

January 18, 2019

Emeryville Planning Commission
1333 Park Avenue
Emeryville, CA 94608

Re: Marketplace Parcel B proposal to be heard January 24, 2019

Dear Planning Commissioners:

As a major property owner in very close proximity, we have enjoyed seeing the overall redevelopment of the Marketplace occur, including several projects closing in on completion right now. We think making that project a more dense and active area makes sense in the big picture. However, we have real reservations about some of the details of the most recent proposal for Parcel B, including the way that this latest proposal interacts with the previously-approved plans for development of Parcel A. We are not against development of those parcels but believe the current vision lacks key design features that are critical to pedestrian and employee experience of the entire area. The public plaza and landscaped open spaces at ground and at bridge level that we have just completed with our new EmeryStation West/Transit Center project were essentially important goals and requirements of the City Council and Planning Commission that approved it. The Marketplace proposals, as designed, seriously and negatively impact these public spaces in a way that is not best urban planning. The City has vested interest in seeing the Marketplace work with and enhance the public and open space improvements across the tracks. Let us enumerate our concerns:

- With our EmeryStation West project, we have just completed a public plaza extension of 59th Street and a strong pedestrian and visual connection to the existing railroad pedestrian bridge. We have similarly created a large and publicly-accessible raised landscaped plaza and connected it to the bridge and also to the ground via a large grand stair.

The design of Parcel A, which we understand is a done deal, unfortunately does not reinforce the straight open vista across the bridge we have created on the other side. Rather, pedestrians must travel through a tall, narrow “canyon” between the two apartment buildings. The two apartment buildings build almost all the way to the east property line along the tracks and present relatively featureless and flat facades to the east (facing our the new public areas and the Amtrak Station).

Wareham was reluctantly willing to accept the proposed design of Parcel A in light of the prior design for Parcel B adjacent to it. That proposal featured a large open area between the two parcels. Other than for a small, single story pad building, that open space was to be landscaped and made attractive. That open space allowed a key aperture towards our new raised landscaped plaza. Additionally, at only 40 feet, the previously-proposed Parcel B garage provided additional aesthetic relief in terms of varying heights, etc. The original PDP and the

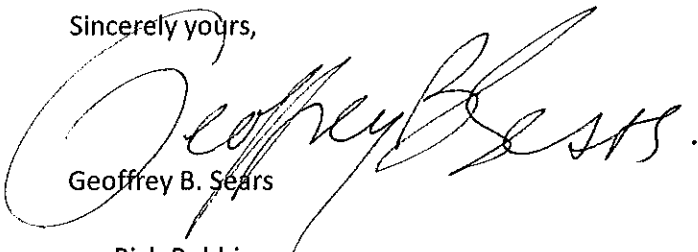
prior design proposals all contemplated varying buildings with varying heights along the railroad, not a monolithic flat wall such as we are seeing in the latest proposals.

- In today's proposal for Parcel B, that open space has been materially diminished in size, effectively cut in half. What is left serves primarily only as a trash/dumpster area. Like the Parcel A design, the Parcel B building is effectively built right up to the eastern property line and rises straight up without relief in a huge, flat wall. The designs of both Parcels A and B clearly treat their eastern facades as unimportant rear ends, which we do not think is justified given that these eastern faces are what travelers on Amtrak and the Capitol Corridor are presented as their entry to Emeryville.
- We believe the design of the new Parcel B building, built as close to the eastern property line as it is, violates the City's tower separation ordinance.

Our recommendations are as follows:

- 1) Require the applicant to maintain the amount of previously-shown open area between the Parcel A and Parcel B developments, either as open as before or at least by stepping the proposed building back as it rises.
- 2) Require the new tower to set back from its eastern property line as required by the City's tower separation ordinance.
- 3) Require the applicant to give as much aesthetic attention and care to the project's eastern face as it does to the western face and not treat all of the track sides as "rear ends".

Sincerely yours,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Geoffrey B. Sears".

Geoffrey B. Sears

cc: Rich Robbins