

Mountain View, February 10, 2025

**Project:** 301, 309, 317 and 323 Moorpark Way and 301 Sylvan Avenue, Josh Vrotsos of Dividend Homes

**To:** Mountain View Subdivision Committee and Zoning Administrator

**cc to Project Planner:** Hang Zhou

Dear Subdivision Committee Members,  
Dear Zoning Administrator,

I, Salvador Callejas, my wife, Carmen Callejas, and our two sons, Alberto and Enrique, have been living in Mountain View, at [REDACTED] Sylvan Avenue, for **20 years** and have enjoyed our nice, quiet neighborhood.

After reviewing the plans of the proposed project, we **are very concerned** that the above housing development will **jeopardize the safety, privacy, and well-being** of not only our family but also our neighborhood.

In our case, the developer has proposed **four houses** to be built surrounding our property, including a **two-way street** facing our back fence.

Our main concerns and requests are as follows:

## 1. SETBACKS

The developer is proposing to build 22 houses using the State Density Bonus, 6 more houses over the 16-house limit permitted for this site's acreage. In doing so, they fail to respect the city's setback requirements that call for minimum rear setbacks of 15' (first floor) and 20' (second floor). As you know, the required dimensions of the setbacks are **crucial** for:

- **Safety:** appropriate setbacks reduce the risk of *fire*, prevent buildings from collapsing onto each other during an *earthquake*, and provide the necessary space for *emergency vehicle access*.
- **Light and Ventilation:** adequate setbacks help ensure that natural light and air can reach all parts of a building.
- **Privacy:** appropriate setbacks create a buffer enhancing privacy, *reducing noise and visual disturbances*.
- **Landscape:** appropriate setbacks provide the necessary space for tree growth, including roots and branches.

Undeniably, the required setbacks are **essential** for promoting **safety, comfort, privacy, and harmony** within the constructed environment. For all these reasons, we strongly **oppose the proposed setbacks** for lot 20, lot 19, and especially for lot 18, in which the proposed rear setbacks are **only 5'** for the first and second floor, instead of 15' and 20'.

## 2. FENCING

To enhance **safety, privacy, security, and reduce noise pollution**, we request fencing-off our property from the proposed development with the **same pre-engineered sound wall** that the developer will use for the outer edge of the development, instead of the proposed wooden fence.

### 3. COLOR

To give us **more light** and make us feel less oppressed and enclosed, we ask for the outer-wall color of the houses adjacent to our property be painted with a **lighter color** instead of the darker grayscale colors proposed on the plans.

### 4. WINDOWS

To preserve our **privacy**, we would like the developer to reduce the dimensions of the windows for the **rear upper level** looking down onto our property and orient them horizontally, placed onto the upper parts of the wall. How **uncomfortable and unpleasant** it would be to feel like our new neighbors are constantly watching us from their upper windows (especially for lot 20 and lot 21).

### 4. ACCESS TO THE DEVELOPMENT UNITS

The development's proposed singular entrance point, onto Sylvan Avenue, poses a significant threat, not only to our **safety** as our neighboring driveway, but also threatens the safety of the retired community members of the New Frontier Mobile Home Park directly across the street.

In addition, the proposed entrance would funnel **significantly increased traffic** onto Sylvan Avenue at a potentially dangerous location, near the intersection of Moorpark Way and the onramp to CA-237. **The traffic situation on Sylvan Avenue is already a serious concern** and would **only worsen** with the proposal.

The proposed entrance, our driveway, New Frontier's entrance, Sylvan Avenue, and Moorpark Way, these six sources of traffic would be subject to a small area that already struggles with handling the existing traffic flow.

We strongly encourage the **entrance** of the project to be **relocated** onto Moorpark Way, for example, where existing driveways to the old Montessori School are (currently, there are three driveways accessing the property from Moorpark).

### 5. VISITOR PARKING

Considering the size of this development, a visitor parking area **should be provided**. If this is failed to be met, visitors would be forced to park their car on the already strained street parking that currently serves the residents of Sylvan Ave and Foxborough Drive, including overflow parking from the New Frontier Mobile Home Park.

In conclusion, for the sake of our **safety, privacy, security, and well-being**, one solution that would certainly help to resolve previously stated problems and concerns with this project would be to **build fewer units**, and for the lots adjacent to the existing neighboring properties like ours to have possibly **single-story houses**.

We are confident that the Subdivision Committee Members and the Zoning Administrator will consider our remarks and issues and act accordingly, so we will still be able to **continue enjoying our life in our home, in this neighborhood for many many years to come.**

We thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Salvador Callejas

  
Carmen Callejas

Residents and owners of the property at [REDACTED] Sylvan Ave., Mountain View

**From:** [Susan Lindner](#)  
**To:** [Zhou, Hang](#); [REDACTED]@dividendhomes.com  
**Cc:** [Sue Lindner](#); [Doug Ward](#); [Carmen & Sal Callejas and Family](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on the Proposed Sylvan/Moorpark Development  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 12, 2025 7:14:08 AM

**CAUTION:** EXTERNAL EMAIL - Ensure you trust this email before clicking on any links or attachments.

Hello,

I am one of those neighbors who will be impacted by this development. I have lived at [REDACTED] Sylvan Ave for 26 years, next to Carmen and Salvador Callejas at [REDACTED] Sylvan Ave.

Following are my concerns about the proposed plan. (Note: I have updated my comments based on the changes made to the plan since August 2024)

### 1) Single Entrance/Exit Increases Traffic Congestion on Sylvan Ave

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The proposed plan has **only one driveway to enter and exit the development** at the end of Sylvan, with no exit on Moorpark. This configuration forces all the additional traffic onto Sylvan, which already has problems with traffic entering 237.

The Zoning Administrator claims that "Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic..."

However, as a conservative estimate, the 22-unit development will likely introduce ~88 additional car trips per day (22 cars that go in and out twice a day). All of the additional traffic will be concentrated near the intersection of Sylvan and Moorpark.

But during the morning and afternoon commute hours, this end of the street is already congested with cars heading to 237, and with cars turning toward El Camino from Moorpark, Foxborough, and Frontier Estates. It can take me 5-7 min for me just to get out of my driveway. I worry that the **increased traffic congestion** at this end of Sylvan will effectively **block my driveway**.

**Please revise the plan to siphon off some of the traffic onto Moorpark.**

To do this: Remove one of units -- Lot 11 or 12 -- along Moorpark and turn it into a driveway?

### 2) Private Street Provides Poor Access for Emergency Vehicles

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The proposed plan configures the private street as a "**T-intersection**" with the sole entrance at the base of the T. There is no loop, or other turn-around space for emergency vehicles.

The Zoning Administrator claims that "The project includes a 20' wide private street off Sylvan Avenue, which will provide adequate space for safe circulation of vehicles, including emergency vehicles and trash collection vehicles".

However, the T-intersection configuration cannot allow for "circulation" of vehicles, and constitutes a **safety hazard**. This configuration provides very little space for large vehicles to maneuver. For example, if the unit on Lot 7 catches fire, a fire truck will need to enter at Sylvan, drive to the T intersection, and then either (a) make a soft right turn and then back up to the fire or (b) make a hard left turn and then back up when it's time to leave. This maneuvering will be even more difficult if there are additional fire trucks and paramedic vehicles.

And what if an emergency requires all residents to evacuate? The sole exit onto Sylvan is a bottleneck.

**Please revise the plan to provide sufficient space for emergency vehicles to maneuver.**

To do this: Create a loop within the development? Open the sound wall on the Moorpark end of the T to create an emergency-only driveway on Moorpark?

### **3) Insufficient Parking Within the Development**

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The proposed plan provides **zero (0) visitor or overflow parking spaces** within the development. This is *absurd!* These homes may well be occupied by families that own more than 2 cars, and will almost certainly be occupied by people who want to invite visitors over.

The Zoning Administrator asserts that "no minimum parking is required per state law (AB 2097) due to the site's proximity to a major transit stop within one-half mile." The assertion that there is a "major transit stop" with 1/2 mile of the site is disingenuous at best:

\* Does the "major transit stop" refer to the VTA light rail? That is indeed 1/2 mile away *as the crow flies*. But for a *person* (on foot, bike, or bus), it's at least .75 miles. (And it's hardly a major transit stop.)

\* Does the "major transit stop" refer to the Caltrain station? That is 1.5 miles away.

**Satisfying the letter of the law for "proximity to public transportation" does not take the place of on-site visitor parking!** It is unlikely that any visitor will arrive via public transportation, unless they are local enough to take the Mountain View Community Shuttle, with stops .25 mile away.

The Zoning Administrator asserts that "each home will include a two-car garage, ensuring adequate off-street parking for residents while reducing the impact on neighborhood street parking."

The garage space might "reduce" the impact on neighborhood street parking (if the garages are actually used for cars and not storage...), but there is **already a significant parking shortage**

**in the neighborhood**, and it won't take much overflow to make it unlivable. Street parking is prohibited on Moorpark and on the East side of Sylvan, so people attempt to park on the West side, often in violation of the No Parking sign in front of my house. Non-resident parking also spills around the corner into the Foxborough neighborhood.

Chronic parking overflow from the new development will **all but eliminate available street parking for long-time residents** of Sylvan and Foxborough, and will **limit the visibility** of those trying to pull out of Sylvan driveways or turn onto Sylvan from Foxborough.

**Please revise the plan to incorporate a *realistic* number of visitor parking spaces within the development.**

- Make the driveways in front of garages large enough to park in.
- If possible, increase the amount of nearby public transportation -- perhaps reinstate the VTA bus stop that used to stop at the corner?

#### **4) The 5' Setback Destroys Privacy and Reduces Safety of My Property**

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The plan calls for 5' setback from the side of the unit in Lot 7 to my back fence. **5' is just too close for a 26.5' building**, and is unacceptable to me. The unit in Lot 7 has windows that will be approximately 15' above my fence, and only 5' away from my fence.

Extreme proximity of the unit to my fence will:

- Completely **destroy any sense of privacy** in my back garden. The unit occupants will have an unobstructed view of my entire outdoor living space. While I rarely have anything to hide, I find the complete loss of privacy unacceptable.
- Pose **serious fire danger to my property** if the unit in Lot 7 were to catch fire. Not only would such a fire be hard to access by fire trucks; it will be close to my fence and tall enough to send sparks at least to my garage.
- Provide **no buffer to lessen nuisance noise** -- cars, music, dogs -- that the unit owners might introduce.

The only reason for a 5' setback is to cram more giant houses into a small space.

**Please revise the plan to provide more open space (ideally 10') between the new units and the existing properties.**

- Build fewer units or build smaller units. Waivers are still possible for sites with 20 or 21 units.

#### **5) The Side Wall of Lot 7 is Visually Dominant and Intrusive to My Property**

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The Zoning Administrator claims that "the architectural design of structures, including colors, materials, and design elements..., is compatible with surrounding development" and will "create a more natural transition to the adjacent residential neighborhood."

I disagree. The **height** of the unit in Lot 7 (26.5'), its **proximity** to my back fence (5'), and the **color scheme** of the main wall (dark brown in Elevation drawings) are **completely at incompatible with my part of the surrounding development.**

The 26.5' tall Right Elevation of the unit in Lot 7 will loom 20' over my back fence, and will extend along about half of that fence. Because of its height, proximity to the fence, and color, this wall will be a giant "billboard" visually dominating my back yard. The impact of other, existing dark brown structures near me is mitigated by lower height, larger setbacks, and landscaping.

- If painted in **dark brown** as shown in the plans, this "billboard" **will be impossible to ignore.** The dark color is completely incompatible with the light browns and greens I have cultivated in my garden, and will not be mitigated by any planned landscaping -- see (7).
- The shadow cast by the 26.5" building will **deprive many of my drought-tolerant landscaped plants of sufficient light.**
- The building will completely **block the view that I now enjoy**, including the redwood trees in the Foxborough neighborhood.

**PLEASE revise the plan to give a larger setback between the unit in Lot 7 and my back fence.**

**PLEASE choose a different color scheme for the main wall that will face my garden.**

**PLEASE -- DO NOT choose dark brown/blue/black!!**

**I am the only one who will see this wall, so why not make it a lighter color that I can live with?**

**(Bracing Blue, Drift of Mist? even Grayish?)**

## **6) What is the plan for fencing around the site perimeter?**

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The Fencing and Site Plan seem to indicate 7' board on board fence with lattice between the site and adjacent properties, such as mine.

- Is this new 7' fence going to be built next to the existing back fences of adjacent properties?
- Or is the plan to tear down existing fences and replace them?
  - What if I don't give you permission?
  - Will you coordinate with owners of adjacent properties to schedule this?
  - **What recourse do I have if you damage existing plants that are next to and/or supported by my fence?**
  - Will you provide professional gardening consultation to help damaged plants recover?
  - Will I be reimbursed for my existing fence and plants?
- Who maintains fencing in the future? Will there be an HOA to contact to share cost of repairs?

### 7) Absence of Landscaping in Side Setback Adjacent to My Property

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The proposed plan provides for **zero (0) plants or trees between the unit in Lot 7 and my back fence**. Is this because the 5' setback is too narrow? (Note that trees *will* be planted along the 5' setback that borders my neighbor's side fence.)

**Please revise the plan to provide some greenery** to mitigate the starkness of the brown and white billboard looming over my back fence. Ideally, this is in addition to providing a wider setback from my back fence.

### 8) Narrow Setbacks Limit Overall Privacy, Safety, and Beauty

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The proposed plan **significantly reduces the required front, back, and side setbacks for all units**, requiring a waiver for *every* setback. Most unit projections are less than half of the required setback.

It seems absurd to market these as single family homes when there is **virtually no space between and around them**. It's hard to imagine the future residents having any sense of privacy from each other, with windows that are only 8' away; with no place for guests to park; and with no space for outdoor living. They may as well be apartment dwellers.

The Sylvan Ave neighborhood of Mountain View has historically featured trees, landscaping, views, light, and air. Yet the narrow setbacks severely limits all of these things, turning the development into a **heat sink** consisting of nearly unbroken dark roofs and pavement. The last thing we need in this era of rising temperatures is another heat sink.

**Please revise the plan to enforce the required setbacks within the development.** Mountain View has submitted a Housing Element to CA, so I do not see any basis for accepting Builder's Remedy exceptions to Mountain View building codes.



To do this: Build fewer units? Build smaller units? Build pairs of units with common wall, to create larger open spaces surrounding them?

## **9) Plan Inaccuracies**

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(1) The proposed plan indicates that the "**existing canopy**" in my back yard covers half my back fence.

**Please revise the plan to note that my tree canopy covers less than 25% of my back fence** near the corner shared with my neighbor.

(2) **Thank you for correcting the inconsistency** in the original plan. In particular, both the site plan drawings *and* the Elevation drawings now show the garage/driveway for Unit 1C in Lot 7 on the **right** side of the unit when viewed from the private street.

## **9) Pest Control**

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The issue of pest control was brought up at the neighborhood meeting in August. I, too, am very concerned that the demolition of long abandoned buildings, and the excavation of fallow land will cause a **horde of rats, gophers, possums, and raccoons** to invade neighboring properties, including mine. We already have an existing rat problem and we don't need more.

**Please engage a pest control service** (now? soon?) to start the process of reducing the vermin?

## **Conclusion**

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I understand that developers are motivated to maximize profit by maximizing the number and size of the units in the development. However, it is irresponsible to do so by severely degrading the quality of life of those who have resided in this neighborhood for over 20 years.

Are we really helping the housing crisis by developing expensive 2400-3100 sq. ft McMansions on tiny lots? Certainly none of these units will be affordable for first-time homebuyers or suitable for seniors hoping to age in place.

**Please build fewer units (or smaller units, or pairs of units with a common wall) to create larger, safer, greener, more accessible spaces around them.**

And, while I'm asking -- **please consider retaining more of the existing mature trees**. As an avid birdwatcher, I see many species of birds feeding and nesting in, e.g., the 27' tree adjacent to my neighbor's property. Removing so many existing mature trees (and the insects they

support) will cause many birds to starve to death until the replacement trees grow large enough to support them.

Thank you for your consideration,

Very Truly Yours,

Susan Lindner  
[REDACTED] Sylvan Ave.

**From:** [J Lee](#)  
**To:** [Zhou, Hang](#)  
**Cc:** [Carolyn Lee](#); [Eric Lee](#); [Cheryl Lee](#)  
**Subject:** Moorpark/Sylvan Avenue Project  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 12, 2025 11:12:12 AM

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Hi Hang:

We reside on Sylvan Avenue for over 47 years and we are concern with the only entrance and exit from the new project is from Sylvan Avenue which will undoubtedly cause a major traffic back up on Sylvan Avenue's entrance to Highway 237. Another entrance/exit from the project should be at Moorpark Way this will help alleviate the traffic congestion on Sylvan Avenue.

Please let me hear from you on this matter.

Sincerely,

Jimmie Lee