

**PA 13-066 The Essex at Central Park  
Pre-Application Neighborhood Meeting  
January 23, 2014**

*Comment Sheet*

If you don't have an opportunity to speak tonight, or have subsequent issues, comments or questions of importance to you, please fill out this comment sheet. Please return it to the City of San Mateo Planning Division, Attn: Julia Klein, 330 W. 20th Avenue, San Mateo, 94403.

**Comments, questions, issues:**

As you heard tonight, the top 3 issues on people's minds are:

1. Traffic
2. Traffic
3. Traffic.

Traffic is already a very significant problem along 5th Avenue + San Mateo. The problem is exacerbated by the proximity to the most heavily traveled ~~thru~~ street in San Mateo - El Camino Real - that causes major back-ups on 5th Avenue, morning, noon, + 3:00-6:00 in the afternoon.

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Comments, questions, issues:

LOSS OF PUBLIC PARKING ?

TRAFFIC CONGESTION AT 5TH + EL DORADO

WANT TO HAVE BLDG ENTRANCE DOWNTOWN AREA

DO NOT LIKE APPEARANCE OF BLDG  
TOO MASSIVE - SHOULD BE SEPARATE BUILDINGS (SMALLER)

WANT MORE EXPENSIVE HOUSING ON TOP OF STORIES NOT PARKING  
FACING STREET

DO NOT WANT RENTALS. S/F CONDOS

RESIDENTS WILL TAKE (USE) THE PUBLIC SPACES DUE TO  
CONVENIENCE.

THAT SPACE SHOULD BE COMMERCIAL USE, NOT RESIDENTIAL

PROPER USE WOULD BE A PARKING GARAGE.

→ INTERESTED IN CENTRAL PARK.

R. DELAURENTIS  
RDELL@AOL.COM

## Julia Klein

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**From:** nancy matthews <merrybeach@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 24, 2014 2:06 PM  
**To:** Julia Klein  
**Subject:** 7 stories??

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Last evening, I attended the informational meeting regarding a downtown apartment development application from the Essex Co.

I share concerns that were expressed about parking, traffic congestion and effects on the present residents of downtown. Both San Mateo and Fifth avenues have hazards associated with heavy traffic, pedestrian safety and insufficient parking.

The City Council and the Planning Division have expressed their intent to make that area the 'official' Central Park entry and have already invested in new trees, benches, etc. Please be wary of permitting a ponderous, oversized building so close to the Park.

In reading "Yelp" reviews about Essex management of Hillside Gardens, I have concern about how the proposed building would be maintained. And yes, I know "Yelp" isn't completely reliable but the trend of reviews is decidedly negative.

Thank you,

Nancy Matthews  
[merrybeach@gmail.com](mailto:merrybeach@gmail.com)

## Julia Klein

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**From:** Betty Wyren <bettywyren@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 31, 2014 9:57 AM  
**To:** Julia Klein  
**Subject:** PA: 13-066m The Essex at Central Park Pre-Application

Good Morning Julia,

I don't see well enough at night to drive to city hall for the upcoming meetings. I live on Laurel Avenue backing Central Park, I use 5th Avenue almost everyday, I use the subject parking lot every week. I know the city is always looking for a new tax base but I respectfully say that this is not it. There is enough traffic at that location at certain times that it is a miracle there aren't accidents. This parking lot is needed. Where are all the employees of the various businesses supposed to park, the restaurant and other businesses that people would like to go to. Not the street that's for sure, parking is full almost all the time.

Several months ago (I apologize for not having the PA number) there was plans to build on like El Camino at Ninth and Tenth Avenues. If that were to happen also, that's also a lot more traffic and if both these planning applications were accepted and built I believe it would be more of a detriment than a help.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate all the hard work that the city does for its citizens.

Respectfully,

Betty Wyren

## Julia Klein

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**From:** Gaëtan Voyer-Perrault <gatesvp@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 31, 2014 11:08 PM  
**To:** Julia Klein  
**Subject:** Questions about The Essex proposal

Hello Julia;

I was unable to attend last week's meeting in Central Park, but I had few quick questions about the project.

1. What happens to the existing parking?  
Between the offices and the Equinox, that parking is often full. Adding another 150+ vehicles is just going to make this worse.
2. Will those shops still be available during the construction? (*I'm thinking of Chase & Starbucks & Noah's, etc.*)
3. What happens to foot traffic, auto traffic and parking during the construction?
  - o The corner of 5th and El Camino is very busy. Between pedestrians coming into downtown, the 24 hour fitness and cars using 5th as the route to/from the 101, this corner is always busy in all directions.
  - o However, the lot is not really empty, so the construction gear will likely be blocking off streets.

The whole project really sounds like a traffic mess.

If there are meeting minutes that address this I would be happy to read those.

Regards;  
Gaetan Voyer-Perrault

## Julia Klein

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**From:** Ronald "Ron" Munekawa  
**Sent:** Monday, February 03, 2014 6:56 AM  
**To:** Julia Klein  
**Cc:** Rory Walsh  
**Subject:** FW: City of San Mateo: Park and Recreation Commission Agenda for 2/5/14

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**From:** Mike Chanteloup <[hmbcougarball@gmail.com](mailto:hmbcougarball@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 2, 2014 2:59 PM  
**To:** Robert Ross; Joe Goethals; John "Jack" Matthews; Maureen Freschet; David Lim; Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Fwd: City of San Mateo: Park and Recreation Commission Agenda for 2/5/14

**C Ortega,,,,I am sorry i have so few email addresses and hope you can pass this onward,,sorry to bother you**

**Not sure where my comments will go but hopefully they will be read out loud..I refuse to go to meetings as when these big projects come up, historically they have been done miserably. The last one at Bay Meadows was a disaster as the City of San Mateo never got a penny for five years or for so many years because no figured it out to get a down payment, non refundable down payment and we had a mound of dirt forever until some tarp was put on,,,,Only when the interest rates went down did this project get any interest at all and the major project developer lucked out,,,Rats went everywhere and I brought this up when we had BAY MEADOWS RACE TRACK meeting but no one cared,,,The only difference now is that we have new people on the city council so maybe my comments will be heard,,,,**

**A) This project is too high and in the flight paths of some inbound airliner,,,Also there will be rats under the ground and I live about 1/2 mile from all of this and do not want to see any..**

**B) this large building will block the sunshine in the mornings**

**C) this project will cause undo traffic issues on B street and we have enough parking problems and traffic now as it is ..**

**D) nothing was mentioned about what kind of funds will be kept and non refunded in case of what ever problems do occur...**

**E) I want to see a written declaration that this project will not affect Central Park in any fashion and is not linked at all to the Central Park at all**

**F) this location is too close to the railroad tracks and if they ever widen the tracks to make for lines this building will have to be destroyed and redone,,,,BAD LOCATION**

**G) We have enough of a population in San Mateo and it is already crowded,,,why do we need more people,,,**

**JUST SAY NO....let them build this across the BAY where there is more open land and space..**

H) You need to put this to a general vote to the citizens of San Mateo and not force this down our throats,,,,,I realize that this is a preliminary discussion however it appears that TEA and COOKIES have persuaded many of the city hall managerial types to get involved and their friends will do well...

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I) This project if approved will disrupt downtown San Mateo for many years although I realize one may say it is blocks from 4th Avenue,,,5th avenue will be severely bothered with trucks, dust , and other negative menagerie.

J) How is this going to be paid for???

I do not want the city of San

M

ateo to pay precious revenues and float a bond,,,

Cordially

Rick Karr

1524 Maple

San Mateo,Calif 94402

## Julia Klein

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**From:** Vicki Wilson  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 06, 2014 8:16 AM  
**To:** Julia Klein  
**Subject:** FW: Essex at Central Park Proposal

Julia,

This email came in late yesterday. I will pass it on the Park and Recreation Commissioners.

Thank you,

Vicki Wilson  
Executive Assistant  
San Mateo Parks and Recreation  
Ph: 650.522.7419  
Fax: 650.522.7401  
Email: [vwilson@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:vwilson@cityofsanmateo.org)  
[www.cityofsanmateo.org](http://www.cityofsanmateo.org)  
[www.erecreg.com](http://www.erecreg.com)  
Parks Make Life Better

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Gretchen Warner [<mailto:gwet@earthlink.net>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 05, 2014 3:14 PM  
**To:** PR Commission Mailbox  
**Subject:** Essex at Central Park Proposal

Dear commission members,

I strongly oppose this proposal. This eight story building plan is an affront to the citizens of San Mateo who worked so hard to pass Measure H. That event was triggered by a developer who wanted to build tall buildings in the same block. This Essex proposal would result in a monolithic, out-of-proportion building that would block daylight and air currents from Central Park. It would do nothing to improve the life of families who use the Park. Contrary to the developers' suggestion, it would not improve the parking situation, in fact it would make parking harder to families using the park. I am quite familiar with the area and often see parents and children crossing Fifth to get to the park. The increased traffic would be a safety issue.

This building would give a Manhattan-like appearance to Downtown. It would not enhance City life. The advantage would accrue to the developer, not the citizens of San Mateo.

My husband and I have owned a residence in San Mateo since 1961. We patronize Downtown and the park.

Sincerely yours,

Gretchen Warner

3201 Monterey Street  
San Mateo, CA 94403

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## Julia Klein

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**From:** Jennifer Barrett <jenniferbarrett@me.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 05, 2014 12:13 PM  
**To:** Julia Klein  
**Subject:** Essex - questions and concerns

I am 15-year resident of San Mateo and I have questions and concerns about the proposed Essex development at 5th Avenue and San Mateo Blvd.

My concerns are about Scale/density, impact on Natural Light and Parking/traffic problems.

Regarding scale and density:

The proposed height of 8 stories is unprecedented in this area of Downtown San Mateo. I understand that any developer of this property will want to maximize return on investment, but to squeeze such a large building with 117 units into a parcel just one acre in size is ludicrous. This building will be taller than anything near it and its scale will be out of place when compared to every adjacent development. The new building can't be this tall.

Impact on Natural Light:

Any building as tall as the one proposed undoubtedly will affect the natural light of Central Park and 4th Avenue. It appears that the Park will be surrounded soon by buildings after Central Park South at 9th Avenue is built and now Essex being considered. Will there be any shade studies conducted to evaluate how an 8-story building will affect these two spaces as part of the Essex project review process?

Parking / Traffic:

The current parking lot occupying the proposed Essex site is used daily by visitors to Equinox Gym and other visitors to downtown San Mateo. Essex developers show plans to replace the parking spots eradicated by their project, but it looks a little dubious. How specifically will they separate resident, residential visitors and commercial visitor spaces? And, during the 20 MONTH building timeframe, where will the people who use the existing parking lot place their vehicles? We must study the impact here more thoroughly. Please work with Equinox Gym and the parking lot owners to determine how many people use this lot daily. Parking in downtown San Mateo is already woefully insufficient and the City hasn't addressed the existing problems sufficiently enough to allow a project like this to be added at this time.

San Mateo is increasing its residential units at an extremely rapid pace. What is the City's plan to accommodate all of the new people who join our community?

Thank you,  
Jennifer Barrett

## Julia Klein

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**From:** Veril Phillips <veril.phillips@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 11, 2014 11:02 AM  
**To:** Julia Klein  
**Subject:** The Essex at Central Park Pre-Application  
**Attachments:** Letter to Planning Commission - final.pdf

Hi Julia,

Several members of the Board of Directors at Gramercy on the Park Homeowners' Association attended the study sessions on this project on January 23 and February 5. As you likely know, our building on Laurel Ave. has 144 condominium units. Because of the proximity of the proposed development to our building, our homeowners and members of the Board have considerable interest in providing input during the pre-application process and, later, in the application and possible approval process.

I have attached my letter, as president of the HOA, addressed to the commissioners on the Planning Commission. Would you please forward this letter to the commissioners this week, so that they may review it prior to the public meeting on February 25. Our own Board meets that same evening and most of our Board members will not be able to attend the Planning Commission meeting. If I should provide this letter to the commissioners in a different manner, please let me know.

Also, would you please put me on any email distribution lists for future notices about this project, and provide me links to the various studies (esp. traffic studies) that will be forthcoming, so that our Board can continue to keep abreast of the progress?

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Veril L. Phillips  
Email: [veril.phillips@gmail.com](mailto:veril.phillips@gmail.com)  
Tel: 650-579-4627



**G**ramercy **O**n **T**he **P**ark  
Homeowners' Association

February 11, 2014

Planning Commission  
City of San Mateo  
330 West 20th Ave.  
San Mateo, CA 94403

Re: 13-066, The Essex at Central Park Pre-Application

Dear Commissioners Massey, Hugg, Bonilla, Drechsler and Whitaker:

The Essex development, if approved, would be a huge project and would have an enormous impact on the surrounding community. We want to take this opportunity early in the process to express concerns about five issues – traffic, parking, impact on Central Park, size and height of the building, and quality of the development.

**Traffic – A Potential Deal-Breaker**

We consider the traffic issue problematic – so problematic that it is a potential deal breaker.

The first word on people's minds when they first learn about the project is "traffic." That was the case at the January 23 Planning Department neighborhood meeting and again at the February 5 Parks and Recreation Study Session.

- Residents in the neighborhood know only too well that 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and San Mateo Avenue, as well as other streets in the downtown core, are already highly congested, particularly at certain times of day. Pedestrians in the neighborhood, including a large number of seniors who live along Laurel Avenue, know that the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue crosswalks between El Camino and San Mateo, at Laurel Avenue and at Ellsworth, are dangerous; many drivers fail to stop or even slow down when pedestrians, many with walkers, are waiting to cross or actually in the crosswalk. Adding 150 or more cars to our current heavily impacted streets would make a very bad situation even worse.

- Traffic on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, heading east toward Hwy. 101, causes serious congestion every weekday afternoon starting about 3:00 p.m. Additional traffic created by a major new development would add to an already exasperating situation.
- The only planned Ingress/egress to the Essex parking garage is located only about 200 feet from the busiest thoroughfare in San Mateo, El Camino Real. Adding more cars and pedestrians at that location would surely create a major bottleneck. That would be a very substantial problem both for Essex residents and the rest of the community – anyone attempting to drive east or west on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, as well as drivers traveling north or south on El Camino who want to turn onto 5<sup>th</sup>, or just want to get through the intersection. Cars entering/exiting the Central Park parking garage under the tennis courts just across the street from the entrance/exit driveway for the Essex further complicates an already unacceptable level of congestion.
- In addition to traffic congestion, there already exists an unaddressed problem of drivers speeding east and west on 5<sup>th</sup> avenue. This is a significant safety issue, particularly at the five crosswalks between El Camino Real and B Street. If the Essex development were to go forward, the City would need to ensure increased police presence and an expansion of other necessary support services.
- The timeline for construction of the Essex development sounds as if it is likely to coincide with Caltrans' plans to reconfigure the El Camino/Hwy. 92 interchange. We can envision a months-long traffic congestion nightmare when both of these projects - only a few blocks apart - are under way.

Essex Property Trust has clearly devoted a great deal of time, effort and thought in planning this project. However, when asked on February 5 if they had any preliminary thoughts on what might be done to mitigate the obvious traffic problem, the answer was, essentially, "no," they would wait for the traffic studies. That tells us that solving the traffic problem is not yet a high priority in their thinking.

When the traffic studies have been completed, we plan to review them with considerable interest. We expect the City to require specific appropriate mitigations as a condition of approval for the project, even if that requires additional studies to determine the effects of potential mitigations. Furthermore, we strongly recommend that the traffic studies to be conducted take a two-tier approach: Study the impact on traffic using reduced occupancies that the 55-foot height limitation affords and study the

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impact on traffic that the 75-foot limitation affords. The additional impact on traffic should help the City determine one component of the public benefit required under Measure P. A similar approach should be taken for the study of impact on parking -- an issue discussed below. Downtown San Mateo is already on the cusp of becoming one of those places you want to avoid because traffic and parking are so difficult. Making the traffic problem significantly worse than it already is would defeat San Mateo's efforts to make downtown a friendly, accessible place to come, to shop, dine and take advantage of entertainment opportunities, including those in Central Park. We know there are good reasons why city planners would favor having a new high-rise apartment development downtown, but the benefits of having such a development may be outweighed by the negative impacts of the project if we end up driving people away because of traffic congestion.

### **Parking – Already a Problem**

The fact that San Mateo has launched efforts to develop a Downtown Parking Management Plan indicates that planners and business leaders recognize parking as a critical issue in need of new and creative solutions. Now comes a project that, if approved, would exacerbate an already pressing problem. The Essex plan includes replacing the 95 current public parking spots on the proposed building site with 95 dedicated public parking spots. We can imagine that mitigating traffic problems might well require using curbside parking on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and using that space to add a traffic lane. Essex would need to compensate for that loss of available spaces.

Essex planners have given much more thought to the parking issue than to the traffic issue. We hope that as the City continues to grapple with parking in the downtown core, city planners and the business community can work with Essex to actually improve access to parking downtown not just replace spaces consumed by building and street modifications. As the plan currently exists, the 95 parking spaces that would replace the existing spots would not be readily apparent to the public since they would be inside the complex. The result could be that the public parking spaces in the building would be rarely used.

### **Enhance Central Park – A Public Benefit**

We urge the Planning Commission to be aggressive in negotiating a public benefit component of the project and commit that funding to enhancing and maintaining Central Park.

- We understand that the City has great latitude in determining what the public benefit might be and that it need not necessarily be directly

related to the apartment project at all. The park, available to all and well-used by many, is one of the most treasured public assets in our community. Even without other compelling reasons, it would be a logical beneficiary of Essex support, and a welcome source of funding, particularly as the Parks and Recreation Department develops its new General Plan for the park's future.

- Use of the park would increase significantly as a result of building 117 new apartments across the street. Residents (and their pets) would add to the maintenance and clean-up costs of the park, so it is appropriate that Essex should, as part of their public benefit compensation, pay for the maintenance caused by added wear and tear.
- It would be emphatically in Essex's best interest to have a beautiful and well-maintained park across the street. That is one public benefit that Essex can monetize. Rents would be higher for units facing the park and, as the name suggests, marketing for Essex at Central Park would benefit greatly from the proximity to one of the City's greatest assets. Consequently, the City could and should negotiate a substantially larger total public benefit component for the project and Essex should be amenable.

### **Size and Height – How to value a sunset?**

We would like to see less building and more sky. This is clearly an important quality of life issue for park users and residents alike.

- For people in the park, and for those of us who live nearby between 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, an eight-story building nearly a block long, and 75 feet high, would block out a significant part of the skyline, including the beautiful sunsets we see this time of year. With the sun bouncing off the southern face of the Essex we are more likely to get glare instead of a sunset.
- The overall size and height of the proposed structure would present a massive presence, which would be out of line with the rest of the downtown core. We strongly urge that plans for the structure be downsized in length and height (particularly height) to better contribute to the ambiance of downtown San Mateo.
- At the February 5 study session we learned that a "wind, shadow and reflection" study would be done by the City for this project. As the Essex's closest group of neighbors (half a block away – 144 units) we

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urge the City to include our view of the situation – literally our line-of-sight-view – as part of the study.

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**Quality of the Development – reduce size and increase quality**

- We are concerned about exactly what quality level Essex is aiming for. At the January 23<sup>rd</sup> neighborhood meeting, and again at the February 5 Parks and Recreation Department study session, we were told that anticipated rent for the apartments would be \$2,000 - \$3,000/month, and that getting approvals and construction could take about 2-1/2 years. In today's market, the apartment one can rent for that price is older and definitely not in a "luxury" class, and one assumes that amount will buy even less two or three years from now. We don't necessarily need The Ritz, but we certainly don't need Motel 6 either. The City should encourage Essex to reduce the size of the overall development and include more upscale units. Essex could command higher rents, compensating for fewer units.

We greatly appreciate the fact that the Planning Commission is encouraging public input at this early stage in the application/approval process for the Essex at Central Park project. We hope our input is useful and will carry some weight in your deliberations as the process continues.

Sincerely,



Veril L. Phillips

President

Gramercy on the Park HOA

RECEIVED

February 8, 2014

2014 FEB 12 A 9 46

To the Mayor, City Council  
and affected Departments  
City of San Mateo

OFFICE OF CITY CLERK  
CITY HALL  
SAN MATEO, CA

Ladies and Gentlemen:

My wife and I have lived in San Mateo for 40 years. We have seen the City Council change from one controlled by developers to one that puts its citizens first. We were members of the group who originated Measure H, the height control initiative that was so popular that voters renewed it 15 years later with hardly any modification, as Measure P.

Now comes the Essex project, the essence of what voters rejected when passing Measures H and P. I realize that at a proposed 75 foot height it "fits" within the law. But it is still a massive project that, if allowed as proposed, will cause serious environmental destruction (significant shade and wind are just two instances), and will cause insufferable and irreparable parking and traffic problems. No amount of "benefits" to the city can offset these ruinous effects.

Simultaneous with the introduction of this project, the city staff, commissions and Council, seem to be wringing their hands about

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what to do to relieve the parking problem in downtown. The Essex would only exacerbate the problem; it would do nothing to lessen it.

Concomitant with, or a part of the parking problem downtown, is the fact that downtown employees are having to find "long term" parking on residential streets both adjacent and near to the downtown business area. In the middle of the 500-600 block of Edinburgh Street, we have just received a survey asking if we would agree to having two-hour parking in front of our home. The ostensible reason for two-hour parking by us is to discourage all day parking on our street by downtown employees.

With the rents that are proposed for the Essex, I would think it would be a better fit in the former Bay Meadows development area. In any event, the Essex project downtown must be stopped before it gets off the ground.

I suggest the city consider the following to help resolve the downtown issues:

1. Build a parking facility in the former Kinko's building lot with three or four upper floors for the exclusive use of downtown employees and charge them a discounted all-day fee. The lower floors would be for downtown customers and visitors.

2. Consider a four story parking facility for public use on the lot at Fifth and San Mateo Drive instead of the Essex project. This would greatly help to relieve downtown parking problems.

3. Consider again making Fifth Avenue and Second Avenue one way streets from El Camino to Delaware, so that Fifth Avenue traffic is westbound, and Second is eastbound. This was proposed when I was on the Downtown Commission in 1983, but did not pass.

4. Consider Councilman David Lim's comment of allowing parking in the commercial bank lots and other businesses during evening hours.

In the meantime, create temporary miniparks on the vacant lots on the corners of Third Avenue and El Camino. We have suffered these two eyesores long enough.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stanley Gross', with a stylized, cursive script.

Stanley Gross

MR. & MRS. STANLEY GROSS  
546 Edinburgh St.  
San Mateo, CA. 94402



Mayor Robert - Ross.  
City Council  
City of San Mateo  
330 West 20th Ave  
San Mateo, CA  
94403

February 14, 2014

Julia Klein  
Associate Planner  
City of San Mateo Planning Division  
330 W. 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue, San Mateo, CA 94403

RECEIVED

FEB 18 2014

Subject: PA 13-066 The Essex at Central Park

I am against the proposed project of 117 apartment units on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue between San Mateo Drive and El Camino Real in San Mateo.

I live at the high-rise at 55 West 5<sup>th</sup> and from my window I see the constant traffic congestion at the intersection of 5<sup>th</sup> and El Camino at all hours of the day. Very often the traffic going north on El Camino is stopped at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and traffic is backed up on 5<sup>th</sup> coming west onto El Camino.

If the entrance and exit to the development is at the west end of the proposed building, the congestion would be unsurmountable, backing up traffic entering and exiting 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. In addition it would cause backups at the entrance to the park and the parking garage under the tennis courts.

A suggestion was made to consider closing 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to through traffic. This would mean using 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue for access to the freeway and congesting business traffic on that street. It would also mean having to go to 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue in order to access The Gramercy or the Stratford. Even the suggestion of limiting 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to one way traffic or No Left Turn would not be a wise idea.

An eight story building is comparable to The Gramercy one block away and that would be overwhelming to the property.

Please consider these additional problems with the proposed project:

----Spaces for the public parking over the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue businesses would be limited because not enough parking spaces are provided for the residents, and that overflow would be parking there.

----A number of the businesses, including Equinox, have parking validating privileges for that upper public parking area.

----The applicants are very evasive about any details on parking provisions .... and are seemingly trying to avoid having to give direct answers to the subject. Please require exact drawings and details.

----The alley would have to be the access for garbage pickup, deliveries, moving vans, etc. and that alley is already congested with the needs of the merchants facing 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

----On 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue west of El Camino, large trucks constantly park in the center lane for moving vans and deliveries to 55 West 5<sup>th</sup> as well as to the Garden Apartments further west. A new bottleneck has been added now that SamTrans parks their large buses for the end-of-the-line waiting period of up to 10 minutes right next to 24 Hour Fitness even though the curb is painted RED. This is very hazardous as cars have to make a right turn in front of the bus to go south on El Camino and they aren't sure the bus is really stopped. Why is the city allowing this?

If the Planning Commission is in favor of the 117 unit building, in spite of the many objections to it, I would suggest that the design be completely redone in order to make the entrance and exit on San Mateo Drive which is shown at the present to not be disruptive to traffic.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns.

Katherine Lee, 55 West 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue #9C, San Mateo 94402 [kayted@pacbell.net](mailto:kayted@pacbell.net) 650-342-9210

February 17, 2014

Julia Klein, Associate Planner  
City of San Mateo Planning Commission  
330 West 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
San Mateo, California 94403

Dear Ms. Klein:

I would like to comment on the Essex proposal on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. I did attend the Park Commission meeting last week. Let me say at the beginning that I am opposed to having a 7 story apartment building on that parcel. It is much too big and will create so many traffic problems in that area as well as the rest of downtown. (I live on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Laurel and B Street and it took me 10 minutes to drive to Trags on Saturday afternoon – only 9 blocks – because of the traffic on B Street.)

Our small block is almost always crowded with parked cars from those who work on B Street or are going to the restaurants there. There are many times my guests have to park blocks away because of the lack of parking. With 117 new apartments and only 137 available parking spaces, there is going to be a problem for the residents of the new building to find parking on the street. (With 2 bedroom apartments, it would not be unusual to have 2 – 3 cars for one apartment.) It might be that they would park on the parking roof above the stores on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue – not leaving much parking for employees or shoppers.

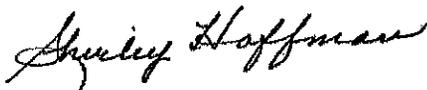
It may be that because the meeting last week was only regarding the park, but there were no pictures of the “back side” of the building – those facing 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. What will this look like? Will the alley be just an alley belonging to the property on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and be used for commercial delivery, or will it be a street for cars to get from San Mateo Drive to El Camino? Given the information we received at the Park Commission meeting last week, the driveway to the building will be on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue south of the Sleep Train building. This will back up traffic on to El Camino as cars going east on 5<sup>th</sup> probably would have to wait for an opening caused by backup of cars going west on 5<sup>th</sup> waiting at the El Camino stoplight. Are there any plans to make 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue a one-way street? If so, going east or west? Also pedestrians wanting to cross 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue at the crosswalk into the park will have to walk in between cars if the cars back up far enough. (That could be an accident waiting to happen.)

This is supposed to be a park for all residents of San Mateo. Where are the families that live east of Delaware or west of El Camino or the Alameda going to find parking to enjoy our City Park?

At the Park Commission meeting last week quite a bit of emphasis was focused on the “shadow study” and the affect it will have on the park. I am wondering if any thought has been given to the shadow that will be caused by this tall building on the 4th Avenue stores. Will 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue be dark and dreary and in shadow most of the morning? Will the west side of 4<sup>th</sup> get any sun at all until afternoon? I think that if you are promoting more stores and activity in our downtown, this shadow has to be considered. Promoting new business on the west side of the street could be difficult - or even on the east side - as this large building will dwarf all these establishments.

I believe that this project should be rejected for the reasons above – and some that have not really been addressed as yet.

Yours truly,



Shirley Hoffman  
217 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue #305  
San Mateo, California, 94401  
650-347-4554/ shirley2101@comcast.net

