

Another Round for San Pedro's Ponte Vista

Wednesday, March 11, 2009, by Dakota

The power of neighborhood councils to stop proposed developments--that's the crux of today's *LA Times*' story on San Pedro Ponte's Vista, a development that at one point was a proposed 2,300-unit project. [Spearheaded by developer Bob Bisno](#), the development was supported by locals businesses, but "facing potent opposition from within the community's increasingly sophisticated neighborhood councils," the planning commission shot down the project, which was set to rise on a 61-acre site on old Navy property, last December. Bisno is now out of the project, which is being handled by DLJ Real Estate Capital Partners, a subsidiary of Credit Suisse Bank. Tomorrow DLJ will hold a community meeting to get input on the new, revised development (likely it'll be much smaller) and then the project will head off to the planning commission on April 9th. [Via the paper](#): [Councilwoman and San Pedro resident Janice Hahn] "said the original proposal was much too big and now developers must come up with a smaller project -- perhaps of about 885 units -- that will offer enough benefits to justify a zoning change." Meanwhile, to get a sense of the neighborhood councils and how they're operating, check out the ["R Neighborhoods Are 1" web site](#) (the name invokes one of the zoning changes desired). There's an update posted by Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council member John Greenwood about the meeting tomorrow. Here's their position: "We think that the developer must begin again with a new proposal and an updated traffic study. Simply revising the existing proposal prior to the April 9th hearing would not allow for a sufficient public input process for consideration of a project of this magnitude." You can [read the PDF of the Greenwood's statement here](#).



- [San Pedro residents organize to oppose Ponte Vista development](#) [LA Times]
- [NW San Pedro NC](#) [Official Site]
- [R Neighborhoods Are 1](#) [Official Site]

And so the NIMBYs rally to make the new housing unaffordable, and shut out the senior citizens. Nice.

[Comment #1](#), left at [03/11/09 09:22 AM](#).

Oh man, Hahn is going to shoot for 885 units? Being pretty familiar with that project and neighborhood council, I have to say that they will see 885 about that same as 2000. I would bet that the final number is under 500 and won't be approved until a few more developers go bankrupt and another 10 years have passed. This one is too hot to touch.

[Comment #2](#), left at [03/11/09 10:23 AM](#).

To Guest #1, you simply do not know what you are commenting on.

Over 11,000 people signed petitions to keep the site with its current zoning of R1, for single-family houses.

Those who signed were from all over the area, including adjacent cities, as well as from neighborhoods in San Pedro that are nowhere near the site.

Many seniors will be able to sell off their present home and buy a place at Ponte Vista, if they choose to.

The ignorance of the truths about Bob Bisno and the development is remarkable; So many people have no real clue about the issues.

Google Ponte Vista blog and read to learn.

[Comment #3](#), left at [03/11/09 11:08 AM](#).

San Pedro is way affordable as it is.

[Comment #4](#), left at [03/11/09 11:18 AM](#).

#3, why does it always have to be R1? What would the NIMBYs say to R1 with minimum lot sizes of 3,000 square feet? Technically it's single family homes, but on lots half the size of typical R1 zones. Is it single family zoning they want or is it single family zoning on lots between 6,000 and 7,000 square feet?

I love how they say they're preserving their heritage. Usually that means maintaining some sort of romanticized vision of how things used to be when the reality was much different. Does that mean they're working to preserve the presence of foul-mouthed alcoholic, wife beating long shoremen too?

[Comment #5](#), left at [03/11/09 01:25 PM](#).

There is an inaccuracy in the story that is worth pointing out.

check out the "R Neighborhoods Are 1" web site (the name invokes one of the zoning changes desired).

The name actually is in reference to the current zoning of the property. It is not a change. The only change is the one the developer wishes to make with regard to making the project a specific plan and thus much denser (more people, more cars, etc.)

The reason that all the neighborhood councils in San Pedro as well as the Harbor City NC have opposed this project as proposed and/or support the current zoning, is that it makes the most

sense for the area that is already heavily impacted. There is only one way in and out on Western Avenue. Never mind the rest of the infrastructure problems a project this size would produce.

The city needs to honor and follow the general and community plans that are in place. If developers buy property with the sole purpose of changing the zoning to line their pockets, then the city should put them on notice that this is unacceptable.

As Gail Goldberg, director of City Planning has said, "In every other city in this country, the zone on the land establishes the value of the land. That's the highest and best use.

"If it's industrially zoned land, it's worth \$20 or \$30 a square foot. In Los Angeles, that's not true.

"The value of the land is not based on what the zone says or what the plan says. It's based on what that developer believes he can change the zone to.

"That is disastrous for this city. Disastrous.

"I have to believe that the developers are getting sick of this. I have developers who come in to me and say, 'I bought this industrial land. I paid conversion prices,' -- meaning they didn't pay \$20 or \$30; they paid \$100 -- and I say to them, 'Can you spell speculation?'

"And they say, 'But, you've always done it. You've always converted.'

"I'm sorry, zoning has to mean something in this city."

And that is why maintaining the current R-1 zoning is the right thing to do.