

7-11-2016

To the Fort Bragg City Council
Comments about the Hare Creek Center project

Members of Citizens for Appropriate Coastal Land Use (CACLU) object that the City Council wants to adopt the resolution approving professional services agreement with Michael Baker International for preparation of the Hare Creek Center EIR together with all the other consent calendar items which will be acted upon in one motion.

We therefore ask you to remove the EIR contract from the Consent calendar and schedule it for a public hearing.

We also request that all draft EIR studies and components be posted to the City's web site, as soon as City staff receives them, with notice to all known interested parties.

The public was given 11 days to get up to speed and study all the work that has transpired since March 23 of 2015. When asked to peruse the available documents & new plans it turned out that many still have not been turned in. Some maps and other pertinent documents have not been made available to the public in a timely manner.

A drawing of the trail to the Hare Creek Beach trail is still missing, as well as a Proforma Analysis. The maps do not show how many trees would have to be cut. Also we could not see new floor plans, a new signage plan, a new site plan for each building, a new roof plan, the location of a bus stop, and the preliminary title report. Where is the bicycle access of the property?

We believe that this project is of interest and concern to many residents and the City Council. The residents and City Council members have the right to know what particular expertise with respect to the complete list of environmental issues that were previously raised regarding the Hare Creek project this consultant and his office staff has. Also we want to know the list of projects on which the office staff have worked. We ask for this information to be fully disclosed in public before the City Council makes a decision regarding hiring an EIR consultant. We also need to have an opportunity to have some questions answered. We especially like to know that the staff of Michael Baker International has extensive experience with shopping centers, coastal areas and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). We want to know what sets them apart from DUDEK.

Why was the initial fee for a Technical Drainage Study given by Michael Baker International from \$20,400 reduced to \$6,400? Who will do a hydro geology study?

We request that the preparation of the Draft EIR include a peer review of each such study by a recognized professional expert.

The request for proposal (RFP) lists major issues that need to be analyzed in the EIR which correspond mostly with the major issues originally listed in the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND). It was determined that the major issues could not be mitigated appropriately. Therefore the EIR needs to also look at the issues of noise, recreation, and mandatory findings of significance as we pointed out in our appeal of the Planning Commission's resolution to adopt the MND. Map N-1 lists the College of the Redwoods as a sensitive noise receptor. In addition there is a charter school and 2 preschools, as well as many residents, who live close by who would be affected by the noise created by the Hare Creek Center.

Apparently various entities have met since March 23, 2015 to discuss the project. Who is on the Hare Creek Center Ad Hoc Committee?

The new design of the Hare Creek Center is improved in some ways, but we are dismayed that the new project increases the size of the parcel by an additional 20 feet to the south. This increases the overall size of the property by 1.68 acres which added up to the original size of 2.24 acres to 3.92 acres. These additional 20 feet would infringe on the Hare Creek Wildlife Corridor, would be very close to the environmentally sensitive habitat areas (map OS-1), would infringe on the scenic views in the coastal zone toward the ocean and Hare Creek (map CD-1) and be very close to the runoff sensitive area (map OS-2). Map OS-4 lists a proposed park close by. Tourists and locals do not appreciate the Gateway to Fort Bragg represented by Grocery Outlet and another strip mall. We disagree with the architect that discount retail stores require a visual exposure to the main highway of a city. We also consider a four foot retaining wall not a small retaining wall.

We are requesting a full EIR scoping meeting with all EIR consultants present on a convenient day at a time and place that is convenient for members of the working public, like a Saturday.

This development would destroy the last pristine agricultural land in Fort Bragg.

The Coastal General Plan's Conservation, Open Space, Energy, and Parks Element states:

The City wishes to create a sustainable environment by conserving natural resources, reducing anthropogenic greenhouse gases, and encouraging its citizens to reduce their carbon footprint. The City also wishes to preserve as much open space as feasible to provide habitat for native species of plants and wildlife, reduce sprawl, and maintain the aesthetic benefits of undeveloped land, and to provide its residents with a full range of recreational opportunities. The City seeks to conserve natural resources and provide its residents with a full range of recreational opportunities. The goals, policies, and programs of this Element address these aims by establishing the framework for the protection and enhancement of natural resources, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, protection of water quality, and enhancement of open space, and for the provision of coastal access and recreational opportunities for Fort Bragg residents and visitors.

Sincerely,
Citizens for Appropriate Coastal Land Use

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