



September 29, 2014

Mr. Tony Kempton
Community Planner
Development Services Department
City of San Diego
1222 First Avenue
San Diego, CA 92101

RE: Silvergate Rancho Bernardo, Project No. 380393
Applicant Response to Recent Rancho Bernardo Planning Group Meetings

Dear Mr. Kempton:

In response to the meeting on September 2, 2014 with the RB Development Review Committee and the meeting on September 18, 2014 with the RB Planning Board we would like to address some of the questions and comments that arose regarding the proposed Silvergate Rancho Bernardo project.

1. **Amendment Precedence:** There was some discussion on whether or not the proposed project is "consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan and Community Plan" (Initiation Criteria #1). We would like to point out that this request to initiate an amendment to the RB Community Plan is consistent with the precedence of four previous amendments to re-designating a site from school use to residential use.
2. **Public Benefit:** With regards to the potential public benefit the proposed project would bring the community (Initiation Criteria #2) we have described the benefits we believe this project will provide, in some detail, in our Letter of Initiation.
3. **Public Facilities Impact:** In response to a concern mentioned regarding the proposed project's impact on public facilities (Initiation Criteria #3) we would note that our traffic study has shown that the traffic impact from the proposed development will be one of the lowest of all uses allowed under the existing zoning. Further, from our past experience with retirement communities, the only public facilities (including those defined by the RB Community Plan as police, fire, post office, library, schools, public utilities, parks, open space and transportation) directly and significantly impacted may be fire (specifically, ambulance service). Yet, our analysis shows (see Item 4 below) even this public facility will only be moderately impacted.
4. **Ambulance Noise:** An issue was raised regarding the potential noise generated in the surrounding area as a result of ambulances servicing the project. In response, we asked our two other Silvergate retirement communities in San Marcos and Fallbrook to report on the number of ambulance visits to their respective properties. As a measure of the burden to be imposed on Fire Station #33 for ambulance service, our communities have reported an average of 2.04 emergency ambulance visits per week at each property over a 60-day period, about half with

sirens (911 calls) and half without sirens (non-emergency calls). We anticipate that Silvergate Rancho Bernardo will follow a similar weekly pattern.

5. **Density:** With respect to the appropriate residential density for the site, it was originally recommended that the site be designated Medium High Density (14 to 29 du/ac), then the recommendation was revised to Medium Density (9-14 du/ac) for residential use. We have proposed in our Letter of Initiation that the School use overlay be removed and that the property revert to its underlying zoning (RS 1-14) consistent with the Low Density designation in the RB Community Plan of 1-9 du/ac. This action would not require a zone change for the property. Any future use of the property at higher densities than allowed under the current RS 1-14 zoning would have to be approved by the RB Planning Board. This designation of Low Density is also consistent with most of the surrounding residential properties.
6. **Land Use:** A question was posed of “what if” for some reason the proposed retirement facility is not constructed? What then would be the appropriate residential density (and use) for the site? We have again addressed this question in our Letter of Initiation by requesting that the site designation be removed from the School subcategory and reclassified under a new classification in the Housing and Residential Land Use Element as a Retirement Housing Facility in the Community Plan. In so doing, the RB community is further protected from an unwanted future use because any use of the property for other than a retirement facility would require another Community Plan amendment, subject to review by the RB Planning Board. This change would also be consistent with the City’s designation of the property as “residential” rather than “commercial or institutional”.
7. **Community Support:** Although some concerns and issues related to the project were brought up during the meetings, we have made extensive efforts to meet with many of the local community groups to present our project and have generally received supportive feedback. In particular, the Board of the Community Association of Bernardo Heights (CABH), which represents all 29 of the neighborhood HOAs in which this project will reside, has expressed strong support for the project.
8. **Area Demographics:** During one of the meetings some comments were made regarding the changing demographics of Bernardo Heights, with more young families moving in. In light of this demographic shift, we question where the older residents are going? The availability of the proposed Silvergate project would allow senior residents to stay in the area and “down size” to senior living accommodations more appropriate to their needs. It would also be consistent with one of the planning goals noted in the RB Community Plan of trying to ensure a balanced community with a wide variety of housing types.
9. **Traffic Patterns:** After some questions arose regarding traffic patterns resulting from the project we spent some time looking into the matter. Regarding peak traffic, the maximum traffic produced at the site will occur at AM/PM shift changes with roughly 60 to 80 employees in transit in the morning and mid-afternoon, considerably less than drop-off and pick-up traffic twice a day for an elementary school with 200 to 400 kids and parents and cars as the elementary school use would have produced. Also, we looked into our experience with delivery truck traffic. Truck traffic typically includes food service suppliers @ 2x/week, dairy delivery @ 2x/week, general supplies @ 1x/week and trash pickup @ 5x/week. The remainder truck traffic is incidental and infrequent.

10. **Site Layout:** In response to some comments regarding whether or not the design of the project is consistent with the existing character of the community, we intentionally addressed this issue by proposing the location of the single story, more residential looking structures on the property (the “cottages”) in an area closest to the neighboring single family homes. This effectively creates a buffer between the residential neighborhood homes and the proposed multi-story buildings farther back on the property.
11. **Parking:** Some questions were asked regarding parking. To clarify, all parking will be located on-site with the number of parking spaces for staff, residents and guests considerably in excess of City standards. No on-street parking will be required.
12. **Sewer:** Although we cannot speak to the “sewer smells” in the area, as were commented on in the meetings, it is our understanding that the existing public utility capacities were sized for either school use or the underlying residential zoning use and that capacities are appropriately available for this project use and density. This issue will be further examined during the project submittal review process. As a fellow member of the community, we do not want an unpleasant smell in the neighborhood either.
13. **Water Tower Stability:** A comment was made during one of the meetings questioning the stability of the municipal water tower adjacent to this site, and the potential risk it presents. As part of our due diligence efforts during the acquisition of the site Poway Unified School District provided us with the results of an Structural Site and Analysis Investigation that found the water tank is safe against overturning due to wind or seismic forces, and that the water tank substantially complies with AWWA standards.
14. **Soils:** A question was posed regarding the stability of the soils in the surrounding area. In anticipation of this issue, we had a preliminary geotechnical investigation of the site completed that confirms the proposed development of the property appears to be feasible from a geotechnical viewpoint and provides various alternatives for achieving construction stability for the site given the characteristics of the existing soil formations. Copies of this extensive report will be included in a subsequent project submittal to the City.

We ask that you take the above responses, along with our Letter of Initiation, into consideration as you prepare your report to the Planning Commission. Also, we request that you share this information with the RB Community Planning Groups so that they may continue to remain informed on all items related to the proposed Silvergate Rancho Bernardo project.

Thank you and regards,



Matthew Petree
Director of Property Development
AmeriCare Health & Retirement