

# Cemetery

Continued from Page 1

rial Park's fate — which has been eight years in the making and was expected to finally be resolved at year's end — will now roll into next year, with Planning Commission meetings on the issue starting possibly in January but with no clear end in sight.

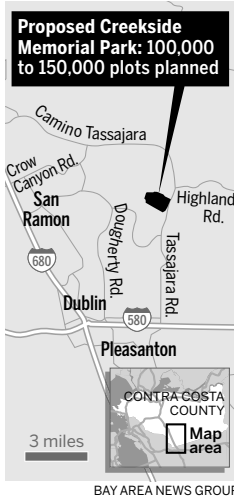
"It's a tough one," said Telma Moreira, a Contra Costa planner in charge of the project, and with so much opposition, the timeline is uncertain.

"There's a lot of work to do still, to see if we are good to go," she said.

First the county zoning administrator must decide on the adequacy of the final environmental report, expected at a Dec. 16 meeting. If deemed adequate, the report will move on to the county planning commission, and then the county Board of Supervisors.

Those public meetings will likely be jam-packed, and could roll into multipart hearings, Moreira said. More than 2,000 people have signed a petition against the cemetery, she said, worrying a little about the size of the county's meeting room.

Creekside Memorial Park — which would be a



Built on 221 acres at 7000 Camino Tassajara, it would be a place that families in San Ramon, Danville, Alamo, Blackhawk and Diablo could bury their loved ones nearby, since the number of plots in the area are dwindling, proponents say. The Alamo-Lafayette Cemetery District has a cemetery in each of those communities. The one in Lafayette has fewer than 400 places left, and all Alamo burial spots are sold.

Yet backlash to the cemetery hasn't died down. The county's environmental report had to undergo three revisions before it addressed all residents' and groups' comments, Corrie said. It makes him

wonder how much longer the process could drag out.

"If you'd asked me this four years ago, I would have said maybe a year," he said, "but I can't control it."

Corrie blames the long delays on the copious amount of detailed technical comments and criticisms of the project by neighbors and conservancy groups like Save Mount Diablo and Greenbelt Alliance that needed to be added to the environmental report.

Seth Adams, land programs director for Save Mount Diablo, said some of the starts and stops have been problems the developer himself encountered in obtaining project funding.

Adams' group is concerned the cemetery would significantly reduce the area's water supply, as well as its rare and threatened species, including the California red-legged frog and the California tiger salamander, he said.

Moreira said the county's environmental report confirmed that the graveyard would have "a significant and unavoidable" impact on the region's water supply.

But the county would work to curb some of the impacts by requiring monitoring of the area's water quality and quantity, according to the report. It would also call for less landscaping and trees on the property and require more native plants

that require less water.

Adams' group also argues that views of the cemetery and a proposed water tank would disrupt the enjoyment of hikers on the Tassajara Trail.

"It's a bad design ... and it's bad location for a cemetery," he said. "And we hope that residents will come out and oppose the project."

But Corrie argues you couldn't find a more ideal spot in the region.

"And the bottom line is it's needed," he said. "And no one wants a cemetery until they need one."

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\$35 million cemetery with a 50-year capacity — would house a chapel, indoor and outdoor mausoleums with extensive landscaping.

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