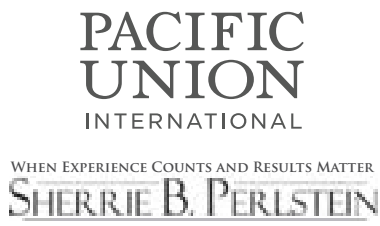




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**County Board of Supervisors approves Saranap Village project**

By John T. Miller

**Project Timeline**

5 YEARS

Site Plans A, B/B1, C

June 2012 – Feb 2013	Land Assembly	
Sept 2013	Application Submission	1.5 YEARS
Oct 2013	County Incompleteness Letter	
Sept 2014	DEIR Published	
Feb 2015	Start Re-Design for Mitigated Plan Alternative (MPA)	2.5 YEARS
July 2015	Submit MPA Design	
May 2016	R-DEIR Published	
June 2016	ZA Hearing on R-DEIR	7 MOS
Feb 2017	Submit 2017 Re-Design	
June 2017	Final EIR Published	
June 28, 2017	Planning Commission Hearing	
July/Aug 2017	Board of Supervisors Hearing	



With a final approval from the County Board of Supervisors, Hall Equity Group will be able to begin construction on the proposed Saranap Village project. The unanimous 5-0 vote Aug. 15 was met by enthusiastic applause from the (mostly) supportive audience.

After presentations from County Senior Planner Sean Tully and HEG Spokesperson Deb Karbo, the board took public input from over 35 speakers, with an overwhelming majority speaking in favor of the project.

Many residents who live close to the new Saranap Village locale spoke in favor of the proposal. They were joined by a number of organizations, including the Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce, the Contra Costa Association of Realtors, the Saranap Homeowners Association, Plumbers Local 159, the Sheet Metal Workers Union and the Building Industry Association of the Bay Area.

The spokesperson for the Chamber of Commerce called the current Saranap business district “run down and in need of help,” while a local realtor said that one of her clients likened the area to a ghetto.

The dissenting opinions centered mostly on the 71-foot height of the proposal and the effect that such a large development would have on future proposals in the Saranap area.

Tully was asked to respond to the question of height and said that the 71-foot figure was from the lowest point of the lot to the highest point of the development. The highest point in any of the

Images provided three buildings is 57-feet. Tully also explained that in mitigating the height issue, HEG also moved the higher parts of the structures further from the roadway.

Before the vote was taken, Supervisor John Giola of Richmond praised the proposed village, noting that it “served as a blueprint for the kinds of projects needed in the county.”

Supervisor Candace Andersen expressed appreciation to the Saranap residents in the planning process. “This will create a sense of place for Saranap, rather than detracting from it,” she said, calling it “a great step forward in creating housing for our area.”

In addition, Andersen noted that HEG will provide \$50,000 toward a community planning process for the downtown Saranap area to direct future developments. Money will also be diverted from other sources to help create the plan.

Mark Hall, president and CEO of HEG said, “We are pleased with the outcome of the hearing. After working with the Saranap area community for so many years, the Board of Supervisors approved a project that is critical to revitalizing the Boulevard Way business corridor, providing the Saranap community its own place to gather for dining and shopping and providing much needed housing for Contra Costa County.”

A spokesperson for HEG said that with the recent approval, there is still much work to be done before naming a start date for the project.



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