

Design Review Meeting – April 2, 2015

The review of Appendix B continued, moving on to the topics of Mass, Scale, and Heights. A preface was to review the significance of Objectives vs Design Standards in the Specific Plan. The former are goals that need not be realized. The latter are requirements.

The first design issue focused on the question of Building Shape. The Specific Plan states the objectives

B.5.1: Avoid large, obstructive building forms by breaking large volumes into smaller wings and additions

B.5.1.3 Larger scale buildings (buildings over four stories) should utilize a variety of forms, arranged in a hierarchy with one form clearly dominant. The dominant form of a building should generally be located towards the center of the building. Subordinate masses should step down on the sides to anchor buildings to the land and the surrounding Village...create the sense that the building consists of a collection of building forms rather than one large unarticulated rectangular mass.

The question before the committee was “Should a Design Standard be included that requires the general shapes given in the objectives? After debate and hearing from the public, the committee reached consensus on the following Design Standard

1. Building Shape

The buildings, if having more than 4 retail/residential floors above the pedestrian level, must not appear as monolithic blocks – there must be variations in roofline with step downs and shorter sections (for example, at shoulders).

There must also be variation in exterior treatment to give 3 dimensionality.

The second design issue focused on the question of building height arrangement. The Specific Plan states the objective:

B.5.2 Incorporate varied Building Heights to reinforce the creation of a diverse and vibrant Village atmosphere and to preserve key views of surrounding mountain peaks

The question before the committee was “Should a Design Standard be included that requires the building height arrangement given in the objectives? After debate and hearing from the public, the committee reached consensus on the following Design Standard

2. Building Height Arrangement

Buildings shall be arranged in VC–C with generally shorter buildings to the North and taller ones to the South, with a one floor minimum difference in max height between “steps”.

The third design issue focused on the question of height limits. While the previous design standard addresses the relationship between buildings, it does not specifically address the issue of absolute building height. This has been a subject of hot debate within the community for a long time, and the discussion here took up a considerable amount of time. The objective initially taken up by the chairperson was the effect building height as on viewlines, for which the Specific Plan says, for example,

B.5.1.1 Buildings within the Plan Area shall be oriented to maximize viewsheds for guests within the Village and for pedestrians and vehicles approaching the project from Squaw Valley Road..... Maintaining view corridors and having a dense, lively Village Core are compatible and complimentary goals

While the discussion started out with referencing the amount of mountain view already blocked by the IntraWest Village, questions were raised about views from other vantage points, whether the parking structures would negate this entire subject, and what the SV Design Guidelines mean by “harmonize” and “to be in scale”. In the end, Alex Fisch recommended this discussion be tabled as the draft EIR will have artist renditions giving views of the proposed Village from a variety of vantage points. This was agreed and the subject of Height was tabled.

During this discussion, one of the committee members raised the question to Chevis Hosea of SVRE as to why not move some density to above the parking structures, and reduce the size of the buildings in VC–C. Chevis replied that he and others had listened closely to the criticisms of the earlier layout proposal. One of these was from the current IntraWest occupants (Buildings 2,4, and 5) who did not want to see anything built to the north of their buildings at a height taller than the podium their building is already on. Taking this criticism, and others along the same lines related

to other buildings, led the applicant to concentrate their main construction on the land where VC-C is planned, which, in their minds, has the minimum impact on the community.

When the DRC meets again on May 7th, it will continue with the topic Mass, Scale, and Height, and will surely return again to the tabled issue of maximum height. Once Mass, Scale, and Height topics are discussed and voted on, the committee will move on to East Parcel.