

Monday, May 27, 2013

Dear Desmond,

I would like to thank you for your email of Friday, May 24, 2013.

The city's initial feedback on the UHCA comments of the Draft ARP on Stadium Shopping Centre appears encouraging. It should be noted that the University Heights Development Committee did not have sufficient time to do a complete and thorough review of the ARP draft, having only received it less than a week earlier.

Your email indicated that the City's next draft of the ARP, to be completed this week, will "respond" to the statements by incorporating new language into the first draft.

Although you expressed "Thanks...for bringing some great remedies to our attention", we are concerned about the details of the changes and the specific language in the ARP version going to CPC. Perhaps a collaborative meeting between UHCA and the planning department (hopefully including Rollin Stanley) would be a more efficient way to expedite the mutually acceptable language and content changes in the less contentious points in the ARP.

We were hoping to find substantial and significant changes in the ARP particularly in light of our feedback pointing out several deficiencies in the traffic impact analysis. These changes would include, but are not limited to:

- Limiting densities
- Establishing a maximum density more consistent with the site's MDP designation as a Neighborhood activity centre
- Placing lower limits in building height
- Improving clarity and simplicity of language

We also feel that it is necessary to add requirements for a sustained collaborative process with the UHCA. The proposed remedy of adding a "formal statement of community engagement demonstrating how the community has been involved and engaged in the development process, in alignment with Policy CC8 of the SSCAP," is not only vague, but does not reflect a collaborative sustained process leading to resolution. Clarity of the ARP is a fundamental problem which still exists, and we note that even the remedies proposed do not conform with the intent of the city's plain language policy.

We are particularly concerned and would like to protest that our Recommended Remedy #8 didn't make the City's "cut" (i.e. our request that the ARP be given more "balance" by adding to the "Context" section a note that clearly describes the strong consensus opposition by UH residents to redevelopment with the extraordinary density level potentially allowable under the current C-C2 zoning and the strong consensus to respect the existing configuration of the MR lands)

Creating a mix of land uses and mitigation measures is not an adequate remedy for extraordinary density. One of our resident's who carefully studied the first draft ARP pointed out that "I am acutely worried that the draft ARP may be potentially misleading to members of the public. Because the project is such a large development (up to 800 thousand square feet & 14 stories – taller than portions of Foothills Hospital) getting the mix and density of land uses wrong will have an extraordinarily negative impact (just as having the right mix could have a very positive impact)."

For the sake of clarity, we still feel it is important that the ARP layout a schedule of allowed density that is linked to the timing of the upgrades required to the road and transit systems. For example the TOD trip generation rates should only be allowed to apply when rapid transit to this site are in place. This of course would follow that all density would be approved after upgrades to transit and the road systems are in place.

We would also like to see clarity and transparency for costs associated with the proposed infrastructure upgrades in 2013 dollars, what proportion will be paid for by the developer and what proportion will be paid for by the city and whether the amounts are currently budgeted by the city. For items not budgeted, how will the money be obtained and in what timeframe? It is only in the context of total costs and available funding to transit, road infrastructure, and a pedestrian overpass, can the issue of density be fully understood and evaluated in an informed and fair manner.

Additionally, we would like to formally request that the City Planning Department provide the UHCA a document showing a tracked version of the changes the City made in its draft 2 of the ARP. This will facilitate the ability of UHCA members, as volunteers, to monitor the City's understanding and responsiveness to what we believe were our City residents' very informed and reasonable input on draft 1 of the ARP.

In addition, with such tracking information, we could use this as a basis for a collaborative meeting to resolve differences before the June 6th CPC meeting.

Sincerely,

Peter Khu, President
University Heights Community Association