

RUGOSA RIDGE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

November 30, 2021

Linda Ritter, Senior Planner
City of Mukilteo
11930 Cyrus Way
Mukilteo, WA 98275

**RE: Harbor Grove Preliminary Plat Application
9110 53rd Ave W**

RECEIVED

NOV 30 2021

CITY OF MUKILTEO

Dear Linda,

This letter concerns a proposed 7-lot subdivision application and is submitted on behalf of the Rugosa Ridge Homeowners Association (HOA). The Rugosa Ridge Subdivision consists of 10 lots located on Hargreaves Place. Hargreaves Place is one block west of 53rd Ave W. The proposed development site directly abuts four properties in Rugosa Ridge. The primary concerns of the HOA are related to drainage and stormwater runoff, and the use of large retaining walls that would allow the project site to be filled to a higher elevation.

Background: Rugosa Ridge was built out over several years as a planned development. A key element of the Rugosa Ridge subdivision is Hargreaves Place, a low impact development feature consisting of permeable pavement. The development lacks a typical centralized stormwater detention feature found in most projects. In this case, the street provides the primary stormwater detention and treatment functions by infiltrating rainwater. We note that due to its design Hargreaves is very sensitive to dirt, silt and debris accumulation and when it gets dirty it does not infiltrate properly. It must be cleaned on an ongoing basis. Cleaning of the street is a highly specialized process that costs the City and private property owners a considerable sum.

A. Stormwater runoff and erosion.

Almost the entire site proposed for development is currently forested. The proposed project would remove all of the vegetation from the western portion of the site and there would be up to 20 feet of dirt placed above the existing ground level. Because the land slopes down to the west, removal of the vegetation and filling the site will result in an increase in site runoff, with potential storm drainage and erosion impacts on Hargreaves Place and the adjoining lots 3, 4, 5 and 6. Hargreaves Place is not designed to accommodate stormwater from developments outside of Rugosa Ridge. It already floods during heavy rains. Any soil erosion that occurs during construction or post-development could have a negative adverse impact affecting not only private properties, but the City of Mukilteo. Both parties have a mutual interest in preventing erosion and sedimentation impacts on the Hargreaves Place, which means potential impacts on the street must be considered during the project review.

There is a history of basement flooding and wet yards for properties on the east side of Hargreaves. The owner of Lot 5 (author of this letter) has spent thousands of dollars on drainage improvements to move

water away from the house foundation. Others, including Lots 3 and 8, have spent similar amounts. There is a clay layer in the soil causing groundwater migrating down from the east to daylight, resulting in water problems for these property owners, including those abutting the subject property. The proposed development threatens to make this situation worse by filling the site and removing vegetation, which helps absorb stormwater and prevent it from moving off-site.

Smugglers Gulch Creek runs through the north and western portion of the Rugosa Ridge development within a NGPA tract owned by the HOA. Hargreaves Place drains to the creek. There is a history of erosion and flooding within Smuggler's Gulch Creek, including drainage complaints from property owners in the Surrey Lane Development. These complaints are mentioned in the drainage study and subsequently dismissed, but the HOA feels they are relevant, given there are two projects in the planning stage with one of them already approved by the city (SP 2017-003). A portion of the creek is actively eroding due to elevated stormwater flows (Photos 1 and 2). Note the elevation of the chain fence, eroded fence posts and overhanging bank in the photos. This information is missing from the Applicant's storm drainage report.

Photo #1 – Smuggler's Gulch Creek Erosion



Photo #2 – Smuggler’s Gulch Creek Erosion



The potential for increased stormwater flows to Rugosa Ridge could cause additional erosion problems in Smuggler’s Gulch Creek, creating liability issues for the city and HOA.

Any additional runoff from the site to Rugosa Ridge would be a significant adverse impact requiring a redesign of the project, additional stormwater mitigation measures, or both. Discharge of any stormwater or collected surface water will require approval of the HOA, individual property owners and City of Mukilteo.

The downstream analysis in the Storm Drainage report stops at the point where the project’s stormwater would be discharged to the Smuggler’s Gulch Creek. The storm drainage analysis should be expanded to include Smuggler’s Gulch Creek, both upstream and downstream of the discharge point.

The City, Association and downstream property owners have a shared interest in preventing flooding and erosion of Smuggler’s Gulch Creek and Hargreaves Place. The City should require an independent, third party review of the drainage study at the Applicant’s expense. The review should be performed by licensed civil engineer with expertise in stormwater/drainage design.

B. Additional Comments on Drainage Study (Preliminary Storm Drainage Report – 9/28/21)

Page 10 of the report includes the following statement regarding the existing drainage pattern on the site and a portion of Rugosa Ridge:

The majority of the on-site runoff sheet flows west across vegetated landcover (Photo 1 – 3). Runoff travelling west continues across Parcel No. 01116500000600, Parcel No. 01116500000500, Parcel No. 01116500000400, and Parcel No. 01116500000300 before entering a catch basin on the east side of Hargreaves PI (Photo 4 – 5).

This statement is incorrect because it does not accurately describe existing conditions. Much of the on-site runoff currently infiltrates into the ground, migrates west as groundwater, and daylights where it comes in contact with a layer of glacial till soil that has been exposed by construction of residences in Rugosa Ridge. This groundwater is what is currently causing drainage issues described in the preceding section. For reference, the parcels listed above are Lots 3, 4, 5 and 6 in Rugosa Ridge.

C. Proposed Grading and Large Retaining Walls

The project includes very large retaining walls along the western boundary of the property. The walls appear to be up to 20 feet in height adjacent to Lot 3 of Rugosa Ridge (see Figure 1 below from grading plan). Not only would the walls be visible from the abutting lots in Rugosa, they would be visible from many vantage points in our subdivision, including from the public street. The walls would be massive and unsightly. For that reason, the HOA strongly opposes the use of large retaining walls supporting large amounts of fill.

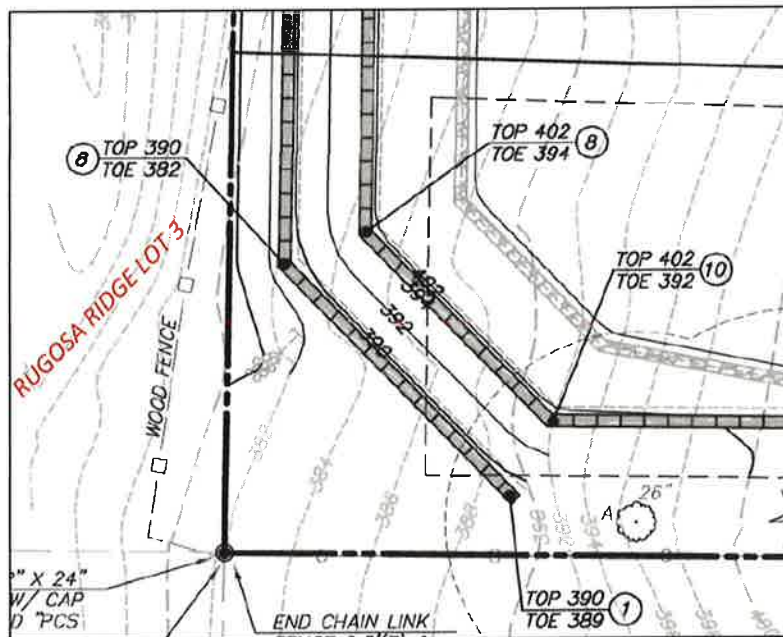


Figure 1 - Image showing proposed retaining walls abutting Rugosa Ridge

Summary

The Association acknowledges the right to develop property and anticipates the site will eventually have houses on it. However, the property must be developed in accordance with the city's zoning and other development regulations. The proposed plan would create adverse impacts on Rugosa Ridge as a

whole, Hargreaves Place, and would reduce property values for those properties that would be immediately adjacent to the development. The project should be redesigned to reduce and mitigate impacts on stormwater, drainage, erosion and visual impacts.

One good example of a subdivision development is the short plat that was recently developed on the abutting property to the north (SP-2017-013). This development was completed with minimal grading and tree removal and should serve as a model for development of the Harbor Grove subdivision. However, it is important to note the applicant of the Harbor Grove subdivision has apparently purchased the lots in SP-2017-03 and will be constructing houses there. The impacts of house construction on adjacent properties are not entirely clear at this time. The City should carefully review the building plans for potential impacts on properties within Rugosa Ridge, including Lots 6, 7 and 8, as well as stormwater impacts on Hargreaves Place and Smuggler's Gulch Creek.

The city will be receiving comment letters from individual property owners within Rugosa Ridge. Please give strong consideration to the issues raised in all public comments. The Association requests to be notified of all further actions concerning this project, including the public hearing. We believe a public hearing should not be scheduled unless public concerns and environmental impacts have been addressed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Rugosa Ridge HOA



Prepared by
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9055 Hargreaves Pl



Approved by
Bryan Carli, Rugosa Ridge HOA President
9047 Hargreaves Pl

**Endnote: 9 of 10 property owners responded (verbally or in writing) in support of draft copies of this letter circulated by email. One property owner did not respond.*