



Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



Richard J. Bruckner
Director

October 29, 2015

TO: Pat Modugno, Chair
Stephanie Pincetl, Vice Chair
Doug Smith, Commissioner
David W. Louie, Commissioner
Curt Pedersen, Commissioner

FROM: Tyler Montgomery *TM*
Land Divisions Section

SUBJECT: **PROJECT NO. R2014-02680-(5)**
VESTING TENTATIVE TRACT MAP NO. 073065
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 201400126
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NO. 201400215
November 4, 2015 Public Hearing
Agenda Item No. 7

Since the distribution of the previous report, Regional Planning staff has received five (5) additional letters from area residents regarding the above project. All of these letters oppose the project, the most common reasons for which include the incompatibility of condominiums in a single-family residential neighborhood, the creation of traffic, and the desire that the land be developed in accordance with its commercial zoning. These letters are attached.

Staff has also received a letter from the Community Development Department at the City of Santa Clarita, dated October 27, 2015. The letter states that the city opposes the conversion of commercially zoned land to residential use, as it would worsen the jobs/housing imbalance in the Santa Clarita Valley. They also state that the project's traffic study is incomplete, and that the existing land was zoned commercial in order to serve the future residents of the Plum Canyon subdivisions, for which several additional phases planned. This letter is also attached.

Also attached are copies of the conceptual landscape plans, open space plans, floorplans, and elevations of the proposed condo development, which were provided by the applicant.

Staff's recommendation for continuance of the project to January 13, 2016 remains unchanged.

Enclosed:
Five (5) letters of opposition from area residents
Letter from the Community Development Department, City of Santa Clarita (10/27/15)
Conceptual landscape plans, open space plans, floorplans, and elevations

10/2915
KKS:TM

Tyler Montgomery

From: The Ruders [philipruder@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, October 22, 2015 4:47 PM
To: Tyler Montgomery
Subject: Opposition letter to project R2014-02680 / TR 073065

Categories: Hearing correspondence

Dear Mr. Montgomery,

I am writing to you in regards to the plans to change the Plum Canyon commercial space into condos, project R2014-02680 / TR 073065.

As a homeowner who lives off of La Madrid, I am strongly opposed to this project. This project should be stopped, and the area not re-zoned for the following reasons:

1) Most if not all of us bought into this area being told that the land in question was going to be made commercial. I'm sure we all had visions of being able to walk to the local grocery store or coffee shop, rather than having to drive 2-5 miles as we all do currently. We do not have any close options in our little valley for shopping, this is something we were promised when we moved in, and we all want this.

2) The local Plum Canyon school is already at capacity. With more new houses slated for the area East of where KB is currently building houses (the area next to the fire station), this will bring the school to maximum if not overflowing. Adding another 175 families would be very hurtful for education in our community.

3) As others have noted, with the opening of the Golden Valley connection to Plum Canyon only a couple blocks away, traffic has already increased. There are lots of new houses being built along Golden Valley which will continue to increase traffic. Adding another 175 families will make our commutes additionally worse.

4) While KB may try to make the case that commercial use is economically unfeasible, what they really mean is that they want to get more profit now. If the land is truly economically unfeasible, why was it originally zoned for commercial? Why do we have 300 people signing a petition saying they want to shop there? By making a quick buck on implementing condos here, KB will benefit in the short term. But all of us homeowners who are planning to live here for the next 30 years will suffer.

5) I agree with all those who have commented that parking will be an issue. This has been proven already across the street with the condos on the other side of Plum Canyon. There is no argument that parking will not be an issue, because the proof of a parking issue in the same kind of development across the street is visible with the naked eye.

6) A lot of us bought houses in this development because we wanted to live in a neighborhood of houses. That's what we promised when we all put down between half a million and a full million and mortgaged our futures. Changing the neighborhood on us when we've already sunk in so much of our past, current, and future hard earned money is outrageous and callous.

Thank you for listening and considering our views. Please make the right choice and decide in favor of the community, which is highly against this project.

Sincerely,
Phil & Darlene Ruder

Tyler Montgomery

From: Jason Webb [jason.k.webb@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, October 23, 2015 2:21 PM
To: Tyler Montgomery
Subject: Plum Canyon/ La Madrid high density housing proposal

Categories: Hearing correspondence

Hello Mr Montgomery, I am writing to express my concern over the KB proposal to re-zone commercial land and pack that land with multi story, high density condominiums. Traffic and air pollution are a big concern. Also of concern is noise pollution and safety for our children because of too many cars. This development is best suited for single family houses.

Sincerely ,
Jason Webb
19225 Carranza Lane
Saugus Ca 91350
661-250-9789

Tyler Montgomery

From: neiljayson@aol.com
Sent: Friday, October 23, 2015 9:20 PM
To: Tyler Montgomery
Subject: Plum Canyon Condo Project R2014-02680/TR073065

Categories: Hearing correspondence

Dear Mr. Montgomery:

In response to the above requested project I offer the following:

1. The proposed density of the project is not in character with the surrounding neighborhood. The surrounding neighborhood condos apparently are stated to have a density of 5 dwelling units per acre. I am guessing that the single family homes in the surrounding area are probably the same or similar in density of 5 dwelling units per acre. Subject project is 300% more dense than the surrounding neighborhood and is therefore unacceptable to me and the surrounding neighborhood. I have no objection to a condo project that matches the dwelling unit density of the surrounding neighborhood.
2. Spill over parking to the north of Plum Canyon off Madrid, from condos across Plum Canyon was mentioned as a problem in a Plum Canyon HOA meeting in the past. Apparently, while there may be parking standards built into the code, they apparently are too low for real life living in condos. This is LA, where many adults in a household and some of their driver age children add up to more cars than the standards allow. I find it hard to believe that the residents of the condos across Plum Canyon really want to park all the way across Plum Canyon from their home. Seems likely they are driven by necessity. Therefore, in my opinion, the proposed development would be acceptable from a parking stand point if the proposed parking amounts (2 car garages for each dwelling unit +71 visitor parking =421 parking spaces) were retained while the density of the condos reduced to 5 dwelling units per acre.
3. Regardless of what is developed on the project land (commercial, residential or otherwise), proposed secondary access to it from La Madrid seems questionable. It seems to me that the entrance to the proposed project by an additional 421 cars (350 garaged vehicles and 71 visitors) would be too close to Plum Canyon such that cars would tend to backup in both directions on the turn from Plum Canyon onto La Madrid. This backup would also adversely affect Plum Canyon Ranch residents.
4. Could the county planning meeting be moved to nearby county offices...perhaps Newhall, and held during the evening so that more working residents may have the potential opportunity to attend?

Thank you for your review of the above.

Neil Roberts
805 402-6983
LanFranca Drive, Plum Canyon
Saugus area

Tyler Montgomery

From: Victoria Cashin [cashinvictoria@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, October 26, 2015 5:38 PM
To: Tyler Montgomery
Cc: J. Brent Cashin; jeneh marcarian
Subject: Plum Canyon condo project (R2014-02680 / TR 073065)

Categories: Hearing correspondence

Mr. Montgomery,

After receiving the yellow card in the mail regarding the Plum Canyon condo project (R2014-02680 / TR 073065) my neighbors and I are deeply alarmed.

The traffic this development would bring to Plum Canyon would be a detriment to the entire Plum Canyon community. The Mariposa development was the latest condo development in our area and it has brought more problems to our community than it was worth...the elementary school had to be rezoned, numerous horrific traffic accidents have occurred, unpoliced and reckless drivers along Heller Circle make it unsafe for children to walk to school, parking along Heller Circle has affected the entire St. Clare community negatively (due to the fact that the developer of Mariposa did not consider fire regulations and the town-homeowners are not allowed to park in front of their own residence), random cars and trucks are parked for extended durations, litter is frequently left curbside, etc...

When we purchased our homes in the St. Clare development we were under the impression that single-family homes were to be built on the other side of Plum Canyon, not 175 densely packed condos. This builder greed and inconsideration of the surrounding neighborhoods is quite appalling to say the least.

I hope that you will reconsider the development.

Sincerely,

Victoria Cashin
(661)513-9505
28322 Hulsey Court
Santa Clarita, CA 91350

Tyler Montgomery

From: carlos@cgctrans.com
Sent: Tuesday, October 27, 2015 7:15 AM
To: Tyler Montgomery
Subject: KB Homes Condo Proposal

Categories: Hearing correspondence

Mr. Montgomery:

It has been brought to my attention that KB Homes has proposed to build 170+ condominiums in my neighborhood near the corner of La Madrid and Plum Canyon Rd. in Saugus, CA. I am opposed to such construction and development because this neighborhood is not designed for dense housing. The main roadways leading in and out of Plum Canyon are filled to capacity. In addition, the area that is being proposed for such housing is zoned for commercial use. Please stop KB Homes from proceeding with their plan. Thank you.

Carlos G. Castillo
19620 Mathilde Ln.
Saugus, Ca. 91350
661.609.0562

Sent from Windows Mail



City of
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October 27, 2015

Mr. Tyler Montgomery
County of Los Angeles
Department of Regional Planning
Land Divisions Section
320 West Temple Street, Room 1362
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Subject: Comments on proposed Vesting Tentative Tract Map 73065 and Conditional Use Permit No. 201400126, located at the northeast corner of Plum Canyon Road and La Madrid Drive (APN 2812-097-007)

Project Description: A proposal to subdivide an existing 14.5 acre commercial lot into one commercial lot (2.5 acres gross) and one residential condominium lot (12 acres gross) and to develop the residential lot with 175 residential condominium units.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above referenced project. The City requests that these comments be included in the correspondence distributed to the Regional Planning Commission for their consideration when reviewing this project which is scheduled for the November 4, 2015 Regional Planning Commission hearing.

The proposed project site is located within the City's Sphere of Influence and is therefore likely to be annexed into the City in the future. As such, it is appropriate for the City to comment on the aspects of the project which will affect both current and future City residents. Our primary concerns are outlined below:

Change in Planned Land Use- The City has significant concerns with the Conditional Use Permit proposal to allow multi-family residential development of approximately 12 acres of the 14.5 acre commercially-designated site. The entire 14.5 acre commercial site has been zoned and planned for commercial use since the 1980s. It has been anticipated in both the City's General Plan and the County's Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan that this site would be developed as a neighborhood shopping center. The existing 14.5 acre site is of sufficient size to accommodate a full-service neighborhood commercial center to meet the needs of the existing and future Plum Canyon residents, as well as the future residents of the approved Skyline Ranch and Five Knolls projects. Reducing the available acreage remaining for neighborhood commercial development to approximately 2.5 gross acres (1.9 net acres) will effectively limit the future commercial development of the site to roughly 20,000 square feet, which will not accommodate a neighborhood commercial shopping to meet the needs of the nearby residents. In fact, a 1.9 acre commercial site will typically only accommodate the most basic of commercial



strips or a fuel station or fast food pad. Existing and future Plum Canyon residents, future Five Knolls Residents and future Skyline Ranch residents will remain without an adequate neighborhood commercial center within their area to meet their basic local commercial needs. The nearest neighborhood commercial shopping center to serve these residents are at least 2 ½ miles away at Bouquet Canyon Road/Newhall Ranch Road, Bouquet Canyon Road/Haskell Canyon Road, Whites Canyon Road/Soledad Canyon Road and Sierra Highway/Soledad Canyon Road. The future long-term needs of the Plum Canyon, Five Knolls and Skyline Ranch residents should be given due consideration, and weighed against the immediate, short-term development desires of the applicant.

Jobs/Housing Balance- The topic of Jobs/Housing balance has been an important issue addressed by the City and the County in the Santa Clarita General Plan and the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan and both the City General Plan and the County General Plan contain policies which promote improving the jobs/housing balance. The proposed change in land use for the majority of the project site from commercial to residential will result in reduced job creation and increased residential units, thereby worsening the Santa Clarita Valley's jobs/housing imbalance.

Traffic Analysis and Mitigation- Staff has reviewed the Traffic Memorandum (memo) prepared by Linscott Law & Greenspan (LLG), dated February 5, 2015, for the proposed land use modification of Tract 73065. In review of this memo and in subsequent conversations with LLG staff, it is evident that the traffic analysis for the revised project did not take into account trip redistribution due to the proposed change in use. The closest commercial centers to residents (existing and future) near this site are currently located almost two and one-half miles to the east and west. A full-service commercial center on this site would have significantly shortened trip length and reduced vehicle miles of travel (VMT) and local emissions as compared to the currently proposed project, since residents would have had a much closer shopping opportunity. The traffic analysis should be revised to include the effects of trip redistribution and trip length, with a comparison of VMT between the original and proposed projects.

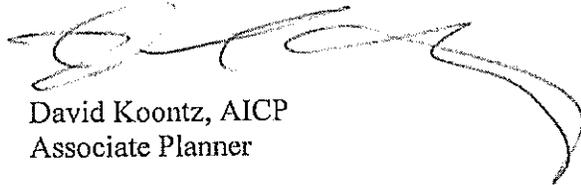
Conclusion- Given the proximity of the current City boundaries to the project site, there is a high probability that the project site and the adjacent neighborhoods will become a part of the City in the next few years. The City has significant concerns with the proposed change in land use from neighborhood commercial to residential condominium for the majority of the site. This change in land use will result in existing and future residents within the City and the unincorporated county neighborhoods having to drive excessive distances for neighborhood commercial services, increasing both traffic congestion and VMT. We understand that the applicant intends to submit a market feasibility analysis to justify the change in land use from commercial to residential, based upon the presumption that there is not sufficient population in the surrounding area to support a full 12 acre neighborhood commercial site at the present time. The City requests that the Regional Planning Commission support the long-term interests of both the existing and future residents of Plum Canyon, as well as several thousand additional future residents of Five Knolls and Skyline Ranch which will be constructed and occupied within the next few years. It is entirely conceivable that a neighborhood commercial center could be built in phases, as the surrounding population grows, but approval of residential uses for the majority of the site will irreversibly preclude development of an adequate neighborhood commercial center to serve these neighborhoods. A lost opportunity for a future neighborhood

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servicing commercial center in this area will permanently and negatively impact County and City residents alike.

Thank you for allowing the City an opportunity to share its concerns with the Regional Planning Commission. If you have any additional questions, please contact me at (661) 255-4330.

Sincerely,



David Koontz, AICP
Associate Planner

TC:DK:kl

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cc: Tom Cole, Community Development Director
Jeff Hogan, Planning Manager