

## Clifford Tong

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**From:** Clifford Tong [ctong@burtonvalley.com]  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 14, 2006 7:17 PM  
**To:** 'Moraga Planning Commission (planning@moraga.ca.us)'  
**Cc:** Lori Salamack (lori@moraga.ca.us); Niroop Srivatsa (NSrivatsa@ci.lafayette.ca.us); Suzanne Jones (sljones@robelia.com)  
**Subject:** Palos Colorados hearing on 10/16  
**Contacts:** Moraga Planning Commission

Dear Commissioners,

Unfortunately I will not be able to attend the 10/16 hearing but wanted to express my concerns about the current Palos Colorados development plan. Now that I have had a chance to review the development maps, staff reports, walk the property, and view it from several offsite locations, I have come to the conclusion that the development as currently designed will have a significant visual impact to Lafayette, both from the downtown area and Burton Valley. I have seen the photo simulation from the Lafayette Bart station and based on a conversation I had with Debbie Chung (Richfield Investment), another will be taken from the Lafayette Community Center ballfields in Burton Valley.

The photo simulation from the Bart station confirms that several of the homes in the range of Lot # 17-27 will be highly visible. These lots were not part of the Settlement Agreement, and given their significant visual impact to Lafayette, it does not seem reasonable to assume that the current development plan is substantially compliant with the agreement.

Lot # 94-105 are also in locations that were not part of the plan approved under the agreement. While their visual impact is not as severe as Lot # 17-27, they are clearly more marketable and valuable to the developer based on their higher elevation, better view, and lower density.

We need to recognize that the elimination of the golf course would not just be better for the environment and reduce traffic, it may also be more economically desirable to the developer. The costs for construction, environmental mitigation, marketing, etc. may exceed the economic benefits gained from the sale of memberships, rounds of golf, and marketability of new homes. According to the Northern California Golf Association, 13 new golf courses have opened in the East Bay since 1996, all at the high end. This represents an increase of 36% in just the past ten years. While for decades there was a shortage of golf courses, this is no longer true, and some areas of the country have overbuilt and many courses are failing. Developing a golf course is far from the economic boon it once was.

In my opinion, we need to acknowledge that the current plan is different from the old plan, and renegotiate some of the basic principles to create a win-win situation for both the developer and the community. Based on my conversation with Ms. Chung, she seems open to this.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Clifford M. Tong  
BurtonValley.com  
V: 925-284-9350  
F: 925-226-3940  
E: CTong@BurtonValley.com  
W: www.BurtonValley.com

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10/18/2006