



## Committee for Green Foothills NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 21, 2007

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### San Mateo County Supervisors Set to Reject Alpine Road Trail

PALO ALTO, CA -- Stanford University's proposal to construct an environmentally-destructive sidewalk expansion in San Mateo County instead of a promised recreational trail on Stanford land faces a recommendation to "reject" the expanded sidewalk at the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors' meeting scheduled for March 27<sup>th</sup>.

"We are pleased by San Mateo County Supervisors Rich Gordon and Jerry Hill's recommendation to reject the Alpine Road sidewalk proposal. Stanford tried to get out of its obligation to build a trail crossing its land in return for substantial development rights it received by moving the trail into San Mateo County," said Holly Van Houten, Committee for Green Foothills' Executive Director. "This recommended action validates our opposition to the proposal. This sidewalk is not wanted by the community and is too destructive to the environment."

Stanford and Santa Clara County did not seek approval of San Mateo County before deciding in December 2005 to replace a required trail on Stanford land with the proposed Alpine Road sidewalk expansion. Residents strongly opposed the proposed 16-foot wide sidewalk because of safety concerns where the expanded sidewalk would cross many private driveways in the Stanford Weekend Acres area, environmental impacts to adjacent sensitive creek and riparian areas, the need to armor the creek banks to support the expanded sidewalk, as well as the proposal to cut into a steep hillside to move Alpine Road to make road for the expanded sidewalk.

Tuesday's anticipated Board action would reject the Alpine Road Trail and instead encourage Santa Clara County to establish a grants program to make the \$8.4 million Stanford is required to pay available to recreation projects. "There are many better uses for this money than the Alpine Road sidewalk expansion," said Lennie Roberts, Committee for Green Foothills' San Mateo Legislative Advocate. "Everybody, including Stanford residents, wins with the creation of a grants program that makes the best use of these funds. We hope the funds can be made available as soon as possible."

Under the agreement between Santa Clara County and Stanford University, Stanford could wait until 2011 to see if San Mateo County would change its mind before paying the fees.

#### **Background: Stanford required to provide two trails**

The Santa Clara County 1995 Trails Master Plan identified two trails crossing on the northern and southern sides of Stanford lands, identified as the "C1" and the "S1" trails. As a condition of Stanford University's 2000 General Use Permit that allowed the University to build an additional 5 million square feet of housing and academic facilities, Stanford was required to come back to the County with a plan to move forward with 'building, dedicating and maintaining' these two trails on University lands by the end of 2001. "During this 5 year period, Committee for

Green Foothills and other community members proposed several alternative alignments and several compromise alignments, all of which were rejected outright by Stanford,” said Jeff Segall, board member for Committee for Green Foothills.

In 2003, the County decided to split the planning of the two trails and moved forward with planning for the less-controversial “S1 Trail” first, and initiated an extensive review process to determine the S1 Trail alignment. Stanford offered an alternative alignment for the S1 Trail that moved it away from Page Mill Road, but when the County indicated in the fall of 2005 that it would accept that offer, Stanford added another condition. It offered to make the “S1 Trail” available immediately, but only if the County immediately decided to exclude the second trail, the “C1 Trail” from crossing Stanford lands in Santa Clara County. Stanford proposed that instead of going forward with the C1 Trail within its lands, it would offer to pay San Mateo County and the Town of Portola Valley to expand an existing sidewalk along Alpine Road. The Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors voted to accept this proposal in December, 2005. The County’s approval did not contain any environmental review of the C1 alignment, even though the environmental review for the S1 Trail had been extensive.

Stanford and Santa Clara County also changed plans without environmental review by agreeing to take money instead of a trail if San Mateo County or Portola Valley rejected plans for an expanded sidewalk. This decision to eliminate a potential Santa Clara County trail in return for money is another approval made by the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors without environmental review.

### **Committee for Green Foothills Litigation on Stanford Trails**

Open space advocacy group Committee for Green Foothills filed suit on June 9, 2006, against Stanford University and Santa Clara County, arguing that the County’s decision to exclude a required trail from Stanford lands in the County violated state law because it was done without any environmental review.

The lower court ruled in October that Committee for Green Foothills had only 30 days to file suit over the decision that Stanford and Santa Clara County made in December 2005. The Committee had filed suit in June 2006, under the belief that a 180-day deadline should have applied. “There’s a striking contrast between the S1 Trail decision with a full scale Environmental Impact Report, and the more-destructive decision on the Alpine Road sidewalk, which was made with no environmental review at all,” said Brian Schmidt, Santa Clara Legislative Advocate for Committee for Green Foothills. “That was our basis of argument that the 180-day period in which to file suit should have applied.”

Committee for Green Foothills filed an appeal in December, 2006, which is still pending before the court. To date, the court has not reviewed the merits of the case, but the appeals court should take a broader review of the issues.

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### **About the Committee for Green Foothills**

Committee for Green Foothills is a regional grassroots organization working to establish and maintain land-use policies that protect the environment throughout San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. Committee for Green Foothills, established in 1962, is a Bay Area leader in the continuing effort to protect open space and the natural environment of our Peninsula. For more information about the Committee for Green Foothills or about our work on this issue, visit [www.GreenFoothills.org](http://www.GreenFoothills.org).