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LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE APPEAL OF DIR-2018-6634-TOC, CEQA: ENV-2018-6635-CE

CERTIFIED COUNCIL
APRIL 16, 2002

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SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

VIA EMAIL

THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION, ATTN: CPC@LACITY.ORG

CASE NUMBER: **DIR-2018-6634-TOC**
CEQA: **ENV-2018-6635-CE**

For the past 2.5 years, The Echo Park Neighborhood Council (EPNC) has continually and repeatedly opposed the 5-story, 70-unit Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) project at 1251-1259 W. Sunset Blvd., commonly referred to as the Stires Staircase Bungalow Court. We submit this letter in support of the appeal brought against this project by adjacent neighbor Richard Courtney.

In February of 2019, the EPNC sent the **attached letter** to the Planning Department in opposition to the project, as it is clearly not in the best interests of the constituents of Echo Park, the majority of whom are legacy residents of rent stabilized housing. The Department of Planning approval will not only **displace**, but **reduce** the number of RSO housing stock in Echo Park. The simple arithmetic below demonstrates that your endorsed elimination of **TEN** existing and truly affordable RSO dwellings (well below market rate), will serve to accelerate our neighborhood's critical shortage of affordable housing in the midst of a city-wide housing emergency. Despite the planned additional units, this project will yield only 10% (7 units) of low-income housing, with 90% of the apartments pegged as market rate rentals. The project **fails to replace three** of the would-be demolished **ten** low-income RSO units, and **will immediately result in a 30% reduction of the current number of affordable units on the site.**

The developer is claiming all the benefits of the TOC, while failing to provide the required replacement housing, thus abdicating the affordable housing requirements

mandated by the TOC guidelines. **This fact ALONE should disqualify the project from claiming TOC entitlements and exemptions, as it FAILS to replace ALL EXISTING LOW-INCOME UNITS.**

Echo Park is in dire need of rental housing stock that is affordable to the many seniors and disabled residents who are barely surviving on fixed incomes, for immigrant families who are compelled to live in overcrowded units because they cannot afford larger, more adequate space, and for our **essential** working-class neighbors, many of whom pay more than 50% of their net income for rent due to the gentrification fueled by decisions such as this one. Make no mistake, because of the Planning Department's rubber-stamping of market-rate developments like this one, you are exacerbating a crisis that will result in displacement and other community-damaging negative impacts imposed on the most vulnerable among us, with untold repercussions across the City for decades.

Moreover, this "Transit Oriented" project ironically ensures that those low-income families who rely on public transportation will lose their current access to it, in favor of wealthy residents with multiple transportation options.

Furthermore, the Planning Department has made this ill-considered decision, which requires the demolition of the existing TEN bungalows, despite the recommendation from the Cultural Heritage Commission to designate the Stires Staircase Bungalow Court for Historic Cultural Monument (HCM) status on all three available criteria, as an important historic resource.

The job of the Planning Department is to approve or deny these proposals based on needs of the specific community according to the **general and specific plan**. This project does not comport with the needs of this community, and your continued approval ignores the valid and important objections from the many stakeholders who have spoken out against this project. You must not approve projects that contribute to the appalling paucity of affordable housing units for working class families. As representatives of the Echo Park community, the EPNC continues to oppose the approval and support this appeal on behalf of the community and the current tenants of the property commonly referred to as the Stires Staircase Bungalow Court.

RESOLUTION

On September 28, 2021, the EPNC Board of Governors held a Brown Act noticed-meeting, at 7pm through zoom. With a quorum of 14 board members present and a vote count of 14 yeas, 0 nays, and 0 abstentions, the Board resolved to write a letter of support for the application as set forth above.

Respectfully,
Echo Park Neighborhood Council



Nick Marcone
Secretary, Echo Park Neighborhood Council

CC:
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