



October 24, 2003

Claudia Cappio
Planning and Zoning Division
City of Oakland
250 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Ste. 3330
Oakland, CA 94612

RE: ER 03-0004, SCH No. 2003022086

Dear Ms. Cappio,

First, let me start by saying that despite the points I make below, I am very excited at the idea of changes going on down in Jack London Square. As President of the Jack London Merchants Association, I know that many of the merchants down in that area are hurting and I think change is good.

What concerns me is the forethought going into the planning for this HUGE project! The timing is also a concern. We've been given a month to respond to a document that is almost 500 pages long with confusing information. During this same past month, we've also been in meetings regarding Design Review which seems like a totally different project than what is in the DEIR. Considering the hours I put in working to grow my business, I wish that I was able to devote full-time brain power towards reading and understanding the DEIR so that I could speak on the same level as the Developer. Unfortunately our requests for an extension have gone unheeded

Another thought had occurred to me – to hire a consultant to do a new traffic study since I am not convinced that the numbers shown in the document have fully considered all the outlying factors to traffic in our neighborhood. Factors include a rise in train traffic, developments in process in Alameda (which increases the drive through traffic here), and a huge increase in residential and business traffic. There are five developments that have been approved in the District, but not yet built. One wonders if a traffic study of our current conditions would find our existing situation LOS C (or F?) before even considering all these other developments.

But the traffic situation should NOT keep development from happening. What it SHOULD do is force the issue of new ideas for public transport so that we can move forward. By new ideas I mean thinking outside the box. If bus transit isn't working now, shouldn't we find something else that not only would work, but would also be its' own attraction? (i.e., CyberTran, monorail, dedicated trolley.)

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The next issue to resolve is historic preservation of Heinold's First and Last Chance Saloon. Enclosing the structure within a larger building is not the answer. A set-back should be determined based on protecting the structure as it exists. A huge amount of construction adjacent to this building is not the answer.

Green space is another issue to consider, specifically in ONE area such as the existing West Green. If you want to build there, that's fine, but could we keep a similar size piece of green space somewhere else within the property?

Consider the wall affect along Embarcadero and along Alice Street. I feel that it could be made less imposing and be made to feel more a part of the neighborhood.

The parking garage, known as site G. TOO BIG! Too many cars! Consider that if a train goes by and 10% of the car alarms go off, that's 100 car alarms ringing for five minutes. A smaller structure 3-4 stories in height would be less imposing and have less of an impact on the neighborhood streets. I would condition the acceptability of that project based on requiring a grocery store go in.

Consider other parking structures closer to Broadway and even building up on the existing Washington Street Garage.

Lastly, consider extending the review period so that the Jack London District could hire their own transportation specialists to review the DEIR.

Thank you,

Joanna Adler
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President, Jack London Merchants Association

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