



Monday, March 31, 2008

Walnut Creek Planning Commission  
City of Walnut Creek  
1666 North Main Street  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596-4609

**RE: 1874 Bonanza Street Project - SUPPORT**

Dear Chairman Jorgensen and Members of the Planning Commission:

For 50 years, Greenbelt Alliance has protected the region's working farms and natural areas while making the Bay Area's cities better places to live. For 13 of these years, Greenbelt Alliance has had an East Bay office on North Main Street in downtown Walnut Creek. A key component of our work is identifying where new growth should occur and which development proposals best meet the needs of the region. Our Compact Development Team endorses and advocates for livable, transit-accessible communities with a wide range of housing options for families of all sizes and income levels. We write to inform you of our endorsement of the 1874 Bonanza Street development proposed by Laune Corporation.

This project benefits from a great location on Bonanza Street, off North California Boulevard and less than half a mile from City Hall and the downtown core. Future residents of this project will be able to access jobs and shops on foot without having to drive. This development makes the most of a small site and provides much needed housing in the downtown area. In addition, 1874 Bonanza Street is within a 10-minute walk from BART, allowing residents to travel around the Bay Area in a way that is friendly to our climate. Open space is also accessible on foot, and the project's scale is well in character with other nearby development.

Location plays a key role when it comes to "green" and "sustainable development," but there are other features that make a difference as well. Laune Corporation has proposed giving no added footprint to parking within the project and has committed to pedestrian-friendly improvements along the Bonanza and Sharpe frontages, including widened sidewalks. Bicycle racks will also be provided on-site, further encouraging residents to cycle for both transportation and recreation. In addition, the compactness of the project is appropriate for development in a downtown area near major transit service. There are also environmental benefits of Laune's fulfillment of Walnut Creek's inclusionary housing ordinance, and of the developer's adaptive reuse of a historic building currently located on this site. For many reasons, the Bonanza Street proposal makes sense.

Laune Corporation has been careful not to exceed the amount of parking required for this site, but the requirements are onerous and excessive for the downtown area, where so many transit and pedestrian connections are available. Walnut Creek is fortunate to have BART service in close proximity to North Main Street shops and restaurants, City Hall, office buildings, and the heart of downtown. To ensure that projects like this do not add more traffic than necessary to the downtown area, and to allow new

MAIN OFFICE • 631 Howard Street, Suite 510, San Francisco, CA 94105 • (415) 543-6771 • Fax (415) 543-6781  
SOUTH BAY OFFICE • 1922 The Alameda, Suite 213, San Jose, CA 95126 • (408) 983-0856 • Fax (408) 983-1001  
EAST BAY OFFICE • 1601 North Main Street, Suite 105, Walnut Creek, CA 94596 • (925) 932-7776 • Fax (925) 932-1970  
SONOMA-MARIN OFFICE • 555 5th Street, Suite 300B, Santa Rosa, CA 95401 • (707) 575-3661 • Fax (707) 575-4275  
SOLANO-NAPA OFFICE • 725 Texas Street, Fairfield, CA 94533 • (707) 427-2308 • Fax (707) 427-2315

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development to boost transit ridership, the City should take a second look at its parking requirements, especially for infill development near BART.

In summary, Greenbelt Alliance urges the Planning Commission's support of 1874 Bonanza Street as a means of protecting open space by promoting high-quality, livable communities.

Regards,

/s/

Marla Wilson  
Sustainable Development Associate