

THE FACTS ABOUT RIDGELINE EQUESTRIAN ESTATES AND RIO SANTIAGO

Dear Neighbors,

The Ridgeline website has been updated with information straight from the project application submitted to the City. The Rio Santiago website is in the process of being updated yet fact sheets we've distributed reflect information directly from the Rio Santiago Specific Plan, which also has been submitted to the City. Numerous neighborhood-level, small group and one-on-one meetings have been conducted for both projects. Plus, the City provided a list of the land uses planned for Rio Santiago and even detailed those uses in its recent Scoping Meeting (to help secure input on what environmental issues it should study). However, I keep getting asked the same questions – and I keep reading the same misinformation from folks who really should know better. In fact, it's kinda sad that the leadership of OPA has already decided to defeat these two very different land use proposals – even though so many of the uses planned are exactly what so many OPA residents have told me they want. So, let me set the record straight with these important facts.



1. THE RECREATION/EQUESTRIAN ESTATES PLANS FOR RIDGELINE EQUESTRIAN ESTATES SUBMITTED TO THE CITY REFLECT YEARS OF LISTENING TO YOU

We originally thought that we'd build equestrian stables and an arena on this land, yet a vocal majority of you said that you wanted just a small ride-in only arena on the land to help reduce traffic and parking. In fact, OPA Board President Tom Davidson was one of the early supporters for the current plan for Ridgeline Equestrian Estates. Prior to purchasing the land, I asked Tom what kind of land use he and the Board preferred on the property – and what he recommended and shared with my investors and others (large equestrian estate lots and trails) is what's planned today. So, let's review the details:

Upon completion, the 51-acre Ridgeline Equestrian Estates neighborhood is planned to provide the following:

- To respect and enhance the equestrian, rural character of the surrounding area, no more than 39 one-acre luxury estate homes (most with room for barns), architecturally styled in California Ranch, California Traditional and California Country designs,
- Land for a 16,000-square-foot ride-in only equestrian arena (with no nighttime lighting proposed),
- Approximately one mile of new, open to the public, multi-purpose trails with potential linkage internally to each lot and potential to the external, existing trail system (internal trails will be maintained by REE HOA),
- Substantially less traffic than the previous land use,
- Preservation of Handy Creek in its existing natural condition, and
- Important infrastructure improvements currently in early drafts of the EIR include the following:
 - o Improved storm water runoff and water quality protection
 - o Traffic and entrance roadway improvements for better access
 - o Secondary emergency vehicular access
 - o Over two-hundred additional trees will be planted

2. RIO SANTIAGO PROVIDES FOR OVER 70% OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL USES WITH LUXURY RESIDENTIAL SENIOR LIVING WHICH IS DESIGNED TO RESPECT AND PRESERVE THE UNIQUE CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNITY

The vast majority of people living adjacent to the old Sully-Miller sand and gravel pit and today's active rock-crushing operation want these current uses to go away. They'd like new land uses that DON'T add peak time traffic yet DO reclaim and restore the site, protect the creek, create the opportunity for trail linkage, and create open space and recreational areas.

Upon completion, the 110-acre Rio Santiago open space/recreational/residential village is planned to provide the following:

- Removal and reclamation of the old sand and gravel mining and current rock-crushing operation,
- Approximately 80 acres (or an incredible 72% of the property) preserved as open space and active/passive parks, including Santiago Creek in its current natural state,
- Two miles of trails open to the public and land donated for future links with the regional trail system and Santiago Oaks Regional Park,
- Passive and active recreational uses such as an equestrian center and a YMCA facility with sports fields, and
- The remaining 30 acres (only 28% of the site) will include an active-adult community complete with the following NON COMMERCIAL uses:
 - o 64 single and two-story casitas around its perimeter (with a zoning overlay that would replace the casitas with either 44 townhomes OR 25 single-family detached homes on lots no less than 8,000 sq. ft.)
 - o 315 independent living residences (two and three stories with a restricted number of interior-situated three-story residences)
 - o 80 assisted-living units
 - o Central resort-style clubhouse offering spa and fitness facilities, dining room, kitchen, library and other uses

The preparation of the EIR for Rio Santiago is underway and key mitigation measures and infrastructure improvements will be studied as part of that process. However, here's one fact that all the experts can agree on – the vast majority of active senior citizens do NOT drive during key commute hours, and thereby, active-adult communities generate significantly less traffic during peak commute hours. They also have NO impact on schools and serve as extraordinary volunteers uplifting the community in which they reside.

3. THE SULLY-MILLER RIDING ARENA WILL BE PROTECTED FOREVER

I have stated in the past and I will state again for the record, I intend to offer the entire Sully-Miller Arena (located across the street from Rio Santiago) for donation to a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. According to Tom Davidson and the OPA website, the Sully-Miller Arena property is worth \$28 million (that's a lot of horse lessons!), so clearly this is a SIGNIFICANT contribution to the equestrian lifestyle of the community. And, I want to make sure that it's open to the community forever. Let's work on that together!

4. THE RIDGELINE GOLF COURSE WAS NOT A VIABLE BUSINESS

The old Ridgeline Golf Course property was offered for public sale because it was no longer competitive in the marketplace – and was not viable for long-term profitability. We conducted a review and analysis of Ridgeline Golf Course with 15 other executive (9-hole) courses in Orange, Long Beach and Los Angeles counties. Here's what we learned:

- Nearly every course reviewed was subsidized by an adjacent hotel, private HOA or (in the majority of cases) by city taxpayers!
- Ridgeline's fees were double and sometimes triple the cost of other executive courses. Plus, the hard to find nature of the course impacted its daily use. Successful executive courses are near major business areas or along major highways.
- Due to space constraints and other site challenges, there was no opportunity to upgrade the course or add additional holes or amenities.

When we bought the property, it was understood that it was no longer a viable venture. That's why, prior to purchasing the property, we asked Tom Davidson if he and the OPA HOA supported residential development on the site. He told us that we had their support for estates on one-acre lots at the Ridgeline property.

5. THE OPA SPECIFIC PLAN WAS NOT WRITTEN ON STONE TABLETS

With regard to Ridgeline Equestrian Estates, on September 24, 1985, when the bulk of the Ridgeline Equestrian Estates property was annexed to the City of Orange, the late civic leader Bob Bennyhoff stated at a public hearing that “The Orange Park Acres community has no objection to this downzoning, however, will be looking for a zoning of R-1-43560 [R-1-40], in the event the property is sold.” We share the view of the late Mr. Bennyhoff.

With regard to Rio Santiago, the land uses proposed by Fieldstone (the previous owner of the property) were NOT in compliance with the OPA Specific Plan, yet were supported by OPA Board Members. The Fieldstone plan provided only a small fraction of the open space and recreational opportunities that the plan for Rio Santiago includes. In addition, the Rio Santiago property rests within THREE different jurisdictional planning areas including the City of Orange General Plan, the OPA Specific Plan and the East Orange General Plan. City of Orange Resolution No. 9778, supported by the OPA Board and signed on Oct. 14, 2003 by the then Mayor of Orange, allowed for “amendments to the Land Use Element of the General Plan, the Orange Park Acres Specific Plan and East Orange General Plan.”

6. THE PROCESS ENSURES THAT PROMISES MADE ARE PROMISES KEPT

Before there was a formal application to the City of Orange for Rio Santiago, we reached out to the surrounding community, key stakeholders and groups to secure their input on desired land uses. The end result of this process was the signing of an official Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by The Coalition Group (representing the Mabury Ranch HOA, Santiago Creek Greenway Alliance and Orange Citizens for Parks and Schools). The MOU identifies project components and timelines, and guarantees MOU signators the right to review all detailed plans before development approvals are granted.

In addition, as stated above, there are three different jurisdictional plans over the Rio Santiago property. To remove land use confusion, address the needs of our neighbors, and ensure compliance with the objectives of the City’s General Plan, a new



comprehensive Rio Santiago Specific Plan will be created. Through this new comprehensive Specific Plan, standards for permitted uses, densities, and other development regulations will finally be established, including strict guidelines for architectural design, landscaping and more. Once the Specific Plan is approved, the zoning for Rio Santiago will change from Sand and Gravel mining and Single Family Residential to Planned Community. This is a general zoning designation that will result in five different and distinct planning areas within Rio Santiago, each with its own list of approved land uses under one Specific Plan.

To help create an additional layer of review by the City as well as our neighbors and members of The Coalition Group, each of these planning areas will have to go through a Major Site Plan Review process requiring the creation of detailed plans, drawings, illustrations, and other information to ensure that what is being proposed for the planning area is in compliance with the Specific Plan. In addition, members of The Coalition Group and other stakeholders will be asked to review the plans for each planning area to ensure compliance.

Plus, we are proposing a Development Agreement that will legally mandate all project improvements as well as other requirements and obligations. The Development Agreement will then be adopted by City ordinance and will run with the land.

So, while the City of Orange General Plan will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis, all the requirements, guidelines, conditions, regulations, and agreements for Rio Santiago will finally be established under one comprehensive Specific Plan. And, more than that, the Major Site Plan Review process will ensure that you all have a seat at the land use table!

Thank you for allowing me to set the record straight on some of the issues that keep coming up. My family and I love living in Orange Park Acres. I've made some incredible friends in this community – and truly enjoy participating in all the wonderful events and activities that take place. I encourage you to ask me about the plans for Ridgeline and Rio Santiago instead of listening to those who stray from the facts. I invite you visit the websites and sign-up to receive more information (www.RidgelineEquestrian.com and www.RioSantiago.com). And, I ask that you introduce yourself to me if we've not yet met. Together, we can protect our rural heritage from another decade of rock-crushing operations and secure amazing benefits and provide a much-needed equestrian center (Sully-Miller), miles of trails, over 80 acres of open space and park land, a small number of equestrian estates and a high-quality lifestyle for our parents. I'm not just "the developer." I'm your neighbor.

Thank you!

John Martin