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April 6, 2025

City of Merced, Planning Commission c/o Valeria Renteria – Assoc Planner (via e-mail)
678 West 18th Street
Merced, CA 95340

RE: Agenda Item 25-263, PD-20 Zone Change from Commercial Office to Business Park
 and Medium High Density Residential

Dear Planning Commissioners,

I join the many other residents of the Oakmont Village area in strongly opposing the proposed Zone Change in PD-20 from Commercial Office to Business Park and High Medium Density Residential. As a resident and licensed Architect with a long career in the design, planning and construction industry, the proposed zone change is not appropriate for this area of the community, and I wish to bring your attention to the following points:

1. Oakmont Village to the south and west is zoned R-1-6 (generally 6,000 sf lot size minimum) however the actual lot sizes range from 8,000 to 15,000 sf, creating one of the lowest density R-1-6 neighborhoods in the City. Home sizes in Oakmont Village range from 2,000 sf to over 3,200 sf. This is a stark difference to the potential house sizes in the proposed development. Many HOUSES in Oakmont are larger than some of the LOTS in the proposed development. Oakmont Village is without question, one of the most desirable neighborhoods in Merced as evidenced by the premium home values. Having an adjacent high density neighborhood will diminish the investments and cohesiveness of Oakmont residents.
2. Oakmont Village consists of ALL single story homes per the Subdivision CC&Rs. Oakmont homes bordering the new development have liveable backyards with swimming pools and patios. At a MINIMUM, Lots 1-17 in the proposed development should be LIMITED to SINGLE STORY homes, both to insure privacy to Oakmont residents as well as preserve open views to the north and east. The developer mentioned “a mix” of single and two story homes. Does this not mean there is a possibility of 1 single story and 16 two-story homes?
3. Oakmont Village consists of all well designed, high quality, mostly owner occupied homes that have properly maintained yards, landscape and streetscapes. Higher density homes are lesser quality in design and materials. Higher density homes are also primarily marketed to investors/landlords, who are driven by returns on their investment and do not maintain homes as well as homeowners, which draws tenants who lack the ability and/or desire to maintain their rented homes. Generally an out of town investor with a portfolio of

rental homes here do not take pride in ownership of their properties, being complacent with the monthly rental incomes as a priority.

4. All Oakmont residents bought or built their home with the understanding that the parcel north of Oakmont is zoned Commercial Office. Residents in any community all know having an office complex as a neighbor is much more preferred than higher density housing or a mini-storage facility. If this high density development/mini-storage facility existed BEFORE Oakmont Village, most residents would likely not have chosen to buy or build in the area.

Notwithstanding the misguided principle of placing high density homes against low density, there are many concerns and questions of the 41 lot homesites that have not been addressed. The comments and questions below are shown on the attached Site Plan.

1. Moving the Surgery Center driveway to the north will cause dangerous northbound exits from the Surgery Center (and likely the new mini storage since that driveway will be shared). The existing driveway being used was located where it is to be further away from the Yosemite Avenue intersection for safer traffic movements.
2. Oakmont is currently separated from the Surgery Center by a decorative concrete block wall. The new development should have a matching block wall to separate it from the Surgery Center as well but is not mentioned in the Conditions. Wood fencing deteriorates and is hard to maintain.
3. There is existing greenscape between the current Surgery Center driveway and the Oakmont subdivision wall (redwood trees) which was a likely condition of development of the Surgery Center. There is no greenscape shown on the current plans, which means the driveway will be against the subdivision with a fully exposed wall/fence. With no greenspace, this will foster vandalism and tagging.
4. There is a subdivision block wall between Parsons Avenue and Oakmont. The new development should have a matching block wall at Lots 18 and 19 as well as bordering the new Dog Park. This should be addressed in the Conditions.
5. There is extremely little street parking. Space for street parking is shown only on the “main” street in the development. There is NO space for street parking on the side streets. It appears there is only enough space for 16 cars, which is unrealistic for 42 homes.
6. Developer stated that an HOA would be formed that would enforce parking and other rules of the development. That is unrealistic given that a certain percentage of these homes will NOT be owner occupied, and enforcing actions on an absent landlord or negligent tenant would be fruitless. This would also apply to building maintenance, yard care, noise, crime, etc.
7. Developer stated that greenspace would be maintained between the Surgery Center and the housing by having trees inside the housing lots. Placing the responsibility of maintaining trees on to homeowners or tenants is unrealistic. Also the proposed setbacks of 3’-6” does not allow for tree growth.
8. Developer stated that the existing tree line between Oakmont and the Surgery Center would be maintained and even added to towards the west. This is unrealistic in that the trees (if left) would be in the backyards of the new Lots 11-17, which is making the assumption that the new homeowners/tenants will maintain or even want those trees in their yards.

9. City and Developer stated that the Fire Department has reviewed this. How can other subdivisions be required to have a certain radius “end bulb” at dead end streets for required turnaround of emergency vehicles? How will refuse trucks pick up trash in narrow, dead-end streets? Will the streets be required to have a heavy vehicle pavement section? (Thickened pavement to withstand fire and refuse trucks).

To summarize, as a resident and as a design professional, I am not opposed to growth and adding much needed housing to our growing City as long as it is done smartly and without haste. However, as a resident of Oakmont Village, I AM opposed to this inappropriate placement of high density housing against an established low density neighborhood. As you know, there are currently many other General Plan Zone Changes in process to create even more high density neighborhoods from previously designated Commercial, Office and low density zones. If the decision making and approval process allows this developer to continue against the wishes of the surrounding Oakmont community, he will no doubt lose no sleep in walking away with huge profits afterwards while our neighborhood is left with diminished home values and lower quality of life.

Please consider a NO vote for this Zone Change application.

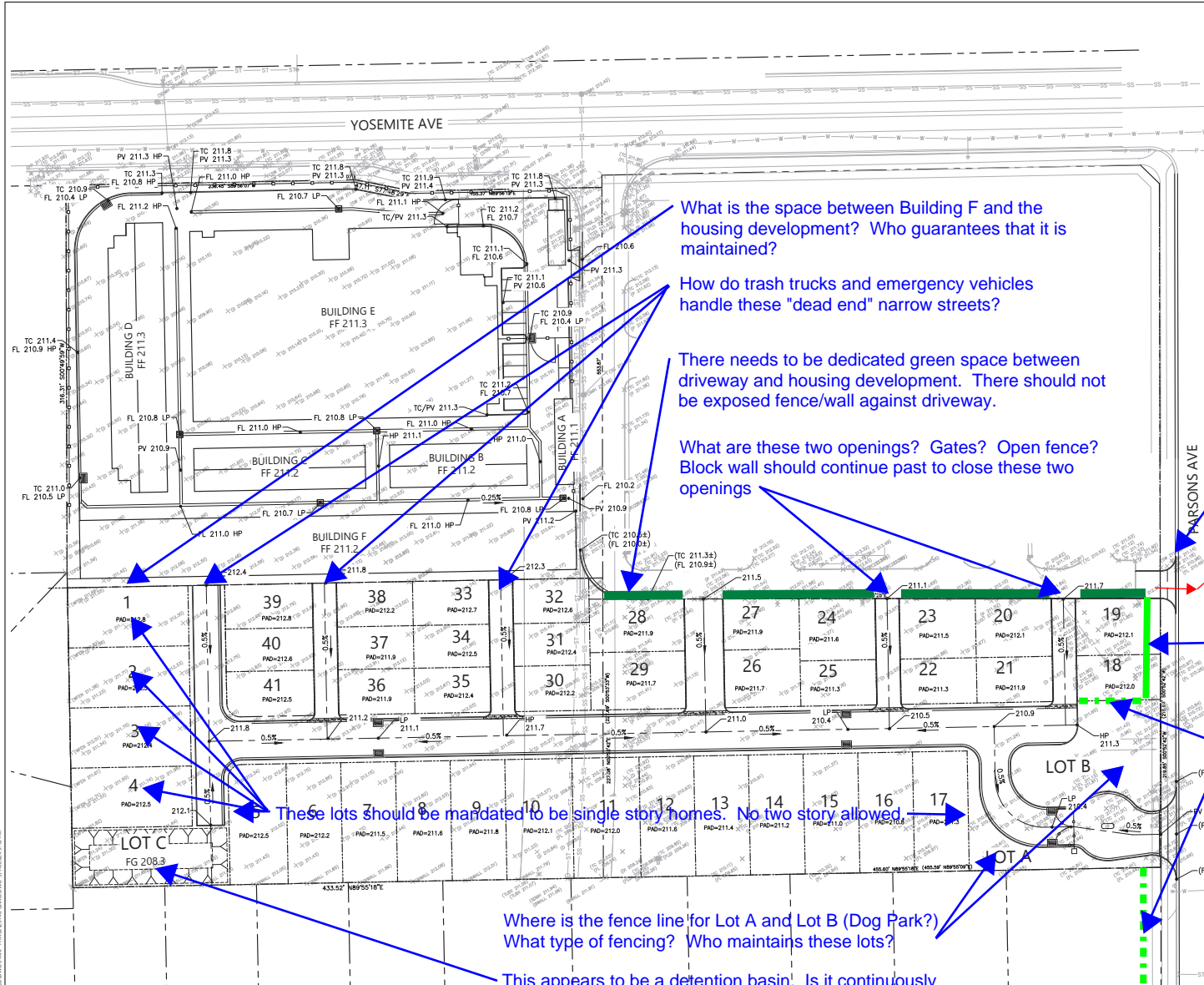
Sincerely,

Robert Dinuzzo, AIA

Architect

Cc: Mr. Scott McBride, City Manager (via e-mail)

Mr. Frank Quintero, Deputy City Manager (via e-mail)



GRADING LEGEND:

TC 100.00 R 99.50 LP 99.62 (TC 100.54)	PROPOSED ELEVATION
	MATCH EXISTING ELEVATION
2.0%	SLOPE AND DIRECTION OF DRAINAGE

C	CONCRETE
CBC	CALIFORNIA BUILDING CODE
EL	ELEVATION
FG	FINISH GRADE
FL	FLOW LINE
GB	GRADE BREAK
MIN	MINIMUM
PV	PAVEMENT
TC	TOP OF CURB



REVISIONS		
NO.	DESCRIPTION	DATE

TENTATIVE MAP

YOSEMITE AVE SUBDIVISION

1380 E YOSEMITE AVE

APN: 006-050-068 / 006-050-072

CALIFORNIA

MERCED



SHEET TITLE:

GRADING PLAN

SCALE: 1" = 40'

DRAWN BY: ABV/TG

CHECKED BY: YI

PROJECT #
23148

DATE
4/22/2024

SHEET #
C4.0

SHEET X OF XX



What is the space between Building F and the housing development? Who guarantees that it is maintained?

How do trash trucks and emergency vehicles handle these "dead end" narrow streets?

There needs to be dedicated green space between driveway and housing development. There should not be exposed fence/wall against driveway.

What are these two openings? Gates? Open fence? Block wall should continue past to close these two openings

New driveway has unsafe northbound exit on to Parsons. Too close to the Yosemite intersection

Subdivision wall setback with landscaping along Parsons should match Oakmont

This should be a block wall to match Oakmont wall.

These lots should be mandated to be single story homes. No two story allowed

Where is the fence line for Lot A and Lot B (Dog Park?) What type of fencing? Who maintains these lots?

This appears to be a detention basin! Is it continuously maintained lawn and landscape or weeds mowed once a year?