

NCPOA Comments to Planning Commission regarding Near North PUD and Site Plan

North Central is a YIMBY neighborhood. For fifty years, NCPOA has supported positive change and diversity in our neighborhood. We have actively participated in the City's planning process throughout that time, and have specifically been engaged in the future of this site for the past five years.

NCPOA opposes this project in its present form because it is incompatible with the neighborhood's zoning and the Central Area Plan, and would set a precedent that would permanently alter the character of the North Central area.

Nonetheless, as we have repeatedly told both Planning Commission and the developers, we *want* to make affordable housing work on this site. We appreciate the specific feedback Planning Commission has provided the developers following your May 5 meeting. We would like to further clarify our position as well:

Height: the proposed height (up to 50 feet from the designated grade, and 58 feet from ground level) creates an imposing institutional feel in a block of two-story homes. In addition, it contradicts the A2D2 plan to have building height step down from the urban core. At no point should the building be more than 40' tall.

Stepbacks: On Main Street, the building's landscaping and façade should maintain a pedestrian friendly scale. A large retaining wall with a 50-foot tower above it is not acceptable. If the developers are allowed to build so close to the sidewalk, the retaining wall should step back, and the building's façade should also step back above the second floor. A stepback at the rear would also be preferable.

Rear Setback: The requested rear setback of 18.5' requires neighbors to the East to use their rear yards as a buffer area. This is unacceptable. At no point should the rear setback be less than 30' from the rear lot line.

Diversity: This project would reduce the diversity of housing in our neighborhood. Because the workforce housing's income limit would exclude working couples, these units would be occupied primarily by single individuals. Such a concentration in one location is undesirable; a mix of unit sizes (bedrooms) would accommodate a wider range of households.

Floodway houses: While we still do not agree that the three houses located in the floodway need to be demolished, if the City requires their demolition, the subsequent management of the site is crucial. It must be designed and permanently managed to function as a safe, family friendly area. Programming, design, and management specifics must be spelled out in the PUD agreement and site plan.

Retail space: Adding a new retail space on this block without removing the existing one is not acceptable. If the developers continue to include a new space for the Summit Party Store in this project, the PUD and Site Plan must require removal of the store's existing building.

Parking and access: One need only visit the Summit Party Store at lunch time to recognize that the proposed parking is completely inadequate for the retail use, let alone the proposed office space. Traffic access also has not been adequately addressed. As currently designed, both access and parking are extremely problematic.

In summary: NCPOA welcomes new neighbors. The North Central neighborhood already has a large amount of affordable housing, and we would be glad to have more under the management of Avalon Housing. A development responsive to these concerns would be a welcome addition to our neighborhood. We will be glad to meet with Planning Staff, Planning Commission, or the developers to discuss the above criteria.