

**2655 THE ALAMEDA MIXED USE PROJECT**  
**RESPONSE TO LATE COMMENTS**

This memo responds to a late public comment letter on the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration related to the potential environmental impacts of the project under CEQA. Numbered responses correspond to comments in the comment letter. A copy of the comment letter is attached.

**Comment Letter A:** Claudia Daw – July 12, 2023

**Comment A-1:** This letter is in reference to item 4, #23-633; action on mitigated negative declaration and mitigation and reporting program, general plan amendment and rezone for the property at 2655 The Alameda to allow the development of a four-story multi family housing development with 39 rental units and 1,500s square feet of ground floor commercial space.

#1) The City Council needs to look carefully at this land in particular. Both Geof Goodfellow and Larry Wolfe stated, back in 2004, that the property was polluted and need 30 to 40 years to mitigate the problem. The neighborhood must be assured that disturbed, contaminated soil, which will become airbourn will not result in cancer causing particulates being released into the air.

**Response A-1:** As discussed in Section 4.9 (pages 68-73) of the Initial Study, there is documented contamination on-site from a previous leaking underground storage tank (LUST) on the site and from an off-site LUST. The Initial Study outlined the potential exposure risk from contaminated soils, soil vapor, and groundwater during construction and identified specific mitigation measures to address the impact. With implementation of the mitigation, the impact would be less than significant and would not result in a significant health risk to the neighborhood.

**Comment A-2:** #2 – The resolution to change (amend) the General Plan zoning from Neighborhood Mixed Use to Very High Density Residential flies in the face of decades of efforts to protect the area from unusually high traffic congestion and resident parking. As there is already a serious parking problem even with restrictions using parking permits and limited hours a car may park on the streets.

Also, it is doubtful that 39 apartment units will accommodate needed vehicle parking if each apartment houses 4 more people. Most individuals bring a car or use a car to traverse here and there. If 4 people times 39 units own a car that is 117 vehicles total. A vehicle 6 feet wide by 20 feet long = 120 square feet of vehicle.  $1500/120 = 12$  spaces. Even if up to 30 vehicles could fit into the “garage”, the remaining residents would have to find parking on streets already congested.

**Response A-2:** As discussed on page 86 of the Initial Study, the existing General Plan designation would allow up to 14 units on the project site. With the proposed General Plan Amendment, the site could be developed with up to 40 units. The project proposes 39 units, resulting in 25 additional residential units on-site. The General Plan included a net increase of 2,957 dwelling units throughout the City. The increase in housing allowed on-site would be approximately 1.3 percent of the total housing planned for the City of Santa Clara. As a result, the project would not represent a significant amount of growth on the project site.

As outlined in the project description (page 6) and discussed on page 118 of the Initial Study, the project would provide 33 parking spaces. Per recent state law, projects in proximity to transit are exempt from local parking requirements.

**Comment A-3:** Then there is the traffic problem. The City of Santa Clara is has not adequately addressed this challenge. Lafayette Street is awash in traffic which already is a hazard to pedestrian's attempting to cross it. This is especially true for students crossing to SCU at Franklin Street and Santa Clara Streets.

The very thought of increasing traffic and congestion street parking borders on insanity and is immoral.

**Response A-3:** Traffic impacts are based on vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which calculates how far a person needs to travel between home, work, and services. Congestion, in and of itself, is not an impact under CEQA. As discussed on page 117 of the Initial Study, based on the density, proximity to transit, and parking ratio of the proposed project, the project would be consistent with the requirements for a low VMT, transit-oriented development project under the Office of Planning and Research and City of Santa Clara VMT guidelines. The project was found to have a less than significant VMT impact. The project was also found to have a less than significant impact on transit facilities, pedestrian facilities, and bicycle facilities.

The Initial Study did include a traffic operations analysis (Appendix F). As shown in Table 1 of Appendix F, the total daily trips for the site is estimated to be 214 with 15 AM Peak Hour trips and 19 PM Peak Hour trips. This is a fraction of the current total daily trips on Lafayette Street and the surrounding streets and will not affect the operation of the local roadways.

**Comment A-4:** Litter: Students and/or renters toss their garbage here, there and everywhere. The neighborhood resembles a ghetto from September to June where all manner of "things" are discarded. These include beds, bedding, beer and/or alcoholic beverage bottles by the dozen are thrown into the streets, gutters, lawns, and hung from trees. All manner of household goods are discarded in alarming quantities throughout the neighborhood but specifically on Park Ave, Bellomy, Washington and The Alameda near Safeway. The appearance of Roof Rats, Norway Rats, mice and other rodents has steadily increased in the area as the population of youthful residents has increase and their density exploded.

How would these terrible circumstances be improved by increasing the problem further?

**Response A-4:** The proposed project would be market-rate rental units and it would be speculative to assume who would live there or whether or not the issues described above would occur on this site. Litter is a code issue and the assumed habits of future residents regarding litter are not within the purview of CEQA. The project will be required to comply with all City and regulatory requirements for garage storage and collection.

**Comment A-5:** #3) Rezone from Neighborhood Commercial to Planned Development – Unless the City of Santa Clara provides for the added traffic and congestion thereof, this new project at 2655 The Alameda will cause harm to the residents of the area. Refer to the comment regarding Lafayette Street. Additionally their does not seem to be the mention of additional lighting, bike lanes, traffic light improvements, alteration in medians, adequate fresh water conveyances or effluent management etc.

**Response A-5:** As discussed in Response A-3, the proposed project would have a less than significant VMT impact. The project was also found to have a less than significant impact on transit facilities, pedestrian facilities, and bicycle facilities. There is no nexus to require improvements to the existing roadway network.

Utilities and Service Systems are analyzed in Section 4.19 of the Initial Study. As discussed on pages 124 – 126 of the Initial Study, there is sufficient potable water and sanitary sewer capacity to support the proposed project. The General Plan Amendment would allow an additional 25 units on the site compared to the existing General Plan designation. As proposed, the project would result in approximately 65 residents on-site. This is a marginal increase on the demand for sewer and water line capacity and would not require the expansion of the existing utility infrastructure.

**Comment A-6:** Additionally, this tall building does not fit into the rhythm of the existing housing and neighborhood and appears to be more of an eye soar than anything else. It is an ugly building to be frank, and should be build in downtown San José where ugly is an acceptable norm. Out neighborhood needs a building which fits into the beautiful neighborhood that exists today.

**Response A-6:** The proposed building would be four-stories, which is comparable to the student housing across The Alameda, and smaller than other nearby apartments on Homestead Road and Benton Street. It is compatible with the mixed-use nature of the area which includes high and low density residential, commercial buildings, and Santa Clara University. As discussed on page 13 of the Initial Study, the project is located in a transit priority area. Under Senate Bill (SB) 743, a project's aesthetic impacts would be less than significant if a project is a residential, mixed-use residential, or employment center project located on an infill site within a transit priority area. Because the proposed project would be located within a half mile of transit and would be classified as urban infill, the proposed project would be consistent with SB 743 and would result in a less than significant aesthetic impact.

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July 12, 2023

## To Planning Commission

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PLANNING DIVISION

This letter is in reference to item 4, # 23-663; Action on Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation and Reporting Program, General Plan Amendment and Rezone for the Property 2655 The Alameda to allow the development of a Four-story Multi-family Housing Development with 39 Rental Units and 1,500 square feet of ground floor Commercial Space -

#1) The City Council needs to look carefully at this land in particular. Both Geoff Goodfellow and Larry Wolfe stated, back in 2004 that the property was polluted and need 30 to 40 years to mitigate the problem. The neighborhood must be assured that disturbed, contaminated soil, which will become airborne, will not result in cancer causing particulates being released into the air.

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Thank you. Sincerely  
Claudia Dew