



Monday, May 5, 2008

Mayor Al Boro
Members of the City Council
City of San Rafael
1400 Fifth Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94915

RE: 33 San Pablo Development Proposal - SUPPORT

Dear Mayor Boro and Councilmembers:

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. 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 (CDT) endorses and advocates for livable, transit-accessible communities with a wide range of housing options for families of all sizes and income levels. The CDT evaluated the 33 San Pablo project proposed by Monahan Pacific using an established set of guidelines. We write in support of this development because we feel it will be a gain for this neighborhood. Due to its location, its environmentally friendly benefits, and its provision of affordable homes, the San Rafael City Council should deny the appeal and uphold the Planning Commission's support for 33 San Pablo.

The 33 San Pablo project is well located in a major job center, but also surrounding the 1.9-acre site is a neighborhood with single-family and multifamily homes. This development is in character with the existing community, as the project has the same height as the vacant office building currently on site. As this is an infill location, near bus routes, this is the kind of development the City of San Rafael can support to lighten its carbon footprint. As evidenced by letters of support from local workers, there is a clear need for new homes near major employers such as Autodesk and the Civic Center. These 82 homes will allow residents to walk to work, meaning that traffic in the area will not worsen and may in fact improve with less commuters traveling from far distances to work in San Rafael.

Beyond enabling workers to commute on foot, this development boasts other environmentally friendly benefits. Monahan Pacific will extend the sidewalk on San Pablo to enable better foot travel in the neighborhood, enhancing the pedestrian environment. Parking will be tucked away underground and not provided in excess of what is needed. Additionally, the developer's green building practices are worthy of commending.

As you know, Marin County is among the most expensive housing markets in the nation. It is becoming increasingly difficult for families who work in Marin to also live there. This means that teachers, county staff, retail workers, firefighters, and others will have an opportunity to live near

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the communities they serve—resulting in a better quality of life not only for them but for everyone in San Rafael. This project will provide, in accordance with city ordinance, 16 affordable homes for moderate income and low-income families. By ensuring new infill development has homes we can all afford, we can combat undesirable sprawl by addressing one of its root causes: the search for affordable places to live.

In closing, Greenbelt Alliance applauds the City of San Rafael's focus on infill sites for new development. This kind of growth combats climate change and alleviates pressure to pave over natural areas and working farms while providing homes for the people who live and work in the community. Greenbelt Alliance urges the City Council to uphold the Planning Commission's support of this project.

Regards,

/s/

Marla Wilson
Sustainable Development Associate

CC:
Raffi Boloyan