



Thursday, September 25, 2008

Mayor Chuck Reed
City Councilmembers
Planning Commissioners
200 E Santa Clara Street
San Jose, CA 95113

RE: Sunol Court – SUPPORT

Dear Mayor Reed, City Councilmembers, and Planning Commissioners:

This year marks 50 years of Greenbelt Alliance's work of protecting the Bay Area's working farms and natural areas while making our cities better places to live. Specifically, our Compact Development Team (CDT) evaluates development proposals, endorsing and advocating for those that use land efficiently, are oriented around transit and pedestrians, and provide homes people can afford. We write to inform you of our support for the Sunol Court Apartments. This project deserves the support of San Jose because it creates compact development within close proximity of several public transportation options, boasts many green design features, and with 100% affordability, offers residents who would otherwise be priced out of the housing market an affordable place to call home.

The CDT evaluated Sunol Court using an established set of guidelines designed with the goal of promoting compact infill development patterns and livable, transit-accessible communities with a wide range of housing options for families of all sizes and income levels. Sunol Court is located only steps from three VTA bus lines and not terribly far from the Diridon Light Rail Station, accommodating hundreds of commuters daily traveling to San Francisco, the East Bay, and throughout San Jose. To further encourage walking, biking and the use of public transportation, the developer is working with the city to achieve a reduction in parking to 0.5 spaces per one-bedroom unit due to proximity to transit. Greenbelt Alliance strongly supports this reduction. The success of transit-oriented development rests on encouraging transit use and discouraging excessive, unnecessary automobile use.

In San Jose and throughout the Bay Area, prices for homes remain out of reach for many residents. Although headlines indicate that national housing prices are plummeting, the average price for a home in the South Bay, coupled with the difficulty of securing a loan, continues to leave so many behind. Sunol Court Apartments will provide 123 homes on approximately 1.2 acres of land. In order to remedy this growing demand for affordable places to live, the apartments are specifically

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designed to serve as transitional “first-step” housing for low-income residents, those at 30% of median income level or below.

The project also boasts many environmental features. The project is currently pursuing Build It Green certification. Sustainable features include Energy Star appliances, low-flow plumbing fixtures, recycled construction material, solar energy for common area, and recycled carpeting and recycled content among others. The project also includes solar panels that will serve as a significant source of energy for the development and serve as a model for all affordable housing projects in the future. Additionally, two common areas will provide open space for residents.

In closing, Greenbelt Alliance encourages the City Council’s approval of the Sunol Court project as a means of protecting open space through the promotion of affordable, livable, transit-oriented communities.

Regards,

/s/

Marla Wilson
Sustainable Development Associate

CC: Martina Davis