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Subject: RE: Comments on Extension of Time for Tentative Subdivision Map on your April 11 Agenda

Dear Commissioners,

The CPC has three things we would like the Planning Commission to consider regarding the tentative subdivision map extension of time on your April 11 agenda.

I. Please limit the Flint Trail Road extension to service the specific plan area.

As a condition of this extension of time, the CPC asks the Commission to direct the applicant to apply for and build the Flint Trail access road to the specific plan area, and NOT extend the road further to the edge of the Tuscany Hills subdivision.

The Flint Trail access road is a necessary part of the project in question. It will serve as an emergency exit for both new project residents and existing residents of the specific plan area. The staff report indicates that approval of the access has been delayed. That delay is part of the reason for the extension requested today. However, one of the reasons that access has been delayed is that the applicant is not satisfied with merely providing the Flint Trail access road to the specific plan area as requested by the Planning Commission. Instead, he has proposed extending it further to another subdivision at Tuscany Hills. (See MVS.com comment letter.)

Let's build the emergency access project we all agree is needed for the residents of the specific plan now and for the future residents of the project in question. There is no need to muddy the waters by involving the outdated Tuscany Hills project that has been controversial since its inception and that has not produced a single new home for anyone during its forlorn 16-plus years of existence.

II. Please limit the term of the tentative map extension to one year while you complete processing the draft Copperopolis Community Plan text.

As you know, the people of Copperopolis have been working on a community plan since 1992, over 30 years. Over that time, many new developments have been approved in Copperopolis, and the population has nearly tripled.

In 2006, the CPC asked the Board of Supervisors (BOS) to create a level playing field with regard to planning. There should be one track. Not a fast track for the developers and a slow track for everybody else. In 2006, the BOS indicated that the Community Plans for District 2 should proceed toward adoption at the same time as the plans for Valley Springs and Copperopolis that were already underway. In good faith, with the participation of Planning Staff and the local Supervisor, the people of Copperopolis drafted a Community Plan in 2013. Nevertheless, in accord with the 2015 direction of the Board of Supervisors, the text of that plan

was neither reviewed by the Planning Commission nor included in the 2019 General Plan update.

In November of 2019, the Board of Supervisors included community plans for District 2 in the general plan and said that adoption of a community plan for Copperopolis was a priority, second only to adopting a community plan for Valley Springs. However, instead of moving forward on a community plan for Copperopolis, County Planning staff and the Planning Commission spent time processing and approving this 800-unit project in September of 2020.

Now, more than three years later, the people of Copperopolis have worked with the latest local supervisor and the Planning Department on yet another Copperopolis Community Plan text. (See Attached.) However, since August of 2023, that draft plan has not moved forward. That plan cannot move forward until it is reviewed by the Planning Commission and the Commission forwards its recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. Over the last eight months, the Planning Commission has not reviewed that draft community plan text. Over the last eight months, the Planning Commission has not made recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding that draft community plan text. The Copperopolis Community Plan has yet to be reviewed by the Planning Commission, while this same subdivision project gets on the Planning Commission agenda for yet another approval. Four regular meetings of the Planning Commission were cancelled in the past eight months!

We still remember the days when Commissioner Laddish stood on the public side of the dais at the San Andreas Community Hall, advocating for the Sheep Ranch Community Plan. We still remember how upset Commissioner Plotnik was when the Board of Supervisors refused to include the text of more community plans in the same 2019 General Plan Update that mapped those communities, especially Copperopolis, with the expectation of large new developments. Because of these commissioners past concern for community plans, we expect that we are not alone in seeing the glaring inequity in this misallocation of Planning Department resources and Planning Commission time.

Now is the time to make this right with the people of Copperopolis. This Commission needs to make a real commitment to review and make its recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on the Copperopolis Community Plan in 2024. To make sure that everybody has a stake in the plan's prompt approval, please extend the time on this subdivision map for one year only. (After the Community Plan is approved, you can consider extending the tentative map for a longer time.) By doing so, you will convey to the people of Copperopolis that now we are all on a level playing field when it comes to County planning and that we are all in this planning process together. For the love of God, please review the Draft Copperopolis Community Plan and make your recommendations to the Board of Supervisors before the end of 2024.

The Copperopolis Community Plan process began in 1992 and has lingered without a satisfactory conclusion for over three decades. As a result, community controversies remain unresolved and distract people from the real work that needs to be done to make a successful Copperopolis Community now and well into the future.

Lydia Lee's 2021 article in *Alta Journal Online* noted, "For now, Copperopolis feels like a bunch of disparate elements, with glaring disparities in wealth between the new and the old." She called the Castle & Cook created town center "faux-historic," a bastardization of the area's real history which developers exploit in their sales pitch. If Calaveras County really wants Copperopolis to overcome its challenges and attract people to settle there, then the County needs to show prospective residents that local government intends to promptly respond to their needs, not just the needs of developers.

The name Copperopolis comes from a copper mining heyday that has long since passed. But those long passed days need not be the end of the good news for Copperopolis. The best days for Copperopolis can be ahead. The first step on that path begins with approval of the Copperopolis Community Plan. That step begins with you.

III. When you get around to updating the County's Subdivision Ordinance, please amend it so that extensions of time are preceded by an assessment of the overall status of the subdivision, any specific plan, and any community plan related to the subdivision in question.

Lately the Planning Commission has been doing a lot of work updating the zoning ordinance in part to implement the 2019 General Plan Update. We at the CPC hope that you will soon do the same for the subdivision ordinance.

Some of you Commissioners may recall that when we considered the extension of time for the development agreement for the Saddle Creek Specific Plan in 2014, the CPC proposed that such extensions of time be preceded by a sort of health check-up for the project and related plans. (See attached.) It helps to see if there is still validity in the factual bases, presumptions, and mitigation measures relied upon when a project and related plans were approved. It helps to see if we can identify actions to take that will address evolving circumstances before just casually extending projects and development agreements lest the resolutions of festering problems are ignored.

Do any of you Commissioners know the conditions and mitigation measures for the 1993 Saddle Creek Specific Plan? Have any of you checked to see if the assumptions and factual bases for its approval are still valid? Have any of you asked people who live in Copperopolis if there are any problems stemming from poor implementation of the Specific Plan? If not, can any of you in good conscience approve an extension of a tentative map consistent with that specific plan without first checking if we need to find ways to address some of the problems, update the conditions, or change the mitigation measures?

Let's look at a few examples. When the 1993 Saddle Creek Specific Plan was approved, the County anticipated that regular traffic and emergency evacuation would be relieved in part by a new bridge across Lake Tulloch. Thirty years have passed and that new bridge has not materialized. What can we do to address circulation challenges in Copperopolis today? San Andreas has had not one but two circulation plans done for it since 2006. One Calaveras Public Works Director suggested updating the circulation plan and 2002 basin fee for Copperopolis in 2013, shortly before he resigned. When will it be time to take a serious look at circulation in Copperopolis?

When the 1993 Saddle Creek Specific Plan was approved, the cumulative impacts of development on roads, biological resources, water supply, and wastewater treatment were all anticipated to be less than significant. By 2011, the County's own reports anticipated that all of those cumulative impacts would be significant. When will it be time to take another look at overcoming those challenges?

In June of 2006, the County anticipated that special status species issues in Copperopolis would be resolved through a Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Resources Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP). Almost 18-years later, no such plan has been completed, and the lack of a plan continues to complicate development in Copperopolis. When will we start the HCP/NCCP?

Those are just a few of the changes in circumstances that should trigger some serious discussion by this Commission regarding the future of the specific plan formerly known as Saddle Creek and the extension of time for the subdivision in question today.

The only time Copperopolis seems to get the Commission's attention is for the approval of a subdivision, a variance, a use permit, or an extension of time. If that is going to be the case moving forward, then let us use that time to ALSO evaluate the specific plan, the community plan, and other relevant plans that dictate the context and landscape in which the proposed project or use will be implemented. Put the rubber stamp down. Take a deep breath. Listen to the concerns of residents with the level of compassion you would have if the issue was your

own home and you own family. We have seen you do it before. We are confident that you can do it again.

Thank you for considering our proposals.

With Gratitude,

Tom Infusino, Facilitator

Calaveras Planning Coalition