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August 5, 2019

Sara Buizer
Planning Manager
City of Hayward

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Dear Planning Manager Buizer,

I am writing on behalf of neighbors in the Grove Way area, including myself, who are concerned about the proposed 40-townhouse development on former Caltrans 238 property on Oak Street. The boundary of Hayward and unincorporated County runs down the center of Oak Street. We are appealing the approval of Site Plan Review No. 201800932 to the Hayward City Council, as outlined in the August 6, 2019 appeal denial letter.

During our previous appeal to the Hayward Planning Commission, the administrative approval was upheld, adding only one further condition involving the use of deciduous trees for summer cooling and winter solar warming. While that condition is beneficial, we had hoped for some approval conditions that reduced the impact on the neighborhood and/or provided some connection or benefit to the surrounding neighborhood. Our neighborhood has been severely damaged by Caltrans' acquisition of 238 bypass property and our half-century history of Caltrans property management here. Hayward's 2016 resolution approving the Sale and Purchase Agreement of Caltrans properties recognizes this and appears to be an effort to rectify some of this damage, in part by recognizing that piecemeal development is not good. This 40-townhouse development lies *between* Hayward's Caltrans Parcels 8 and 9; therefore, its development process does not derive any benefit that could have been provided by its inclusion in the Hayward Sale and Purchase Agreement of Caltrans properties. It has not yet been officially revealed what development is planned in Parcels 8 and 9 and how the Oak Street development fits into those plans.

The proposed Oak Street Site Plan is for 40-units. Not studios or one-bedrooms, but rather three-bedroom, two-bathroom units which will potentially *double or triple* the population on Oak Street. There have been no

recent traffic studies, but traffic at the Grove Way and Foothill Boulevard intersection is currently between LOS E and LOS F, meaning stop and go traffic.

We know historically how a development impacts our neighborhood because of the 509-unit Hayward Mesa Verde Condominiums on Gary Drive, one block away from Oak Street. Mesa Verde is in Hayward but can only be accessed using Castro Valley streets. Gary Drive serves as one of the two Mesa Verde exits and is in horrible disrepair. We heard at the Planning Commission that the Oak Street developers will only be responsible for improving the Hayward side of Oak Street, which is in similar horrible disrepair. Right now, the high traffic volume on Gary Drive is due to the Mesa Verde Condominiums because there are only four single family homes on the street. But yet, Hayward does not service our street because it is in Castro Valley. Similarly, residents on Oak Street can only enter or exit using unincorporated County roads and it is not yet clear that the traffic impact has been considered. In addition to residential automobile traffic, we often have line-ups of Uber-type vehicles on Gary Drive, waiting for customers to exit the gated community. Customers waiting for rides regularly drop their cigarette butts and trash that must be cleaned up by neighbors or left to denigrate the Grove Way neighborhood. This proposed Oak Street development contains too many units and is too tall for the neighborhood, unless its impact is somehow mitigated by improvements to more than half the Hayward half of the street.

Since this Oak Street lot proposed for development has been regularly used by neighbors to access the Hill's Coffee Shop plaza on Foothill Boulevard, we proposed that future residents would benefit from having a gate opening up to the Hill's driveway. I spoke to the developers, the Hill's property owner, and the commercial tenants about the gateway. Nobody was opposed, but since the plans were already drawn before this suggestion, the developers are hesitant to redraw the plans to incorporate the gateway. If neighbors had been notified sooner, we would have made this comment sooner, but we did not have the ability since we were not aware of the plans. It seems that the time to make any changes is now, while it is on paper, and not irreversibly make accessing the Hill's driveway impossible. Walking on Foothill Boulevard is loud, dirty, and unpleasant. It is mere feet away from the freeway on-ramp, so cars drive very fast, there are frequent accidents, and standing on the sidewalk even 5 minutes results in black road grit on your face. A gateway to neighboring commercial would also improve the commercial area. Maybe instead of a liquor store next to Hill's, something like a tutoring center would be more appropriate if this proposed new development actually integrated with the neighborhood instead of fencing it off. In the past, we had retail businesses that were part of our neighborhood. That is something that Caltrans destroyed and that should be restored.

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Another way that the proposed development is not integrating nor compatible with the neighborhood is that only one of the units is for low-income (half of 6%). The current Site Plan Review is for rental units, but both City staff and the developer have said they plan to submit a tract map for converting to owned units. At that time four (10%) would be affordable units. We need housing that is commensurate with the local wages here. It would be more appropriate to provide smaller affordable units to provide housing for local workers. Putting expensive market rate townhouses in a disadvantaged area is not compatible with sustainable community.

The Oak Street development needs to be considered in light of the surrounding former Caltrans properties that will be developed; however, this is difficult because we do not have a comprehensive plan for the almost 30 acres of former Caltrans land in the Grove Way area (approximately 60% is unincorporated County). By looking at the general plans, we can see that this area was not designated for infill, nor is it in a designated transportation priority area, nor is it in a planned development area. Hayward residents, as a whole, have enough open space per the Quimby Act. But residents in this area, which includes Cherryland and Castro Valley, have approximately 1/10 of the open space recommended for health and wellness. It is important that park fees generated from development in the former Caltrans properties go toward preserving open space in neighboring Caltrans parcels such as Parcel 8 or Ruby Meadow. Because there is no overall plan between County and City and HARD involving the approximately 30 acres here, it is unclear how preservation of open space will be funded.

We appeal to the Hayward City Councilmembers to require this development to be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and to provide some beneficial integration with the neighborhood and its infrastructure.

Sincerely,



Ann E. Maris, PhD

Organizer Grove Way Neighborhood Association

Chair, MEV! Parks and Open Space Committee

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