



Burbank/Del Monte

Neighborhood Advisory Committee

August 27, 2009

Joe Horwodel, Director
City of San Jose Planning, Building and Code Enforcement
200 Santa Clara Street
San Jose CA 95113

RE: PDC 08-034, 270 Sunol Court

Dear Joe;

The Burbank/Del Monte (B/DM) Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC) has grave concerns about the above project that we feel need to be addressed prior to approval. The NAC welcomes low income housing because incoming projects have been primarily market rate, not addressing the needs of existing and future residents of our area. We do not believe that this project, as currently proposed, in this location, does not serve the goals of appropriately locating low income housing, redeveloping an area already declared blighted or the long term goals of the NAC. In an area without parks, with deficient infrastructure and without services, any new housing, much less low income, should be placed carefully. We do not feel that a Mitigated Negative Declaration should be considered until the inherent conflicts this project brings are resolved. We feel that the project does not meet the needs of the City, the NAC or the future residents for these reasons:

Lack of information regarding future residents. While the public has been told the site will be developed as a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) site, it is not clear what the target population will be. We have been told that the residents are either "at risk" (i.e. drug and/or alcohol recovery or on probation), they may be physically or mentally disabled or are simply low income. We have been told that an onsite resource center either will be needed or might not be needed depending on the population. Whatever the situation, we want to make sure that any incoming residents who need services will have them readily available and will be able to integrate fully into the larger community. We are concerned that the story keeps changing because the needs of each population are different.

High density. The current proposal is for 117 units which would allow 234 residents on approximately an acre. This would mean the site is one of the densest proposals seen in the city, much less the NAC. This creates concerns regarding parking, access to services, impact on existing public services, traffic, etc., and each concern is affected by the people who will be moving in. For instance, completely mobile but low income residents have different needs than seniors or disabled. Per local policy, we have the potential for seeing an extremely high density development that brings nothing in the way of mitigation. With limited on site open space, there is no place for people who want to get out of their units which are less than 400sq ft. The impact on the Midtown Specific Plan has not been discussed. Residents have previously asked that the units adjacent to the MSP be counted because we are concerned that there is insufficient infrastructure to support incoming developments.

Compatibility with existing commercial district. West San Carlos is a vital commercial and retail link that was zoned Pedestrian/Commercial but has seen primarily housing via the PDC process. The existing retail and commercial surrounding the site is in conflict with proposed high density. There is inadequate parking for the site which would further impact surrounding and adjacent businesses. While there is a "retail" component, it is almost non-existent compared to the housing and appears to be a token placement. If the residents are disabled or seniors, placing them in a heavily trafficked commercial area is inappropriate and will degrade the existing business district. No mitigation has been outlined.

Compatibility with existing residential. The housing on Sunol is single level, single family housing on smaller lots. While higher density housing is in the permit process across West San Carlos, the impact on this side of the street will be extreme. There is nothing in the area that is close to this density.

Parking. The site is underparked and parking is hidden in a semi-submerged podium on Sunol. This means there is no visible parking for the retail component off of West San Carlos except for the adjacent Sam's Feed Store. It places an undue burden on an existing establishment if they must now police their lot and will create tension through the inherent conflict built in. The 69 proposed units of parking do not meet the needs for the residents and retail. If the site is to house seniors or disabled, caretakers, social workers and other assistants will be coming in and out of the site on a regular basis. If just 20 residents require assistance from just one person on a 24 hour basis, 40 spaces will be in use at shift change. This will severely impact residential and commercial parking. If a low income only site, we are assuming that 234 people and their guests and families will all be without



Burbank/Del Monte Neighborhood Advisory Committee

vehicles. We cannot assume that all 234 people will be earning a living by working at the 2000sq ft retail establishment. Overflow parking will impact streets, businesses and the school. This is further confused by the motorcycle and bicycle parking on site; which population is going to use these spots?

Lack of public services and recreational opportunity. Because this type of housing comes with no on site open space requirements and because it is studio style housing, we need to be sure that there is some place that is accessible for these residents. There is considerable (15,000sqft) on site space designated as common open space, it is not clear how this is going to be laid out. The adjacent school site cannot be considered as a recreational opportunity. The closest future park site is Del Monte which is not due to break ground for years and there is currently limited access via the street. The closest open facility is O'Connor Park which is an excessive distance from the site. There are no community centers or libraries nearby. If we are assuming the population is disabled, this places them in the position of having virtually no access.

Lack of transit infrastructure. If we are assuming the residents are disabled, they will be depending solely on the bus lines that run along West San Carlos. There is no way for residents to safely head along sidewalks towards downtown. The surrounding pedestrian infrastructure is sorely lacking and there is no safe bicycle access. The closest light rail stations are at Race Street (an excessive distance along streets without basic sidewalks) or Diridon (not accessible to anybody who is disabled). The scenario of building housing for people who are transit dependent in an area lacking access to transit is not compatible with current policy.

Conflict with Adjacent School: The site abuts an existing school site, presenting several conflicts.

- Populations of all schools are considered "at risk" when discussing some adult populations. The populations of residents (as previously described by the developer) could be considered "at risk" if placed adjacent to the school. We do not think it serves the City's goals of reducing crime and providing safe neighborhoods if we are placing one population that is at risk adjacent to a population that will be tempted to take advantage of them.
- There is no on site recreational opportunity and the school is the closest "open space". This will invite trespassing.
- Parking issues have already been outlined.
- The tallest part of the project is closest to the school. Even with the proposed emergency access, the massing is inappropriate for the adjacent single story school. There is concern that this will overwhelm the school site.

Many of these issues were brought up at the first public meeting and the public has continued to voice concerns. It does not appear that the mitigation criteria have been met and the project as proposed could have a severe negative impact on existing residential, commercial and retail areas. With all the approved and pending development scheduled for this area, we are concerned that the cumulative negative impacts are not being addressed.

Respectfully submitted to the NAC for approval.

Randi Kinman

Randi Kinman, Chair NAC Planning and Land Use Committee

Approved by the NAC on August 27, 2009

Norma Ruiz

Norma Ruiz, President Burbank/Del Monte NAC

cc: Councilmember Pierluigi Oliverio, District 6