

To: Dana Point City Council and City Manager

From: Toni Nelson, Capo Cares

Re: Agenda Item #13 - Discussion Of Status For General Plan Amendment And Specific Plan, And Environmental Impact Report For 26126 Victoria Blvd.

I am unable to attend the Council meeting this evening but would like to weigh in on Agenda Item13.

First, I'm very surprised to see this item on the agenda one day before the public meeting on the subject. I'm dismayed that the Council would weigh in on the project in a public meeting before the general public gets a chance to learn all the details of the development in tomorrow's public meeting. If this item is discussed in public tonight I hope, in the interests of fair play, that you intend to first allow the applicant to present the project with full details. While I have my own opinions on the project, I encourage the public to attend the workshop and learn all the facts before coming to a conclusion.

Based on my current understanding of the project and discussions with and emails from Capo Cares subscribers, it would appear that the public is generally in favor of the project for the following reasons:

1. The Doheny Village area is in dire need of revitalization. Despite welcome landscaping and other improvements, the area has not changed in a major way since the 1960s. The people of Capistrano Beach would like to see the area improved and new opportunities emerge for retail shops, restaurants and other services that we now access in surrounding neighborhoods, allowing sales tax leakage from Dana Point to other cities.
2. The Victoria Apartments project, although large in scale, will bring much needed housing to the community including 53 badly needed affordable units. My understanding is that the affordable units will be spread throughout the project. These represent vital housing, particularly for those who support our vibrant hospitality industry.
3. The project will fund important infrastructure improvements for local CUSD schools. I believe the proceeds of a bond issue securitizing the revenue stream from this project will be directed to DHHS – an excellent school that is rated as the worst one in the district in terms of infrastructure. The people of Dana Point did not support a bond issue for public school infrastructure improvements. CUSD has no other option for funding needed public school improvements and it makes sense for it to seek funding by leveraging its surplus property.
4. The builder, Toll Brothers, is a high quality builder with a good reputation. They will have an ongoing stake in the community due to the large investment in upscale apartments that they will continue to manage.
5. The two areas in the Village where building height will be least noticeable are against PCH in the South and against the 5 Freeway in the North. Views appear not to be impacted.
6. The developer is directing an acre of land to public use as small parks (including a dog park) and a well-lit trail behind the building. These will bring apartment dwellers and members of the public to an area that is often empty and subject to unsavory activity.
7. The developer is contributing millions to public infrastructure improvements along Victoria Blvd, the connectivity project and other improvements in the Village.
8. The project conforms to the City's parking requirements with 1.5 spaces per unit plus more for 2 or 3 bedroom apartments. Parking is located at the back of the project where it will not be visible from the street. The developer is apparently sharing public parking with the church on Sundays.

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9. The project has many amenities and will offer attractive, market rate housing.

The main concern I'm hearing about the project concern the following:

1. **Traffic.** People are concerned that traffic can back up along Victoria or Sepulveda and cause slowdowns in the Village or rerouting onto other streets locally or into the Palisades. The results of the traffic study will be very important. One thing that might mitigate parking impacts would be to limit parking (particularly of large trucks) on both sides of lower Camino Capistrano, which currently slow traffic flow.
2. **Density.** The community is concerned with the density of the project. Although the developer has decreased it, 63 units per acre (349) seems excessive. However, at the same time, if we want revitalization and improved schools, we may need to accept some density. There is likely a "win-win" point where the project can be scaled down a little without the developer abandoning the project and the community losing revitalization and school improvements. A reduction even to 60 units per acre (6%) might reduce the footprint to two stories on Victoria Blvd by scaling the project back by 19-20 units to 330, without risking project abandonment.

This will be an important decision for the Council. I trust you will look at all the facts and consider all the competing concerns and issues. In my personal opinion, I really don't think a luxury apartment complex is a bad trade for an unsightly bus yard – especially if we can jumpstart revitalization of the village and improve DHHS at the same time.

Best regards,

Toni Nelson