



COUNCIL AGENDA: 6/21/22
FILE: 22-915
ITEM: 10.2

Memorandum

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmember Sylvia Arenas
Councilmember Maya Esparza

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: 6/17/22

Approved

Date

6/17/22

SUBJECT: FILE NOS PDC19-049 & PD20-006 - PLANNED DEVELOPMENT ZONING DISTRICT AND A PLANNED DEVELOPMENT PERMIT LOCATED AT 1312 EL PASEO AND 1777 SARATOGA AVENUE

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) Accept staff recommendations.
- 2) Decline project changes that would directly or indirectly negatively impact the 150 units of affordable housing proposed on-site.

BACKGROUND

We thank Vice Mayor Chappie Jones, our Planning and Development Services staff, the applicant, and the community for bringing forward this important project today. It has been improved by a long and thorough process of community engagement and consensus building. The result is a project with ample setbacks, effective mitigations, and valuable community benefits.

This item is a clear opportunity for Council to show our commitment to solving the housing crisis, desegregating our city, proving our commitment to Urban Villages and Signature Projects, and meeting the RHNA goals we've committed to through our Housing Element.

Desegregating Our Community and Creating Opportunity

Of particular significance, is the clear value this project would have in creating affordable housing in a very high resourced area. Creating 150 units of affordable housing here would open doors of opportunity for hundreds of children and families

This project is located in the Moreland School District, and the affordable housing proposed would be built inside the service area for Country Lane Elementary School – a school that ranks in the 80th percentile for test scores in the state for both English and Math.

Integrating students of differing income levels in these kinds of school is a difficult policy challenge for our council, our school districts, and our community. As a council, last year, we committed to an Affordable Housing Siting Policy, which flips what has been normal on its head. Instead of the typical 9% of affordable housing being built in high resource areas, we have switched to first have 30% and then 60% of city projects be built in these areas.

We charged our Housing Department with creating 432 unit of affordable housing in high resource areas in 3 years, and 960 more in 5 years.

While that policy is specific to projects funded by our Housing Department – which this project is not – this project is a special opportunity to meet the policy goals that has Council set. The 150 units proposed here is – alone – more than 1/3rd of our citywide goal for the first 3 years.

If this project were forced to reduce the scale of the project, it could result in funds being put into the in-leu program – which would mean no affordable housing would be built here, and the City would need to manage these funds, as well as struggle to find a site to build in a high resource neighborhood. We must not turn back – this is a rare opportunity to actually create opportunity and prevent displacement.

Fair Standards Across the City

Last – we commend the enormous efforts taken to reduce the impact on nearby residents of the building heights. There is a successful mitigation of reasonable concerns for building heights.

We would ask the development community and our council colleagues to take note of the enormous investments and mitigations being made here – in this affluent community. While we support these important steps, we also note that these mitigations are not available to less affluent neighborhoods.

Will there be setbacks equal to this in East San Jose? Will Whole Foods be opening a location east of 87, (let alone 101)? Will major traffic and pedestrian safety projects be funded? Will there be over 50 community engagements?

If even all these steps aren't enough in this affluent neighborhood, why is so much less acceptable in low resource communities in our city?

BROWN ACT

The signers of this memorandum have not had, and will not have, any private conversation with any other member of the City Council, or that member's staff concerning any action discussed in the memorandum, and that each signer's staff members have not had, and have been instructed not to have, any such conversation with any other member of the City Council or that member's staff.