

# Ponte Vista changes draw mixed reviews

Open house on downsized San Pedro project draws a crowd.

By Donna Littlejohn, Staff Writer

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While developers have cut the number of units, critics think it's still too big. (Steve McCrank / Staff Photographer)

Hundreds of residents filed past display boards late Thursday, most in search of the magic number.

About halfway through, they found what they were looking for: San Pedro's proposed [Ponte Vista](#) housing development had been downsized from 1,950 to a range of 1,375 to 1,475 homes.

For some, that represented a significant improvement.

"I think this is going to change people's perceptions," said John Delgado, president of the Central San Pedro Neighborhood Council.

Others disagreed.

"These are outrageous numbers," said Mark Wells, who writes a blog critical of Ponte Vista. "It's way too much."

The four-hour open house at Peck Park drew widespread interest, with parking spaces disappearing and a line forming at the door when the event began.

Representatives of the development were positioned throughout the room to answer questions.

Colorful Post-its from members of the public anxious to add their opinions quickly went up on display boards that lined the walls of the recreation center's auditorium.

"The proposed # is too high," one stated. "750-900 is much more reasonable."

"The mix of housing for different age groups is what will keep this a vibrant community," read another.

Barbara Millman of San Pedro questioned how the sluggish economy will impact the project.

"The thing is with the economy the way it is now, nobody will be able to afford these homes," she said. "I've always been against it because I have to drive Western Avenue."

Ponte Vista supporter Mary Jo Walker of San Pedro commended the way the open house was handled.

"I think they did a nice job," she said of the displays.

Senior housing units would number from 300 and 450 on the 62.5-acre site on Western Avenue across

from Green Hills Memorial Park.

Town home styles would predominate (625-700 units);



An open house presenting revised plans for the Ponte Vista housing development drew a large number of people, many of whom used Post-it notes to make their feelings known about the changes. (Steve McCrank / Staff Photographer)

there would be 350-425 multifamily condominiums. Building heights would be capped at three and four stories.

While there would be open public park space, the downsizing of the project - which developers say will require a more spread out building plan - will eliminate the provision of including a large, permanent home for Eastview Little League.

Developers pledged not to apply for a density bonus, a provision that could add hundreds more low-income homes to the project.

Plans for a "green" project will be ramped up to a new level under the revised proposal.

Tim McOsker, an adviser to DLJ Real Estate Partners, said developers included scores of comments collected over the past few months in the revised proposal, set to go before the Los Angeles Planning Commission on April 9.

A second open house to get more comments is tentatively planned from 1 to 4 p.m. March 28 at the Boys and Girls Club at Harbor Boulevard and Fifth Street.

"This is what's great about San Pedro," said McOsker, who is a native of the town. "Folks have come here with their comments, both positive and critical. It's a great turnout and everyone here loves and cares about San Pedro."

Many of Ponte Vista's strongest critics, however, remained opposed to the project, even with the changes.

Doug Epperhart expressed skepticism that no density bonus would ultimately be claimed to expand the project.

"It boils down to an issue of trust and it doesn't exist," he said.

Dan Dixon, president of the Northwest Neighborhood Council, said he was impressed with the retooled display, but still believes the plan needs to have a new environmental impact study done before it moves forward.

"I've said to several people here tonight that this (development) team has made more progress in four months than the other team did in (almost) four years," Dixon said.

Bob Bisno, who formerly headed up the development team, was ousted late last year. New team leaders have spent the past four months meeting with community members in an effort to salvage and rework the plan.

City planners have said housing units shouldn't exceed 1,200 homes.

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