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September 17, 2024

City of Roseville Planning Commission
311 Vernon Street
Roseville, CA 95678

RE: My opposition to the WB-42 proposal

Dear Roseville Planning Commissioners:

I am Kate Rosenlieb and I moved to Roseville this Spring from Sacramento. I now live in Heritage Solaire, the development that immediately abuts two sides of the WB-42 site. This vacant 14.5 acre commercial parcel played a key role in my decision to buy my house. I have been counting on the future commercial retail services this site will offer my community, and I am counting on the Planning Commission and the City Council to support their existing Specific Plan for this site.

I spent my entire career working in land planning and development related issues. I worked for developers for 20 years. I worked for Economic and Planning Systems Inc. for 5 years, the same financial consultant who did the fiscal impact study on this WB-42 proposal. I worked for 10 years for cities in the public sector side of development, and I served for 6 years as a Planning Commissioner for the City of Bakersfield.

I am very much opposed to the developer's request to significantly downsize the commercial parcel from its current 14.5 acres to a strip mall size of 7 acres. As many of you know, these small commercial sites lack synergy and tend to have higher turnover than larger commercial sites, while offering fewer services.

During my research on this proposal, I talked to some retailers myself. They indicated a minimum site of 7.5 to 8 acres would be a minimum target size for them. And several potential future users will not consider a site as small as 7 acres. Is 14.5 acres too big? I think not based on my research. And it's important to note, the developer agrees this site is marketable at 14.5 acres but it will take some time for that to occur. That's what long term planning is all about. Is 7.0 acres too small? You bet it is!

I've spent considerable time talking to other well established commercial brokers who know this market and know this developer. They indicate Mr. Tallman, the developer behind this proposal, is primarily a residential developer. But, while this proposal fits the developer's comfort zone and timeline and cash flow desires, it does nothing to meet the needs of our West Roseville community.

The only justification the developer has offered in his quest to significantly change the Specific Plan land use designation to downsize this commercial parcel from 14.5 acres to 7 acres is it's too large to market. The developer then notes as his only supporting evidence he's owned it since 2010 and he's been marketing it the entire time and has been using a top-notch real estate broker since 2018 who has been unable to date, to market it to one buyer (as is required by the developer).

There are many already developed commercial parcels of this size including the recently developed Raley's One Center (13.21 acres) and the Nugget Center (15.5 acres). The 15.5 acre Nugget Center on Blue Oaks and Woodcreek Oaks, combined with the other two commercial centers at this same intersection (Safeway center at the Southwest intersection at 9 acres and the Walgreens/Dutch Brothers center at the Northeast intersection at 10 acres) total to 34.5 acres of commercial uses at this one intersection.

As you are aware, commercial retail doesn't come into an area until the housing is there to support it, so this site hasn't truly been ready for development for the many years this developer has owned this parcel. Most retailers count the rooftops that have been developed around a one-mile radius to a site before they agree to invest in a new site. We are still adding new rooftops in that one-mile radius around this site and we are still building critical road systems to serve this site. Given patience, there is no doubt this site will develop into a wonderful neighborhood commercial center with many vital services we need and deserve in West Roseville neighborhoods. That's what long term planning is all about and that is what Roseville has had a reputation for being good at.

We know the carrying cost of this parcel has a "bite" to it, and Mr. Tallman expressed that in his first of two neighborhood meetings on this proposal, both of which I attended. But this is a business risk inherent in the development industry. While I want to acknowledge that Mr. Tallman has a proven track record of commitment to the community, there are many of us who remain very opposed to this proposal which would be another blow to the future neighborhood commercial services our West Roseville community needs.

I think looking at the history of the commercial land use changes that have already occurred in West Roseville along Pleasant Grove Boulevard are worth mentioning. The already built commercial parcel where the MoJoe's café is located was originally planned to be 13.8 acres in size, but was allowed by the city (and with this same developer) to be downsized to 3.1 acres in 2017. So, we lost forever those planned 10 acres of vital commercial retail that could have served our neighborhood.

Then, in 2022, again this same developer, Mr. Tallman, received permission from the city to change the 10 acre planned commercial center (WB-41) at Santucci and Pleasant Grove to 100% single family homes. So there went another 10 acres of vital commercial retail that could have served our neighborhood.

When the WB-41 site at Santucci and Pleasant Grove was changed from community commercial to 100% residential just a little over two years ago, the developer's

consulting firm, Intalytics, noted this WB-42 site would be a superior supermarket site to support our neighborhood commercial needs. And, the developer's other consultant on the WB-41 parcel, MXD, rated this current WB-42 parcel 7th out of 26 future planned community commercial sites located in the Sierra Vista, West Roseville, and Creekside Specific Plan areas with respect to ability to attract and implement a successful retail development.

Specifically, the MXD study rated this WB-42 parcel in the top third of future planned community commercial sites based on access, visibility, future population growth, proximity to civic and employment uses, vehicle counts, and by the shape and the size of the parcel. The developer's own consultants for the WB-41 project 2.5 years ago didn't indicate any marketability issues with this WB-42 site. I note the absence of any real supporting data or consulting studies now to this developer's claim the WB-42 site is "too big" to market successfully.

The developer has called this history of reducing and eliminating planned commercial sites along the western end of Pleasant Grove Boulevard "right" sizing. "Right" for who? Right for an impatient and primarily residential developer? It's been a history of "down" sizing, eliminating the future potential of commercial services to our neighborhood. And this proposal...there's nothing "right" about it. It's not the right idea, it's not compatible with the Sierra Vista Specific Plan, and it's not what our larger neighborhood needs or deserves.

This is the last opportunity we have along this stretch of Pleasant Grove Boulevard to have a community commercial serving project. This 14.5 acre WB-42 site in time, will indeed develop to provide vitally needed, deserved, and expected future commercial retail to serve our West Roseville neighborhoods. When asked what type of retail services do we want at this location, different neighbors will offer their own wish list, but we primarily focus on the fact 14.5 acres produces more service opportunities than 7 acres does.

I recognize this is not an easy decision, but once this vibrant and feasible retail opportunity is lost through this proposal, you can't go back. If you choose to support this proposal, please take great effort to help the many of us who purchased our homes relying on this long-term land use plan understand why you would be willing to take such a radical step at this time. What is the "compelling reason" to significantly downsize this parcel now, rather than wait for the parcel to be more marketable in time?

As a new resident of Roseville, I have to tell you how truly amazed I have been at the outpouring of pride the residents of this community have for this city. It's inspiring. I listened to the Mayor's State of the City address recently, and the swell of pride in that room was wonderful. I have listened with envy for years how my friends tout the benefits of living in Roseville. And, I'm finally here. I'm finally part of this swell of community pride and I'm excited to be here. My home has been the greatest single investment for me that I've ever made. It's taken me a lifetime of work to get to where I am. And I hardly got my boxes unpacked before this objectionable proposal came up.

Mr. Tallman, who has a great reputation as a residential developer, was asked at the second of the two neighborhood meetings what would he do if this proposal was rejected by the city? Mr. Tallman said he's not a quitter and that he would keep working on marketing this site. We're hoping you send him back to the drawing board and that he keeps working on this. Maybe he'll even consider phasing the project, which he has called "piecemealing", but that other commercial brokers have stated is a viable option.

Thank you for your consideration of my objection to this proposal, and thank you for volunteering to serve your community as Planning Commissioners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kate Rosenlieb". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Kate Rosenlieb