

My name is Holly Newman, of 7300 Camino Tassajara, and I'm speaking on behalf of Friends of Tassajara Valley, an informal alliance of residents and friends united against the construction of the proposed Creekside Memorial Park cemetery in the Tassajara Valley. Tonight I want to address the points raised by Mr. Abram Wilson at the San Ramon City Council meeting on April 10, which he said he would also be discussing with the other Tri-Valley cities, requesting each city's financial support for this proposed cemetery.

- Mr. Wilson talked about the proposed cemetery as though it were a "done deal," but that isn't the case. The Draft EIR was published last September, and a number of significant issues were found with it. The county planner doesn't even have an estimated date for when the Final EIR might be available, and after that first the County Planning Commission and then the County Board of Supervisors have to approve it.
- Although Mr. Wilson stated that there was a lack of cemetery space in the area, which seems reasonable at first glance, this statement needs to be quantified before it has any meaning. When we did the analysis, we learned that the large (and increasing) shift to cremations means that the existing cemeteries in the Tri-Valley area actually have more than enough space to handle the anticipated need for the foreseeable future.
- Mr. Wilson stated that the cemetery would not increase traffic, but this is not correct. In fact, at full build-out, the plans show three burials per day, seven days per week, resulting in total daily trips of 448 people. This would be a lot of additional traffic!
- Mr. Wilson is to be commended for stating that the cemetery is not to be a financial burden on the city. But he did not add that a new cemetery can take many years to become established, since most people want to be buried in the same location where other family

members are already buried – so this cemetery could easily be a financial burden for a significant number of years.

- And while most of us think of a cemetery as a peaceful, grassy, “open use” kind of space, this cemetery would not be like that. Although Mr. Wilson accurately stated that about 70% of the 221 acre site would be ‘open space,’ he did not mention that the remaining 60 acres would be developed in a fashion totally inconsistent with open space. The plans show many oversized structures, totaling over 60,000 square feet, plus about 13 acres of impervious area.
- The cemetery would also destroy a prominent ridgeline that is visible up and down Camino Tassajara and from the Windemere Hidden Valley trail, by removing up to 30 feet from the top and putting cemetery structures on the new, flat surface.
- The water use would also be huge and unsustainable; the DEIR states it would be a “significant and unavoidable” environmental impact, even after mitigation. Since all of the cemetery’s neighbors get their water from wells, the cemetery would seriously deplete the quality and quantity of water they need just to live. To take the water needed for survival from living people and from endangered plants and animals, and to use it instead for landscaping for dead people, does not seem like the right thing to do.

To conclude, given all of the pressing needs that you, the City Council, are trying to address in these difficult times, it makes no sense for you to spend any money on this unneeded, financially risky, and environmentally flawed proposal.

Thank you.