

Tuesday, April 8, 2008

Anaheim approves Platinum Triangle plans again

Development would add thousands more people to the area.

By **ADAM TOWNSEND**

Staff Writer

ANAHEIM – The City Council voted 4-1 on a rehearing of plans to add thousands of more people to the Platinum Triangle. Councilwoman Lorri Galloway voted against the package of zoning language and infrastructure plans, siding with critics concerned about traffic, schools and affordable housing in the development. She also voted against the proposal in December.

The hearing came after a citizens group demanded an appeal of council's December decision to approve the new development's maximum to 18,363 new homes, offices space totaling more than four times the space in the Sears Tower, and commercial space double the size of South Coast Plaza – a decision criticized by some community groups and individuals. The new plans double the number of homes and commercial space and quintuple the amount of

office space originally allotted in the 2004 Platinum Triangle plan.

Critics worry about traffic congestion, the lack of affordable housing in the area and potential strain on services the influx of residents would bring were developers to take full advantage of the new zoning.

Council members – except for the sole dissenter Lorri Galloway – said in December the new zoning was important for the economic future of the city when they adopted the new allowances last year.

The package up for adoption by council Tuesday would add more connector roads, realign other streets and widen Katella Avenue to eight lanes between Anaheim Way and Manchester Avenue, among other changes. The new plan also calls for three fire stations and sets aside space for the planned ARTIC train and transportation hub.

Citizens for Responsible Equitable Environmental Development filed the initial suit against the city demanding a re-hearing, but a number of other community groups and planning experts spoke out against the increase in density for the project.

"I urge you to reconsider this plan," said UC Irvine Planning and Police Professor Scott Bollens. "It would turn a blended environment more into a suburban downtown where jobs will dominate housing."

He said traffic would choke surrounding streets and freeways and that smog would blanket the downtown.

Mayor Curt Pringle also said the planned ARTIC transit hub would help take a lot of cars off the road, abating some traffic problems.

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Also, Eric Altman, an affordable housing proponent who runs the OCCORD advocacy group, repeated his criticism that it was a mistake to not require any affordable housing of developers.

Pringle pointed out that a number of the apartment complexes currently under construction in the Platinum Triangle -- though built at free market rates -- qualify for moderate income affordable housing. He also said other affordable housing sites under development in the city were on city-owned property. The only property the city owns in the Platinum Triangle area is Angel Stadium and the Honda Center.

Galloway countered, saying the city has final say over what kind of development goes where.

"Right now is when we make these decisions on these developments," she said. "We issue RFPs to direct developers to do what we want. we tell them what we feel is the right type of development for our city."

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