

To: Albany City Council

From: Albany Sustainability Committee

Re: Proposed UC Village Retail and Senior Housing Development

The Sustainability Committee has reviewed the conceptual design plans for the above referenced project several times over the past year. In general we support the proposed development particularly some of the environmental features and the moderate to low income senior housing component. However, we believe that the City's parking requirements are excessive, and could result in a significant negative environmental impact on the project.

To accommodate for the number of parking spaces required, about half of the parking is surface level, and the remainder is subterranean. Per the developer, the surface parking has been included because of the excessive cost to add another level of subterranean parking. The Committee is concerned with the amount of surface parking as the space required for parking limits the potential for a more sustainable design.

The following provides some detail about how the City's parking requirements negatively impact the sustainable design of the proposed project:

- Encourages the use of automobiles to use the site rather than walking and biking.
- By having such a large area reserved for surface parking the developer is restricted in locating and orienting the two main components of the project. This has limited the options handling automobile traffic along with bike and pedestrian safe access to the site.
- The siting issues have a significant negative impact on pedestrian and bicycle pathways which will result in safety issues and discourage alternative means of transportation.
- The developer is required to manage rain/storm water runoff from the parking lot. Even if permeable paving is used to accomplish this, it will in all likelihood add cost to the project. A better option would be to develop the resulting space for public access and enjoyment through landscaping or other sustainable designs.
- Unnecessary use of materials and resources to build a surface parking lot.
- Contribute to urban heat island effect which will increase energy use and poses some public health risks.*

We believe that the current parking requirements do not support the City's commitment to reaching the targets of the Climate Action Plan as adopted by the Council in 2010. We believe this project can be of far greater benefit to the City of Albany if the majority of surface parking for the retail portion of the project is dramatically reduced.

Sincerely,

Tom Cooper

Chair, Albany Sustainability Committee

*According to the EPA: On a hot, sunny summer day, roof and pavement surface temperatures can be 50–90°F (27–50°C) hotter than the air, while shaded or moist surfaces—often in more rural surroundings—remain close to air temperatures.¹ These surface urban heat islands, particularly during the summer, have multiple impacts and contribute to atmospheric urban heat islands. Air temperatures in cities, particularly after sunset, can be as much as 22°F (12°C) warmer than the air in neighboring, less developed regions.²

Elevated temperatures from urban heat islands, particularly during the summer, can affect a community's environment and quality of life. While some impacts may be beneficial, such as lengthening the plant-growing season, the majority of them are negative. These impacts include:

- increased energy consumption;
- elevated emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases;
- compromised human health and comfort; and
- impaired water quality.