



Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council

“Your Community Voice”

Planning Department
City of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attn: Henry Chu
Major Projects
Room 750C

Case # CPC-2012-2558-GPA-ZC-SP, VTT-71886-MU
CEQA No.: ENV-2005-4516-EIR
Hearing Date: July 30, 2013

Mr. Chu,

Since the introduction of the Ponte Vista Development before 2005, the Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council (NWSPNC) has focused its attention on the details of the project. Although Ponte Vista is identified as being within the Wilmington-Harbor City Community Plan, the project sits within the San Pedro community boundaries and, more specifically, within the area of responsibility of the Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council. Today we continue to examine the project to determine how it fits within the San Pedro community and to a larger degree how it fits in within the whole harbor community.

From the beginning, the Neighborhood Council has looked at the various aspects of the project including density, environmental impacts and civic responsibility. When the initial plans were presented to the community, the unreasonable number of units proposed caused the community to react with fury at the attempt to build over 2300 residential units of differing types creating a community so dense it was inconceivable as to how the applicant was going to accomplish the project. The project proposed multi-storied buildings, behind gates and fences with very little recreation space and no public access. Today, one could say that the new plan is a victory for the community since the applicant is now proposing 830 residential units. However, as one could see from the site drawings, the project still appears to be extremely dense, surrounded by gates and fences with minimal open/green space. When the current project was presented to the community, the applicant described the project as taking into consideration the feelings and concerns of the community and developed an improved plan. Unfortunately some of the concerns of the community were not listened to since the project still reflected a community behind gates and fences and what little open/recreation space that was identified was still unavailable to the residents of the harbor community.

Ray Regalado
President

Laurie Jacobs
Vice President

Scott Allman
Treasurer

Katie Marrie
Secretary

As in the early project proposal traffic continues to be of concern for the community. The applicant has stated publically that careful studies were undertaken with mitigations suggested. For those community members who travel Western Ave. regularly, specifically, during peak traffic hours, traffic is a challenge to say the least. Travelers, to and from San Pedro, find Western Ave. difficult as they travel to and from work, local markets and taking or picking up children from local schools. As traffic studies were conducted quite a long time ago, it would seem appropriate renewed studies should be ordered since the implementation of bike lanes on Westmont and Capital Aves. have drastically changed traffic patterns. Other stakeholders have expressed their intention of addressing this issue with the hearing panel. Mention of this issue within this statement is meant to reinforce the fact that with hundreds of potential residents within this would-be project, would greatly impact the traffic on Western Ave., the Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council recognizes the potential problems if accurate and up-to-date traffic analysis is not reinitiated by the applicant and realistic mitigations are recommended.

The current zoning requirement for open/recreation space is of concern of the NWSPNC. Looking at the density of units and the number of potential residents of the project, very little real recreation space is provided within the community and would require the youth and adults to travel to surrounding parks and recreation centers to participate in organized sporting activities. With this in mind and the fact there is very little open space in this part of San Pedro, the NWSPNC is recommending that ten (10) to fifteen (15) acres of recreation/open space be incorporated within the project plan and be fully accessible to all residents of the harbor community with ample parking. It is further recommended that the space incorporate the contours of the existing site integrating the natural creek bed that runs through the property. This feature along with the open space would allow rainwater to naturally filter into the underground aquifers thereby minimizing runoff into the local communities.

As the Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council examined the various aspect of the project one piece has stood out as being very distressing. The gates and fences that surround the community has given residents and stakeholders pause as to the reason a community such as Ponte Vista needs to be separated from the rest of the harbor community. When the current applicant was presenting the plan proposal to the council, they followed a presentation by the local Senior Lead Officer from LAPD who explained how the overall crime statistics for our area were down. He explained that if there was an area that could be improved it was burglaries. I believe he was explaining how the community could protect themselves better from theft from autos if the residents would lock their car doors and refrain from leaving personal electronic devices in their vehicles, in the open. When the applicant representative started to describe the project he stated the need for the fences was to guard the Ponte Vista residents from the local criminal element. Needless to say this did not bode well with the council and stakeholders in attendance. Although, the applicant does not use this reason for the need for fences today, one has to wonder if the applicant still entertains these feelings. They do say it heightens the value of the homes. The NWSPNC does not feel this is the case. Research makes a very compelling argument in opposition. I am sure both sides of the issue can

justify their position on the subject; however, one thing is very apparent, the use of gates and fences does not fit into the character of the community. Yes you may find a few examples of the use of walls and fences in the local community, but those developments are very rare and very much the exception.

As the NWSPNC continues to take the pulse of the community in gauging where the community stands regarding the Ponte Vista Project one of the main areas of concern is the establishment of a gated community. Many state that among the many things that draws them to San Pedro and the larger harbor community is the civic engagement and involvement by the residents of the area. With this in mind it is no wonder why this project has not been a walk in the park for the applicant to get approved. An engaged community is an informed community. Community members examine and determine what makes sense regarding their neighborhoods. This is the basis of the Neighborhood Council concept. Community stakeholders meet, discuss and give input as to the direction their neighborhoods should take. Input that our city elected officials and departments should consider. In the case of the Ponte Vista Project, the NWSPNC has taken the initiative to closely examine the application and thoughtfully suggest changes and/or share concerns since this development is in our backyard. The NWSPNC feels the rejects the use of gates and fences and all streets, sidewalks, proposed home designs and open space conform to city standard and allow full public access.

Finally, it has been the desire of the Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council to sit with the applicant and discuss the project's various characteristics. Recently, discussions have taken place where both parties have shared their positions. The NWSPNC appreciates the initial dialogue and hopes to arrive at a project that makes sense for the harbor community.

Respectfully submitted,

Raymond Regalado
President, Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council