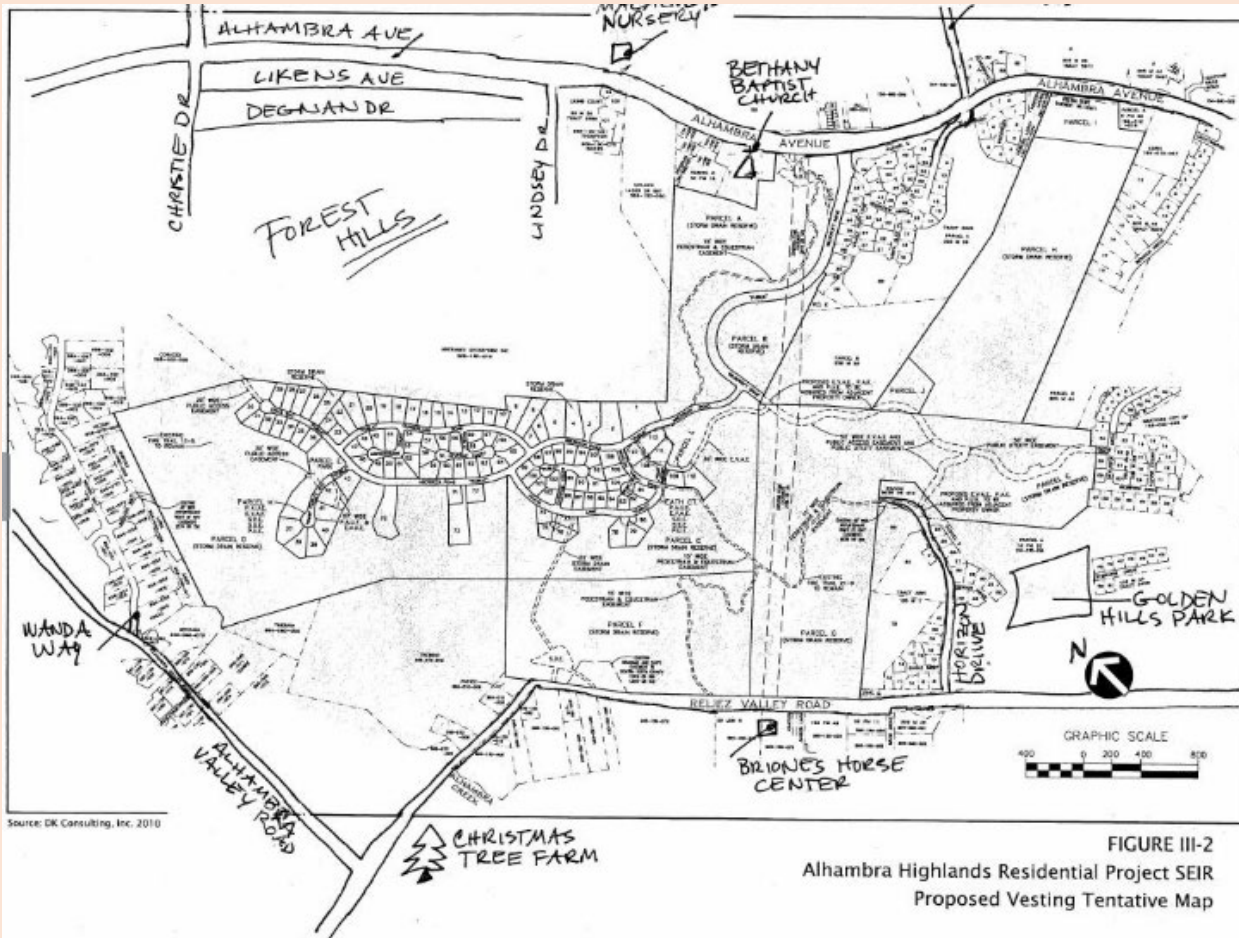


# What is happening with Alhambra Hills?



Alhambra Hills---600+ acres of beautiful open space filled with thousands of heritage oak trees (one of which some believe to be the oldest living oak in Martinez), and abundant wildlife including the endangered Alameda whipsnake. The Hills provides a natural connection between Mount Wanda and Briones Regional Park, and to open space and trails going all the way to Mt. Diablo.

Views from this spectacular area are unparalleled. And they encompass the only land John Muir actually owned. The Hills form a natural barrier between development to the east and open lands extending for miles to the Oakland Hills in the west.

Yet 110 houses are planned for the very heart of it.

Since 1990, citizens have been battling to find a way to acquire this iconic land, or at least keep development to a minimum. Three separate plans have been proposed and fought over. Discovery of the Alameda whipsnake on the south end of the property reduced the project to approximately 110 houses. And the Alhambra Hills Open Space Committee was formed by concerned citizens to educate residents and advocate for the Council to lead efforts to acquire the land.

The Council approved the Verified Tentative Map for the project in 2011, after a citizen appeal wrung out a few last-minute changes. No efforts to find a way to acquire the land had ever been attempted by the City.

Years after approval the Council voted to start negotiations with the developer. Unfortunately this was well after the Council had dramatically raised the price of the land by approving the project.

Negotiations have been on-going since with sporadic rumors of some movement, but little public information.

Now it appears the last step to actually starting the project is at hand. At their February 3 meeting, the Council approved funds to prepare the Final Map on the project.

Why was this step taken? Have the Council negotiations failed? We've asked the City. They said information will be coming soon on the City website.