

## **Presentation of BAREC Housing Plan**

(Note: The City is now calling this property 90 Winchester Blvd.)

February 10, 2004 at the City Council Meeting

The City's Planning Director, Geoffrey Goodfellow, presented the two sets of housing plans, one is the City's Redevelopment Agency Senior Housing proposal for the front 6 acres facing Winchester Blvd. and the second one is the State's single family housing plan on the back 9 acres. The Senior Housing plan shows two high rises, one five stories and the other four stories with 165 units. The State's plan has only two story buildings. Seventy percent of them have no side yards and have common walls. The other thirty percent have narrow access side yards that appear to be for pedestrian access and not for plants. They show 36 units along the three perimeters with each unit having 3000 sq. ft. of land and 2400 to 2700 sq ft. of two-story building; each unit has 50 percent open space. In the center the plans show 82 two-story buildings with no side yards, common walls attached with 1500 sq. ft. of land and 1800 to 2150 sq. ft. of building; each unit has 20 percent of its land dedicated to open space (i.e. the building coverage is 80 percent). The City's housing density is 28 units per acre. According to our calculations the State's housing density for the units in the center are 27 ½ units per acre and 14 ½ units per acre for the perimeter houses. There will be 401 parking spaces for the people living on the land plus those for guests. We estimate a conservative number of residents will be 720 people. The one-acre park was moved to BAREC's back corner adjacent to Forest Avenue with a fire access road through it. There are no plans for the park except as an open green space.

To receive the quickest possible notice of any future City Council meetings related to BAREC, you should send a letter and an email requesting this to: City Clerk, 1500 Warburton Avenue, Santa Clara, CA 95050 and/or email him at [ggoodfellow@ci.santa-clara.ca.us](mailto:ggoodfellow@ci.santa-clara.ca.us). Geoffrey Goodfellow's assistants who work on BAREC issues are Judith Silva and Kevin Reily and they can be reached at 615-2450. They are not as busy as Mr. Goodfellow and can answer your specific questions. We are trying to inform everyone but the City does not give us much advance notice. They give Ulistac Open Space members many weeks notice so they can get organized for their meetings but unfortunately they do not appear to have the same respect for the BAREC land.

### **Analysis of this Plan**

1. The community was asked to comment on the BAREC plans without adequate notice and saw the plans only just before the City Council meeting. The announcement of the meeting was one week before the meeting and we were told in writing that we could review the agenda the Friday before the Tuesday meeting. However, the Agenda was not ready until mid day Monday and the community had to wait at the Planning Office for several hours until it was ready. When we have talked to the

Planning Staff they have said that the BAREC information would be on the City's website. However, the last BAREC update on the City's website was for a meeting one year ago on February 15, 2003. In addition, each community member was given only two minutes to respond to this complicated plan. For these reasons the community was not prepared to respond to the City and the State's plans.

2. There was no consideration given for BAREC's history anywhere on any plan. Many of the Valley's best historians have said that this property is the most important historical piece of agricultural land in the Bay Area and the Central Coast. However, the plan showed no consideration for its historical contribution or for its historical buildings. The historical 1920's building should be saved along with the greenhouses both of which were donated by the community. There should be a historical park separate from the one at the back property and the money for this land could be raised by a number of places which would like to help: the City of San Jose, the Federal Farmland Protection Act, Prop 40, the Santa Clara Valley Water District, UC Santa Cruz Department of Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, and various foundations. For example, the Farmland Protection Act will match the money being given by the developer for the one-acre park so there would automatically be two acres of agricultural open space. The landscaping everywhere should reflect the agricultural history of the property. Neither the State nor the City seem to recognize the historical importance of this land even though the City's historian says that the land is so important that it should be registered on the National Historical Registry.
3. The housing densities presented at the City Council are much greater than in the adjacent neighborhoods. The adjacent neighborhoods have between six and nine units per acre. The Senior Housing Proposal is 28 units per acre or about 3 ½ times the density of the neighborhood. The center portion of the State's plan appears to be 27 ½ units per acre or about 3 ½ times the density of the neighborhood. This density is way beyond what belongs in the community. The environmental quality of life for those living in the community will be greatly reduced with such huge density changes (more traffic, less sun and warmth and, therefore, greater heating bills, increased pollution, greater noise levels).
4. The State's plan for the units in the center have only 20 percent of their land devoted to open space. This is a huge difference from the adjacent community and does not allow any room for shade trees.
5. There is no consideration for the shade that will be cast by the five, four, and two story houses on the property. The sun comes from Winchester Blvd and Stevens Creek and, therefore, the buildings on these sides of the property should have the lowest rooflines. The five story Senior Housing will cast long shadows onto the land's major open space and, therefore, make it difficult to call it a garden and to grow a variety of plants that a garden should contain. The residents on Forest Street do not have deep back gardens. The shade that will be cast by adjacent two story buildings

packed together with almost no side lot open space will cast such long shadows that the Forest Street residents will no longer be able to grow the same vegetables and fruit trees which helps to supplement the health of their food. Shadow studies should be done for all the proposed buildings on the property. Because the site is long and narrow and because the best sun comes from the western long side of the property, the buildings on the entire property should be as short as possible and the roofs should be flat.

6. The land values of the adjacent property owners will be reduced dramatically... especially those that lose their sunlight.
7. It is unfortunate that they are adding a three acre fenced private garden with no guarantee that in the future the community may use it. By adding this private three-acre open space, the City Council is hoping the community will think they are giving them something in return for the dense housing being proposed. Unfortunately, the fact is that they are adding much denser housing, creating more traffic, taking away the sun and open space, and reducing the community's property values. Many BAREC neighbors and especially those on BAREC's property line purchased their homes before 1985 based on the fact that the BAREC open space would increase their property taxes.
8. The one-acre park was originally supposed to be a heritage orchard. Its size will be reduced for a fire access road unless the community says the land for this road should come from the developer and not from the community's park.
9. There should be a more creative way to link the park and the Senior Housing open space with a curving greenbelt path/garden.
10. The community would like to work with the City Council to try to keep the BAREC history alive and, unfortunately, they are ignored. Community members are not invited to the private important meetings about BAREC's future. When there is a community meeting, the decisions have already been made in private meetings with the State's consultants, the City Council, and the City staff. This is a violation of the Brown Act. We welcome anyone who can help us understand how to work with the City Council rather than being ignored.
11. We plan to present these proposals to the City Council in the near future and would welcome those who are interested to come and help present these ideas and any we might have omitted. The date we do this has not yet been sent. However, a copy of our comments is being sent to the City Council.