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PLANNING FOR HIGHER RESIDENTIAL DENSITIES

James R. Bergdoll

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore some of the reasons for suburban resistance to higher-density housing developments and to propose some policies which will address underlying concerns without sacrificing the density itself. Three cases are examined where a parcel of land was developed amid existing single-family neighborhoods. Aside from opposition to socio-economic and racial integration, the dominant concerns were the physical character of the new development—the size of the abuildings and the quality of construction and maintenance—and a fear of (overall) change in the physical character of the existing neighborhood.

The United States has seen approximately a century of urban decentralization and decreasing residential densities. In the last few decades many different people in the development and planning professions have increasingly voiced opposition to this trend on environmental, social, aesthetic, and economic grounds. The increasing cost of urban land is making the detached American dream house unaffordable even to many middle-income families. At the same time, we are seeing a strong and perhaps growing resistance to new higher-density housing in suburban areas: growth control, downzoning, and organized opposition to specific multi-family or townhouse developments.

Why are people so unanimously opposed to higher-density housing in their neighborhoods? Suburbanites may tell you that they just do not think it is appropriate to have high densities in their neighborhood. Alternatively, they may fire off a list of specifics such as traffic, crime, or poor maintenance. But the answers to this question are not so obvious or conclusive. This conflict is by no means a new phenomenon, nor is discussion on the issue. Richard Babcock, in his classic work on zoning twenty-five years ago, expressed dismay at the inconsistencies in the arguments for exclusionary residential zoning and prophesied that

> One of these days some judge in a jurisdiction that has encountered the population explosion is going to take a second look at the bases on which suburban governments exclude or narrowly limit multiple-family development. He is going to reflect on the chasm between the old cliches about tenements and the facts of modern design of residential buildings. As he listens to the customary municipal pleas not to permit the destruction of the "character" of the neighborhood, he will start to ask why, in fact, detached

> dwellings and attached dwellings cannot live side by side.
> (Babcock 1966, p. 183)

This paper addresses the question of resistance to higher densities not primarily to explain the problem or its history but to explore a few workable solutions to the conflict, which continues basically unresolved. If we accept the fact that suburban densities are increasing in many places and will continue to increase in the future for whatever economic, ecological, or social reasons, then there should be an examination of how to avoid sacrificing people's sense of security and quality of life. The premise here is that although density is the usual target of the attacks, it is not the primary issue. There are other related social, aesthetic, and economic factors underlying the opposition which should be the focus of our urban policies. Three cases of suburban opposition to higher density are compared below in order to discover some of these underlying issues, and some policies are proposed which attempt to address the specific findings of the analysis. These cases suggest that it should be possible to plan for higher residential densities in urban and suburban areas without sacrificing quality or character held so dearly by the American public.

This study is primarily oriented toward finding physical planning (i.e. land use and design) solutions to the conflicts uncovered. Social and economic issues such as housing tenure and property values do seem to play a role in decision-making, but it is felt that there are more basic, more concrete factors underlying these issues. For example, perceived property devaluation is one of the most often-stated reasons for objecting to rental and/or multi-family development, but why do certain people in a certain situation feel that their property values will be affected? Is it the noise from the increased traffic on the thoroughfares, the quality of the housing construction, the transience of the presumed residents, or simply their income level? The more concrete we can make the objections, the easier they can be addressed through planning policies.

There has been some quasi-experimental research and much writing on this issue. Many survey research projects have shown consistently that there is a negative relationship between density and resident satisfaction (Norcross 1973; Zehner and Marans 1973; Flachsbart et al. 1975 and 1979; Schmidt, Goldman, and Feimer 1979). These studies generally identify various physical design aspects of housing, such as privacy of yards or size of housing clusters, which contribute to the occupants' or neighbors' sense of crowding and/or dissatisfaction. Constance Perin, a cultural anthropologist/planner, conducted a series of interviews about cultural values in the land-use and housing systems and found that perceptions of different population groups were based in part on their living situation, as defined by density and housing tenure

(Perin 1977). In her attempt to document popular values, mores, and practices with regard to land uses in our cities, she showed a deeply entrenched bias against rental housing and multi-family housing in almost all of the population groups she surveyed. Every planning and zoning textbook and theoretical writing also has its own perspective on the rationale for residential segregation according to density and housing type.

There has also emerged a closely related literature on visual characteristics of the street/neighborhood/housing development and the relationships between density, perceived density, and resident satisfaction. Amos Rapoport was one of the originators of the idea of perceived density with his writing on the "redefinition of density" (Rapoport 1975), which has been followed by field research on the topic (Flachsbart et al. 1975 and 1979). Investigations on this subject have also been completed by student groups working at U. C. Berkeley with professors Allan B. Jacobs and Peter C. Bosselmann. In the last issue of this journal, one such study was presented in a paper entitled "Density Perception on Residential Streets" (Bergdoll and Williams 1990). Planners and designers have also published works discussing changes in the design characteristics of housing as ways of modifying perceived densities (McLaughlin 1976; City of Vancouver 1978; Wentling and Bookout 1988). There is also much in the way of design practice and review which goes beyond this writing but which is mainly unspoken or unwritten design considerations and strategies.

This paper is an attempt to look at what is actually happening in some typical suburban situations. The goal was to get beyond the stock issues presented to the Planning Commission—such as traffic impacts, crime, and family character in neighborhoods—to the reasons which are less easy to define or talk about. A case study approach was chosen for several reasons. First, the conflict between low-density advocates and moderate- to high-density proposals which presents itself to planners, local government officials, and neighborhood residents is more than a theoretical issue of economics and environment. There are real hopes, concerns, and frustrations which need to be looked at and weighed into the equation. Second, the comparison of three cases allows us to examine differences and similarities to uncover plausible explanations for the neighborhood opposition. Ideally, a larger study should be conducted with many cases examined in detail, which would provide a broader basis to understand the issues.

The research strategy, therefore, was to find out as much background information as possible in a limited amount of time, to listen to some of the players involved, and to look at the physical characteristics of the original design proposal compared with what was actually approved or

built. Staff planners were consulted for most of the background history, and their information was cross-checked with the owner or developer, and in turn compared where possible with written or verbal comments from residents in the adjoining neighborhood.

Three cases were selected which were located in a suburban community in the midst of a rapidly growing region and which experienced a similar process: a proposal is made for a housing project or development which is significantly higher in density than the existing, surrounding residential area; residents are unwilling to allow this increase in density for various reasons; and eventually a change in density and/or design of the project is made in response to these concerns. The demographic make-up of the area was not considered in the selection of cases, nor were physical features such as topography and natural features. As one can see in the descriptions below, each case is unique in some respects, but all three share a common pattern.

Crystal Point, Virginia Beach, Virginia

Thirty-five years ago, present-day Virginia Beach was an unincorporated area, almost all rural. It was becoming a suburban bedroom community, approximately twenty miles from downtown Norfolk, the urban center of the region. Since the 1950s, Virginia Beach has changed into a gigantic suburban city with a population of more than 350,000 people. In the late 1950s, the area where Crystal Point is now being built was developed as one of the first local neighborhoods and was named "Lake View Park," because of its location next to a large natural lake. The neighborhood now stands out as an exception in the city, with large, wooded lots, and small unpretentious houses, isolated somewhat from the newer higher-density suburban development a few miles to the south. A beautifully sited 7-1/2-acre parcel on the lake at the very edge of the neighborhood was left undeveloped, and sometime in the early 1980s the owners decided to take advantage of the booming housing market by developing it. There is only one existing house which is immediately adjacent to the development. The site is on a point of land protruding into the lake and bounded in the landward direction primarily by a major boulevard (without any nearby commercial development).

Several proposals were made for the site, and they were all opposed very strongly by the nearby residents. The area was zoned for 0.8 single-family dwelling units per acre, which allows six homes, but the developer repeatedly sought zoning changes for higher density. These were denied and the proposed number of dwelling units steadily dropped. In the late fall of 1985, a proposal was made for rezoning to 5.3 units per acre, allowing the construction of 40 "up-scale" townhomes in clusters of four to seven units (Figure 1). Once again the residents in Lakeview Park and one or two people who had very large lots adjacent

Figure 1

CRYSTAL POINT: VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA
Original Proposal

to Crystal Point strongly opposed the development and sent a petition to the Planning Commission. The Planning Department Staff recommended against the upzoning.

The residents' petition listed eight reasons for opposition: 1) the project is incompatible with the natural beauty of the area of existing single-family homes and will set a precedent for rezoning to higher densities; 2) the project will add pollution to the lake/reservoir; 3) dense development will "limit the ability of the soil to drain itself"; 4) the roads will be filled with traffic beyond capacity; 5) there will be a traffic hazard where the entrance to the development opens to a heavily traveled thoroughfare; 6) the schools in the area, already overcrowded, will experience even greater problems; 7) the attached units and high density will increase the fire hazard because of inadequate space between dwellings and will exacerbate the lack of city water service through fire hydrants in the existing neighborhood; and 8) the existence of attached units or duplexes will decrease "both the real and aesthetic value of the homes and property" in the adjacent areas (Planning Department files).

The staff recommendation cited two major reasons for opposing the development proposal. First were environmental concerns—the lake was a city water reservoir and could only support a certain level of urbanization in the immediate vicinity because of pollution to the runoff. The second reason was mainly in response to the residents' concerns: this level of density would be incompatible with the surrounding single-family neighborhood. The city's Comprehensive Plan stated that the density of the recent development in the area had been too high, at 10.4 units/acre (apartments and townhouses). It recommended that future development be a mix of single-family and multi-family units, because the projected housing mix of the area would otherwise be significantly different from the existing one and because the population of the area was increasing more than was desirable.

The Planning Commission denied the rezoning application and the developer went back to the drawing board. The next proposal was for 26 detached single-family lots at a gross density of 3.4 units/acre (Figure 2). The Planning Department staff felt this density level was still too high, but the Planning Commission approved the project. According to the planner involved, the Commission felt that the proposed project was good and that this was the best proposal that they could reasonably expect (Ray Odom, Virginia Beach Department of City Planning, personal communication).

In general, there seem to have been three primary reasons for which residents, planners, and officials opposed higher-density development in this case. The first reason is frustration with the history of development throughout Virginia Beach. The character of the whole city is

Figure 2

CRYSTAL POINT: VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA
Revised Proposal

changing because of dramatically increased population, new higher-density housing subdivisions, and the increasing presence of commercial and other non-residential uses. The residents of Lakeview Park, some of whom have lived there for twenty or thirty years, are resisting the change from a semi-rural suburb to a large city and what they see as a declining quality of life. The second reason is a fear of the physical transformation of the Lake View Park neighborhood itself—subdivided lots, new duplexes and apartment buildings built, and poorer maintenance of rental property, all of which allegedly decrease the aesthetic and monetary value of the neighborhood.

The third reason is a stereotypical negative image of housing developments with many townhouses or apartments. This image may have been strengthened by the fifteen-year-old large apartment complex nearby, which was not very well designed. One adjacent resident expressed concern for the people who would be living in this new development "shoulder to shoulder" (Dr. Walker, personal communication, January 11, 1990). It appears that the nearby residents dislike living in a high-density environment and that the proximity of a compact development makes them uncomfortable and increases their own sense of crowding.

Marina High School Property, San Leandro, California

San Leandro is a small city (population approx. 70,000) wedged into the continuous zone of development lining the eastern shore of the San Francisco Bay. Its northern side shares a border with Oakland, and its southern side meets an unincorporated portion of Alameda County next to the city of Hayward. The city is mostly suburban in character, not very intensively developed except in a few places. It also has a history of social, political, and racial homogeneity, and of overt exclusion in many residential areas. The demographics have been steadily changing, however: the non-white population went from 15 percent in 1970 to 22 percent in 1980 to 35 percent in 1990; multi-family dwelling-unit construction outnumbered single-family construction (including townhouses) by three to one in the 1980s; and many young families are replacing a shrinking elderly population (San Leandro Development Department 1991).

A parcel of 38.7 acres near the bay was proposed for residential development in 1988. The site is on the edge of the developed part of the city, but separated from the bay by a three-quarter-mile-wide strip of property belonging to Southern Pacific Railroad. The only residential area immediately adjacent is a very-high-quality mobile home park with a density of approximately twenty units per acre. Across a boulevard, a small park, and a flood-control channel lies a single-family residential area (7-8 dwellings/acre) of modest homes built in the 1970s. Accord-

ing to a local city planner, some houses are noticeably aging and some front yards contain abandoned, broken-down cars (Gary Patton, San Leandro City Planning Department, personal communication). But the neighborhood is predominantly well-kept.

The original proposal for the parcel in question was for three different types of housing: 132 detached 1- and 2-story zero-lot-line houses on narrow lots, primarily on cul-de-sacs, at 7.2 units per acre; 252 apartments in 2- and 3-story buildings grouped into eight U-shaped clusters at 17.6 units per acre; and 112 elderly apartments in six 1- to 3- story buildings at 29.7 units per acre (Figure 3). There would be a recreation facility, a community center, and one convenience commercial building near the entry road. The overall project called for 496 units, at a gross density of 13.6 units per acre.

This proposed development was vehemently opposed by the existing population of that part of San Leandro. According to the developer's representative (Bruce Brennan, Homestead Land Development Corporation), the architect (Joseph D. Chance, AIA, Fisher-Friedman Associates), and the city planner involved (Gary Patton), the residents' stated concerns were, first, the difference in density from the surrounding residential areas; second, the increase in traffic volume on Wicks Boulevard; and third, the presence of such a large concentration of rental property in the area.

The opposition was so strong that the developer decided to give up the concept of multi-family housing altogether rather than try to push through a slightly modified plan. The revised plan was for 290 detached houses at 7.5 units per gross acre—very small lots with 5-foot side-yard setbacks. The cul-de-sac strategy was replaced with a pattern of narrow blocks within a perimeter street, in an attempt to make all of the lots basically square. The community center remained in the plan, but the recreation facility and the convenience commerce were eliminated (Figure 4).

Several issues unspoken by the surrounding residents also appear to have contributed to their opposition and the resulting change in design. A large multi-family housing complex had been built a few years before near the San Leandro BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) station which had been plagued by drug dealing and crime. The complex was widely hated throughout the city and was perceived as a "fortress." People feared the possibility of another such situation arising, especially with the large scale of the proposed project. The planner reviewing the project also felt that if the original proposal had not included such a large-scale apartment complex, the residents would not have opposed it as strongly. Apartments were perceived as catering heavily to minorities, a percep-

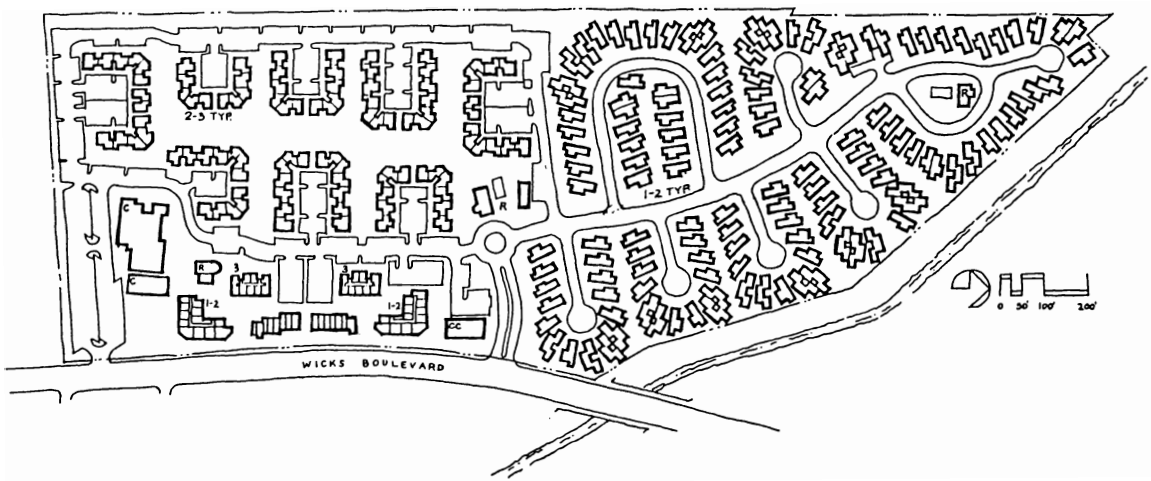

Figure 3

MARINA HIGH SCHOOL PROPERTY: SAN LEANDRO, CALIFORNIA
Original Proposal

Legend:

C	Community Center
R	Recreation Facility
CC	Convenience Commercial
3	Number of stories (no number indicates single story)
2-3	Variable number of stories

Figure 4

MARINA HIGH SCHOOL PROPERTY: SAN LEANDRO, CALIFORNIA
Revised Proposal

tion which reflects the history of opposition to different racial minorities and socio-economic classes in San Leandro.

The results were a smaller total number of dwellings and a decrease in overall density, but an actual increase in the density of the single-family dwellings. This points to an acceptance of higher densities if the dwellings are detached houses which can be individually owned and maintained. Another interesting result was the elimination of the commercial property at the entrance to the development. The introduction of commercial uses into a residential area may make people feel that an area is becoming more urbanized and therefore less desirable, despite the fact that the area is very close to an existing business park.

The most primary factor behind the residents' opposition was the rental nature of a large portion of the units and the associated class of people who would be intruding into the owner-oriented surrounding neighborhoods. The second primary factor was the large number of apartments, with the perceived threats of crime and deterioration that they tend to elicit, and possibly the negative visual impact of such a large development. The third factor was the threat of urbanization itself, as represented by the density of the development, the presence of apartments, and the presence of a commercial facility.

Mission Creek Apartments, Hayward, California

Hayward, California, is a city southeast of San Leandro and is in the same zone of continuous urbanization along the eastern shore of the San Francisco Bay. Its population is approximately 100,000 and has experienced very rapid growth in the last fifty years, expanding four-fold from less than 7,000 in 1940 to approximately 26,000 by the 1950s, and quadrupling again since then. The growth, however, has been slowing down considerably. The median age in 1990 was about 35 years and increasing, while the average number of persons per household was around 2.6 and declining.

In this case, the property on which the development was proposed (now called Clarendon Hills) is a 34-acre area situated at the eastern edge of the city. It sits on the lower western slopes of the East Bay Hills, immediately adjacent to undeveloped land owned by the Regional Park District. It is one-half block from Mission Boulevard, an automobile-oriented commercial strip running north-south, parallel with the hills. To the north of the project area, between Mission Boulevard and the Hills, are scattered single-family homes and the remnants of farms which appear to have been the pre-existing land use. To the south is a neighborhood of primarily single-family homes, built in the 1950s and 1960s. The City's General Plan designated the area in question as medium-density residential—17.4 dwelling units per acre—and there

was a large multi-family complex built nearby consistent with this plan. The zoning district allowed multi-family housing but with a much lower density than the General Plan.

In 1972 a developer applied for a zoning reclassification to allow 12.1 dwelling units per acre. The proposal was for 410 luxury apartments distributed in small clusters of buildings on all 34 acres (Figure 5). This proposal generated substantial opposition from the residents nearby. At the hearings on the application, these residents raised concerns over the project's impact on the single-family character of the area. Since there was already a large multi-family complex nearby, another one would "take the heart out" of the area. They also were worried about threats to the area's "family" character–associating rental apartments with singles and unrelated groups of adults–and requested that some of the units be set aside for traditional families with children.

The City Council approved the development but with several conditions affecting the design. First, one five-acre portion on the east side of Alquire Parkway would be a buffer zone of single-family detached houses only—with a minimum of 6,000 square feet per unit (19 homes)—in keeping with the homes in the adjacent area. Second, in the multi-family area, which was also adjacent to single-family housing, there could be no more than 341 apartments (11.8 units per acre). Third, additional setbacks were required between existing homes and the new apartments, and from the perimeter roads. Fourth, part of the units adjacent to existing housing would be limited to one story in height. And fifth, a six-foot fence with landscaping was to be erected at the property line. The property would also carry an option for increased density at the center, out of direct view from the main road or existing housing. Soon, the single-family homes were built on the five-acre area adjacent to Alquire Parkway, but the multi-family portion was not built at that time.

In 1984, a different developer applied for a re-zoning of the remaining 29-acre parcel to allow for the construction of 488 units (17 units per acre). In this case there was no significant resident opposition. The Planning Department staff recommended that this zoning change be approved. The Planning Commission, however, denied the application on the grounds that the density was too high and would cause too much additional automobile traffic. The City Council subsequently reversed the decision and approved the application. Most of the development was built (Figure 6). The upper portion of the project, with approximately one-third of the dwelling units, is on hold pending the construction of an additional water reservoir and pumping station.

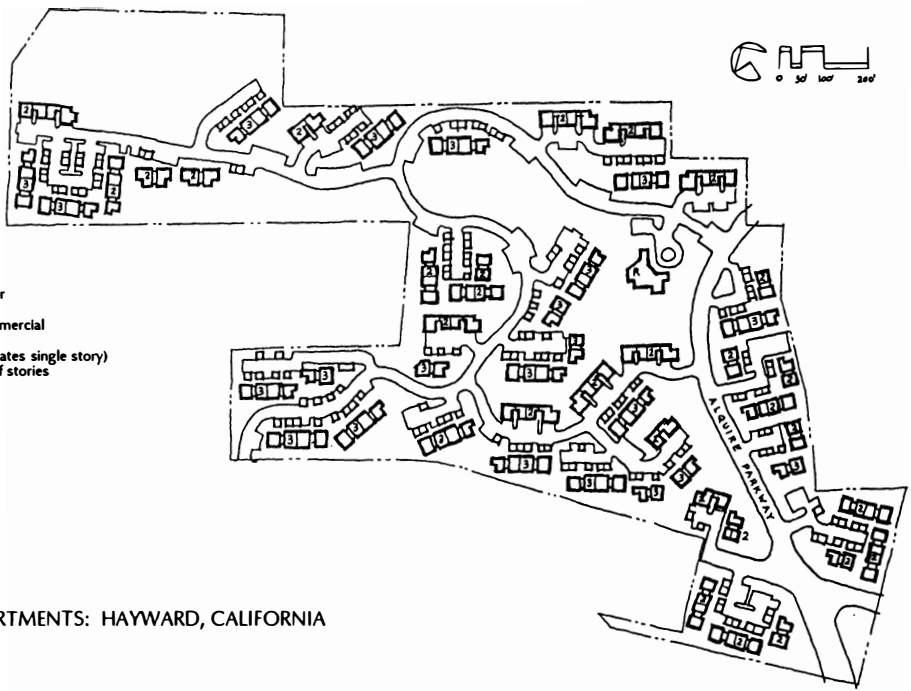

Figure 5

MISSION CREEK APARTMENTS: HAYWARD, CALIFORNIA
Original Proposal

Figure 6

CLARENDON HILLS: HAYWARD, CALIFORNIA
Revised Proposal

There appear to be two reasons behind the residents' original opposition to the increase in density. First, they did not want the character of the area to change demographically—to more low-income residents, renters, singles, and miscellaneous non-family households. Second, they did not want the character of the area to change physically—the height of buildings, the relationship to the main thoroughfare—and they did not want want to have the feeling that they were living near a high-density development. They wished to avoid seeing multi-family buildings from their houses—hence the setbacks, the buffer zone of single-family homes, and the one-story height zones. It is important to note that the neighborhood had little objection to the higher-density proposal in 1984 after the buffer zone of single-family dwellings was already constructed.

These reactions, and especially the ways in which they were met, indicate the importance of design issues in perceptions of density. The developer chose to further rearrange the site plan to accommodate specific complaints without drastically reducing the total number of dwellings (from 410 to 360). In the Virginia Beach case and the San Leandro case, the changes in the plans are not as illustrative of design techniques because, in those cases, the developer decided to reduce the overall density of the projects and to make major functional changes in the site plans.

Analysis of Issues

These three case-studies provide helpful clues as to which specific social, physical, and aesthetic characteristics are responsible for local opposition, rather than density itself. Still, the main focus of this investigation is the physical characteristics of the opposed and revised projects; the case studies were therefore not set up to thoroughly investigate the effect of socio-economic variables on the outcome. Opposition to racial and socio-economic integration appears to have been a major factor, but it is difficult to quantify its role and even more difficult to address this through polanning policies. the relevant issues for planning and design appear to be the physical character of the new development and a fear of change in the physical character of the existing neighborhood.

One problem which was mentioned by all of the neighborhood groups was traffic impact, as measured by congestion and/or accidents. This is a real concern for suburbanites who are forced to depend heavily on their automobiles, but it does not appear to have been a primary issue in these cases. A detailed traffic analysis could easily have been done for each of these projects, predicting the increased load on the arterials and any significant decrease in level of service, but no such study was used in any of the cases. It is more likely that impacts on traffic are just assumed to be heavy, even when the increase in number of housing units is fairly insignificant (as in the case of Virginia Beach)

or when existing thoroughfares were planned to handle such increases. The fact that questions of traffic were also not addressed directly in any of the design changes adds to our belief that they are secondary issues.

Fear of change to the visual character of the neighborhood underlies much of the opposition. In Virginia Beach, there was a fear that the new development would be of lesser quality and a fear that this would be a precedent for physical degradation in the existing neighborhood. In Hayward, there was no mention of fear that the existing neighborhood itself would change, but the residents were concerned about the visual quality of the new development and its effect on the area as a whole. Hayward residents felt that this large a project would, in combination with the existing multi-family project, significantly change the character of the area. In San Leandro, the request that commercial property be removed from the plan indicates a similar fear of change, in particular a fear of urbanization in a residential area. In this case, the planner also felt that a project with smaller-scaled clusters of apartments would not have been opposed as fiercely. It is interesting to note that in Hayward, the clusters of apartments in the final plan are much smaller than those in the rejected proposal for San Leandro, and that this aspect of the design was not challenged or changed.

Residents clearly want either continuity in the character of the area or insulation from high-density development by means of buffers between that development and the existing low-density fabric of the city. This was most clearly demonstrated in the Hayward case and was an issue in each of the other cases as well: the more the new development conformed to the existing pattern, the less opposition there was. The type of buffering strategy used in Hayward is carried out routinely in Planned Unit Developments, where the site plan can be manipulated as long as the gross density remains constant. Thus, perception seems to outweigh knowledge.

Proposed Housing Policies

These case-studies indicate that certain physical features of housing developments, such as size, appearance, and site plan layout, can be analyzed more closely in the design and planning stages so as to minimize negative impacts. This, in turn, suggests that a number of policies for housing development could be used to achieve a better balance between the need for higher-density housing and the desire of nearby residents to preserve the quality of their neighborhoods. The following recommendations, however, should be treated as a preliminary policy outline since the scope of the investigation on which they are based is quite limited.

1. Require a mixture of affordable and market rate units in any housing development so that a project is not entirely at the bottom of the market or entirely at the top of the market. Also require that the units designated as affordable not be physically segregated from other types of units, so that any impacts or perceived impacts are spread throughout the project. This would obviate the need for creating large complexes of cheaply built housing to meet affordability standards which are likely to create the perception, if not the reality, of lower property values in the vicinity.

2. Smaller projects should be encouraged because they have less potential for disruptive impacts. Multi-family projects over a certain size (for example, more than 20-30 units in a new housing development, or more than 10-15 units on a lot in an existing neighborhood) could be permitted only conditionally and subject to strict controls. Development on parcels over a certain size should also be permitted only conditionally in areas with existing small-lot residential properties. This strategy was adopted as part of the Planning/Zoning Code in San Francisco's Neighborhood Commercial Districts to maintain existing scale and character in new mixed-use projects.

3. Large, new housing developments should be designed carefully to respect the existing context and development pattern. The conditional use controls mentioned above should require design review by staff or by a community board with training in architecture and urban design. The goal woulds be to reduce the visual impact of large housing complexes by sensitively designing plan components and varying their architectural/visual character. Ideally, different people should design and build different parts of each project, so as to achieve a certain degree of variety. A complaint often heard from suburban dwellers concerns the monotony of design of large tracts of homes, apartments, or townhouses built by the same developer. Even when there is an attempt by the builder to vary the colors, shapes, and details of buildings, these often read as one massive project.

4. Establish maximum cluster sizes depending on the character of the existing neighborhood. For example, in areas of single-family homes, built on large lots and with one or two stories only, multi-family units should be built in clusters of not more than 8-10 units. In areas with existing medium-density, mixed single- and multi-family homes with heights ranging to four stories, multi-family units should not be built in clusters of more than 25-30 units.

5. Cities and counties should also adopt a similar policy for publicly owned or built housing. Small-scale clusters spread throughout a large area or even single-parcel developments are alternatives used successfully by some cities in California such as Oakland and Berkeley. Such projects can be designed carefully to fit into the existing neighborhoods, driving up costs to a point where the units are no longer affordable. This strategy can work to give the lower-income residents a greater sense of pride and an incentive to maintain the property. This, combined with higher-quality construction and design, can help reduce negative pressure on property values in the neighborhood.

6. Allow moderate increases in density on all lots throughout an existing area rather than establishing high-density zoning districts that are islands in

low-density seas. This can be done, for example, by allowing minor second-dwelling units or duplexes in single-family districts (which was mandated by the California State Legislature). Conversion or renovation of single-family houses into three or four dwelling units where there is adequate parking and open space will allow densities to increase without significantly changing the visual character of the area. This encourages a more natural mixture of dwelling types and a mixture of owners and renters, and it can help eliminate dramatic contrasts in character between existing and new developments.

7. Some policies are called for to address residents' concerns about traffic and transportation. As has already been argued by many people, higher-density housing should be encouraged or allowed near established public transportation routes and the mass transit network should be enhanced so as to be a realistic option for travel. While it is true that more housing brings more people and hence more cars, it is also well established that higher densities come with fewer cars per capita and enable greater use of mass transit. Likewise, neighborhoods, even in very suburban areas, should be designed with more attention given to pedestrian access to neighborhood commercial areas and to public transportation routes. Many opportunities have been lost in planned developments to increase pedestrian circulation, with the effect that even short trips require the use of automobiles.

These recommendations are only a starting point for addressing the question of moderate- and high-density residential planning in suburban settings. Each of them could be applied in a number of different ways, depending on the context. Some cities already have extensive experience with this issue and can provide models for others. On the other hand, the issues at stake often lend themselves to common-sense strategies which can be easily implemented. There is no question that higher-density urban development will continue to grow in importance in the future. It is therefore incumbent upon planners to explore local situations, address local concerns, and devise specific solutions in ways that enhance the quality of new urban development and the livability of our our cities.

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