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To: Urban Design Commission
From: Tim Gruber, District 11 Alder
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It is clear from what is being currently being built in phase one and from plans presented for phase two that Sequoya Commons will have outstanding design, materials, and environmental features such as rain gardens and natural landscaping.

In the PUD standards, there is a section that reads:

“Character and Intensity of Land Use. In a Planned Unit Development District, the uses and their intensity, appearance and arrangement shall be of a visual and operations character which:

a. Are compatible with the physical nature of the site or area.”

Reasonable people have disagreed on whether not the density and height the buildings are compatible with the neighborhood. Those issues were decided in the approval of the GDP in 2006. The point was made at that time that the level of density proposed was appropriate for the location at the intersection of two major streets, Midvale and Tokay, as well as being on a bus line (Transit Oriented Development). Traffic from the development should be routed to Midvale and Tokay.

“b. Would produce an attractive environment of sustained esthetic desirability, economic stability and functional practicality compatible with the general development plan.”

I think we can agree that the plans meet this standard for the most part. Traffic management is part of the “functional practicality” of the plans.

“c. Would not adversely effect the anticipated provision for school or other municipal service unless jointly resolved.”

I think we can agree that the plans meet this standard. It is expected that there will be few families with children in these units.

“d. Would not create a traffic demand incompatible with the existing or proposed facilities to serve it unless jointly resolved. A traffic demand management plan and participation in a transportation management association may provide a basis for addressing traffic and parking demand concerns.”

Parking has been adequately provided. This brings us to the last remaining issue, the traffic to and from the site.

The basic intent of zoning is to protect adjacent property owners. Increased traffic can decrease property values and quality of life. Neighborhood residents want the traffic to go to Midvale and Tokay, not to residential streets. They have a good case for having the garage entrance be from Midvale based on the PUD standards.

A compromise would be to have the garage entrance on the north end of the building near Caromar with an alley along the north end of the building from Caromar to Midvale. This would provide two ways for residents of phase two to enter and exit by car, disperse traffic, and break up the “super block.”

Traffic Engineering staff has indicated that they can accept either an entrance from Caromar or Midvale. Both locations have positives and negatives.

Traffic Engineering staff stated that they have 3 main considerations in looking at access issues:

- 1) Property owners have a right to reasonable access to their property.
- 2) Access to residential properties is preferable from side streets.
- 3) Attempt to minimize traffic into residential neighborhoods.

Points 2 and 3 are in conflict in this instance.

A garage door on the north side of the building allows for a better facade on Caromar.

Here is what I recommend:

- Grant Initial Approval.
- At Plan Commission, place a condition that the garage door entrance to phase two either be from Midvale or from both Midvale and Caromar.
- Come back for Final Approval with new elevations.

In this way, we can avoid endless referrals and a contentions approval process.