

GENERAL PLAN
REDWOOD CITY TIMES TRIBUNE
JAN. 21, 1983

Belmont residents are angry

Neighborhood groups protest general plan

By **(Anne Houghteling)**
Times Tribune staff

* JAN 21 1983
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BELMONT — Presidents of Belmont's homeowners groups have started a campaign to erase language from the city's general plan that they claim endangers their neighborhoods.

The community leaders say the general plan fails to protect residential neighborhoods from higher density development at school sites. The City Council revised the general plan last summer.

"Because of the way it (the plan) was changed, there's no assurance of what could be there (at surplus school sites)," said Hartley Laughhead, president of the Cipriani Hills Homeowners Association. Presidents of five of the city's seven homeowner associations have joined in the protest.

The general plan — the city's guide for development — states that any new zoning for a surplus site "should take into consideration" the land use of neighboring properties and the ability of roads to handle new traffic.

"The wording is 'should,' which is very loose," said Marcia Smerican, president of the Belmont Heights Civic Improvement Association. "It doesn't mean the council has to take (surrounding land use) into consideration."

"The concern of neighbors is traffic."

People "are worried about commercial uses or high-rises or a big apartment complex" on a school site, said Faye Younger, president of the Central Homeowners Association.

Belmont has no surplus school sites now, but the school board is scheduled to vote next month on whether to close three schools. The board also is trying to sell the district's office on Hallmark Drive.

This week, homeowners groups appealed to the Planning Commission as one of the first steps in the campaign to change the general plan. The commission decided to discuss the groups' concerns at its Feb. 28 meeting.

"The homeowners would like to give some input, and we just didn't have a chance to do that" in the summer, Smerican said after the meeting.

The City Council took a vote on the final general plan wording covering surplus sites after a closed public hearing. The wording itself was considered after the time for public comment had passed.

Councilman Bill Hardwick, who suggested the new wording, defended the council's action. He said the public had other opportunities to comment on land uses for school sites and that public hearings will be held if the council receives any specific proposals for school sites.

Hardwick also said he thought schools in residential neighborhoods probably would be zoned for residences, if they are closed.

present wording "keeps our options somewhat open," he said.

Hardwick said he does not favor reopening discussion on the general plan language.

"I think we discussed it (in the summer), and we had an amount of public hearings," he said. "I don't see what's in there now that's detrimental."

The council's vote in August was 4-1, with Mayor Bob Hoffman dissenting.

The homeowner groups generally favor reinstating the plan's original language.

According to the original language, school sites surrounded by single-family residences should be used "only for low-density residential or similiar or lower intensity uses."

OVER

Belmont Planning Commission
Redwood City Tribune
March 10, 1983

Residents to discuss schools ³

Times Tribune staff * MAR 10 1983

BELMONT — The Belmont Planning Commission will hear the concerns of residents about the future development of surplus school sites on March 21.

By a vote of 6-1, the commission decided Monday to let residents discuss whether the city's General Plan should be more specific about the kind of development that would be allowed for each site, if and when it becomes vacant.

Leaders from five of Belmont's homeowners' associations Monday urged the commission to revise the General Plan so that the future development of the city's school sites would be more specific and limited.

In August, the City Council adopted a new revision of the General Plan. The section about the development of school sites was rewritten in more general language to allow for more development options, if schools were to be closed. Since then, the Belmont Elementary School District has decided to close Barrett, Cipriani and McDougal schools.

Marcia Samarican, president of the Belmont Heights Neighborhood Improvement Association, said she was very happy that the commission voted to listen to the concerns of residents regarding the possible restrictions on the kind of development allowable for vacant school sites.

"The homeowners' associations want back the original wording to ensure that the complexion of the neighborhoods remains the same," Samarican said.

General Han
Redwood City Tribune
April 8, 1964

Hughes Denies Council Acted on Bond Issue

APR 8 1964

By BRUCE B. BRUGMANN
Tribune Staff Writer

BELMONT — The Case of the
anishing Sewer Bond Issue
urfaced again here today.

Mrs. Eve Sterry has charged
at the council, among other
ings, has been quietly plan-

ning a \$1 million sewerage and
drainage bond issue, but Council-
man Henry Hughes today
said in a letter that the council
did not have the authority to
pass a bond issue.

He characterized Mrs. Sterry
as a council candidate "whose

ambition for election to the
council has blinded her. . . ."
Hughes said that her accusa-
tion "is invalidated by the sim-
ple fact that the council does
not have authority to pass bond
issues."

"The law reserves that au-
thority exclusively to a two-
thirds majority of the voters,
and unless and until the voters
so approve, neither the taxpay-
ers nor anyone else is commit-
ted to anything.

"Mrs. Sterry's failure to rec-
ognize this elementary provi-
sion of city government is, I
think, a challenge to her quali-
fications for election. If and
when this or any other bond is-
sue is found necessary and ad-
visable, it will, as always, be
submitted by the council to the
voters for decision." Hughes is
running for re-election.

Although government docu-
ments, an engineering report
and a news release from Wash-
ington, D.C., detail the sewer-
age project and the bond issue
as the method for financing,
Hughes reiterated to a reporter
that the council had not discussed
the bond issue.

He was told by a reporter that
planning documents, approved
by a council resolution June 24,
1963, were sent to the Housing
and Home Finance Agency which
showed that construction was to
begin in January, 1965, and that
it was to be financed by general
obligation bonds for \$973,500.

Hughes said that the docu-
ments must have been filled out
later, by City administrator John
Watts "or a girl in the office"
or, possibly, City Engineer Nor-
man Hansen. Watts must have
filled in these points to "get it
off his desk and put it through
and we take the crack across
the snout," he said.

He said the council didn't know
about the bond issue or construc-
tion plans or it "would have gone
in the minutes."

Watts said today that "I did
not fill in the application," but
pointed out that the information
concerning financing and con-
struction dates came out of the
engineering report.

(The minutes of the council

(See Hughes, Pg. 2, Col. 1)

Hughes Bond Actions

(Continued from Page 1)

meeting say the council approved the "completed planning documents," with Wallace Benson, Robert Fitzgerald and Raymond Faber, then vice mayor, voting.

Kenneth Dickerson and Hughes were absent.

(Faber reported that the city would "receive compensation from the federal government toward the project" and Benson remarked "this is a fine study and this is the first time the city has had a sanitary sewer and storm drain analysis made," the minutes say.)

Asked if he would vote for the bond issue as reflected in the documents, Hughes said: "Oh, Lord no." He said none of the councilmen would have so voted.

Mrs. Sterry asked today: "Why does the council continue to refuse to take responsibility for its actions? Is it telling the truth to the U.S. government or the citizens of Belmont?"

Aside from the charges that the documents were filled in after the council decision, Hughes' remarks roughly parallel the denials of other city officials that a bond issue was in the works.

Watts has said that the council was waiting until after the election to decide, but Faber, Benson and Fitzgerald have maintained that the council has not discussed the issue and that it was not planning such a bond issue at this time.

Faber has said that a "prime source which could be used for immediate funding would be city-sponsored obligation bonds," but the "city has no intention of initiating a million-dollar bond issue. At Candidates' Night last Friday night, Hughes said the council had not discussed the bond issue and Fitzgerald said he knew nothing about it. Officials have denied that construction was to begin in January, 1965.

Amid the conflicting charges, these facts can be noted:

—A \$13,500 report by the Millbrae Engineering firm of Wilsey, Ham and Blair recommended expenditures of about \$1 million to improve Belmont sewer and storm drain systems. It recommended the use of general obligation bonds for immediate funding.

—The council's resolution, signed by Faber as vice mayor, said: "... the completed planning documents have been carefully studied and are considered to comprise adequate planning of the public work essential to the community and within the financial ability of the city of Belmont to construct."

—The title of the approved resolution 2356 reads: "Resolution approving the completed planning documents prepared with an advance from the United States of America under the terms of Public Law 4560."

At one point in the documents, it was asked whether any federal, state, or local approval was "required before construction can begin."

It was answered: "None."

Instructions with the documents give this explanation of their commitment: "When prepared and certified, FORM CFA-430 serves as evidence of plan completion, and of plan approval by the applicant's governing body; in addition, it furnishes information regarding the applicant's anticipated subsequent actions with respect to such matters as prepared detailed plans, arranging financing and starting construction. The dates shown for such actions . . . should be firm as possible."

GENERAL PLAN
MAY 18, + JULY 14, 1982
REDWOOD CITY TIMES-TRIBUNE

Belmont planners OK study of San Juan area

* MAY 18 1982

By Anne Houghteling
Times Tribune staff

BELMONT — The Planning Commission Monday approved a proposed general plan calling for a geologic study of one of the city's major undeveloped sections before allowing further building in the area.

The plan calls for a study of geologic conditions in the San Juan area, a mostly wooded tract of about 90 acres generally north of Ralston Avenue. The area's hilly terrain and substandard roads have left much of the land undeveloped.

The San Juan area, parts of the Western Hills and property east of Bayshore Freeway make up most of the undeveloped land within the city.

Monday, the Planning Commission agreed with the planning staff that the San Juan area should be granted the designation "residential conservation and open space."

The city reserves that designation for steep areas that are thought to require environmental protection. Under the present general plan, most of the San Juan area is designated for low-density residential construction and open space.

The Planning Commission's vote is a recommendation to the City Council, which will consider the general plan at its next meeting May 25. Except for the new designation for the San Juan area, the proposed general plan does not differ substantially from the present

one, according to Belmont Planning Director Tom Vlasic.

The geologic study of the San Juan area will provide information for a detailed plan for future housing in the area. The housing plan may call for a transfer of development rights.

Under such a setup, a property owner with a lot that future study deems unsuitable for development would be given "credits" to develop elsewhere in the area.

That system will tend to lead to a clustering of homes surrounded by permanent open space, according to the proposed plan.

The planning staff hopes to have ready its study of the San Juan area within the next fiscal year, Vlasic said.

In considering the proposed general plan, the commission acted on two requests from developers.

The commission turned down a request from Realtor Sal Pantano for a change in the general plan to allow a four-story office and restaurant building on property south of Ralston Avenue between Hallmark Drive and Highway 92.

"We have a very strong expression from the community that we don't need further commercial expansion in this area," Vlasic said.

The commission also approved a request from Frank Ong of Foster City to pre-zone an unincorporated, 1.6-acre parcel on Adelaide Way near the intersection of Highway 92 and Ralston Avenue to allow construction of two houses.

OVER

focus upon the future

... while Belmont debates its plans

By Holly Fletcher
Times Tribune staff

4B-1
* JUL 14 1982

BELMONT — An often unruly, standing-room-only crowd jammed the council chambers Tuesday night to debate a proposed general plan that would impose new restrictions on building in the city.

The council postponed a decision until its next meeting.

The general plan, approved by the Planning Commission, suggests the city should be the subject of a study to determine which lots are appropriate for building. Many of the approximately 500 lots in the eastern Belmont neighborhoods may be geologically unstable and do not have sewer hookups or access roads.

The crowd clapped and cheered during the public hearing, and Mayor Bob Hoffman threatened several times to clear the cham-

bers when members of the audience began shouting at citizens who did not share their views.

The vocal opponents to the general plan are those property owners who fear implementation of the plan will prevent them from building on their property.

One lot owner, Michael Calbreath, said he considered the plan a confiscation of his land and asked the council what they would pay him for his property.

He advised the council he would converse with them in the future through his attorney and said he was "ashamed" of the council and its actions.

Another landowner, Stuart Hoffman, expressed his concern over "over-restriction"

of property, saying owners should be free to develop their land.

Some landowners, however, support the plan. P.M. Melliar-Smith, for example, told the council, "It looks like the plan is a worthwhile attempt to fix problems."

Residents in favor of the plan are concerned with geological instability in the Belmont area. Several speakers alluded to Bay Area slides caused by this winter's heavy rains.

"I watched them build, build, build," said T. Jones. "To build in some of these areas is to invite sure disaster. Gentlemen, please plan it and plan it carefully."

GENERAL PLAN
REDWOODCITY TIMES TRIBUNE
JULY 20, 1986

OVER

Advocates push growth control for Belmont land

* JUL 20 1986

By Carl Lakey
Times Tribune staff

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To some they are saviors. Others refer to them simply as "those radicals."

Regardless of how one views them, few would deny that growth control advocates in Belmont have become one of the most prominent forces in city politics and now appear ready to make their mark on the community's future.

Their opponents, many of whom are developers, say that means the end of private property rights for those who want to build in Belmont.

Growth control advocates say they are merely trying to make the city resemble Hillsborough, Portola Valley and Woodside more than nearby San Carlos or Redwood City.

"We've been screaming since 1976; now it's beginning to pay off," said Coralin Feierbach, a planning commissioner who has been a member of Citizens for Orderly Growth and Alert Belmont Citizens, both growth-control groups.

In November, the two groups pulled off their greatest political coup with the election of a growth control majority on the City Council.

Earlier this year, the council appointed two growth control advocates to the Planning Commission and Park and Recreation Commission.

The mere presence of a growth control plan for the San Juan Hills area shows the clout the growth control groups have. The proposal currently is before the Planning Commission and is expected to be

approved by the City Council in October or November.

In addition, the City Council appears ready to impose a campaign contribution limit aimed at controlling the influence of developers, the scourge of the growth control groups.

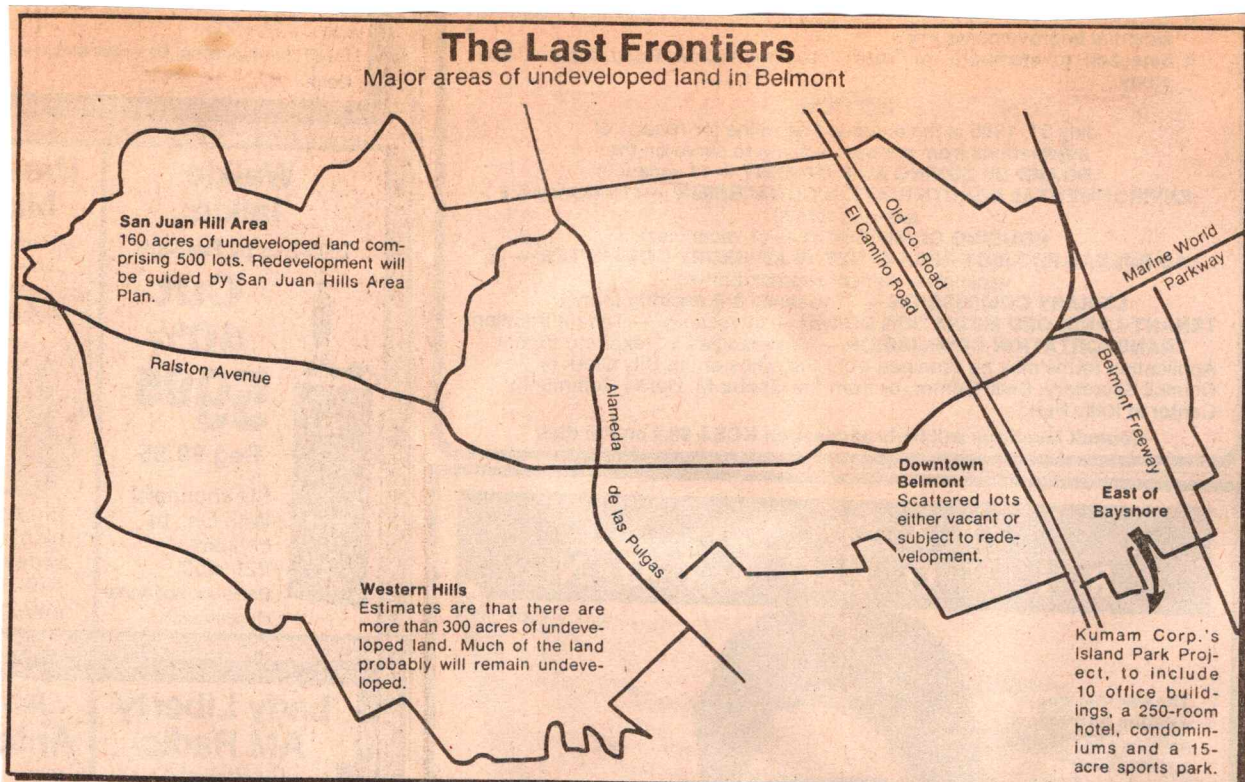
But the growth control advocates don't appear ready to rest on their laurels.

In coming years, they say, Belmont could see restrictive ordinances for the Western Hills, a tree protection ordinance, height limitations and perhaps even a temporary citywide moratorium on development.

"If the council won't insist on (growth control) ordinances fairly soon, maybe we'll have to do something again," said Lida Paetzke, a member of both growth control groups who generally is considered among Belmont's most influential citizens. "There are always initiatives."

Though the seeds were planted in the late 1950s, the growth control movement in Belmont didn't really come to the forefront until 1979 when Citizens for Orderly Growth successfully worked to pass Measure A, a growth control ordinance that allows a maximum of 56 housing units to be built in Belmont each year.

In 1982, there was an initiative battle to disallow the Kumam Corp. an exemption from the growth control ordinance. Fresh from another victory, some of the instrumental members of Citizens for Orderly Growth regrouped as Alert Belmont Citizens in a 1984 attempt to recall four city councilmen for



Times Tribune map by Richard Sigberman

their pro-development votes.

The recall failed, but David Bomberger, a member of Alert Belmont Citizens, and Gary Orton, from Citizens for Orderly Growth, were elected to the council after two councilmen targeted for recall decided not to seek re-election.

"It's been a long, hard battle for them," said Mayor Bob Hoffman, who was endorsed by both groups in the 1985 election.

"They have for years been talking about real problems and all that happened was that they got ignored. When people get ignored, they get mad, and when they get mad, they work harder."

Now they're getting things more and more their own way.

Mayor Don Heiman, who was one of the targets of the attempted council recall, said: "There definitely has been a change in the political spectrum in Belmont. Any politician has to pay attention. I think



Lida Paetzke

... "There are always initiatives."



Coralin Feierbach

... "It's beginning to pay off."

(CONTINUED)

GROWTH

Continued from A-3

it's fair to say I've moved (politically) somewhat."

Not everybody in the city views the changing of the political guard as positive. * JUL 20 1986

"It's a drawbridge mentality," said Ken Ambrose, a Belmont Hills resident and president of Woodmont Developments in downtown Belmont.

"They're up there with their views of the Bay saying that they don't want anyone else up there. They all moved in here as yuppies without kids," Ambrose said. "The ironic thing is that they now have kids. And the kids have to live somewhere. So if they say they want growth control, my attitude is that they should be working for Planned Parenthood."

Ambrose and other developers disagree with a City Council policy of discouraging housing downtown and in the flatlands.

They point to several vacant lots downtown they say would be ideal for apartments. However, the City Council wants to promote retail uses to boost the city's revenue. That policy is likely to be solidified in the city's Downtown Plan, which is in a conceptual stage.

"There's a lot of young people in the Bay Area," said former Councilman Bill Moore, who also was targeted for recall. "Where are they going to live if there is no affordable housing?"

But Bomberger said, "Building more housing doesn't necessarily solve the problem. We (the county) should have thought of the housing problem when we built all those office buildings in the baylands. Of course we're going to have to provide housing for that."

"It saddens me that many of these people complaining about housing are complaining too late."

The issue of development has not been the only source of controversy in Belmont. There also has been antagonism between hills residents and people in the lowlands, where growth control advocates enjoy far less support.

"They covered our hills, where I used to go horseback riding, and now they want to keep others out," said 49-year Belmont resident Rose Ozwirk, former president of the Homeview Homeowners Association and a frequent opponent of growth control forces.

"Nobody's locked out," Paetzke

said. "Anybody who can afford to can still live here. Unless we want to radically change the character of the community, there will be some people who just can't afford to live in Belmont."

"The quality of life is what we're concerned about," Feierbach said. "If everybody comes here, nobody wants it anymore. The only things we have that cover the sins of the city are the hills and the trees."

Many developers say they have always considered Belmont a tough city for development. In recent years, some have given up trying to get projects through the Planning Commission and City Council.

"We sold off our last half-dozen lots because it was too discouraging," said developer Laureston McLellan, who built 16 homes in the San Juan Hills before deciding to stop working in Belmont.

McLellan, whose family owns an apartment complex on Old County Road, has contributed to the campaigns of several council candidates who have run against growth control advocates.

Feierbach called McLellan the "only good developer in Belmont," and said she doesn't worry if other developers want to stay out of Belmont.

"We're not going to get the shoddy development that we've had before. You should see some of the crap that the Planning Commission has approved in the past.

"If they don't want to develop, they don't have to. When the right development comes in, the zoning that we want will all be in place."

Despite the fact that Belmont still has more than its share of controversy, things have calmed considerably since the late 1970s and early 1980s. Part of the reason is that Belmont, like other Peninsula communities, has little developable land left.

"People can say 'I'm pro-growth, or I'm no-growth,' but the vast majority of Belmont is already developed," said City Manager Ed Everett, who has been credited by both sides for his role in stopping some of the infighting in Belmont politics.

But residents say things can always heat up again in Belmont.

"Maybe it's just a lull in the storm," said Densel Lawhern, a planning commissioner who was opposed by growth control forces in his quest for a seat on the City Council in 1985. "The storm may return, but it's always been a healthy storm."

If more battles are fought, they will likely be in the Belmont hills,



Laureston McLellan
... sold remaining lots.

where large stretches of land remain undeveloped.

The San Juan Plan, which is expected to be used as a model for growth control in the Western Hills, includes restrictions on density and the slope on which development can occur.

The plan in its present form already is expected to be controversial with landowners who will find out that they can't develop land they bought years ago. There are more than 200 landowners who have yet to develop their land in the San Juan Hills.

Some developers have said that the plan goes too far. But Feierbach and Paetzke said they would like to see further density restrictions.

Feierbach's husband, Gary Feierbach, who was a member of the committee that prepared the San Juan Hills plan, wrote a minority report calling for stricter density controls.

For now, though, the screaming that formerly characterized the growth control groups is absent.

"The growth control groups are not active now," Feierbach said. "But if something comes up, boom, we're all together."

"We're not tired; we're just resting right now."

GENERAL PLAN
REDWOOD CITY TIMES TRIBUNE
JULY 20, 1986 (CONT.)

Residents fight Belmont rezoning plan

By Phyllis Brown
Times Tribune staff

A Planning Commission proposal to simultaneously rezone 49 Belmont land parcels scattered citywide — including churches, schools and businesses — drew a strong protest from more than 100 angry citizens Tuesday.

The landowners and their neighbors said the varied zoning changes would disrupt neighborhoods, destroy property values and kill businesses.

The proposal is an attempt to make the properties' zonings agree with their "land-use" descriptions in the general plan, which tells where schools, homes and businesses will be located.

State law requires zoning and general plan compliance. City Attorney Steve Carpol said the city might have addressed each instance of non-compliance one by one, but there were too many for that.

No one in the unruly, standing-room-only crowd who addressed the commission supported the rezonings.

The commission is likely to hear more of the same when it continues its discussion of the proposal Aug. 7. The commission listened to citizen comment without discussion Tuesday.

If approved by the commission, the plan would be recommended to the City Council for its final approval.

The zoning changes would have no impact until the properties in question are redeveloped, such as when a business is closed or a home sold.

However, opponents fear the demise of a business or the sale of a home could mean unwanted neighbors in the near future.

The rezoning proposals fall mainly into three categories. The proposal to rezone all the city "institutions," such as churches, hospitals and schools, to planned development, received the most opposition.

The College of Notre Dame, Gloria Dei Church, St. Mark's Church and the Peninsula Jewish Community Center are among the nine properties which would have planned development zoning.

The lands are designated "institution" in the general plan but now have a variety of different zonings. For example, elementary schools currently are zoned for single-family housing.

City Planner Jerry Podesta assured homeowners that an institution land-use designation means

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REDWOOD CITY TIMES-TRIBUNE
JULY 18 & SEPT. 5, 1984

ZONING

Continued from B-1

* JUL 18 1984
the land is to be used for institutions. The planned development zoning does not describe what can be built on the land.

But opponents of the zoning changes, like those living near the Congregational Church of Belmont, 751 Alameda de las Pulgas, said they saw the spectre of condominiums rising in their neighborhoods.

"This zoning gives the opportunity to open the property up to greater development to come in

and try to put in townhouses or whatever they want," Roger Lamais said.

"I don't believe things will stay the same," Robert Estrada said.

The city has proposed rezoning four properties, mostly along the El Camino Real corridor and Old County Road, from highway commercial to high-density housing. Among those proposed for rezoning is the Belmont Iceland skating rink.

Dozens of other lands scattered throughout the city are proposed for rezoning to comply with the general plan, including the Camelot pre-school and the Belmont County Water District facilities.

OVER

Unpopular proposals for Belmont rezoning GENERAL PLAN may be withdrawn

By Phyllis Brown (4)
Times Tribune staff

At least some of the more than 100 land parcels scheduled for rezoning as part of an unpopular Belmont Planning Commission effort probably will not be rezoned after all.

Though it did not take definitive action, the commission Tuesday indicated that many of the properties' zonings will be left as they are. * SEP 05 1984

In other instances, the city general plan will be changed to agree with the properties' zonings, and not the other way around as originally proposed.

Among the most unpopular of the proposals, making commercial land on El Camino Real residential, probably will be dropped. Store owners had said the changes would put them out of business.

Instead, the commission will encourage merchants to put housing above their stores.

The commission probably will also abandon changing from residential to planned development the zoning of several church properties, largely because of homeowner opposition.

Homeowners living near the churches feared the planned development zoning would invite condominium construction on the land, despite commission assurances to the contrary.

(BELMONT)
The rezonings first proposed in July, are part of an attempt to bring the parcels' zonings into agreement with their description in the general plan. The document describes what sections of Belmont should be residential, commercial and industrial.

The plan was updated in 1982, after three years of review. But the status of these 100 properties "fell through the cracks," planning officials said.

The properties are scattered throughout the city, from its hills to its bayside, and include some of the largest parcels in town, including the College of Notre Dame.

There are vacant lots, schools, churches, businesses and residential properties included in the list of lands whose zonings are under reconsideration.

Landowners have voiced vehement opposition to the proposal at earlier commission meetings, saying the changes in the lands' zonings would hurt property values and put some out of business.

Largely because of the intense opposition to the proposal, the commission began an arduous review of the status of the lands. It will act on the proposal as a whole in its next regular meeting Sept. 18.

"I think we will be able to alleviate a lot of the fears of the people who showed up at the earlier meetings," commission Chairman Densel Lawhern said.

GENERAL
REDWOOD CITY TIMES-TRIBUNE
AUG. 4, 1982
AUG. 25, 1982

Belmont council rejects plan to study San Juan Canyon

* AUG - 4 1982
By Tim Pickwell
Times Tribune staff

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BELMONT — Stating that it "took away the rights of individuals," Councilman Donald Heiman led a group that successfully killed a Residential Conservation and Open Space plan Tuesday night.

The controversial plan, an item in the proposed general plan, which the council approved, would have required a study of geologic conditions in the 90-acre San Juan Canyon area, and would have effectively prevented building on lots in the steep canyon which were found to be unstable. The Planning Commission on May 18 recommended approval of the general plan, including the RCOS designation.

Opponents of the RCOS designation, mostly land owners, argued that a study condemning their land was a violation of their property rights.

These opponents had jammed earlier council sessions and were vocal in their displeasure. In previous meetings Mayor Bob Hoffman had threatened to clear the chamber when the crowd became too emotional. Tuesday evening the au-

dience was outspoken but smaller.

Those in favor of the study, such as Hoffman, felt that the City Council was dodging the issue by not setting up a growth plan.

"This council does have a responsibility to the community to establish a plan," Mayor Hoffman said. "We have a unique situation here in Belmont. We had a chance (with the RCOS) to set up an innovative plan."

The plan called for pooling all lots that a future study might deem unsafe for building. Owners of lots in the pool would build their homes in a cluster surrounded by an area of open space unsuitable for building.

Councilman Joe Green said that "there are so few parcels of land that it is not worth it to finance a study."

Mayor Hoffman feels that the best interests of the citizens of Belmont were not served by the decision to scrap the RCOS part of the general plan.

"Some of the land owners do not live in the community and are concerned only with profit," he said. "They are not concerned with the quality and beauty of our community."

The mayor claims the plan would have helped residents and property owners.

"The plan would have prevented building on steep hillsides and would have protected residents who already have homes in the bottom of the canyon from dangerous slides like those that occurred this past winter."

The mayor cited the topography and history of the land as part of his reason for supporting the plan. He maintained that much of the land was never meant to be built upon in the first place.

"More than half the lots are sub-standard," he said. "They were originally laid out in the 1920s and '30s and were given away as jokes in San Francisco movie theaters. They were designed for cottages and now people would like to build permanent, solid dwellings."

"By not developing a plan for the area," Hoffman said, "we are putting our heads in the sand and ignoring the problem."

The general plan, minus the RCOS designation, now goes back to the Planning Commission. The commission is required to reconsider the plan any time the council makes changes in it.

OVER

Belmont to review land plan

Council wants more time
to study the controversy

* AUG 25 1982

By Anne Houghteling
Times Tribune staff

BELMONT — The controversial Residential Conservation and Open Space plan governing building in the city will surface again, but this time only for study.

The plan, proposed as part of Belmont's new general plan, calls for study of geologically fragile areas to determine where building is appropriate. It caused an uproar at several council sessions as scores of property owners in the steep San Juan canyon area protested that it would take away their property rights.

After hearing residents' complaints, the City Council two weeks ago gave its preliminary approval to the new general plan, but not before deleting the RCOS designation from the document.

There was sentiment on the council, however, that the concept should not die without further review.

Tuesday night the council adopted the new general plan without the controversial item. But the city staff was instructed to put the disputed plan back on the agenda for study, probably sometime in October.

"I don't have a desire to totally reject RCOS," Councilman Bill Hardwick said. He said he would like to study more carefully what the plan might mean to housing densities and what its implementation would cost the city, among other things.

That feeling was echoed by other council members, although Mayor Bob Hoffman issued a warning.

"I don't think I could convince

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AUG 25 1982

* Continued from B-1

people (to accept the plan) with a two-by-four," Hoffman said.

Council members expressed support for a joint meeting with the Planning Commission to review the plan. That meeting has been tentatively scheduled for sometime between Oct. 4 and 10.

The commission disapproved of the council's action to delete the RCOS designation from the general plan, which was written by Tom Vlasic and Martha

Blair, the city's planning consultants.

In other action Tuesday, the council set tonight at 7:30 for a special meeting on the proposed 1982-83 budget and revenue sharing funds.

It also postponed until Sept. 14 further discussion of a final environmental impact report for the proposed Island Park project. The action was taken because the Planning Commission has yet to vote on a zoning change, general plan amendment and grading plan for the project. The commission will take up those items when it meets in special session Thursday at 7:30 p.m.