

Piru Neighborhood Council

P.O. Box 162

Piru, CA 93040

July 13, 2009

Ventura County Board of Supervisors
800 So. Victoria Ave
Ventura, CA

Re: Ventura County Housing Element Redux

Dear Supervisors:

At the request of my board and at least 50 residents, I am requesting that you refrain from rezoning the two parcels in Piru to 20 low income units per acre, in particular because the proposed density is extreme in our small-town context. We appreciate the problem the State has posed for planning in the unincorporated areas; combined with the rigidity of the SOAR ordinance, the options for sitting low-income units are limited

Besides clashing with our community character and contributing to a disproportionate number of low-income households, both locations are problematic.

A portion, if not all of the site on Camulos Street is in a flood zone next to the Warring Wash Barranca. Residences south of the 1.5 acre site are required to carry flood insurance. The most recent quote on my home was \$900 annually, provided I was comfortable with a \$5,000 deductible per year. This could prove a burden on the financially challenged. I must also question the wisdom of locating 30 units on a street that bears a significant amount of large truck traffic generated by the nursery. Possibly the barranca itself is enough to provide the barrier required between agriculture and residential uses; nursery fruit trees are sprayed quite often.

On Pacific Avenue, the 5.43 acres could generate about 110 residences. Pacific is also a mix of residential, agricultural and industrial uses, which is less than ideal for the density proposed, and the nearest park is miles away. It is no longer legal to make a left turn on SR 126 from the east end of the street in order to turn into Piru on Main St., which physically isolates the residences. (The west end is a safer left turn from Pacific Avenue, but adds to the travel time for autos and school busses). These residents have a Fillmore address with street delivery of mail, so they miss the social atmosphere of our local Post Office, and they also pay higher automobile insurance rates than Piruvians, because on paper at least, they are Fillmorites.

While there always people in Piru interested in affordable houses, they have found that they frequently make too much money to qualify to buy a home. Further, there is no guarantee that the residences built on these parcels will be for ownership. With the density proposed, most certainly, they will have to be multi-family units, with little in the way of yards, which would make apartments likely.

Presented to the Board
Re: Agenda of 7/14/09
Item # 33

Finally, to clear the Neighborhood Council of any charges of NIMBYism, please keep the following proposed low income units in mind:

- CEDC Farmworker rental units - 66 units
- Main Street, 3 projects - 35 units (unless the developers opt to pay an in-lieu fee if the farmworker units are approved, and receive credit for units that way)
- Habitat for Humanity on Temescal Street - 2 units

No proposals are on record for the following properties because economics and other factors have dampened the enthusiasm of the owner/developers, but options that have been considered as low/affordable/farmworker units and could occur in future include:

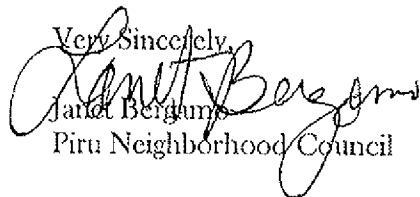
- James Finch, Center Street apartments - 15 units possible
- CEDC Center Street - 16 units possible

We are aware that the State will not give Ventura County any credit for what already exists, but to remind you of our community character, let me point out our existing low income status:

- Although located a few miles south and west of town, the Rancho Sespe farmworker rental project has 100 units
- When our Redevelopment Agency was formed following the 1994 earthquake, 80% of our older housing stock was considered blighted and little has changed; for most owners, the reasons are economic
- A recent study performed to permit the County to apply for low-cost loans for improvements to Water Works 16 revealed that the median annual income in Piru was \$21,000, another factor that has changed very little
- Since our RDA was formed, the Area Housing Authority has built Colina Vista apartments, 35 units on Main Street, and rehabilitated 15 units at the old Palm Motel on SR 126 (Summer Wind)
- Part of the Citrus View development on Main includes housing built by Peoples' Self Help, 47 units
- Habitat for Humanity on Main at Sacramento Street has 22 units

For a population of fewer than 2,000, this seems to be a disproportionate amount of low income housing, particularly in an area with virtually no public transportation, few local employers and very limited access to medical care.

Thank you for doing the best you can to find a balanced and equitable compromise that the State will accept as our Housing Element while considering Piru's concerns and challenges.

Very Sincerely,

Janet Bergum
Piru Neighborhood Council