



Santa Monica Coalition for a Livable City

STEERING
COMMITTEE
& ADVISORS

May 21, 2012

TO: Planning Commission

mark armour
peter davidson
gale feldman
victor fresco
susan giesberg
diana gordon
dan jansenson
sherrill kushner
mary marlow
bea nemlaha
jacob samuel
lorraine sanchez
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jeff segal
carol sobel
maryanne solomon
doris sosin
linda sullivan
peter tigler
bill zimmerman

RE: SMCLC NOTICE OF OBJECTIONS TO VTP DEVELOPMENT
**(5-A. Development Agreement 07-005, Village Trailer Park
Development Agreement, 2930 Colorado Avenue)**

The Santa Monica Coalition for a Livable City (“SMCLC”) has reviewed the staff report, objects to the proposed project that would decimate the Village Trailer Park (“VTP”) and strongly believes that the Planning Commission should recommend against approval of this developer preferred project for the following reasons:

- 1) It would destroy a unique, irreplaceable type of low-income housing and an entire neighborhood in our city with potentially devastating impacts on the residents who live there as well as future residents in need of this scarce, affordable housing.
- 2) it is inconsistent with the LUCE not only as to the critical need to protect the loss of scarce low-income housing stock for Santa Monica but also because the large-scale of this proposed project – 400,000 square feet will create additional traffic and circulation problems in an already highly congested area.
- 3) It proves beyond any doubt the critical need for a good Bergamot Area Plan for the entire 140 acres abutting Olympic Blvd because, just a few months ago (and as studied in the DEIR), the developer was proposing a 400,000 sf mainly **commercial** project; now it’s proposing a 400,000 sf mainly **residential** project without regard to an Area Plan or any of the other proposed projects in close proximity such as the nearby almost 400,000sf Paseo Nebraska mainly residential project of similar size and mix.
- 4) The discussion about what housing we want to protect, where we need additional housing and for what unmet needs is all part of what the Bergamot Area Plan must determine, including where it should go throughout the 140 acres. We do not yet have this plan.
- 5) Under LUCE, residents in Santa Monica and throughout the Westside have a right to be at the table when an Area Plan is proposed for such a large part of Santa Monica that will have so many impacts on their lives and their livelihoods -- no such plan is currently done:
- 6) There is NO exemption in the LUCE that would permit this project to be approved BEFORE such an Area Plan is done. The LUCE specifically exempts only ONE project in one district only – the Hines Bergamot Transit

Center project in that District. No project was exempted from the Mixed-Use Creative District where the VTP is located. This project has no right to be considered or approved until the Area Plan is done and any aggressive reading of LUCE (e.g., that it is allowed because not specifically prohibited) would be directly at odds with well-established, reasonable interpretation contract principles under the law.

- 7) The HUD Grant the City and HUD entered into also does not exempt any project demolishing the VTP from awaiting the Area Plan; instead the City assures HUD that any Development Agreements for projects in the Bergamot Area will be consistent with the Area Plan. Without such an Area Plan to compare this Development Agreement to, the City cannot meet this obligation.
- 8) Approving this project before any such Area Plan would constitute unplanned, piecemeal development by the City of Santa Monica in violation of local and state law. Worse, still, it is developers shaping the Area Plan instead of the other way around – exactly what our former Planning Director warned the Planning Commissioners against in 2010. (See Nov 9, 2010 Memo of E Fogarty to Planning Commissioners, attached).
- 9) SMCLC further objects to this project because its proposed size, scale, and change in use make it subject to a development agreement. SMCLC believes that all such large-scale projects requiring development agreements now or in the future which exceed our zoning laws should be submitted to residents for a vote. Our city has failed residents too many times in approving development agreements over the past 25 years without sufficient or substantial public benefits that would justify the greater height, density and uses allowed. Equally egregious, our city has only recently begun to monitor these large-scale projects for compliance with traffic, circulation, parking or other required environmental mitigations.

Sincerely,

Diana Gordon,
Co-Chair

Cc: David Martin
Rod Gould
Marsha Moutrie
City Council
SM Neighborhood Associations
Sabrina Venskus
Marc Luzzato

Attachment