

Planners reject Ponte Vista map

By Donna Littlejohn, Staff Writer
Daily Breeze

City planners on Tuesday denied the tract map plan for San Pedro's proposed Ponte Vista housing development, boosting opponents' hopes that the project itself will also be struck down later this month.

Two more recommendations are expected by the end of the month, including the most important one that considers the project itself.

The tract map - only a technical piece of the decision that allows the 61.5-acre property to be divided for multifamily homes - can later be approved should the city decide to greenlight the overall project.

"We still have a pending application for a plan amendment and the specific plan that will go to the (Los Angeles) Planning Commission in December," said senior planner Jim Tokunaga.

Although the denial doesn't necessarily forecast complete project rejection, Ponte Vista proponents said they are anticipating that developer Bob Bisno will ultimately downsize the project to about 1,700 units.

"We don't necessarily expect (the city) to approve the project as originally proposed," said Allan Abshez, Ponte Vista's land use attorney. "But what we're expecting is that the Planning Department will recognize the many benefits and the logic of the proposal we made."

Opponents, however, believe the tract map denial could signal the city's intent to turn down the proposal altogether when its subsequent recommendation is released, expected as early as next week. They cited sections in the opinion

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that quoted from the community plan that restricts the property at 26900 S. Western Ave. to its current single-family zoning.

"No matter how you slice it, this isn't good for (Bob) Bisno," said Doug Epperhart of the Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council.

"The fight's not over," said Pat Nave of the Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council. "But this is good news. They found that it wasn't consistent with the general (community) plan."

Tokunaga said the tract map denial does not not necessarily mean the project will be turned down.

"If the specific plan (for Ponte Visa) is approved, then the (planning) commission could grant the appeal" of the rejection, he said.

"So there is some comfort in it (for opponents), but they shouldn't rule out" a project approval, he said.

The project is slated to go before the Harbor Area Planning Commission on Nov. 18 for comments only, although neighborhood council activists have asked the city attorney for a ruling on whether some members should recuse themselves. No decision will be made at that meeting.

The matter is then slated to go before the city's Planning Commission on Dec. 11.

Ponte Vista has been one of the most hotly debated issues in San Pedro. Originally proposed more than three years ago as a 2,300-home development, it quickly became a lightning rod for residents tired of increasing density and congestion along Western Avenue.

After a hearing in June, city planners have been preparing to make their formal staff recommendation.

WHAT'S NEXT?

What: The Harbor Area Planning Commission will hear a presentation on the Ponte Vista housing development.

When: 4:30 p.m. Nov. 18.

Where: Harbor Department Administration Building, 425 S. Palos Verdes St.