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To: [City Council](#)
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At your March 1st study session, you directed staff to prepare a “hybrid” option for the Moraga Canyon Specific Plan that would combine aspects of Options 1 and 2 submitted by the consultants. The conversation at the study session implied that the hybrid should meet the following criteria.

1. Market rate as well as low, very low, and extremely low rent apartments, while developed as separate projects, should not be segregated in space or time. This implies that the Council prefers that all the housing be built on one or the other side of Moraga Avenue and that market rate and rent-controlled units be built, if not simultaneously, at least close enough in time to form a neighborhood.
2. Recreational amenities available in the Canyon should increase.
3. The cost to the city of implementing the plan should be as low as possible.

Your March 18 staff report recommends nearly doubling the market rate housing units from 72 to 139. Applying the above criteria to only Options 1 and 2 with 67 additional units leads to a choice between a very bad and an even worse hybrid. The less bad hybrid would move Coaches Field to Blair Park and locate all the housing on the north side of Moraga Avenue. This choice would satisfy the criterion of avoiding segregation in space. As consultants to the Council have noted, it would also reduce segregation in time because the views it would provide renters would increase the value of the units and the return to developers. But this option would incur the cost, unanticipated by the city’s planning for capital improvements, of rebuilding Coaches Field in Blair Park. This option would also induce children living in the 199 new units and elsewhere to cross Moraga to use the rebuilt Coaches Field. The lack of safe crossing of Moraga, among other problems, caused the city to suspend planning in 2011 for a soccer field in Blair Park. What has changed in Piedmont that would make a hazard judged unacceptable by the City Council in 2011, acceptable to you in 2024?

The worse of the two hybrids would locate all 199 units of housing in Blair Park and expand Coaches Field. The most distressing cost of this hybrid is what a city-adopted EIR has deemed a “significant and unavoidable” risk of vehicular and pedestrian accidents on Moraga Avenue. The alignment and slope of Moraga

Avenue, as well as the number and speed of vehicular trips it carries, preclude driveways to Blair Park that meet Caltrans standards for safe corner sight distance. This hazard was originally reported in a 2010 EIR prepared for the city by LSA consultants to evaluate impacts of expanding recreation uses in Moraga Canyon. Traffic engineers hired by Moraga Canyon residents independently confirmed these hazards. The hazards measured in 2010 have likely become worse given increases in traffic and speeds on Moraga Avenue. And those hazards would apply, conservatively, to 800 or more vehicular entrances and exits from Blair Park. Putting 199 families in Blair Park would, in short, create a neighborhood forever stigmatized not only by physical isolation but also by the danger encountered by drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians leaving and returning home.

Why, then, would you consider hybrids of only Options 1 and 2 when Option 3 remains available? That option, like the first above, would locate all the housing north of Moraga Avenue. Coaches Field would be enlarged but stay in its current location. But the corporation yard would be moved to Blair Park. The Council has ignored this option apparently because a superficial cost/benefit analysis of options attributed the cost of rebuilding the corporation yard to Option 3. This, of course, makes no sense. Facilities in the corporation yard have approached the end of their useful life and the city will soon bear the cost of rebuilding them regardless of whether or where developers build housing in Moraga Canyon. The cost of rebuilding the corporation yard should not affect the choice among options for the Moraga Canyon Specific Plan but the location of a rebuilt corporation yard should. Rebuilding the facilities in Blair Park will not only minimize safety hazards for children using Coaches Field and for bicyclists and drivers using Moraga Avenue, but also allow for the expansion of recreation opportunities as well as hasten the emergence of a true neighborhood integrated in space and time. By any reasonable accounting, Option 3 remains, by far, the most cost-effective presented to the Council.

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