

Gautho, Julia

From: jeff lee <jeffersonlee77@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2025 11:58 AM
To: City Council; Sesanto, Sean; Planning
Subject: 600 Park Ave. Apts. - Rezoning - Please Protect Existing Single Family Homes

Importance: High

Dear City Leaders,

As currently proposed, rezoning regulations ignore the best interests of existing residents and neighboring single family homes.

Before formally approving on 9/11 & 9/25, **please make revisions** to specify protections to soften the blow from overdevelopment.

A neighborly, respectful rezoning approach should include some combination of (but not limited to):

- **Increased building setbacks:** the 10' side setback as proposed is much too close for new 36' high apartment buildings adjacent to single family homes and would severely impact single family backyards, natural light and privacy. We're fairly confident the City has rendered these conditions and studied what this will look like and it's not good for existing residents. A transparent public outreach approach should include sharing examples / rendering(s) to best inform neighbors of what's to come. Please increase the setbacks before approving rezoning regulations.
- **2-story building limits (with associated 2-story height limit)** at minimum for the first rezoned apartment units closest to existing single family property lines, with allowable step up to 3-story (and associated 36' height limit) if absolutely necessary, working towards the center of the complexes away from single family. This would soften new building massing. We're still opposed to 3-story and 36' heights though in general - it's too much for primarily single-story neighborhoods. Also please consider utilizing the existing down sloping grade and civil engineering measures to soften the rezoning impacts: new apartment buildings bordering Wesley St. for example, could be built with lower finish floor elevations with retaining walls to mitigate the building height impacts (knowing retaining walls add some construction cost). Lower height limits and/or 'step-up' provisions should be specifically written into rezoning regulations.
- **Specific restrictions regarding new apartment windows, elevated walkways, balconies etc.** facing single family homes. Rezoned taller apartment complexes should not look into existing neighbors' homes and yards! This should be specifically written into rezoning regulations.

- **Mandatory privacy / green space / open space buffer zones** within the single-family property line setbacks (i.e. sound walls, 'significant' tree planting, privacy hedge planting etc.). Existing residents shouldn't have to bear the burden and spend thousands, even tens of thousands of dollars to protect privacy from rezoning measures. Personally, we've spent the last ~14+/- years working hard, expending time and money, to make the backyard private as it is, and with the proposed setbacks and height limits, would have to start all over again with a continuous fence line 'rezoned apartment privacy hedge', costing thousands, blocking views and natural light. All single-family neighbors would be put in a similar position, and that's not ok. **Rezoning should mandate that multifamily developers provide for privacy considerations due to rezoning, not the existing single-family property owner.** This should be specifically written into rezoning regulations.
- **Sufficient onsite apartment parking accounting for all residents and guests**, not an overly-optimistic approach. It isn't right to impact Wesley St. (and other similar Capitola neighborhood streets) with rezoned apartment overflow parking due to watered-down parking calculations. Apartment parking should be on apartment property. This should be specifically written into rezoning regulations.
- **Many other concerns (see previous letters to City on the subject), but we'll stop here, hoping action on the above will be taken to lessen impacts.**

The above would not kill any \$100M+ construction deals and would help protect existing neighborhoods and homeowners. Rezoning regulations can and should be finely tuned to provide 'win-win' outcomes, not just favor developers as currently written. There is plenty of room to make responsible revisions while not 'discouraging development'.

Again, we urge City leaders: **please do not ignore the perspective of existing residents. Please protect our homes.**

Sincerely,

Jeff & Kirsten Lee
117 Wesley Street, Capitola