



CITY OF PINOLE

Community Development Department

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December 7, 2009

Contra Costa County
Department of Conservation & Development
Attn: Rose Marie Pietras, Senior Planner
651 Pine St. 2nd Floor, North Wing
Martinez, CA 94553
Via email: rosemarie.pietras@dcd.cccounty.us

RE: Proposed 970 Appian Way Project (File # RZ083207 & #DP083072)

Dear Ms. Pietras:

The City of Pinole appreciates the opportunity to comment on the development application, File # RZ083207 & #DP083072, a proposed 17 unit residential development on Appian Way. The proposed project is located within the City of Pinole's Sphere of Influence and includes a portion of Duncan Canyon, a sensitive area in the City. The site is also located along a transportation route of regional significance (Appian Way) that is designated as a potential Priority Development Area (PDA) within Pinole by ABAG and MTC. After reviewing the project information provided to us on December 2, 2009, the City has several comments below.

1. The two proposed single-family homes (units 16 and 17) located at the rear of the subject site raise aesthetic concerns based on the proposed design and location. The two cantilevered homes with two proposed balconies per unit extending along the full width of the rear elevations facing Duncan Canyon should be reconsidered. Duncan Canyon is a very sensitive area where new development should be carefully considered and strictly limited.

The City is currently working on a Specific Plan for the Appian Way corridor as well as a General Plan update. The City of Pinole's General Plan Steering Committee for these efforts has recommended establishing a development limit line at the 270 foot elevation contour for development on the Appian Way Corridor abutting Duncan Canyon. The proposed single-family homes (units 16 and 17) are proposed to be developed below the 270 foot contour elevation. We request that the County not allow residential structures below the 270 foot contour. Instead, we request placement of the proposed playground and/or landscaping for the proposed turnaround in their place. Some options to consider to minimize the net loss of proposed units could include:

- Exploring a cross-access easement and reciprocal parking agreement with the property owners at 980 Appian Way to reduce the size of the proposed turnaround area and required onsite parking,

- Redesigning some of the proposed 3- bedroom units and including smaller 1- or 2- bedroom units, or
 - Allowing higher building heights closer to Appian Way with underground parking rather than having exclusively 3-bedroom units with ground floor two-car garages to cluster development closer to Appian Way and further from Duncan Canyon.
2. The proposed architecture for the 17-unit development project appears very uniform with the identical orientation for units 1-7 and 8-15. The proposed massing of these 15 attached units appears poorly suited for the configuration of the project site. The City of Pinole suggests that a mix of unit types and sizes be added to provide a more varied architectural design. For example, as mentioned above, one and two-bedroom units could be integrated into the project rather than exclusively 3-bedroom units.
 3. The project as proposed does not encourage the use of alternative modes other than automobile use. The County should consider conditions that facilitate greater usage of the existing AC Transit 70 bus route along Appian Way and dedication of right-way sufficient to add a striped bike lane on Appian Way along the project's frontage. In addition based on the site plan information provided, the on-site circulation does not appear to include separated paths for pedestrian travel and this should be corrected.

The following conditions are suggested for County consideration:

- The developer shall provide transit stop amenities for AC Transit Bus Route 70 including a covered rider shelter and bench, waste receptacle, and a conduit for access to electric power needed to display bus arrival times in real time to encourage transit use. The design for these improvements shall be submitted for review and approval by AC Transit and Contra Costa County prior to issuance of any building permits.
 - The developer shall provide secure on-site bicycle parking to facilitate future bicycle use for project residents and visitors. The location and design of the on-site bicycle parking shall be submitted for County review and approval prior to issuance of any grading or building permit.
 - The developer shall dedicate sufficient right-of-way to allow for striping of a Class II bike lane on Appian Way along the project's frontage. The right-of-way dedication shall be provided and recorded prior to the issuance of any building permits.
4. The project should be conditioned to pay the required West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCTAC) Subregional Transportation Mitigation Program (STMP) fees to mitigate for the project's impact on regional transportation facilities.

In the future please forward the City of Pinole copies of all County CEQA documents for projects within our Sphere of Influence, including mitigated negative declarations, at the outset of the comment period so we have sufficient time to review and comment on proposed projects that affect the City.

If you have any questions about this letter, please feel free to contact me by phone at (510) 724-9832 or via email at wrhodes@ci.pinole.ca.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Winston Rhodes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Winston Rhodes, AICP
Planning Manager
City of Pinole

CC: Pinole City Council
Pinole Planning Commission
Belinda B. Espinosa, City Manager
Christina Atienza, WCCTAC Executive Director