

COUNCIL MEETING DATE:

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

**ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCE
RECEIVED AFTER COUNCIL PACKET
PREPARATION**

Item 3-1. Draft General Plan Study Session

DO NOT REMOVE

Please return to Eileen Harrington, Administration

Eileen Harrington

From: The Rev. Julie Wakelee-Lynch [rector@st-albans-albany.org]
Sent: Thursday, December 10, 2015 4:02 PM
To: citycouncil
Subject: General Plan Study Session December 15
Attachments: DHWG General Plan memo to Council.pdf

Dear Mayor Mass, Vice Mayor Barnes, Councilors McQuaid, Nason and Pilch,

In advance of the General Plan study session on December 15, I send you the attached memo with my concerns and those of the Diverse Housing Working Group regarding consideration of affordable housing needs in the midst of this important work.

Thank you all for your leadership.

Cordially,
Julie Wakelee-Lynch

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The Rev. Julie Wakelee-Lynch
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Albany, CA 94706
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St. Alban's Episcopal Church

1501 Washington Avenue, Albany, CA 94706
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December 10, 2015

To: Albany City Council

From: The Rev. Julie Wakelee-Lynch

Re: Including consideration of housing needs in General Plan

I write in my capacity as the rector of St. Alban's Church and as a member of the Diverse Housing Working Group (DHWG), to ask that as you study and work toward the new General Plan 2035, you pay attention to and prioritize the following information regarding the development of new affordable housing in Albany.

Given (1) the housing crisis in the Bay Area, East Bay, and Albany, (2) Albany's RHNA, (3) Albany's commitment to meeting its RHNA, and (4) the fact that the land under Golden Gate Fields is available for possible redevelopment in the next twenty years, the Diverse Housing Working Group urges the City to include in the 2035 General Plan language that makes it clear that in developing any proposal for the voters on the redevelopment of the Golden Gate Fields property, housing will be considered a top priority use.

Further, any housing development included in an initiative for the voters would include

- (1) housing affordable to households in a ratio equal to the RHNA ratios of income categories (24% very low income, 16% low income, 17% moderate income, and 43% above moderate income) or
- (2) contributions to an affordable housing fund in amounts to substantially support the development of housing for income categories not included in the project in equal percentages on San Pablo Avenue or elsewhere in town or
- (3) the development on San Pablo Avenue or elsewhere in town of housing for households in income categories not included in the project in equal percentages to those provided in the project.

Thank you so much for your consideration in this important matter, and for your good work in leading our community.

Eileen Harrington

From: Edward FIELDS [efields@berkeley.edu]
Sent: Monday, December 14, 2015 3:56 PM
To: Anne Hersch
Cc: citycouncil; Edward FIELDS
Subject: Comments on the 2035 Draft General Plan and DEIR
Attachments: 2015-12-General Plan.docx

Anne,

Please see attached Word document with comments.

Thank you,

Ed

From: Ed Fields
Date: 12/14/2015

Comments on the 2035 Draft General Plan and DEIR

High Density Residential

At Page 28 of the DEIR:

“The High Density category (35-87 units/acre) merges the “High” and “Tower” categories included in the 1992 General Plan, but the definition notes that the top (Tower) end of the density range is only permitted on the Gateview site; everywhere else, the high end of the range is 63 units/acre, which is consistent with the existing high density category.”

At Page 55 of the DEIR:

“Residential Towers. This category was added through a 2004 General Plan Amendment to recognize that the existing densities at Gateview (555 Pierce) are 87 dwelling units per acre. It applies only to the 466-unit Gateview development.”

The definition at page 3-10 of the Draft General Plan itself states only: “However, development at the top end of this range is not permitted on all sites.”

The 1992 General Plan does not permit new development at 87 units/acre. See pages 38 and 59: “Multi-unit residential densities begin at 35 units per acre and go as high as 87 units per acre, although this maximum density is no longer permitted.”

The language in the new General Plan is vague and misleading and should clarify that the maximum density for all additional development in the High Density Residential category is 63 units/acre.

San Pablo Avenue Mixed Use

At Page 3-14 of the Draft General Plan:

“A 38-foot height limit applies, although height bonuses may be considered to achieve General Plan goals.”

Such height bonuses are not part of the current General Plan or Zoning Code, and are not analyzed in the DEIR. Nor is there similar language proposed for the Solano Mixed Use category.

University Village

At Page 3-15 of the Draft General Plan:

“Non-residential uses, including recreational and academic buildings, are subject to a maximum allowable FAR of 0.95.”

Why is development in furtherance of the University’s academic or research mission subject to Albany’s FAR?

Solano Avenue Corridor

At Page 3-20 of the Draft General Plan:

“There are also frequent applications to improve or alter existing structures, or to change uses in existing storefronts or upper story spaces. Given the limited amount of offstreet parking available, the proximity to single family homes, and the density of existing uses, these applications are sometimes controversial.”

Isn't this also true for the San Pablo Avenue Corridor?

University Village

At Page 3-24 of the Draft General Plan:

“The 2004 Master Plan calls for continued use of this area as open space, including urban agriculture and potentially including other recreational or research activities.”

There is no provision in the 2004 UC Master Plan for “urban agriculture.” The UC Village community garden (for residents) was proposed to remain, but it is incorrect to state that urban agriculture was included as a use of the Step 3 area east of Jackson Street.

Land Use Element Implementing Actions

Note the difference between LU-3.E (San Pablo Avenue) and LU-3.F (Solano Avenue) in how “existing older single family homes” and “potential impacts on neighboring residential properties” are treated. The proposed action for San Pablo Avenue is to increase the height limit, which would impact neighboring homes on Kains Avenue and Adams Street (R-3 District), while the proposed action for Solano Avenue is to “Consider special zoning regulations... to minimize potential impacts on neighboring residential properties” by creating a transition to the R-1 district.

GOAL LU-4: CIVIC, INSTITUTIONAL, AND MEDICAL USES

At Page 3-39 of the Draft General Plan, Policy LU-4.6: Gill Tract

“Support future uses of the Gill Tract (San Pablo Avenue at Buchanan Street) that are consistent with the University’s academic objectives while also responding to the community’s desire to retain a substantial portion of the property for open space and recreational uses.”

Mention should be made of the community’s desire to include urban agriculture, as that use is not currently included in UC’s 2004 Master Plan.

Chapter 7: CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY ELEMENT

Table 7-3

The General Plan and EIR should account for Monarch Butterfly surveys done since 1998. I know surveys were done on Albany Hill at least in 2014 and as recently as November, 2015.