



Santa Clara County Housing Action Coalition



The Santa Clara County Housing Action Coalition is comprised of a broad range of organizations and individuals who have, as a common goal, the vision of affordable, well-constructed and appropriately located housing

November 9, 2009

Planning Commission
City of San Jose
200 E. Santa Clara
San Jose, CA 95113

Dear Members of the San Jose Planning Commission,

On behalf of the Santa Clara County Housing Action Coalition, we are writing to express our support for the general plan amendment sought by by Green Republic for their proposed project located at West San Carlos and Sunol Streets.

By way of reference, the Housing Action Coalition includes more than 100 organizations and individuals. Its goal is the production of well-built, appropriately-located homes that are affordable to families and workers in Silicon Valley. Organizations participating in the HAC represent business, labor, environmental organizations and many more.

The San Carlos corridor is an incredible opportunity to bring more intense, pedestrian friendly, well designed mixed uses to San Jose. This site represents one of those opportunities and as the first of hopefully, many soon-to-come revitalization efforts along San Carlos, must be done in a way that sets the standard for future development. Fortunately, GR is on the right track.

The Housing Action Coalition is particularly pleased to see the proposal address three main Coalition concerns.

Transit Access: The site is located within walking distance of what is envisioned to become a major transit hub in the Bay Area, the Diridon Station. The short ten minute walk to get to the Station means future residents will have access to the East Bay, the Peninsula and everything in between, not to mention destinations along the high speed rail corridor.

However, as our culture transitions away from automobile centrality, it is not enough to simply locate height and density proximate to transit. Buildings must be designed in ways that facilitate walking, creating a pleasant pedestrian environment that entices people to stroll to the station. As well, amenities for future residents such as an ecopass can be a tremendous asset in helping to change transportation behavior. Although these kinds of details are not handled at the general plan level, it is our understanding that GR intends to do both. We strongly support the provision of ecopass to residents as well as quality design that facilitates walkability.

Green Building: The Housing Action Coalition was also pleased to learn that this proposal intends to comply with green building standards. Again, although those kinds of details are not dealt with at the general plan level, we do encourage the planning commission and city council to ensure that this proposal minimizes its overall impact on the environment through the use of green building practices. As mentioned above, proximity to transit and the provision of ecopass to residents can play a significant role in limiting the environmental impact of future residents.

Community Outreach: Our organization endorses many development proposals and testifies on their behalf all across the County. In many cases, opponents to the proposed development show up in great numbers, motivated by fear of the unknown. With the projected growth of Silicon Valley, communities that successfully oppose housing ultimately serve to damage the environment, the economy and community. After all, the growth doesn't evaporate. It goes somewhere else, often times following the path of least resistance, taking the form of an unsustainable type of growth called sprawl. For these reasons, it is incredibly important that developers and cities take the community outreach piece of their work very seriously. Change is scary in any community and when not done well, makes it even more difficult to accommodate the projected growth in a manner that benefits our community, environment and economy.

We have been heartened by GR's deliberate and thoughtful approach to community engagement and encourage an ongoing commitment to working with the community to alleviate fears, address real concerns and pave the way for future development in this important area.

With the City and region's projected growth, our challenge is to figure out where to appropriately direct that growth. This site is close to downtown, close to a major transit hub and represents one of those appropriate places. It is exactly where we, as a community, should be building more intensely.

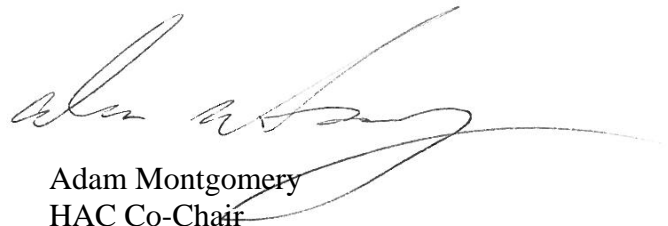
We support this general plan amendment and look forward to following this proposal as it moves from high level ideas and concepts to real project details.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,



Margaret Bard
HAC Co-Chair



Adam Montgomery
HAC Co-Chair