



Wednesday, December 31, 2008

Steve Lawton
Community Development Director
City of Hercules
111 Civic Drive
Hercules, California 94547

RE: Hercules Bayfront Project - SUPPORT

Dear Steve:

For 50 years, Greenbelt Alliance has worked to protect open spaces and promote vibrant places around 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 Compact Development Team evaluated the Hercules Bayfront Project, proposed by Anderson Pacific, LLC, using a set of endorsement criteria. We have endorsed the project because of its orientation around a planned multimodal transit facility, because the project includes a thoughtful balance between development and open space, and because the envisioned community will be complete and will mesh well with existing neighborhoods. We urge the City Council's support of this project. Along with the planned Hercules New Town Center proposal, this development will dramatically revitalize Hercules, providing new homes, jobs, and shops in a way that limits greenhouse gas emissions.

Anderson Pacific proposes 1,224 compact homes, both rental and for-sale, including 184 affordable homes. These new homes will embrace a new transit station with WestCAT buses, Amtrak Capital Corridor trains, and WETA ferries. The developer also proposes a shuttle service, funded by the City of Hercules, which will provide a link to BART, to jobs, and to other neighborhoods. The significant transit service will reduce the need to drive, and the form-based code will prescribe good urban form that encourages walking, biking, and other alternative means of transportation. Anderson Pacific will resist the common temptation to provide more parking than needed and will instead offer a suite of innovative parking solutions, including shared parking and parking in-lieu fees. Neighborhood-serving retail in the development, including health and fitness facilities, a potential library, daycare, and hospitality facilities, will also function to reduce unnecessary car trips due to their proximity to homes.

No new community would be complete without open space and recreational areas for residents and visitors to enjoy. This 17-acre development enjoys bayfront land, and the plans call for the creation of Hercules Point Park, a 10.9-acre public park. The creation of this park will conclude the remediation of the site, which was previously used for dynamite and fertilizer production. Public open space is distributed throughout the Bayfront project, with an emphasis on maintaining views of the surrounding bay and hills, including Mount Tamalpais. A central part of the project's open space plan involves restoration of wetlands habitat as well. Moving forward, the City of Hercules and Anderson Pacific, LLC should continue to work together to ensure that stormwater runoff is sufficiently managed, due to the site's unique location on the Bay.

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A community is not complete until residents and visitors alike have transportation options. As described above, the Bayfront development will facilitate multiple modes of transportation, beyond just cars. Anderson Pacific is working with the U.S. Green Building Council to achieve LEED-ND certification for its green building practices, meaning that this large-scale development will not have an undue impact on our climate. It is no surprise that this project has earned the support of nearby residents in the neighborhood adjacent to the proposed development. This project will integrate well into the existing community, adding more shops and providing water transportation to San Francisco. It will preserve buildings with historic significance and add new buildings to complement them.

In closing, Greenbelt Alliance urges the City Council to support the Hercules Bayfront development. This kind of “smart growth” helps protect open space by fulfilling our region’s housing needs within the existing community.

Sincerely,

/s/

Marla Wilson
Sustainable Development Associate

CC: Michelle Harrington