

Ponte Vista Update

By John Greenwood

The last two months of the 2008 year brought good news to those in our neighborhood who are concerned about overdevelopment at Ponte Vista. In November the Planning Department issued a preliminary report recommending denial of developer Bob Bisno's tract map application.

The tract map underlies Bisno's proposal for 1,950 units (or even more given certain bonuses for housing for those of low and moderate income). The Planning Department pointed out that development at Ponte Vista is required by the community plan to be compatible with other development in the area.

As all of us know, the homes across Western Avenue are single family, while to the south are primarily single family homes and the Gardens development. These are not compatible with the dense development proposed for Ponte Vista. The Planning Department came to the obvious conclusion that the proposed development was too large and that the layout was incompatible with the community plan. This gave us hope that the entire proposal would be denied.

A month later the Department confirmed this and issued a report recommending the following actions to the Planning Commission and the City Council:

- Disapprove the proposed amendment to the General Plan to allow the heavier density at the property.
- Disapprove Bisno's proposed zone change from the current R-1-1XL (single family density) and OS-1XL (open space).
- Disapprove the Ponte Vista Specific Plan proposal.
- Disapprove the proposed development agreement between Ponte Vista Partners and

the City of Los Angeles.

- Not certify the Environmental Impact Report and related documents.

While the Planning Department did not support the Neighborhood Council's recommendation to preserve the current R-1 zoning, the Department featured many of the arguments put forward by NWSPNC in our comment letter and testimony.

In addition, the owner of the Ponte Vista property, Credit Suisse, announced in December that the bank's agreement with Bob Bisno had expired. The company decided that it would reexamine its options and develop the property itself. This was also good news, since many of us who tried to work with Bisno believed that his stubbornness had divided the community.

We hope that Credit Suisse has learned from this costly experience and will work to develop a proposal that is compatible with other development in San Pedro and meets the concerns expressed by our Neighborhood Council and San Pedro residents.

Credit Suisse has interviewed many community residents and is planning an "open house" on March 12 from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Peck Park to reveal a new plan and hear community reactions.

The plan is scheduled to go to a hearing before the Planning Commission on April 9 (check www.nwsanpedro.org for specific time and location).

The Neighborhood Council has taken a position to support the Planning Department recommendation of denial. 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 9 hearing would not allow for a sufficient public input process for consideration of a project of this magnitude

A new proposal would not allow the developer to take credit for signal synchronization already underway on Western Avenue and elsewhere.

Whoever develops the property must come up with additional traffic mitigation benefits for the San Pedro area. Please attend both meetings and voice your

opinion.

To read the Council's latest position on Ponte Vista, go to:
<http://www.nwsanpedro.org/pdfs//letter%20to%20planning%20commission%20re%20ponte%20vista.pdf>.

John Greenwood is a board member of NWSPNC and chaired the advisory committee on Ponte Vista established by Councilwoman Janice Hahn.