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September 26, 2011

This letter was received by the Planning Department on September 26, 2011.

Abra R. Nusser
Planning Department
City of McKinney
221 N. Tennessee Street
McKinney, Texas 75070

RE: Letter of Intent - Stone Hollow

Dear Abra,

We are pleased to submit the attached General Development Plan and related materials for Stone Hollow. In accordance with the requirements of your Zoning Application Guidelines, we offer the following information for your consideration.

BACKGROUND
In March of this year, Standard Pacific of Texas obtained approval of a General Development Plan and associated development standards for the 83.29 acre tract generally at the northeast corner of Alma Road and Silverado Trail. The approved plan reflects 358 single-family detached lots with two typical lot sizes, 62' x 115' and 50' by 110'.

As part of that approval, Standard Pacific made a commitment to the City and Frisco Independent School District to construct the perimeter roads around the school as well as public road connections to Alma and Silverado Trail. Those improvements will be constructed as part of Phase I, which is currently under engineering review.

Subsequent to zoning approval, Standard Pacific began exploring the possibility of adding the 41-acre Wheeler tract to Stone Hollow. We also recognized the potential benefit of including a portion of the surplus fire station property in the plan. However, it quickly became clear that simply adding those tracts to the existing layout would not result in a desirable master plan. The plan we have submitted reflects a true integration of those properties and results in far better circulation, connectivity and sense of community.

MASTER PLAN CONCEPT
The Master Plan for Stone Hollow is designed to produce a high quality, cohesive and integrated community, with a sense of place and identity, around ample open space.

The circulation is organized around a loop collector street, simplifying and clearly revealing access into the project, and to the home sites from the entries and elementary school. The network of streets and open space corridors have been specifically arranged to maximize the opportunity for pedestrian circulation through the project, as well as to the school and future adjacent commercial areas.

The project will feature ample and well distributed open space areas. All homes will be well within a quarter mile walking distance from useable open space. The project will be centered on the primary open space area, which will feature a neighborhood recreation center and landscaped play areas. This primary open space has specifically been located just north of the proposed elementary school, and will serve as the southern anchor to a unique "open space corridor and linkage" from the school, through the center of the project, to the large City Park just north of the project.

This greenbelt corridor will be continued via large, 30' landscape easements on either side of the diagonal road, at the center of that linkage, giving ample space for a trail/sidewalk, with occasional seating areas, and, of course, trees and planting areas. There will be a gathering area at the north end of that corridor, just before it enters the City Park.

We are also proposing a 30' landscape easement on the east side of the collector, south of the aforementioned diagonal greenbelt, providing a generous pedestrian linkage to that corridor from the eastern side of the project, which includes the other major open space area- a 100' wide, acre plus "median park."

COMPARISON TO EXISTING ZONING

As the table below shows, the proposed master plan provides a larger lots, higher open space percentage and lower density than is currently approved.

ITEM	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Total Property Area (ac)	83.29	128.95
Maximum Lot Count	354	485
Gross Density	4.30 du/ac	3.76 du/ac
Average Lot Area	6,250	6,650
Interior Open Space (ac)	4.3	8.6
Interior Open Space Percentage	5.1%	6.7%
Total Open Space (ac)	6.4	12.7
Total Open Space Percentage	7.6%	9.8%

PURPOSE AND JUSTIFICATION

- Revised General Development Plan - We have prepared a new master plan that incorporates the Wheeler tract and a portion of the fire station property
- Fire Station Configuration - Through dialogue with Staff, we are proposing to modify the fire station property by increasing its frontage along Alma. This will provide greater flexibility for future improvements to the facility.
- Access & Circulation - The existing plan provides for one street connection between the Standard Pacific and Wheeler tracts. The proposed plan provides four connection points, including a collector road. The street layout provides improved circulation and trip distribution, including access to the FISD elementary school.

- New Home Product - The additional area creates the opportunity for Standard Pacific to introduce a new larger, higher price-point product to the community. The typical lot size for this product will be 75' x 120'.
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OPEN SPACE

The General Development Plan includes a total of 12.6 acres of open space, which equates to 9.8% of the site area. Of that, approximately 8.6 acres (equating to 6.6%) is within the project interior. All open space areas will be irrigated and landscaped.

PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY WIDTHS

The General Development Plan (GDP) reflects a variance on the right-of-way widths for type A and B streets. The reduced width is applied to the parkway only; the pavement width conforms to the Street Design Manual. The proposed cross-sections are shown on the Sheet 3 of 3 of the GDP. Our justification of this request based on a number of factors.

1. Conformance to REC Guidelines. The plan we have presented conforms to, and in some instances, exceeds REC guidelines in a number of important areas including:

REC Criteria	**Provision Made**
10% of streets shall be Type A	Approximately 19% of streets are Type A, based on linear footage
90% of homes shall be within 1,320 feet of interior open space	97% of homes are within 1,320 feet of the amenity center area
Streets and blocks promote pedestrian activity	Street layout includes traffic circles, enhanced concrete cross-walks at key intersections, sidewalks and street trees provided on both sides of all streets
Minimum 5% of the land area should be devoted to interior open space	6.7% interior open space provided
Minimum 5-ft wide sidewalks along Type A streets	6-ft sidewalks provided along Type A streets and around community green
Developers should confer with the appropriate school district to locate schools within walking distance of neighborhoods	From the project's inception, we have worked closely with FISD to integrate their proposed school into Stone Hollow and provide for improved access and circulation
Schools should be located within 1/2 mile of the majority of dwelling units	100% of lots are within 1/2 mile of the FISD school site
Pedestrian paths shaded with trees	Street Trees will be provided on all streets
Plan should promote energy conservation	Majority of lots oriented north-south to help reduce cooling costs
Curb return radii should be 10 to 15 feet to reduce walking distance across streets	Our plan currently reflects curb return radii per the street design manual; however, we are willing to reduce these to 15 to conform to the REC if staff prefers
Crosswalks	Enhanced colored concrete shall be provided at key intersections along Type A streets
Amenities	A neighborhood pool/amenity center is planned in the central open space area

2. Pedestrian Oriented Elements: Stone Hollow has been designed to be a pedestrian friendly environment and includes:
    a. 6-ft wide sidewalks along Type A Streets at connections to 10-ft wide City hike and bike trail, and around community green.
    b. An internal open space corridor linking the elementary school with the adjacent City Park to the north, through the center of the project, with 6-ft wide sidewalks the entire length and occasional shaded seating areas.
    c. Shaded sitting area at Entry Plaza adjacent to Alma and within community green
    d. Street trees

    It is also worth noting that the provision of 6-ft sidewalks along our Type A streets will create an appealing alternative route for users of the 10-ft hike and bike trail along Silverado Trail and Alma Road. Pedestrians will prefer the route through the neighborhood and away from the higher traffic thoroughfares.

3. REC Street Design Principles: The orderly and efficient movement of vehicular traffic has traditionally been the primary emphasis in roadway and transportation design. Many of the accepted design standards relating to elements such as street widths, horizontal curvature and design speed reflect this focus. However, with recent trends towards multi-modal transportation design, some of these standards are being reevaluated to give greater consideration to pedestrian safety and comfort. The REC guidelines reflect some of these principals. For example:
    a. Page 38, Item 2.a.ii indicates that Type A streets shall be "narrow streets with narrow curb turning radii."
    b. Page 44, Item 3.a.v indicates that curb return radii for minor collectors and local streets shall be 10 to 15 feet. This is in contrast to the Street Design Manual minimum radius of 25 feet.
    c. Page 48, Item c.i indicates that major local two-way streets should have a maximum right-of-way of 60 feet. The clear implication of this provision is that a lesser right-of-way width is permissible, otherwise it would be stated as a minimum or defined number.
    d. Item c.i also provides for maximum pavement and lane widths.
    e. The horizontal alignment of roadways in the REC also differs from City standards. For example, Collin-McKinney Parkway is identified on the City's Master Thoroughfare Plan as a Greenway Arterial. The minimum centerline radius for this roadway classification per the Street Design Manual is 1,050, which is based on a design speed of 45 mph. However, the portion of this street that is within Craig Ranch, has a centerline radius of less than 50 feet. This dramatic departure from the standard reflects REC's emphasis on slower vehicle speeds and pedestrian safety and comfort.

4. Traffic Calming. Central to creating a pedestrian oriented environment is the reduction of vehicle speeds. Studies have shown that the posted speed limit has little effect on the 80th percentile speeds. Therefore, reducing traffic speeds must be accomplished through other "traffic calming" elements. Our plan provides several such measures:
    a. Traffic circles - These force motorists to slow down through the intersection. In particular, the traffic circle at the northwest corner of the school site will reduce the through-movement speeds and discourage speeding along Stone Hollow Parkway adjacent to the school.
    b. Intersection spacing - The number of intersecting streets along a given roadway effect average speeds. Where intersections are more closely spaced, drivers tend to reduce speeds as they become more aware of potential cross-traffic. The Stone Hollow street

network, which is characterized by intersections generally spaced between 250 and 600 feet accomplishes this.

c. Parkway Design - It has been documented that narrower streets calm traffic. But this principle applies not only to the paved width, but the parkways as well. Structures, trees and other improvements in closer proximity to the traveled way tend to cause motorists to drive more slowly.
d. Neck-downs - reducing the paved width at intersections is a commonly used traffic calming measure. However, neck-downs may adversely affect orderly traffic movements around the school during peak traffic periods, so they are only currently shown on our plan at the 4-way intersections on the collector loop road that is not adjacent to the school.
e. Cross-walks - we are proposing enhanced patterned concrete crosswalks at key intersections. The visual contrast created by this element alerts motorists to the possible presence of pedestrians.

5. School Safety. Peak traffic volumes in Stone Hollow will be concurrent with school drop-off and pick-up times. During those periods, reducing traffic speeds and providing for safe pedestrian movements is most critical. Our proposed street cross-sections will contribute to these needs.

6. Prior Precedent. Because portions of the REC guidelines are a "form-based" code, the application of some of its principles can be subjective. For that reason, there is value in looking at how these principles have been applied to other projects within the REC. Because of the many similarities between Craig Ranch North and Stone Hollow, we believe it is entirely appropriate to evaluate how the REC guidelines were applied. The common elements between the two projects include:
    a. Both are within the REC overlay
    b. Uses are exclusively single-family detached and open space
    c. Communities are adjacent to each other, being separated only by Alma Road
    d. Residential homes are primarily front an swing entry (83% of Craig Ranch North homes; 100% of Stone Hollow)

    The street and right-of-way widths we are proposing are the same as what was constructed in Craig Ranch North. Our selection of these street widths is due in part to these similarities.

    Furthermore, Craig Ranch North was master planned through a design charrette process conducted by Andres Duany, who is recognized as the foremost authority on new urbanism. The Craig Ranch North plan is the result of careful deliberations, planning and design. As such, we feel that it is prudent to study the plan and, where appropriate, draw upon its example. It is important to note that, with respect to gross density, pedestrian facilities, open space areas, lot size, home values, and amenities, Stone Hollow exceeds what is provided in Craig Ranch North. For those reasons, we believe that the same street variance is warranted.

7. Other Jurisdictions. A parkway width of 10 feet measured from face of curb, as we propose for Type B streets, is not unusual in public roadway design. Allen, Keller, Flower Mound and Grapevine are just a few of the cities that use 10 foot parkways on residential streets, so what we are requesting is not out of the ordinary. Required paving, drainage improvements, and utilities can be accommodated within the proposed right-of-way.

GARAGE OFFSET - FRONT ENTRY HOMES

Standard Pacific is developing an overall architectural style for Stone Hollow that will include three different home product lines. While each product will include variety of floor plans and elevations, all of the homes will reflect the overall architectural theme for the community.

The floor plans and style being proposed reflect Standard Pacific's expertise and insight into the desires of today's homebuyer. Mandatory front porches on all homes will greatly detract from the upscale style Standard Pacific intends for this community. Also, a ten-foot garage offset greatly diminishes the flow and function of the proposed floor plans.

The REC seeks to promote a sense of community and interaction. While front porches on most homes go unused, Standard Pacific will truly capture the spirit of the REC in Stone Hollow. Most floor plans will include large covered patios with many special amenities. This emphasis on outdoor living draws families out of their homes with greater frequency and creates more opportunities for neighborhood connections.

CUL-DE-SAC/LOOP STREETS

The master plan reflects two cul-de-sac streets. While the REC discourages cul-de-sacs, we believe that their inclusion in Stone Hollow is justified for the following reasons:

- There are only 14 lots out of 485 on cul-de-sacs
- The cul-de-sacs do not discourage pedestrian movements or neighborhood interaction
- The southern loop street includes a wide median area that will be landscaped
- The end of the northern cul-de-sac has is open to a common area and includes a pedestrian connection
- There are a number of mature trees at the northwest corner of the site. We terminated the northern where shown in order to preserve as many trees as possible

OVERLENGTH STREETS

The proposed master plan meets the intent of the REC. There are a few blocks that exceed 600 feet in length, but of those, only four are longer than 700 feet. Since blocks of 1,200 or longer are commonplace in residential neighborhoods, having a few that exceed 600 feet does not diminish the level of connectivity within the community. Further reducing block lengths will only add additional streets and utilities that the City will have to maintain while doing nothing to improve the quality of the neighborhood.

BUILDING SETBACKS

A rear yard setback of 10 feet is proposed for all products. Most homes to be offered will provide 20 to 25 foot rear yards. However, Standard Pacific is not a "cookie cutter" builder and will customize their homes to satisfy the needs of their buyers. The 10 foot setback is being proposed in order to allow the flexibility to offer a wider variety of floor plans and product customization.

SITE DATA & PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Please refer to the attached exhibit.

Per your planning application submittal calendar, we are requesting that this case be heard before the Planning & Zoning Commission on October 25, 2011. We appreciate your assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,

J. VOLK CONSULTING, INC.

Jay Volk, P.E.
President

cc: Chris Matzke, Division President, Standard Pacific Homes