pertaining to the re-application of certain older existing building features (e.g., older single-pane windows) rather than constructing replicas of those building features that may better conform to current building codes and standards.

Orientation, Parking and Landscape

Suncal and Architectural Dimensions have updated their proposed site plan (see Attachment B1) to address certain of these DRC comments. The orientation of the Club Knoll building is retained as previously presented, with the design intent to relocate the building in a manner that is most compatible with the building's original character and use. According to the Carey & Co. report

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(Relocation Evaluation, May 13, 2016), "people mainly accessed the building from the courtyard side after they parked their car, so the courtyard side of the structure is the primary entry side of the building." Therefore, the primary entrance to the building from Creekside Parkway remains through the courtyard, with secondary pedestrian access via a pedestrian trail along the edge of the restored Rifle Range Creek corridor. The updated site plan illustrates a reduced width of the pedestrian pathway to 12 feet as an acceptable EVA route to this side of the building. Additionally, the building's existing setting is built into the side of a knoll, such that three stories of the structure are exposed on the west elevation, and two stories are visible on the east. The proposed grading for the relocated Club Knoll site enables placement of the building on a sloping grade, such that even without the basement, the westerly elevation retains a taller, nearly 3-story appearance (see Attached B2).

At its existing location, the front entrance to the Club Knoll courtyard is directly via a surface parking lot that occupies the "front yard" of the Club Knoll site. In response to DRC comments as to the appropriateness of parking directly in front of the newly relocated building, the updated site plan (see Attached B1) shows that previously proposed parking in the front of the Club Knoll building has now been removed and placed in larger surface parking areas to either side of the building. This updated design allows for a more attractive landscape in the immediate front of the building and the larger side-yard surface parking lots can accommodate more parking spaces than indicated in the previous design.

At the November 14th LPAB meeting, Architectural Dimensions presented an updated Landscape Plan for the site (see **Attachment B3**). This landscape plan now includes both a streetscape plan for landscaping and the Creekside Parkway frontage in front of the relocated Club Knoll building, as well as an interior site landscape plan that includes the relocation and planting of several heritage-sized oak trees across the rear building façade.

Building Elements to be Removed

As has always been proposed, relocation of the Club Knoll building includes removal of the basement and the building's north wing. According to the Carey & Co. report (*Relocation Evaluation, May 13, 2016*), removal of the basement and north wing will impact the appearance of the exterior of the building, but not to such an extent that the building will no longer be able to convey its historic significance or justify its eligibility for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources. The loss of these basement and north wing rooms will impact the overall layout of the building, but these spaces are ancillary whereas the grand public spaces and exterior courtyard, which are architecturally significant, will remain.

As previously shown to the DRC, removal of the basement includes removal of the exterior rounded staircase that leads from the basement level to the outdoor deck in front of the main level lobby, as well as the arched opening to the basement that was the previous locker room entry onto the former golf course (see **Attachment B4**). Prior designs had indicated construction of a new rectangular-designed "winged" staircase that would not suggest a replica of the original. However, based on DRC (as well as LPAB) comments, the updated Site Plan (see Attachment B1) now indicates construction of a new staircase similar in design to the original asymmetrical rounded staircase. Because there will no longer be a basement level to the relocated building, the pointed arch entry to the basement is not proposed for relocation.

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Original vs. Replica or New

The design intent for the Club Knoll building is to relocate the building as a clubhouse for the new community center and smaller commercial areas, as well as to provide for its rehabilitation in a manner consistent with Secretary of Interior Standards (Rehabilitation as a Treatment and Standards for Rehabilitation, Technical Preservation Services - National Park Service). This intent is fundamental to the CEQA conclusion presented in the Draft EIR – specifically that the impact of relocating the Club Knoll building is considered mitigated to a level of less than a significant by following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Pursuant to Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, rehabilitation is an acceptable treatment when repair and replacement of deteriorated features are necessary, or when alterations or additions to the property are planned for a new or continued use. Pursuant to these standards, "deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced, and where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features must be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence."

Information provided by the applicant to date indicates their intent that dismantling, reassembly and rehabilitation of the Club Knoll building will be executed in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Specifically,

- Those features of the original building that will be salvaged, restored and reassembled in their original locations include roof tiles, roof trusses, doors and windows, columns, corbels and emblems, wood trim (interior and exterior), wood flooring, truss base moldings, railings and hardware. As these features are salvaged they will be cataloged, protected and stored in a dry secure area. Necessary repairs or restoration of these features (e.g., cleaning, painting or staining as may be necessary to remove graffiti, mold, rust or water stains) will be performed off-site by qualified vendors and contractors.
- Features that are missing, deteriorated or damaged beyond repair will be replaced, taking care to match any new features with the design, color, texture and (where possible) materials of the original.
- A preservation architect and a structural engineer will be on-site to monitor reassembly of the building to ensure there will be minimal changes to the defining characteristics of the building, that construction will not destroy historic features that characterize the building, and that any new work shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the building.

To ensure that the relocated building is structurally sound, a new steel frame will be constructed, onto which the retained building features will be reassembled. The new steel frame will not be visible in the relocated building. New mechanical, electrical, plumbing and fire protection systems will also be integrated into the steel frame, but designed to integrate into the historic fabric of the building and not be visible except as necessary for life safety or in newly installed kitchens, or bathrooms or elevators. Where feasible, new systems will be compliant with current building codes, and the California State Historical Building Code will be invoked where necessary to retain historic character.

This construction approach is substantially different than building a replica of the original building, or obtaining all new replacement building features which may appear similar to the originals but are not original. Though less cost effective than new construction and perhaps less energy-efficient in performance than modern materials, this rehabilitation approach to reconstruction of Club Knoll is in substantial compliance with the General Plan's Historic Preservation Element policies, as well as being fundamental to a CEQA conclusion that relocation and rehabilitation of the Club Knoll building is being conducted in a manner complies with Secretary of Interior Standards, and thus, mitigates environmental impacts to this historic resource to a less than significant level.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Including this meeting, the Project applicant and their design team have presented information to the DRC on three separate occasions. At the DRC's request, information has been provided to:

- better understand the Project's scale and proposed development plan in context;
- present relevant case studies;
- indicate the appropriateness of the Project's residential densities and provisions for affordable/workforce housing;
- provide a technical review of issues specific to the Rifle Range Creek Restoration Plan;
- to describe the aesthetic and policy choices associated with the Project's proposed design of upper hillside home sites; and
- to address landscape design issues specific to detailed recommendations of the DRC.

At this meeting, the applicant and their design/development team will present additional information to support their proposed scale and design strategy for the Retail Village, and to further explain the rationale for the proposed relocation and restoration of the historic Club Knoll building.

It is Staff's opinion that the currently proposed Village Center design does a better job than the previous layout in addressing the DRC's prior concerns (e.g., masking the loading docks and servicing area, providing a wider landscape area along Mountain Boulevard, reinforcing the "main street plaza"), but now introduces new design problems that are not well resolved. Staff's issues with this current layout include: 1) the prominence and scale of surface parking; 2) the extent of rear building facades facing onto Mountain Boulevard (particularly in light of the applicant's perspective that the Village Center will succeed by maximizing visibility); 3) the isolation of the two separated retail pads to the south; and 4) the lack of clearly defined pedestrian and bicycle connections between the retail spaces and off-site access points (e.g., the bridge over the creek, or the staircase, or from sidewalks and bike paths on Creekside Parkway). In some ways, the new design feels less like an authentic village center but more of a standard suburban shopping mall aping some of the characteristics of a small, commercial/village node. Given that there's no commercial fabric in existence now, that may be difficult to avoid entirely but with the surrounding sea of parking, isolated building pads which don't relate to the "Complete Streets" proposal and the way the north-south road dissolves into the parking rather than continuing as a proper road, it's hard for Staff to see how this is a community focal point that benefits the Oak Knoll community or what distinguishes it from a multitude of other typical suburban-style developments and makes this place special. Staff requests that the DRC review the applicant's proposed design update with consideration of Staff's opinions, and provide any further direction to Staff and/or the applicant as may be necessary prior to moving the Village Center design

materials forward for consideration by the full City Planning Commission as part of the overall PDP, including additional DRC review should you believe that to be necessary.

Staff is supportive of the Club Knoll design as now presented and believe the applicants have refined these materials to better address the design concerns of the DRC, the LPAB and the full Planning Commission to date. If the DRC is satisfied with the applicant's materials for Club Knoll, Staff requests the DRC provide any further direction to Staff and/or the applicant as may be necessary prior to moving the Oak Knoll PDP design materials forward for consideration by the full City Planning Commission. We also continue to work with the applicant and their design team toward completion of Final Development Plan materials for Club Knoll's relocation and rehabilitation, including a more detailed description and itemization of those features of the original building that will be salvaged, restored and reassembled in their original locations, versus those features that are missing, deteriorated or damaged beyond repair will need to be replaced. It is Staff's intent to bring that FDP to back to the LPAB and the Planning Commission (not the DRC unless directed), commensurate with completion of the Project's CEQA process.

Prepared by:

Scott Gregory

Scott Gregory Contract Planner

Reviewed by:

Robert Merkamp

Development Planning Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A1: Lowney Architecture - Oak Knoll Retail Site Plan 11/22/16

Attachment A2: Letter from JLL Retail to SunCal, Re: Retail Demand for Oak Knoll Area, 11/28/16

Attachment B1: Architectural Dimensions, Proposed Revised Site Plan for Club Knoll

Attachment B2: Architectural Dimensions, West Elevation of Club Knoll Building (prior submittal)

Attachment B3: Architectural Dimensions, updated Landscape Plan Club Knoll

Attachment B4: Architectural Dimensions, Demarcation of Proposed Relocation Features versus

basement Demolition at Club Knoll Building

Attachment A1



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11/22/16

Attachment A2



November 28, 2016

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RE: Retail Demand for Oak Knoll Area

Dear Sam:

Thank you for your call last week. As I mentioned to you, I have been following the Oak Knoll development for many years. In fact, unbeknown to you, my very first listing (29 years ago) was to lease a "to be built" project along Keller Ave. I spent many months working with the developer and talking to potential tenants, but alas, the project didn't get built with the developer with whom I had the listing.

It is with pleasure that I see your Oak Knoll project is now getting built. It is my professional opinion that the Oak Knoll area of Oakland has a great need for retail in its immediate area. I have heard the complaints regarding the lack of retail for the last 10 years since the concept of Oak Knoll was first discussed with the public.

Retail in this area has always been viable, as has housing. Both retail and housing are lacking in Oakland and are a needed category of real estate. Grocery needs were discussed with both grocery stores and the public as early as 2005 and it was clear the need was here for both grocery along with neighborhood serving retail, i.e. possible drug store, and smaller retail shops. In the June 2008 Oakland Retail Enhancement Strategy, a grocery store for this development is specifically called for.

The current site plan along Mountain has the grocery store on the north side with an area of parking that should meet most grocers parking criteria. On the site plan, the drug store and shop spaces seem to lay out in a manner that will allow good lease up, although there are some possible changes that could be made to the shop space building layouts to properly accommodate tenant needs better and insure quick and easy lease up.

Currently, the residents surrounding Oak Knoll travel longer distances than normal to shop for their groceries. While there is a FoodsCo at Foothill Square, and neighborhood serving retail at Eastmont Village, these grocery and neighborhood serving retail formats are not the desired format for all shoppers. Many area grocery shoppers currently travel as far as Alameda to gain access to a more

upscale, newly built grocery store offering all the latest products and services. With the purported 935 new residences to be built at Oak Knoll, travel to the newly built grocery stores in Alameda will exacerbate the already challenging traffic issues on the local streets and freeways. A good quality, local serving retail center with a grocery anchor will alleviate constituent's frustration and the increase in traffic from the new residential units at Oak Knoll. It is clear a local grocery and supporting neighborhood retail shopping center is desperately needed.

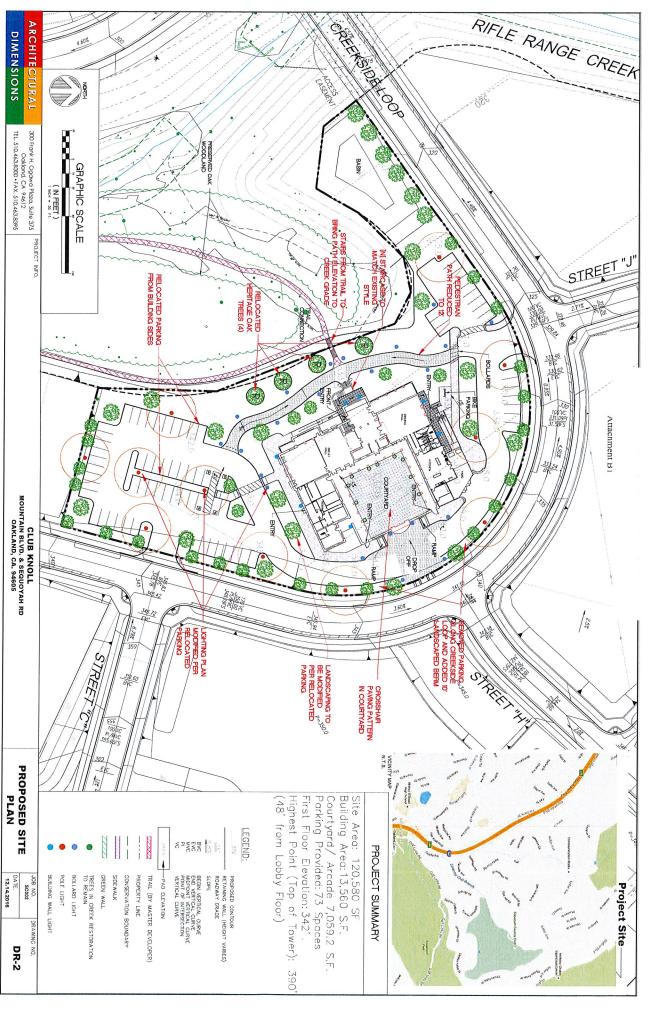
I am happy to answer any future questions you might have about the area and local retail in Oakland.

Sincerely, JLL RETAIL

Christine Firstenberg Senior Vice President License #00973135



Attachment B1



Attachment B2



DR-9.1

Attachment B3



