To Whom It May Concern:

RECEIVED
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CITY OF SAN JOSE
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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Our family, residents at Hermocilla/King community, fully understand the current economic situation that the city is facing, the deficit and the need to raise revenue and cut spending. It is affecting our family as well. However, we are concerned about the plan to convert the golf course to residential housing for the following reasons. We would like to submit our comments to the planning committee and the city for consideration.

SELECTION

1. Why is this golf course chosen? What about other city-owned properties? Must it be one of the 3 city-owned golf courses? We know the city is losing money on golf courses but what about the other two city golf-courses? Are they making money (net income/loss including debt payments)? Or are they losing as much or more than Rancho del Pueblo? This is a smaller course (9-hole vs 18-hole at Los Lagos) and maybe less popular than the other, but at the same time, it also means smaller expenses and smaller debt payments comparing to the other golf courses.

2. Our understanding is that the two golf courses (Rancho and Los Lagos) were built not too long ago and raised capital via issuing bond(s). Why was they built then and is now on the chopping block, not too long after, even before much benefits are realized? Does it mean much of the money already spent will be wasted?

Open space and the golf course is nice for families, kids, the community, the environment, and also the home values. Even this area is next to the 101 freeway, the golf course creates a much-needed buffer for everyone. People walk around the neighborhood daily and really enjoy the open space. This golf course targets beginners, including kids. All of these benefits will be gone when this open space and the golf course is gone.

HOUSING

1. Is building more residential housing a sustainable and long-term solution at this economic time? Do we really need more houses?

2. Can the market handle more new houses when we got plenty of foreclosed houses and plenty of families "under-water" with their mortgages? Many people are waiting and hanging on to their houses since walking away mean they effectively realized the loss of their down-payment, which can be significant.

Housing is the reason that the whole country, including San Jose and our own family, got into this great recession. We're still in the middle of a very serious recession, not out of it yet. Real estates in this area are among the low end of the market and price dropped significantly since 2008 and have not recovered. The increase supply of new homes will put additional pressure to an already depressed market. Building more houses at the wrong location might be a bad idea. Selling this golf-course does reduce the debt for the city but it brings worries and hardship to many existing residents. It also means the original project, that built this golf-course, is now considered short-sighted and the loss is realized.

TRAFFIC

Can King road at this junction handle the additional traffic?

Traffic and air pollution will increase significantly because many more people will use a limited number of roads to go in and out every day. The current community on Hermocilla/King is only about 200 single-family houses and this new plan is almost 3 times more than that (570 units). King/Story intersection was expanded not too long ago and it's already very busy, especially during peak hours. The exit ram from/to 680 at both directions usually back up significantly during peak times, which can cause traffic hazards for drivers on the freeway. Any further expansion will only cause delay for residents, traffic jams, and additional expenses for the city and tax payers.

CRIME

Crime will increase, simply because of the higher density of people. Alum Rock, East Side, 95116 is not the best neighborhood to start with. If it gets crowded with many more people, crime will definitely increase.

The shooting/killing with 2 men died in August 2010 at the newly-built apartment (San Antonio Ct, next to 101 freeway) is a worrisome example. The developer got financial subsides from the city of San Jose for low-income housing. Residents there did complain about the plan before it was built. But their voices went nowhere. We regularly hear siren, see police cars, see fire trucks coming into it from our house. From this example, we will do everything we can to prevent the same issues from happening to our neighborhood. Some highlights from the article from Mercury News:

Source: http://www.mercurynews.com/bay-area-news/ci_15932775

"*The violence shook up neighbors in the section of the San Antonio neighborhood that backs up to the Alum Rock Avenue off-ramp from northbound Highway 101. They were already angry and fearful about the Fairways, a low-income apartment complex built with $5.75 million in city money last year. They said they've complained about drug dealing, fights and gangs near the 84-unit complex, and that police and emergency vehicles show up there two or three times a week.*"

"*Neighbors said they protested vehemently when the city planned the housing complex. But "it's tough to beat the city," said Alfred Talamantes, president of the San Antonio Community Association. Another neighbor said auto burglaries are up, as are traffic problems and speeding.*"

SCHOOL

Can local schools that already have low test scores (Chavez, San Antonio) handle the additional number of children/students?

DESIGN/PLANNING

1. Does the city have the list of potential/prospective buyers? Who are they and what are their plans for this property?
2. Why 570 units? Is there a tentative/suggested blue-print or plan available to the public?
3. Are 570 units: condos, townhouses or single-detached houses?
4. How many levels will it be? How close to the property line will the future buildings/ structures be?
5. Since the golf-course has an L-shaped/U-shaped area, how will the access for this new resident community look like? Will access for cars, fire trucks, and police cars easy?
6. Will there be public streets or private streets for police patrol and public safety?
7. Will there be street connections to existing communities? Will it be a cul-del-sac or gated community?
8. Are there any open areas or community parks? How big are they and where are they located within the new community?
9. Is there a timeline that the developer/buyer must commit to (i.e buy now, build later)?
10. Will there be limitations, commitments, restrictions for the developer to address public issues?

ALTERNATIVES

1. Are there any other alternatives instead of housing or selling?
2. What about a low-maintenance public park?
3. What about selling a portion for housing development and leaving the rest open space or a public park?
4. What about waiting for a few more years before any decision for this site is considered again?

Sincerely,

8/8/2011
Date

1625 Hermocilla Way, SJ 95116
Address

Signature

Signature

Signature

Signature