

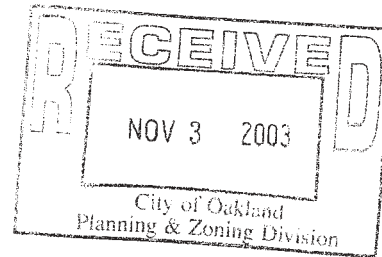


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Northern Alameda County Regional Group
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November 3, 2003

Lynn Warner, Planner IV
City of Oakland
Community and Economic Development Agency
Planning Division
250 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Suite 3330
Oakland, CA 94612



By fax to: 510-238-6538

Re: Comments on DEIR for Uptown Mixed-Use Project (Case No: ER03-0007)

Dear Ms. Warner:

We are writing on behalf of the Sierra Club, including approximately 5,000 members who are residents and property owners in Oakland. We support infill, mixed-use, relatively dense development within existing urbanized areas that encourages transit use, walking, and bicycling and that minimizes private automobile use. We believe that infill development will help to counteract sprawl and improve the environment and the quality of life for all Bay Area residents.

The relatively dense mixed-use proposal for Uptown Oakland has the potential for revitalizing Oakland's urban core and invigorating the Uptown Entertainment District. Its location near a regional transit node is propitious. The Entertainment District can draw from the whole region, and residents of the proposed project can have access to the region without cars. However, the site planning must be such that residents can have quiet enjoyment of their homes while others are enjoying the lively arts. The possible conflict between these uses has not been addressed in the DEIR.

A key issue of concern to us is that location of the open space should also be studied as part of the site planning. This may be considered a design issue rather than a comment on the Environmental Report, but the location and design of the open space will significantly affect the social environment of this new community. The present location of the planned open space might be appropriate in a suburban community surrounded by similar residential uses. But that is not the case with the Uptown project.

Safe open spaces are ones that can be completely viewed by a cruising police car. We strongly recommend consideration of a linear park along Telegraph Avenue from 19th to 20th St. This would be a defensible space and also a potential festival space for the Entertainment District. Placing the open space along Telegraph Avenue bordered by mid-rise mixed-use structures on the west between the lower rise residences and the entertainment area would create a buffer between the two uses. Oakland does not have anywhere near the problem of panhandlers and the homeless sleeping on benches and in doorways that San Francisco has.

A wide "piazza" along Telegraph Avenue with cafes, restaurants, book and record stores, and a market hall would create an exciting pedestrian destination. It would give a sense of place, an outdoor living room, for both the residential community and visiting theatergoers. This "piazza" would be lively with students,

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day and night, if the graduate student housing is built at 20th and Telegraph. In fact, this adjacent open space would make the site more attractive for student housing.


In summary, relocation of the open space along Telegraph Avenue should be studied for the following reasons:

- It would be safer, day and night, and so encourage use.
- It would encourage commercial development along Telegraph Ave.
- Students would have a place to meet and socialize.
- It would provide a festival space for the entertainment district.
- It can resolve the possible conflict between residential and entertainment uses.
- An attractive space adjacent to public transit will encourage the use of transit.
- It would take advantage of our Mediterranean climate and encourage outdoor activities.

Thank you for your consideration of the Sierra Club's views on this important project. We commend the City of Oakland for encouraging new infill development of this kind, which can make an important difference in the vitality and attractiveness of Oakland.



Joyce Roy
Co-chair
Conservation Committee



William J. Smith
Co-chair
Conservation Committee

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cont.