

To: Debbie Pedro, Community Development Director, Saratoga

Copy: Cynthia Richardson, Project Planner, Saratoga
James Lindsay, City Manager, Saratoga
Tina Walia, Mayor, Saratoga (by email)

Feb 28, 2022

Subject: Story Pole Requirement 15-45.075 for SRC Expansion Project

The city of Saratoga, CA has a Story Pole requirement, 15-45.075 that states “ Story poles are required to be installed as set forth below for all projects subject to design review approval in order to depict the elevations and silhouettes of a proposed new structure or an addition to an existing structure requiring design review approval. Trees proposed for removal in conjunction with a proposed project shall be clearly marked in the field as set forth below”

The current PRS project undergoing the design approval process including an Environmental Impact Report for expansion of the Saratoga Retirement Community (SRC) falls under this requirement.

Based on a video presentation given by PRS on February 18, 2022 to the SRC Resident Council, PRS stated their intent to request an exception to the story pole requirement based on use of the video they have prepared and they offered three reasons;

- a) The project is large scale unlike a residential construction project
- b) The poles will interfere with traffic and normal operations
- c) The poles and netting will inhibit ambulance traffic.

We the undersigned residents of SRC strongly object to PRS’ request for an exception and request the City of Saratoga to enforce their Story Pole requirements for this project, including the tree removal requirements.

Sub-paragraph (e) of 15.45.075 which provides for an exception to the story pole requirement, states “The Community Development Director may consider unique and/or special circumstances (e.g. dangerous site topography or hazardous weather conditions) where an alternate method, tool or technology may be used in lieu of story poles to satisfy the requirements of Section 15-45.075”

We acknowledge that the 3D virtual approach is a technology success for the artist, but the scaling is wrong, the use of the perspective view diminishes the size/height of the actual buildings and the view of the current topography, including tree cover, is missing.

None of the reasons stated by PRS meet any of the requirements for an exception to the story pole requirement. All of the proposed buildings, with the exception of Building C, are in locations which do not interfere with parking, moving traffic or ambulances. The buildings are located off the streets and where they might interfere with parking, such as Building C, a cantilever pole arrangement could be used to avoid any interference with street traffic or parking. The required netting is at heights that also does not interfere with normal operations, such as delivery traffic, resident traffic and recreational activities and emergency access.

There is certainly no dangerous site topography. For example, when compared to the Meadows, Los Gatos site reconstruction project where story poles have been erected, SRC is a relatively flat site.

The fact that the proposed SRC expansion is a larger scale project than a residential project has no basis of consideration for an exception. In fact, the Saratoga story pole requirement must be viewed as necessary in light of the future multi unit projects facing Saratoga under the proposed RHNA Housing Element quotas currently under discussion. This is not the time to set a precedent of exception to the story pole requirement for large projects.

We believe the story poles must be erected at the SRC site and the tree removal markings be clearly visible in order to reflect the gross changes in the environment. Since the PRS video does not provide a “before and after” view, we are attaching 6 photos (PDF images) which provide a comparison and contrast of the changes. This is another reason that story poles cannot be replaced by a video.

The story poles tell the real story

Please confirm by written response to info@preservesrccampus.org your receipt of a PRS request for an exception under sub paragraph (e) of Article 15-45.075. Please also confirm the action process that the City of Saratoga will take when/if such a request is received.

Sincerely,

John Abel

Jon & Linda Bale

Marilyn Basham

Barbara Borthwick

John & Carol Brittain

Richard & Janet Caputo

Sylvia Chen

Helen Connolly

Roger & Betty Curry

Jim Dixon

Lorry Droblich

Linda Elden

Marcia Hall

Joann Jackson

Marianne Kerl

Carol King

Rich Lamb

Betsy Landergren

Tom & Jean Austin

Tsing Bardin

Robert & Michelle Berglund

Dave Brewer

Betty Cant

May Carroll

Del Coates

Chuck & Anne Cummins

John Day

Isik Doluca

Richard & Pat DuBridge

Michael & Grace Griffin

Thomas & Carlene Irwin

Stephen & Eleonore Johnson

Alan King

Julie Kunstier

Diane Lam'e

Bob & Marilyn Lenormand

Shung-Ling Lin

C K Liu

May Liu

Robert Mallison

Marilyn Manies

Marjory Marsching

Patrica McGlynn

Jonathan Mansbridge

Vince Martin

Ron & Judy Mason

Vera Morhenn

Harlen & Beata Ng

Brenda Niemand

Lois O'Haren

Pat Pfeiffer

Mel Schmucker

Ruby Shew

Nath Silberman

Don & Jan Schmidek

Marilyn Steinhart

Linda & Walter Umbach

Tony & Bobbie Vandersteen

Bev Wallace

Nancy Welch

Carolyn Whipple

Colin & Patricia Whitby-Stevens