

Midcoast Community Council

An elected Municipal Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors

Serving 12,000 coastal residents

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Ms Leung,

Thank you for forwarding a copy of the Big Wave Facilities Plan Draft # 2. The following comments are the result of community input, as well as the Big Wave presentation at our February 11th MCC meeting. While there is much support for the idea of creating a residence and support community for developmentally-disabled adults on the midcoast, there are many issues in the project that we feel should be considered at this early point in the planning process.

Project description: Environmental issues Chapter 1.0 page 1

The Draft on Page 1 states: Over 50% of the site will be restored into high functioning coastal wetlands. Upon measuring the undeveloped space in "Figure 1.1.1: Wellness Center Site Plan" the developed space (using the fire-trail as the divider) is clearly much larger than the "wetlands space". Similarly, "Figure 1.3.1: Office Park Site Plan" clearly shows the undeveloped space to be much less than the developed space. Either the estimates of coverage (Table 1.1.2.1) are incorrect, or the site maps are drawn incorrectly. We feel that it is better for the data to be accurate, for the community to better evaluate the project.

The wetland determination and requirements, using all 3 of the Coastal Act standards, should be done immediately.

Wellness Center Site

The 70 person residential Wellness center is sited in a light-industrial (zoning W/DR) area. The site is separated from groceries, shopping, cafes, and other residential support services by a warehouse district. Pedestrians would have to negotiate loading trucks, forklifts, and other industrial hazards, in an area that has no paths, or sidewalks. We are told that many of the residents would not drive (from Table 7.1.2), which could leave them separated from general interaction with the community. This site could feasibly be developed as light-industrial. While this might not preclude the placement of the wellness center in the industrial area, it is a serious issue and is not adequately addressed in the Facilities Plan. After the project is built, whatever issues are overlooked in the planning process could negatively affect the quality of life for wellness center residents and other residents of the area, for a very long time.

Office Park Site

The size and scale of the proposed Office Park is out of character with its surroundings. Buildings of this size and mass are unprecedented on the Midcoast. Zoning Regulations Section 6565.7 requires the design of the structure be in harmony with the shape, size and scale of adjacent building in the community. On one side it abuts the W/DR light industrial Princeton area, where buildings are all less than 36 ft tall. On the other side the proposed project abuts a one-story residential manufactured home park. The proposed 3-story 51-6" buildings would dwarf not only its neighbors, but all other buildings on the Midcoast. We feel it would seriously affect the view of the ocean from Hwy 1. There are many 3-story buildings in the Princeton light industrial area that are only 36' tall, and work quite well. We suggest story poles at an early point in the application process, in order for the community to accurately evaluate the effects of the unprecedented height.

Traffic

Under the Summary of Project features, is this claim: "Reduced traffic on Hwy 1". This statement contradicts Table 7.1.2, which estimates (car) 3787 trips per day, all of which would add to traffic on Hwy 1. In the Bay area, residents from as far away as the central valley commute into office parks, and the suggestion that a large office park in a fairly remote location would alleviate traffic, is unrealistic. Some coastside residents may work at the new office park, but even coastal residents would have to use Hwy 1 to get there. The addition of 225,000 sq. ft. of office space to the coast would undoubtedly draw commuters from other parts of the Bay Area. A project of this size would have significant effects on traffic through Devils slide (tunnel) and already congested hwy 92 as well. Business parks located near transit hubs (BART) or existing commute routes can arguably reduce traffic, but large business parks located in remote locations do not. A new office park might have other things to offer our community, but we should talk realistically about the traffic issue.

Other possible uses for the property could decrease the impact of traffic, such as light industrial, warehouse, or storage. Live-work lofts could arguably reduce the need for commuting. In terms of traffic, a large satellite office park would be one the highest traffic generating, of the allowable uses for this site.

Parking

On Page 61 of the Facilities Plan, the applicant asks for a parking exception (1 space per 250 sq ft, instead of 1 space per 200 sq ft) based on being located next to public transit. It cites other cities in San Mateo County, with public transit, which allow a lower number. The other cities in San Mateo County are all more urban, with a different level of public transportation compared to the rural Midcoast. Other cities in San Mateo county have other public transportation options (BART, Caltrain, park & ride), and public parking facilities, which are not available on the Midcoast. What the Office Park Site also lacks, is overflow. If the parking on-site is full, there are no other lots nearby. By looking at the site map (Figure 1.3.1) it is clear that there is no ability to expand on-site parking in the future. Even in its semi-rural location there is already an existing parking problem on Airport Blvd due to overflow from Pillar Ridge. Barring any serious mitigation measures for parking, we suggest that the existing (1 space per 200') parking requirement is reasonable.

Table 7.2.2 (page 61) suggests a mix of uses (40% office, 25% research, 15% storage, 20% manufacturing) which require different parking components. The proposed buildings however, are all Office buildings, and while they could be used for a lesser use, they all could also be used as the highest use, which is for General Office. If built, it would be difficult for the County to enforce this proposed mix of uses. If there is more demand for General Office space, then the required parking spaces would be seriously insufficient.

Storage buildings (of which there are many existing in Princeton) are less expensive to build, usually lack windows, are usually not heated & cooled. Manufacturing buildings usually have limited heating, large roll-up doors and usually 1-2 stories tall (there is limited demand for 2nd & 3rd story manufacturing). Since the 51' tall buildings in Figure 1.3.5 appear to be office buildings, and could all be used as Office buildings, they should be subject to the parking requirements and traffic impacts for General Office Space.

The parking area for residential units appears to occupy the airport overlay setback.

Financial feasibility

The economic data contained in the Plan is dated 2007 and the economy has changed radically since then. There is a good possibility that the data is optimistic and not based on fact. The developer is proposing to double the amount of office space on the coast and in an area that does not have good highway access and is remote to goods and services. Nearby commercial space at the Oceana mall is not leased out. Many counties require a feasibility study as part of the EIR. We strongly recommend that independent analysis be required.

The residential units are for low income and ultra-low income – by whom and how will compliance with this requirement be determined? This should be reflected in any independent analysis.

Emergency evacuation

This area is subject to emergency Tsunami evacuation. The evacuation route is up Airport Blvd, to Cypress Ave, To Hwy 1. The existing roads and intersection with Hwy 1 are completely inadequate to handle the number of evacuees from the site. It is also questionable as to whether Hwy 1 could handle the additional number of cars evacuating the big wave site.

Subdivisions

The Planning applications mention a request for subdivision, but there is currently no proposed Lot line adjustments marked on the site maps in the Facilities report.

Additional Natural Resources Questions

No permitting agency wetland determination is included in this document and should be completed as soon as possible. Allied Waste is not the garbage company serving this area as stated in the Plan. Where will the water recycling plant be located? Where will livestock be housed? What is the effect on creeks? What are the regulations concerning private, commercial water recycling programs? Are there any located in the Bay Area? What effect will recycled water have on runoff to wetlands? Is the solar generation capability dependent on grant funds? What if these funds are not obtained? Is fuel cell technology speculative? What will be done to protect the groundwater, the Pillar Ridge water supply and marsh from saline intrusion? Where will the monitoring wells be? Should projects of this scope be built in dwindling ecologically sensitive areas?

There are many undefined specifics to the "green" and agricultural aspects of the project we do not list here. We hope a comprehensive EIR will address these issues and the county will require concrete answers prior to going forward. In addition this area may contain archaeological sites.

General

In summary, after viewing the Facilities Plan Draft #2, holding a public meeting, and getting feedback from the public, we have the

following overall comments:

- While there is a feeling that the Wellness Center could be a good addition for the Midcoast, there are concerns regarding the location in a warehouse district. Many residents feel that development consistent with the zoning in this area is critical. Variances create inconsistent land usage and are not good planning.
- The Density, Height and Scale of the proposed Office Park are out of scale with the character of the site on the Rural Midcoast. A more moderate proposal with smaller scale buildings would be more appropriate for the area, and could still generate profit for the developer.
- There is concern that the traffic generated would overwhelm the rural roads that serve the site.
- While the project includes many "green" proposals, the concept of locating large scale concentration of office space at the fringe of the urban area, away from major traffic corridors, and transit hubs, would result in large scale commuting, which is not good planning.

Thank you

Deborah Lardie
Chairperson
Midcoast Community Council

Cc: R. Gordon