

ESSEX

PROPERTY TRUST, INC.

March 6, 2008

Jean Marlowe, President
Mike Bertram, Vice President
River Oaks Neighborhood Association
San Jose, CA

RE: Essex Development Project on River Oaks Parkway

Dear Jean and Mike:

I am sorry you were unable to meet with us this week to go over our Development Plan changes; we would have liked to review them with you in person. The significant changes we have made are the direct results of your efforts and the Community Meetings we have held.

Essex has spent the past two and a half years working to create a new residential community that complements the existing character of the River Oaks neighborhood which provides the housing required to support the economic growth pursuant to the North San Jose General Plan. The development plan has evolved significantly since our initial meeting with Staff when we were pursuing a density of over 1,200 units, which was at the upper end of the allowable density range.

Over the course of the past year and a half we have gathered a wealth of input through three separate formal community meetings which you have all attended. We have also had numerous other informal meetings and conversations with homeowners, staff and the District Council office to refine our plan. We have used the feedback, combined with the Guiding Principles developed through the North San Jose Planning Task Force process, to make substantial revisions to our project.

We appreciate the acknowledgement in the last Community Meeting that we have greatly improved our plan over the course of the discussions and three formal Community Meetings. The remaining principal objection still noted in the last Community Meeting focused on the height (8 Stories) of our Tower located on the rear portion of our site. When we adjusted our park location, we did so with the intent to further buffer the location of the building from the adjacent property. We seem to have a consensus with the neighborhood on the new park location / orientation, however, we have still received significant feedback on the height of the 8 story building. We strongly disagree with the input related to concerns over the building height as we have designed it to minimize any adjoining neighbor impact, although we fully recognize the perceived impact it may have.

Considering the strong objections to the Tower building height, we have decided to acquiesce and have decided to reduce the building height to 5 stories in our revised Development Application, consistent with the remainder of our development which has been well received. With this change we have overwhelmingly addressed the cumulative major concerns from the community over the course of the last 18 months of input.

Furthermore, in response to requests from the community on the proposed park re-alignment we have created multiple connections to the trail system, which was outlined as a priority of the Planning Task Force. This change will also serve to move the bulk of the park closer to the existing neighborhood and will provide neighbors with better views of the park. We have also refined our pedestrian-friendly environment with improved connectivity and smaller walkable blocks which is another priority of the Task Force and the local community. As a result, we have improved our street network which will provide two public streets with on-street parking, and a third private street for ingress/egress and emergency vehicle access. These streets will allow future expansion of the street network and will provide better access to the proposed park while creating a buffer between the park and the residential project – another Task Force priority. We have also added a 60' pedestrian "paseo" which will reduce the project block size and create a new open space amenity for the residents and the surrounding community. All of our proposed streets, as well as the "paseo" will be treated with architectural and landscape elements that will enhance the pedestrian experience at street level.

We are excited to be submitting our final revisions to the project and are preparing for Planning Commission and City Council hearings. We appreciate all the input we have received from RONA and the entire River Oaks community during this process and feel the final product reflects the efforts of all involved. Our door is always open to you for a meeting to go over the specifics of the plan amendments we will be submitting in our revised application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Panek", written in a cursive style.

Jeff Panek
Development Manager

cc: **Kansen Chu**, *City Councilmember District 4*

John Eudy, *Executive Vice President and Chief Development Officer, Essex Property Trust*