

August 17, 2015

TO: The Honorable Matt Hall, Mayor, City of Carlsbad
The Honorable Keith Blackburn, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Carlsbad
The Honorable Mark Packard, Council Member, City of Carlsbad
The Honorable Lorraine Wood, Council Member, City of Carlsbad
The Honorable Michael Schumacher, Council Member, City of Carlsbad
Planning Commissioner Neil Black
Planning Commissioner Jeff Segal
Planning Commissioner Velyn Anderson
Planning Commissioner Kerry Siekmann
Planning Commissioner Victoria Scully
Planning Commissioner Marty Montgomery
Planning Commissioner Hap L'Heureux

FROM: Jim Nardi, San Pacifico HOA President, on behalf of the Ponto Beachfront Development Review Committee

Re: City of Carlsbad City Council Proposed Amendments to General Plan

"The issues facing the future of Carlsbad are...related more to protecting and enhancing the quality of life that the community has worked hard to create."

This first statement on the City of Carlsbad's General Plan website, Carlsbad's master plan for addressing the continuously changing needs of our growing populace, is a reflection of the core values that have driven city planning since the 1950's. Bordered by the coast and on our northern and southern ends by expansive, beautiful lagoons that are home to a large variety of flora and fauna, Carlsbad has uniquely created managed growth that preserves and protects valuable open spaces and sensitive ecological environments that make our community so attractive to citizens and businesses. The Carlsbad City Council, Planning Commission in consultation and concert with Carlsbad citizens, set out to reaffirm and enhance these values that are the heart and soul of the General Plan. It is with that long history of civic pride, collaboration and love for Carlsbad that the Citizens of San Pacifico, a community of about 500 homes and approximately 1,000 plus citizens ask for your support in our concerns for the planning and development of Ponto – the southern Coastal Gateway to Carlsbad.

With respect to "Ponto East and Ponto West", the Heart of Ponto, a careful review of the City shows that these parcels comprise the last few undeveloped parcels of land in all of Coastal San Diego County and they are uniquely situated with pristine coastal beach and lagoon access. Even in the parcels minimally managed state, they provide daily, open access to the entire community of Carlsbad for trails and enjoyment of undisturbed coastal views. We support your efforts to, with careful thought, plan and develop this treasured land and wish to be constructive and collaborative partners in this process so that the end product is a

lasting joy to our citizens and visitors and an exemplary legacy to present to future generations.

Coming together to express our consensus concerns, we as a community have identified the following key issues we would like to see addressed in the Carlsbad General Plan and Local Coastal Program, and as outlined in the City adopted Ponto Village Vision Plan created just less than a decade ago.

1. We generally support the rezoning of Ponto East, the Townhome Residential to R-23, however would prefer a R-15 designation given the developers intent to apply for planning changes and density bonuses to increase density. We do not support their proposed massive apartment block in the Ponto Vision Plan "Townhome" community. . High density housing seems less appropriate for limited coastal and beach access land.
2. Neighborhood preservation and enhancement goals are of great importance to our San Pacifico citizens. We support the zoning of Ponto West ("Heart of Ponto" in the Ponto Vision Plan) to General Commercial that limits the residential uses to 12 dwellings, and feel the primary orientation for this site is toward Visitor Commercial as there is very limited commercial opportunities for both Carlsbad Citizens and visitors in South Carlsbad – and Ponto represents the last opportunity to provide those services. Citizens and visitors are forced to drive to Encinitas or Downtown Carlsbad for coastal commercial services which increase Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and congestion. We are aware of the developer's development proposal and proposed General Plan and Local Coastal Program Amendment applications to the city that seeks to change the Heart of Ponto's commercial and visitor servicing orientation to dense housing (estimated at 85%) with minimal and unsustainably designed residual amount of commercial establishments. We feel this is inadequate, will not generate enough commercial presence and momentum to allow these establishments to thrive, creates land use incompatibility for the commercial uses, will not create desirable commercial Village synergies with the adjacent hotels and planned for high-quality resorts and beach visitors, and not serve the long term needs of Carlsbad citizens and visitors for coastal commercial access in South Carlsbad.
3. Open space, coastal access, and natural environment goals are of great importance to our Ponto citizens and we do not support relaxation of the minimum setback and easement rules. The developer's proposal to not meet minimum setbacks and recreational open space standards would greatly limit all Carlsbad citizens and visitors the ability to enjoy the natural beauty of prime beachfront spaces that have previously been available to our citizens. The proposed large building masses run counter to a pedestrian scale and open environment of the Ponto Village vision. In certain public view and access corridors, such as along Avenida Encinas and other coastal access pathways perhaps expanded increased minimum building setbacks

should be considered to retain some portions of ocean views from public right-of-way and public spaces.

4. Below are proposed General Plan Policy updates for the Ponto area that we would like the City Council and Planning Commission to please consider adding to the General Plan. We believe these updates would help better serve to Develop Ponto Right and be more consistent with the adopted Ponto Vision.
 - a. 2-P.86 Promote development of the Ponto area with high-quality and coastal priority land uses that are consistent with those envisioned in the Ponto Beachfront Village Vision Plan.
 - b. 2-P.87 Promote development of high-quality activity centers with restaurants, cafes and shopping in the Mixed-Use Heart of Ponto and Visitor Serving Commercial areas of Ponto.
 - c. 2-P.88 At the center of the Heart of Ponto advance the planned use of excess road right-of-way as a central public open space and connection to the beach as envisioned in the Ponto Beachfront Village Vision Plan.
5. Access to recreation (beach, walking trails) and potential of inadequate number of parking spaces are of great concern to our San Pacifico citizens. High density housing and the presence of commercial property will only increase the need for parking, which is already in very short supply along the stretch of Carlsbad Blvd from Poinsettia Lane to La Costa Avenue. Critical will be expanded parking requirements for mid to large residential units that correspond the unit's occupancy load for visitor serving rental (VRBO, etc.) that are allowed in the Coastal Zone. San Pacifico has experienced the increased demand for parking, and we have significant on-street parking which is critically missing in the proposed development.
6. Sustainability cannot be achieved without proving a more balanced land use as suggested above, and without addressing mobility and traffic concerns. Avenida Encinas is the only access way for a significant area of land use to/from the coast. It will, unless the planned second intersection north along Carlsbad Boulevard is developed soon, become the main artery for traffic for both East and West Ponto. There is no direct access from Poinsettia Lane, nor currently from Carlsbad Boulevard. Avenida Encinas is not in any way configured to handle this increased vehicle volume at just 2 lanes and with a railroad overpass bridge at 2 lanes, particularly given the funneling of significant pedestrian and bike coastal access travel along this corridor. Avenida Encinas at Ponto Road is currently used as a roundabout for regional coastal access to the beach. A comprehensive traffic plan for coastal circulation is needed as the development fronts on this intersection. A stop sign on Avenida Encinas was needed to try to address vehicle speeding and impacts to pedestrian and bike safety, however research into other traffic calming improvements should be explored. The eventual build out of a high-quality boutique hotel (per current Ponto Vision Plan) at

the southern Ponto parcel opposite the East and West Ponto properties will further complicate traffic and safety issues.

7. The nearest elementary school, Pacific Rim Elementary, is highly impacted and regularly turns away children to other district schools since it cannot accommodate any more. The introduction of high density housing into this exact area further compounds the problem, which is a severe disadvantage to the current citizens of Carlsbad and their children. This needs to be taken into consideration.

We as citizens are meeting with the proposed developer to try to work with them to rethink their proposal to address these issues. We are hopeful. However we and all Carlsbad Citizens and Visitors, need to have the General Plan and Local Coastal Program policy and plans that as suggested help Develop Ponto Right. City Staff and the City Planning Commission have provided their recommendations which we support, and ask you to please consider adopting all the General Plan items mentioned in this letter.

This patch of pristine coastal land at the southern end of Carlsbad deserves to represent the City of Carlsbad as well as the northern entrance to the city does, with an open, vibrant, walkable, enticing and community-focused village development...something that all of our citizens can continue to enjoy.

We respectfully request that all of the above considerations be taken into account when assessing the possible General Plan, Local Coastal Program, and zoning standard revisions for Ponto and these Ponto East and West properties in particular. The City of Carlsbad has an incredible last opportunity to create a wonderful legacy for the community with thoughtful and appropriate development, and environmental stewardship that will last for generations to come. We sincerely hope that we can all reflect back on the values that have brought our beautiful city to this point, and continue to let those values govern our growth into the future.

Sincerely,

Jim Nardi, San Pacifico HOA President on behalf of The Ponto Beachfront Development Review Committee

Cc:

Kathy Dodson, Interim City Manager, City of Carlsbad

Don Neu, City Planner, City of Carlsbad, Community and Economic Development Department

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