

Bonnie Bush

From: Judi Grunstra <judiriva@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, June 14, 2024 12:34 PM
To: City Plan; City Council
Subject: Study Session on Downtown Expansion Draft

Hello,

Though the public has been given until July 7 to respond to the Downtown Expansion draft, this June 18 Study Session is taking place before public comments are submitted. This seems "backwards" somehow, and it asks the public to submit comments twice.

Though this is a rather long email, I hope you will take a few minutes to read it through.

The fact that this Study Session is only on Zoom makes me fear that a power "glitch" similar to what occurred for some folks (including myself) during the Clocktower Zoom meeting will inhibit public engagement. Let's cross our fingers. Why couldn't this meeting also be conducted in person?

As I did some research, being the librarian that I am, I came upon the consultant WRT's "Preferred Concept and Preliminary Recommendation Report", presented to the Planning Commission and City Council back in 2009, and documents relating to the River Front Overlay District, accepted by City Council on May 3, 2010. There were two "sub-districts" identified - Sub-District 4 (Downtown Extension/Lower Pacific) and sub-district 5 (Downtown Extension - Riverfront South).

The consultants proposed that the South of Laurel area could be a "mini arts district" and could provide "ownership opportunities for artists and retail outlets to attract beach visitors to downtown." That plan could have been well received by many in our community. (The Warriors were not yet part of the picture.)

A number of concepts in that plan seem to have been incorporated into the present SoLa plan, including the area as a gateway, development of housing ("promote **compact** mixed-used development"), commercial space, attractive streetscapes, significant public spaces (plazas), etc. In the Final Report, accepted by Council, they stated "Only in limited instances is it recommended that there be a substantive change (e.g. Increased density) in the current zoning regulations." One has to wonder how much money the city has spent on consultant's plans that are tossed aside and gather dust.

The city has an opportunity here to facilitate (along with community members!) a new neighborhood that will show Santa Cruz to be forward-thinking, not just a new draw for tourists.

Tourism is not the most "sustainable" industry, with its low-paying jobs, large consumption of water, and car trips to get here. I'm all for attracting nationally-known touring musicians, but worry about the future of our Civic Auditorium. Whether a sports arena will be suitable for classical music is questionable. Also unknown is how much the arena will be used when the Warriors are not playing (a large part of the year). Many details must be worked out regarding management of the arena, including providing security, to avoid the lawsuits that have plagued other deals between Bay Area cities and sports teams.

Somewhere in the document the arena is considered "public space" which it is NOT. It is privately owned space. I am very interested in the "Spruce Street Plaza." I have read a great deal about what makes a

successful plaza, and one very important factor is programming the space on a regular basis, and of course maintenance. This requires funding and personnel. You might want to hire Projects for Public Spaces (www.pps.org) to evaluate the likelihood of success of the planned plaza.

"Sustainable" is used again, in the Health in All Policies statement. Massive amounts of concrete for new tall buildings, hundreds of cars owned by all the new residents crammed into the area, an eventual demand for a new water supply (desal), and the fact that all this is in a FEMA flood plain is far from "sustainable."

A very thorough traffic study must be done. We haven't yet seen how traffic will be impacted by two approved but not yet built projects near the beach - the Calypso apartments at the end of Center St. and the project at Bay and Westcliff (parking lot across from the Dream Inn). Traffic for all these projects must be assessed together, not individually. The 2010 Plan calls for a rather "robust" year-long low fare shuttle service, from a remote lot. Still, residents (esp. In market rate units) will own cars.

The housing is not likely to fulfill the idea of the "missing middle" for young families, teachers, etc. What is to prevent many units from being rented as second homes?

Building height is of great concern to many, if not most, residents (other than landowners and real estate interests who stand to make a great deal of profit). Be honest and ask yourself if you would want to live in or next to one of the 12-story buildings (likely even taller).

In the Staff Memo in today's packet, on page 9, it says *"A new fee will also need to be established for the City to recover non-grant-funded costs associated with preparation of the specific plan."*

Please explain who will pay this fee.

Under "Fiscal Impact," it says *"The city is considering creative solutions to allow the beneficiaries of the plan to reimburse City general fund costs towards funding the plan, including staffing costs."*

Who are the "beneficiaries" of the plan? The Warriors? The Seaside Company? Other investors?

Indeed, with all the projects in the pipeline, Planning Staff seems to have plenty to do.

It seems that there is still a great deal missing in this Study Session. Where is the discussion of funding for all the added infrastructure, road alignments, paving, not to mention flood prevention measures? Need for more police, public transit, etc. Will local Union labor be assured to construct all of this? (As I understand it, there is not enough local skilled labor, so those workers will commute from possibly long distances, adding to Vehicle Miles Travelled over several years.)

Our quality of life here is eroding, so please consider a less intensified development ("incremental development") for South of Laurel. You are NOT helpless.

Thank you.

Judi Grunstra

Bonnie Bush

From: Judi Grunstra <judiriva@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, June 14, 2024 1:57 PM
To: City Council; City Plan
Subject: Study Session Downtown Expansion Plan_suggested walking tour

Hello, I would like to suggest that City staff conduct several walking tours of the SoLa area so people can get a real picture of and feel for what will potentially go where - the arena, housing blocks with levels of density, Spruce St plaza, other open space along the River. Schedule a few tours before the July public comment date cut-off, with a Spanish interpreter along. Some day time tours, some evening, for working people. It stays light out late. You did a walking tour to show the affordable housing projects in the pipeline several months ago. This plan also deserves that.

I also think it should be a requirement for developers and planners to show an accurate depiction/comparison of proposed buildings height and mass side by side with some other tall buildings that exist here, such as the Dream Inn and the new Owen Lawlor building (Taco Bell site). Also, computer renderings should show the adjacent buildings or streets in an accurate way, not shown as if they exist in an imaginary Santa Cruz or a void.

Thank you.

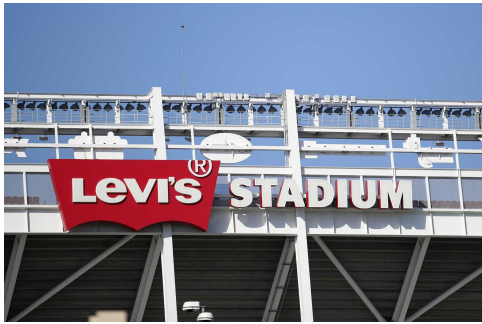
Judi Grunstra

Lindsay Nelson

From: Judi Grunstra <judiriva@hotmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, June 15, 2024 11:09 AM
To: City Council; City Plan
Subject: Exactly what we need to be wary of

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/sports/49ers/article/49ers-outplayed-santa-clara-levi-s-19511683.php>
Grunstra

Judi



49ers 'outplayed' Santa Clara with highly favorable Levi's Stadium deals, grand jury says

Santa Clara long ago cut a bad financial deal with the San Francisco 49ers over the operation of Levi's Stadium, according to a local watchdog agency.

www.sfchronicle.com

From: [Paula Haller](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: Proposed Building near the Clock Tower
Date: Sunday, June 16, 2024 8:15:43 AM

Dear City Council Members:

I have lived in Santa Cruz since 1971 and have witnessed many architectural changes in the downtown, from the earthquake when we lost the historic Cooper House and the unique trees of the Pacific Garden Mall to the ugly concrete square buildings devoid of architectural esthetics that have recently been erected downtown.

If you are going to streamline high rises for Santa Cruz could you at least demand that the new buildings have some consistency with the ambiance of downtown? Santa Cruz is starting to look like every strip mall town in the Central Valley. We are losing our unique identity. You could put the proposed building in any large city in the Bay Area and it would fit right in. Why should it shadow our beloved town clock? We have no other landmark, besides the roller coaster, that makes our town unique.

You may not be on the City Council 4 years from now, but the decisions you make about our downtown will last even longer than your lifetime.

Respectfully,
Paula Haller
113 Miles St
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Lindsay Nelson

From: david van brink <david.van.brink@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, June 16, 2024 9:39 AM
To: Sarah Neuse; City Council
Subject: Downtown Plan Expansion: "affordable storefront"?

Dear Senior Planner Neuse & City Council Members,

The downtown plan expansion is very exciting and on point. All great stuff! The increased height and density is an important step forward.

The decreased emphasis on car-throughput and parking may be challenging to some... **but is a necessary progression.**

One idea I'd like to share; it perhaps lacks precedent but may ring true. A mix of market rate and "affordable housing" is known to facilitate thriving, useful, and diverse neighborhoods. This is good. Is there a parallel concept of "affordable retail"? Many businesses that provide utility and/or character to a neighborhood are necessarily low-margin. Whereas newly-constructed ground-floor market-rate retail space will be expensive.

I'm unaware of any existing model for subsidized retail space. One approach might be to include a mix of different sized ground floor spaces. (Maybe you've stepped into a microscopic ramen shop in your worldly travels.) Or include a "marketplace" with flexible vendor stalls. And designing the building perimeters to support that kind of use and flow.

Think Interesting, Quirky, Useful, and Walkable. To consider!

Best regards -- David Van Brink

david van brink / david.van.brink@gmail.com / 831.332.6077

Lindsay Nelson

From: Nancy Hodges <kg6hdp@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, June 16, 2024 10:10 PM
To: City Council
Subject: High Rises in Downtown
Attachments: High Rises in Downtown.docx; High Rises in Downtown.rtf

My comment on the many proposed high-rise buildings in downtown Santa Cruz is attached, in two formats. I live in Scotts Valley, but what happens in the City of Santa Cruz affects the whole north county.

Nancy

To: The Santa Cruz City Council

From: Nancy Hodges, Scotts Valley

The Santa Cruz downtown is in tsunami, flood, and earthquake hazard zones. I can't imagine that building many high-rise buildings in such a small area in a floodplain is wise. In recent history, the Santa Cruz downtown was flooded in the Christmas Floods of 1955 and damaged in the Loma Prieta Earthquake. These two disasters caused significant damage to the downtown. The flood covered 410 acres per the city website. The book "5:04 P.M. The Great Quake of 1989" states that 33 buildings were destroyed or later demolished and that two people died in the downtown.

There have been recent articles regarding land subsidence due to building weight in cities, especially New York and San Francisco. The developers are considering placing tall buildings on land that probably has a lot of deep alluvial soil along a river near the ocean. Wouldn't this cause land subsidence and liquefaction during earthquakes? Sea level rise will make this worse.

Do the city building codes reflect the new reality of high-rise buildings in geological hazard areas? Do the developers have soil and structural engineering that verifies that the buildings can survive tsunami, flood, and earthquake and that the high-rise won't topple due to liquefaction? Can the engineers verify that windows won't break in the top floors sending a shower of glass shards below? Are there geological reports? Do the building codes reflect the future changes due to climate warming and sea level rise?

I think high-rise buildings should go in hazard resilient land with good ground conditions. I assume that pile foundations are required along with other mitigating building designs otherwise. Perhaps the city should review Japan's rigorous building standards. The state rules regarding developers circumventing local zoning regulations still require building to code. The developer can't construct a building that is not safe unless the city decides to forgo the building codes. If the city allows dangerous structures to be built, wouldn't the city be liable for any future injury during future floods, tsunamis or earthquakes?

Lindsay Nelson

From: Sarah Neuse
Sent: Monday, June 17, 2024 9:32 AM
To: david van brink; City Council
Subject: Re: Downtown Plan Expansion: "affordable storefront"?

Hi David,

Thanks for sending your comments. This is a very interesting idea, and a challenge I have been thinking about since we did the work on the Objective Design Standards for Multifamily Housing a few years ago, which include standards for mixed use buildings and the commercial spaces at ground floor level on our major commercial corridors. I haven't found any great models as of yet, and it's a conversation that is ongoing with the Business Services division in our Economic Development Department. Hopefully more will come of it in the next few years, as I do expect that lots of the existing commercial space is appealing to development at this point, simply based on the age of the structures and size of the parcels.

We'll keep at it, thanks for the reminder and highlight.

Sincerely,



Sarah Neuse

Senior Planner
City of Santa Cruz | Planning & Community Development
809 Center St – Room 101, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Phone: 831-420-5092
Email: sarahneuse@santacruzca.gov
Web: www.cityofsantacruz.com



From: david van brink <david.van.brink@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, June 16, 2024 9:39 AM
To: Sarah Neuse <sneuse@santacruzca.gov>; City Council <CityCouncil@santacruzca.gov>
Subject: Downtown Plan Expansion: "affordable storefront"?

Dear Senior Planner Neuse & City Council Members,

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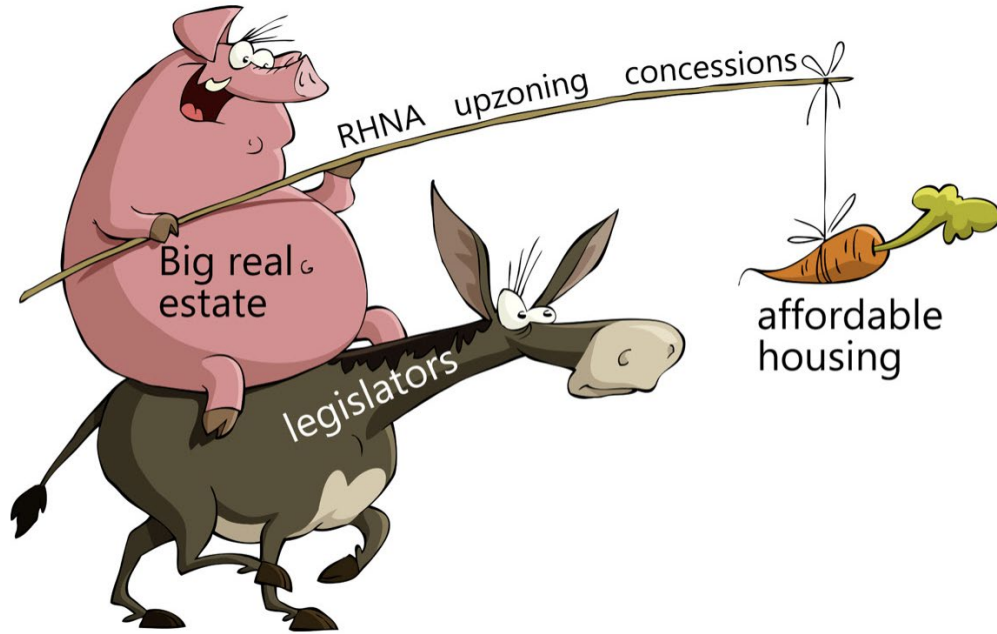
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Think Interesting, Quirky, Useful, and Walkable. To consider!

Best regards -- David Van Brink

david van brink / david.van.brink@gmail.com / 831.332.6077

From: [Chris Zegers](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: Seal of the City of Santa Cruz
Date: Monday, June 17, 2024 4:07:58 PM



Now
all we need are L.E.D covered buildings and legalized gambling and Santa Cruz will be an adorable entertainment city just like Las Vegas. Please stop the insanity of proposed L.E.D infused sports arenas that will destroy our night sky. Please retain at least a sliver of small town charm.

From: [Judy Weaver](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: DPE Project
Date: Tuesday, June 18, 2024 12:50:57 PM

To Mayor Fred Keeley and City Council members:

I am not in favor of the Downtown Plan Extension project.

Judith Weaver
Santa Cruz CA
95060