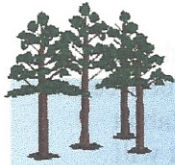


## Correspondence



### **RABBIT CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL (RCCC)** A Forum for Respectful Communication & Community Relations



**1057 West Fireweed Lane, Suite 100 / Anchorage, AK 99503**

November 15, 2020

Platting Board  
MOA, Planning Dept  
4700 Elmore Road  
Anchorage, AK 99507

RE: S-12582, River Hills Estates Subdivision Lots 1-6, Tract A

The Rabbit Creek Community Council (RCCC) has reviewed the proposed plat for River Hills Estates: S-12582. This is a subdivision of 20 acres into 6 lots and Tract A, spanning Little Rabbit Creek.

Our review of this project included a presentation on the draft plat at our August meeting by the S4 Group (via Zoom). Numerous neighbors from the adjoining Mountain Air Estates #1 subdivision (through which River Hill lots will be accessed) asked questions about road repairs, snow plowing, and their existing driveways. A Bear Valley teacher submitted a text on his long-term use of the 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue path as a way to reach Golden View School with his students. The Hillside District Plan and its pertinent requirements were described.

This was followed by a November 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the RCCC's Land Use & Transportation Committee including review of S4's August meeting summary and final plat application, RCCC August minutes, the Hillside District Plan (HDP), and adjacent plats. Resultant recommendations were refined and approved by a vote of 34 yeas, 2 nays, and 3 abstentions at the RCCC November 12, 2020 meeting (Zoom).

Rabbit Creek Community Council appreciates the meeting with S4. Our comments and recommendations are as follows.

1. Include a condition requiring repairs to the roads within Mountain Air Estates #1 subdivision, should road damage occur during or after River Hills construction activity. This condition should provide for coordination between Mountain Air residents and the River Hills Developer (or the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA)) to jointly select the contractor for any repairs.
2. Mountain Air Estates residents request a requirement that future River Hills homeowners contribute to Mountain Air's road maintenance group. Mountain Air roads are substandard, are not served by a Limited Road Service Area, and must be used to access River Hills.
3. The plat should delineate and label areas greater than 5,000 square feet on slopes greater than 30% that are to be left undisturbed as required by Title 21.07.020.C.3.b. Plat notes should state which lots are subject to a maximum building disturbance envelope under 21.07.020.C.3.c. Showing the non-disturbance area, as well as the public pedestrian easements (which may in some cases traverse the non-disturbance areas), provides clarity to prospective buyers and the public.
4. **Ensure that public pedestrian easements are shown on the plat map and plat notes, in addition to listing these easements as a condition of approval.** These easements must be shown

on the plat because they cannot be added afterwards. Nearby plats that show public easements are: Gudveinia, Creek View Estates, Spruce Terraces and Potter Heights.

5. A few revisions are needed to provide the pedestrian connectivity required by Title 21 and the Hillside District Plan. Numerous municipal policies support non-motorized connectivity between neighborhoods, schools, and parks. The lack of practical road connections across Little Rabbit Creek creates a superblock more than 1 mile long. Pedestrian connection across the creek will connect River Hills to other neighborhoods, as well as to schools and parks.
  - a. The plat application states a North/South pedestrian path will run from Snow Flake Drive towards Little Rabbit Creek to meet the existing stream-side East/West pedestrian easement; map this easement on the plat, and label it as a public easement
  - b. Ensure that the North/South easement on the plat extends all the way **across** Little Rabbit Creek and south of the creek to connect with the 156<sup>th</sup> Ave alignment; otherwise there will be a gap in the easement that would prevent a complete connection. The 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue alignment is shown on the Hillside District Plan as a future primary road and trail corridor (see diagrams). Pedestrian connectivity across Tract A will ensure that future access is not delayed, just as the Platting Board recently secured access across a tract in Canyon View Estates.
  - c. Show that the new public easements in River Hills connect to existing easements on adjoining properties. The plat application does not show these connecting easements. Downstream, Gudveina subdivision has a platted stream-side public easement. On the south side of Tract A, there are platted pedestrian easements and a Section Line easement long the 156<sup>th</sup> Ave section line alignment (Spruce Terraces subdivision). Ensure that the North/South easement is shown on the plat all the way to Little Rabbit Creek and across it to the 156<sup>th</sup> Ave alignment to ensure no gaps will impede future connectivity.
6. Include a condition that public pedestrian trails or paths will be constructed (soft-surface) and posted with signs at the time of any land use permit application. This condition matches the conditions in other recent subdivisions, e.g., Spruce Terraces and Potter Heights subdivisions. Trails are part of the transportation infrastructure that are best completed at the time of development.
7. The width of the pedestrian easement should be approximately 20-30 ft, consistent with other easements in the vicinity. This width allows for sustainable construction on slopes and along the creek. **The actual trail footprint will be narrow**, and will be decided in consultation with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game per Title 21.07.020.D, Wildlife Management Corridors, and perhaps a professional trail designer (such as was used for the Potter Highlands path).
8. RCCC requests that the eventual property owners minimize the use of fencing so as not to impede wildlife movements and to avoid conflicts. This would contribute to the intent in Title 21 of Wildlife Management Corridors.

The Platting Board should be assured that there are proven techniques for construction of sustainable, low impact trails on slopes such as those within this plat. **See attached photo of box steps on a trail in Rabbit Creek Greenbelt, Birch Road Trailhead.**

The Platting Board should note that adopted municipal plans commit to the development of pedestrian connections between the surrounding neighborhoods, Golden View School, Bear Valley School, Section 36 Park and Chugach State Park. The 2006 Hillside Subarea Transportation Study specifically identifies these as important community destinations (Attached; Figure 13 and page 39). Trails along Little Rabbit Creek and the 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue alignment are depicted in the HDP Trails Map (Map 4.6).

The HDP does not show, and could not be expected to show all pedestrian connections to/from undeveloped lands. Title 21 and the 2020 Comp Plan policy 55 anticipate that each new development will contribute to the ever-expanding pedestrian networks.

While River Hills is not specifically depicted in the HDP and Hillside Subarea Transportation Study (which was incorporated into the HDP), the HDP Trails Map 4.6 states: 'not all neighborhood access points to trail systems, greenbelts, or Chugach State Park are shown on the map; refer to the Hillside District Plan text'.

We appreciate that the developer has included the pedestrian easements in the text of his application and look forward to platted easements providing access across Little Rabbit Creek to link with 156<sup>th</sup> Ave for a long-anticipated pedestrian infrastructure connecting the recent and future subdivisions.

Sincerely,



Ann Rappoport, Co-chair  
Rabbit Creek Community Council



Ky Holland, Co-chair  
Rabbit Creek Community Council

Attachments

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