

Planners seek cuts in Ponte Vista project envisioned for San Pedro site



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Al Seib / Los Angeles Times

A developer is hoping to build new homes in area along Western Avenue in San Pedro. It once housed the families of Navy shipyard workers.

The city panel rejects a 1,950-unit proposal but invites developer to submit scaled-back plan.

By Jean Merl
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The Los Angeles Planning Commission rejected on Thursday a 1,950-unit housing project for a 61.5-acre site in San Pedro but directed its staff to continue to work with the community and developers of the proposed complex, dubbed Ponte Vista, to come up with a smaller project.

Planners will have six months to try to forge a compromise between the staff recommendation of 775 to 885 units and the developer's latest proposal, for 1,395 units.



Project supporter



Map

DLJ Real Estate Capital Partners, a subsidiary of Credit Suisse, originally wanted 2,300 homes on the site of long-vacant former Navy housing but dropped the number to 1,950 in the face of community opposition. The firm recently offered to cut the size again but wanted some direction from commissioners before formally submitting another modified version.

Proponents say the project would provide much-needed jobs and housing that middle-class families and senior citizens could afford to buy. But opponents cited congestion and existing traffic problems along Western Avenue, which would provide the only access to the project.

"We're giving one more shot at coming up with a compromise," Councilwoman Janice Hahn said after the meeting. Hahn, whose district includes San Pedro, added that she still would prefer a smaller project than the developer's current 1,395-home proposal but said she would wait for results of a new traffic study and other details before making up her mind.

The project, on the drawing boards since 2005, has split the close-knit community and generated a long-term task force and hours of public hearings.

"It's on everybody's mind," Hahn told the Planning Commission.

Opponents are a coalition of neighborhood councils and others, including officials in the neighboring cities of Lomita and Rancho Palos Verdes. They formed a group, R Neighborhoods are 1, to press for retaining the site's current single-family-home zoning, which would allow about 500 houses.

Labor unions and nonprofit community organizations rallied behind the project, which developers promised would be an environmentally sound, pedestrian-friendly community that would boost the area's economy and enable more of the town's residents to buy homes.

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