

# **SPEAK** SUNSET PARKSIDE EDUCATION AND ACTION COMMITTEE

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March 17, 2014

Supervisor Katy Tang

San Francisco Board of Supervisors

Re: Housing Opportunities in the Sunset  
Community Workshop # 6

Dear Supervisor Tang:

We thought it would be worthwhile to set down in writing our comments on the workshop topic, Housing Development in the Sunset. Unfortunately, there was no hand-out material provided on the sites proposed.

**Rear yard setbacks.** SPEAK has been consistent in our support for the shared rear yard amenity which is the result of adherence to the Planning Code's requirement for rear yard setbacks and limitations on lot coverage. At the meeting, we joined others who expressed opposition to "building in the back" because neighbors would lose sunlight, privacy and enjoyment of common open space. Building back also can ruin the interior of a block for everyone.

**Large corner buildings.** Large corner buildings are present in the Sunset today only because they predate the Planning Code and its requirements for limits on density, lot coverage and rear yards. If large corner buildings were to be permitted today, a zoning change would have to be passed by the Planning Commission to change the RH zoning district to RM apartment residential. Such a proposal for corner lots would fall into the category of "spot zoning" and thus not be permitted.

**Front façade setbacks.** Front façade setback requirement for new second story additions is a great visual benefit when the block in question is almost entirely one-story over garage. Such a setback causes the new story to blend in by stepping back from the row of lower story buildings; the City's Residential Design Guidelines have long recognized this need. Very little floor area is lost for the expanding family. SPEAK has never opposed second story additions which have at least a 10-foot setback on the additional story.

**Opportunity sites.** There many underdeveloped properties in the Sunset and some vacant ones. For example, SPEAK has encourage for years creative and sensitive proposals for the re-use of the Francis Scott Key Annex site(historic, almost vacant building on 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue between Irving and Judah). The problem 7-11 parking lot on 45<sup>th</sup> and Judah could become housing fronting the street with retail uses on the ground floor and parking under. There are many parking lots in the Sunset and some of them were named at the meeting. The question is whether those spaces can be replaced in kind; that could happen only if new development of housing with retail could also provide parking for the lost parking lot, which is very unlikely.

**Safeway.** No one in the groups I contacted objected to putting housing on top of the Safeway or having housing on top of retail, but there was concern about loss of the Safeway parking lot.

**Community Centers.** Meeting attendees requested more community centers. For example, a PUC lot near Taraval was named as one possibility.

**Additional density.** Traffic corridors were highlighted for denser housing; most of these are already zoned for more density than exists there currently and could be developed with no special permissions. However, planners at the meeting did not reveal that the term “transit corridor” might allow density increases along a wider swath of streets running parallel to the transit streets. What is the definition of these transit corridors, what are the heights allowed, and how many blocks does this cover, for example north and south of Judah?

**Open Space.** Many people expressed the need for additional open space, with more parks and community gardens, close to where people live. Often it is assumed that everyone goes to Golden Gate Park; however, a map of the Sunset District will show that there also is a need for open space within the district. The Code assures the livability of the Sunset’s residential districts. The desire to reduce the amount of open space is not a necessary corollary to adding more residential space. Participants expressed their desire to preserve the neighborhood character and human scale of the Sunset.

We look forward to learning the next steps that your office will take to further our goals. In the meantime, we would appreciate seeing a written inventory of the sites that Planning has prepared.

Mary Anne Miller

President, SPEAK

Sunset-Parkside Education and Action Committee

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Comments Received After March 5, 2014 from Constituent

**Parking:**

In my opinion, at the meeting, people had differing ideas about parking relative to any future ordinances for parking, especially as it relates to legalization of the current illegal apartment stock. Many participants at the meeting thought legalizing these apartments would add more parking issues. Personally, I think this question is mute, because the existing illegal units are already occupied! Therefore, any parking issues relative to these units have already been assimilated into the overall parking mix.

**Senior Housing in D4.** Reminds me of a conversation that I had with you in late October 13' (at the 45th Avenue (Judah/Kirkham Street Fair) , we talked about the lack of housing for seniors in this district. While Senior housing is seldom addressed, we are a district of many seniors. And as you know, typically, this group lives on fixed incomes. And if they are not, any catastrophic situation could wipe out any assets and leave them vulnerable.

**Senior 's Living in D4.**

When seniors who have lived in these neighborhoods for long periods are displaced, due to the lack of affordable housing, these seniors will face moving to other parts of the city. Which may not be easy nor convenient for them to take care of their health and social concerns. Or worse, they will have to move out of the city and away from family and longtime friends.

We are now beginning to see where the displacement of seniors from their homes and families, friends, are causing health issues both physical and physiological.

**Senior Housing Opportunity in D4 - 45th Ave between Irving and Judah - the Francis Scott Key Annex**

One of the 19th locations listed on one of the Planning Department's maps is the Francis Scott Key Annex property located on 45th Avenue between Irving and Judah. While I believe, this is the property of the SF Unified School District, the SFUSD just worked out a property exchange at another location in SF for further development. What is the option for D4 to investigate a similar exchange?

**10 units of more apartment buildings - % of low income or below market value available for low income residence.**

As this was explained at our table, the construction of building in District 4 with 10 units or more will have a percentage of Below Market rate rental units. Compare this percentage of available Below Market rental Units to all other housing units proposed as additional housing stock in certain business corridors (approximately 3000), I wonder how many of those units would be available so that people living on fixed incomes, so they could remain in District 4.

**Transparency in D4**

In closing, as a lifelong District 4 resident, prior home owner, mother of 6 children and grandmother, I want to say that I'm available to work with you in our District plans. Making the D4 community more affordable, viable and safe for all community members, especially seniors who have invested time throughout their lives is my highest priority.