

Dear City Council and Members of the Design Review/Tree Board,

I am writing concerning the proposed Woodmark Apartments by Pacific West Communities at 7716/7760 Bodega Avenue in Sebastopol. I live at [REDACTED] and my building is in the back of the complex called Bears Meadow. My unit is adjacent to the furthest back part of the apple orchard at the northeast corner which is next to my backyard where I grow organic vegetables and flowers, facing the Washington Avenue backyards. I have lived in Sebastopol for 39 years and in this townhouse for the past 21 years. I bought this end unit because of the apple orchard and the trees and greenery surrounding it. I was attracted to Sebastopol for its trees and foliage in the City limits and I like being able to walk downtown. Although our back yards are small we do have a yard and can sometimes get a glimpse of the sunset through the apple orchard.

I am very apprehensive that the proposal for this development as it has been presented may jeopardize the existing trees on the neighboring properties and the stability of my building due to the grading and installation of retaining walls. The building I live in is built at the top of the hill that they are planning to shave down. Excavating the ground 16 feet down, and leveling the hill would most certainly open the path to soil erosion of this hill and the degradation of the foundation of the building. There is no doubt that many trees would be affected and people and buildings could be destroyed by falling limbs. What contingency plan will the developer have in place in the event that people, trees and buildings are destroyed due to their disturbance of the ground and "landscaping" of the natural terrain? Will they set up a fund to reimburse us in the event this happens? Will the City of Sebastopol be responsible as well? The Sebastopol Tree Ordinance requires protection of many of the neighboring trees and a larger setback from the property line would be needed in order to protect the trees' root systems and avoid injury. Both for the trees and the building on my property, a setback of 30-40 feet might be more reasonable. There is a Magnolia tree on my side of the fence that is only 8 feet from the fence and is a very healthy beautiful magnolia.

Then there's the issue of adding close to 300 cars to existing traffic on Bodega Avenue and the adjacent side streets where children and seniors walk on streets without continuous sidewalks. The traffic now backs up daily on Bodega Avenue beginning at 4:00 P.M. going East to get into and through town. It often backs up to Robinson Road which is across the street from the Bears Meadow driveway which is actually an easement we share with the property in question. Woodmark is proposing to use this as the main driveway for another 84 units.

Bears Meadow is on 2.2 acres and has 27 units on the property. Pacific West Communities is proposing 84 units on 2.2 acres plus 1.36 acres from the 7760 Bodega Avenue orchard. The amount of traffic added to Bodega Avenue from 84 units would make it almost unbearable to get to out of our driveway and through the Main Street intersection. In the mornings it takes more time to get through that intersection than it takes to get all the way to Santa Rosa, which is 7 miles. The congestion on Bodega Avenue forces people to go on all the side residential streets to get around that Main Street intersection and to even get out of their driveways. I suggest a traffic remedy be in place before attempting to add 84 more units of 2-3 cars each to this mess.

I have been very happy living in Sebastopol and have considered myself lucky to live in such a nice town where I can walk and feel safe. I do hope we all agree that the quality of life here should be maintained and trees and less traffic are part of that quality. I am not opposed to low income housing but feel this development as proposed jeopardizes the quality of life here and our very existence.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns.

Sincerely,

Renee Kramer
[REDACTED]