

A Gated Entrance at The Estates at Tanoan

From time to time, residents have asked about converting the Estates at Tanoan into a gated community.

The subject has been discussed at a number of our annual meetings and, in the past, we have appointed two different committees to study the matter, looking primarily at gate types and costs. The Board has also met with City Traffic Engineering to discuss the implications for the neighborhood.

This is a summary of the past investigations for those who were not involved in those discussions.

Design Review Process and costs

Through a Design Review Board process, the City would vacate the roadway right of way and we would be required to replat the roadways either into our residential lots or as a separate tract of land owned by all the residents of the neighborhood. The City would no longer own the streets in our neighborhood -- we would have to purchase the streets from the City and they would become private streets. We would become responsible for all street maintenance, street lights, signage, etc.

Obviously, sharing these costs among our 57 properties would necessitate a large assessment and a significant increase in dues. Larger communities can share these costs among hundreds of residents.

There are also infrastructure costs related to automating the gate to accommodate our needs, the needs of visitors and service vehicles, and also to assure emergency vehicle access to the neighborhood.

Gate Restrictions

The gate would have to be installed west of the existing driveway on Starlight. This would limit the stacking distance to only 2 or 3 vehicles. The Traffic Engineering Manager said in no case are vehicles allowed to spill out onto Eubank.

A large section of the median at the entrance on Starlight would have to be removed to provide a turn-around for any vehicle that has entered but is unable to proceed through the gate. If a vehicle is stalled at the gate, those behind will not be able to enter the subdivision until that vehicle is removed.

The property on the south side of Starlight has no barrier at the curb and vehicles could circumvent the gate by driving up onto their personal driveway and into the neighborhood, so security is severely limited in any case.

Security Alternatives

The past discussions considered video surveillance (we tested cameras at our entrance); motion-sensor still cameras (we tested 3 samples); Neighborhood Watch (residents expressed concerns about personal risk and our difficulty scheduling someone to cover the early morning hours); security patrols; and a gate at the entrance.

The gate was the least preferred option. The security patrol was the most preferred for deterrence and information in the event of a crime. Our security patrol currently provides us with continuous presence during the hours APD has reported to be the peak periods for crime. It is still our responsibility to be watchful whenever we are out and about in the neighborhood.