



Friday, May 16, 2008

Mayor Ken Bukowski
Members of the City Council,
Planning Commission
City of Emeryville
1333 Park Avenue
Emeryville, CA 94608

RE: Emeryville Marketplace Development - SUPPORT

Dear Mayor Bukowski and Councilmembers, Planning Commissioners:

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 Emeryville Marketplace project proposed by TMG Partners using an established set of guidelines. We write in support of this development because we feel it will be a gain for this neighborhood. This project provides plenty of homes in a great location, makes the neighborhood friendlier to pedestrians and cyclists, and also boasts other environmental benefits. Greenbelt Alliance encourages the Planning Commission and City Council to support this model development as an example for others to follow.

TMG Partners proposes 674 homes for this site, and fortunately, the location is ideal. The project redevelops a 15-acre brownfield site that is occupied primarily by a large surface parking area. The surrounding area has a large amount of commercial and retail space, meaning that future residents of Emeryville Marketplace will have the opportunity to live near jobs and needed services. The development itself also includes shops and office space, including ground-floor retail that will foster lively streets.

One of the greatest assets of the Marketplace project is its contribution to Emeryville's walkability. This development will make the neighborhood friendlier to pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders, and less oriented around cars. Long "superblocks" will give way to a street grid lined with wide sidewalks, and the provision of parking will be gradually phased down while other means of transportation are emphasized and improved. An aggressive, forward-thinking Transportation Management Plan, including subsidized transit passes and bike-sharing, will ensure this development meets the needs of future generations. This project is adjacent to Amtrak and AC Transit, with free Emery-Go-Round shuttle service providing a convenient link to BART. Urban design features of the project include improved access to stations and shelters.

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There are numerous other environmental benefits of this development proposal. For one, TMG is actively pursuing LEED Platinum certification from the U.S. Green Building Council for its green building practices. In addition, because the desire for affordable places to live is a contributing factor to undesirable sprawl development, TMG's provision of 20% affordable homes in this project qualifies as an environmental benefit as well as a social justice benefit. The compactness of this project provides a similar guarantee that Emeryville is helping the East Bay meet the demand for new homes without paving over open space. The existing park near this site will be expanded as a result of the proposal, making it a more inviting place to spend time.

In closing, Greenbelt Alliance applauds the City of Emeryville for considering such a bold, transit-oriented proposal. This kind of growth combats the threat of climate change. It is no surprise that TMG Partners enjoys a favorable relationship with many nearby residents, as they have made a strong effort to address neighborhood concerns. Greenbelt Alliance urges the Planning Commission and City Council's support of the Emeryville Marketplace proposal.

Regards,

/s/

Marla Wilson
Sustainable Development Associate

CC:
Patrick O'Keeffe
Charles Bryant