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## Town Center III Condominiums Fate Undecided

By Cathy Tyson



Artist's rendering of Town Center III project, courtesy of Heller Manus Architects

expressed their general support for the project, but now it's up to KB Homes to seek corporate approval as well as secure financing. As of press time a decision had not been made.

Panek reiterated what a perfect location this is for exactly this type of pedestrian friendly development, "Within a quarter mile of site are all the services you could want - Safeway, a drugstore, banks, restaurants."

"Staff supports high density multi-family at this location - it's an ideal site," said Niroop Srivatsa, City of Lafayette Planning and Building Manager.

One particular sticking point with residents is concern about the height of the building. The homebuilders made a point of noting that, "the edge of the proposed condominiums is fifteen feet lower than existing adjacent Town Center apartments.

Public comment was similar to the last go-round. "It's far too high, far too bulky. I'd like to take a story off to begin with and I'd like to see story poles," said Guy Atwood.

"This is the site for more housing and more density. Any other use would be a shame. Clearly the fifth story is a challenge - balconies and set backs would make it more attractive," said Thomas Chastain, Vice Chair of the Planning Commission. "Everything I see and read points to this kind of planning - we have all got to make some sacrifices."

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"We hope to show you some very positive changes. We'd like a good solid thumbs up to proceed with this project," said Ray Panek, Senior Vice President of KB Homes South Bay.

KB Homes South Bay is considering whether to go ahead with a proposed 82-unit condominium development on the 1.47 acre site behind Panda Express that is currently a parking lot.

The five story project received feedback early in the summer to gauge city support at a joint meeting of the City Council, Planning Commission and Design Review Committee. At that point there weren't any fatal flaws, but definitely some constructive criticism. Heller Manus Architects came back at the September 14 meeting with some significant changes to the plans. The unpopular towers were removed, the number of units were scaled back from 89 to 82, and the lobby area was moved to align with Dewing Avenue, among other things.

The landscaping was also significantly improved; now it's much more pedestrian friendly with greater articulation of the walkway and enhanced connectivity. Landscape Architect Bill Smith explains the design, "We've created a more generous plaza area - now it feels like you're walking through a woodland."

At this point the ball, or rather the multi-family project, is in KB Homes' hands. Both the City Council and Planning Commission