January 6, 2020

Ms. Anne Hersch
Planning Manager
City of Albany
1000 San Pablo Ave
Albany, CA 94706

RE: Albany Hill Residential Subdivision — Pre-Application Submittal

Dear Ms. Hersch,

Trumark Homes is pleased to present a new hillside residential community at Albany Hill. The subject property is located near the Western edge of Albany City limits and is one of the final residential development areas within the City and is, currently zoned for this property is Hillside Residential. New home development has been anticipated for this property for many years, and we intend to fully comply with the goals, objectives, and standards the City has outlined for this site. We are not requesting any land use changes to the existing General Plan or property Zoning. The proposed project intends to follow the Policies and Goals outlined in the 2035 General Plan EIR and the Albany Hill Creekside Master Plan. In addition we believe the proposed project offers an exciting opportunity to help meet the City’s Regional Housing Needs Allocation goals for affordable housing.

We are proposing to develop the 10.79-acre property to include:

- 48 Duet Attached Single Family Homes
- 48 Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU’s) to be located within each unit
- 15 ADU’s are offered as deed restricted to be rented at Low and Very Low Affordability Levels
- Approximately 4-acres of publicly accessible open space to be dedicated to the City in perpetuity
- Creation of a site-specific work plan for the 4 acres of open space that shall be offered to be dedicated to the City in perpetuity that shall following the Plans Goals and Objectives outlined in the Albany Hill Creekside Master Plan
- Creation of an endowment to enhance and improve the offsite Albany Hill Park, as well as the approximate 4-acre dedication of the subject property to the City
- Onsite mitigation of trees, plants, and animal species that may be impacted by the development
- Maintain public access to hiking trails on Albany Hill

Site Planning:
The 10.79-acre residential development has been intentionally clustered in effort to limit and minimize grading and associated impacts to the hillside. The proposed development utilizes both uphill and downhill duet homes, and all units are planned to include an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). The addition of the ADU’s boost the total potential unit count for this project to 96 units within 48 lots, without the impact of additional buildings within this sensitive area. The attached unit types coupled with the addition of ADU’s allow the site development potential to be maximized and site impacts to be minimized.
TRUMARKHOMES

The site’s road design is planned to promote pedestrian and bicycle use with its connections to Hillside and Gateway Avenue. The addition of bollards at the proposed connection points will limit through access for Emergency Vehicles only, to prevent increased through motorized vehicle traffic from the surrounding neighborhood. Final design will be the result of a cooperative effort with your Planning Department, Public Works Department, Fire Department, and surrounding neighbors.

**Biological:**

According to the Albany Hill Monarch (butterfly) Habitat Assessment produced for the City of Albany by Stuart Weiss Ph.D. Albany Hill is used by Monarch butterflies as an overwintering roosting site. Albany Hill is primarily covered with non-native eucalyptus trees. In his assessment, Stuart Weiss labels various trees and tree clusters as important roosting locations on and off the subject property. In an effort to avoid impacting the roosting sites, Trumark has designed its preliminary site plan in to avoid most of the significant trees shown in Weiss’s assessment.

Many if not all, of the trees located within the proposed development envelope will likely need to be removed, but this will allow for the remaining upper and more prominent portion of the site to remain undeveloped. As outlined in the Albany Hill Creekside Master Plan, native (oak) mitigation trees are planned to replace the non-native Eucalyptus trees within the new development area, as well as in appropriate undeveloped portions of the site. This work will also help reduce the risk of invasive non-native species that have created the conditions for high fire hazards outlined in the City’s Master Plan and General Plan Draft EIR.

Trumark has had its consulting arborist inventory the trees on the subject property with a total count of 624, of which 450 are anticipated to be impacted by the site development. According to the consulting arborist, most of the eucalyptus onsite are of poor general quality, many having structural failures at the roots and canopy. According to the arborist, fire(s) in the past 15 years or so have damaged the base of many trunks and large cavities with decay are present at many of the trees. Location and extent of decay will make many trees unstable in the future. A large amount of ground debris is present, making the site highly prone to fire. The arborist went on to note that the action of removing selected trees and leaving the surrounding trees will become hazardous if within falling distance of new homes and improvements.

The preliminary site plan has been designed to allow for the development of the site, minimize the impacts to the upper slopes and ridgeline of Albany Hill, avoid significant trees that may provide roosting habitat for monarchs, remove non-native hazardous trees that pose fire and public safety hazards, improve fire & public access to the existing City Hillside Park, as well as expand the park with a land dedication of the upper slope and ridgeline areas of the property.

The proposed site development and mitigation efforts are designed to be consistent with the 2012 Albany Hill Creekside Master Plan Policies and Goals as well as the General Plan Draft EIR Policies and Goals.

- **2015 Draft EIR - Action PROS-1.C: Albany Hill Conversation Easements.** Work with the owner of the 11-acre vacant parcel south of Gateway Towers and land conservation organizations to develop a site plan for the property which maximizes the conservation
of open space on the upper slopes and ridgeline portions of the site. Continue to work with owners of private properties on Albany Hill to reduce fire hazards and manage the Hill’s unique ecosystem.

- **2015 Draft EIR - Policy CON-1.3: Conservation of Albany Hill.** Protect and restore natural features, native vegetation, and wildlife on Albany Hill.
- **2015 Draft EIR - Policy CON-2.5: Albany Hill Vegetation Management.** Protect the remaining native plant communities on Albany Hill. Vegetation on the Hill should be managed in a way that allows the eucalyptus forest to co-exist with other plant communities, include oak woodland, grassland, and toyon understory.
- **2015 Draft EIR - Policy CON-5.1: Habitat Protection.** Ensure that development decisions, vegetation management plans, and open space plans enhance wildlife diversity, avoid wildlife disruption, and protect the habitat of rare, endangered, and special status species.

**2012 Albany Hill Creekside Master Plan – Policies and Goals**
1. Protect, maintain and enhance natural features, native vegetation and wildlife habitats of the site.
2. Protect cultural resources.
3. Improve basic services to make the site safe and accessible to all people.
4. Provide simple amenities that respect the site, educate the user & allow for appreciation and enjoyment.

With the cooperation and oversight of expert biologists, the upper portion and most sensitive part of the site is proposed to be protected from future development, dedicated to the City, enhanced with native plant species that provide roosting habitat and nectar (foraging habitat) to overwintering monarchs, and selective tree canopy management in effort to maintain the desired balance of solar exposure and wind protection to mitigate impacts from the lower development of the property. Tree removal would be conducted outside of overwintering periods for monarch butterflies.

**Home Segmentation:**
Two home programs across the planning area are proposed yielding a density of 8.89 homes per acre, the homes will range from 2,400 to 3,200 square feet each. The concept of integrated covered & open decks, and low-maintenance attractive patios help minimize the need for water demanding yards. Each unit has a 2-car direct access garage and full-length driveway for additional off-street parking. Special care has been made to create ample covered, secured bicycle parking within the main garages.

**Architecture:**
Modern architecture has shaken-up the California style scene for decades and is returning with the high desire for efficient, clean design, open floor plans with a strong connection to nature. As hillside homes pose a challenge, it also offers additional housing opportunities with the inclusion of ADU’s at the lower level of all proposed units. Flat rooflines, clean lines, and handsome architecture help tuck the proposed homes into the silhouette of the hillside in effort to minimize visual impacts of the neighborhood.
Albany Hill Cornerstones:

Eco-Friendly Landscaping:
A variety of climate and wildlife habitat appropriate onsite landscaping responds and connects to the natural ecosystem and encourage butterflies, birds, and other wildlife. The use of drought-tolerant and native vegetation as well as efficient low-volume drip irrigation minimizes water usage. Strategic landscape planning creates shade and wind protection on streets, common areas, and proposed park areas. Connected streets, trails, and public transportation within walking distance inspire a healthy, active lifestyle, and neighborhood connectivity.

Forward-Thinking Building Design:
Authentic architecture complements Modern Bay Area and California Styles. Covered secure bicycle storage to help foster and promote green modes of transportation. Open floor plans with accentuated outdoor spaces and natural ventilation accommodate contemporary lifestyles. Accessory Dwelling Units provide opportunities for extended families and comply with universal design and create affordable by design units. Low-VOC coatings, ENERGY STAR appliances, and water-efficient fixtures help preserve the environment.

An All-Embracing Neighborhood:
Creating a sense of home for all cultures and generations by utilizing universal values and Northern California identifiers. World Class views combined with proximity to Parks and open space that will be dedicated for future generations to enjoy.

Processing, Next Steps:
Based on our experience developing in the Bay Area for over 30 years, we have started investigating the potential environmental impacts to the site.

We ask the City of Albany staff to review and comment upon the conceptual project on the following items:

- Zoning compliance
- Site & architectural design acceptability
- Preliminary grading & wall plans
- Project circulation design acceptability
- Potential offsite improvements required
- Utility capacity of existing connections
- Confirmation that deed restricted ADU’s shall satisfy the city’s Affordable Housing requirements
- Desired environmental review and approval process

Trumark is excited to bring the Albany Hill proposal to the City of Albany. The project design is intended to comply with the City’s goals, objectives, and standards already well established for this property without the need for variances or land use changes. We believe the site plan has been carefully and respectively designed to gracefully connect to the existing hillside while creating a sense of place by accentuating the natural features of the property.

The proposed new home community will be attractive and is intended to serve a wide variety of needs ranging through the mix of Accessory Dwelling Units and Primary Homes. The uphill and downhill
housing types are blended together with public park space and trail connectivity to help complete the vision of Albany Hill.

We look forward to your review and associated comments to determine project feasibility and conduct a formal application.

Sincerely,

Robin Miller
Director of Development
TRUMARKHOMES.COM