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January 16, 2019

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT
Marko Popovich

Sent via email to the City Council and Planning Commission

VICE PRESIDENT
Dorothy Kraus

City Council and Planning Commission
City of Newport Beach
100 Civic Center Drive
Newport Beach, CA 92660

TREASURER
Dennis Baker

SECRETARY
Allan Beek

RE: Newport Crossings Project

Dear Honorable members of the City Council and Planning Commission:

BOARD MEMBERS

Nancy Alston
Dennis Baker
Tom Baker
Bruce Bartram
Allan Beek
Jo Carol Hunter
Dorothy Kraus
Donald Krotee
Andrea Lingle
Elaine Linhoff
Bobby Lovell
Jennifer McDonald
Rita Phillips
Marko Popovich
Jeanne Price
Melinda Seely
Nancy Skinner
Jean Watt
Portia Weiss

Stop Polluting Our Newport (SPON) has been actively engaged with land use planning, community work, policy decisions, and advocacy for nearly 45 years. As residents, we support the kind of growth that is received by the community as being beneficial and maintains our quality of life. Simultaneously, we aim to keep Newport’s infrastructure, views, and very character from being overburdened, and most importantly ensure proposed projects follow the General Plan.

We are strongly opposed to projects which cause negative impacts to Newport Beach’s character, residents, and businesses. Our participation in government takes many forms (community outreach, public process participation, advocacy, initiatives, referenda, and more) and we maintain a robust and diligent membership of local residents, stakeholders, and businesses.

As you are likely aware, for the last year SPON has been hosting community workshops geared toward educating residents on general plans, policies, and using the right tools to achieve win-win outcomes. We call them the General Plan Advisory Committee workshops, with the goal being to achieve optimal and effective public participation in updating the General Plan, which we know you are making progress on.



A 501(c)(3) non-profit public education organization working to protect and preserve the residential and environmental qualities of Newport Beach.

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Although we continue to firmly believe that an updated General Plan, especially a more specific and holistic plan for the Airport Area, is in order before processing and allowing the piecemeal projects that have been proposed, the fact of the matter is that several projects in the Airport Area are making their way through the planning process right now.

At our August 21, 2018 SPON board meeting, we hosted guest speakers from the development team for the **Newport Crossings** project. Although the project is substantial in size and scope, the Newport Crossings development team embraced a collaborative tone, soliciting further discussions to resolve our concerns. As we understand it, the Newport Crossings team has sought a similarly collaborative and solutions-oriented approach with adjacent property owners regarding concerns they may have. After review of the Draft Environmental Impact Report for Newport Crossings we've found there to be limited significant impacts. We simultaneously applaud the Newport Crossings developer's willingness to meet, listen, and resolve concerns *prior to* the project coming before a deciding body. We are especially pleased with the robust affordable housing component and mixed use nature of the project.

This experience is in stark contrast to the approach pursued by another large Airport Area project—the 15-story **Koll Center Residences** condo towers. At this point SPON has had multiple meetings with the development team for Koll Center Residences, as recently as May 24, 2018. We have offered solutions to resolve our concerns to this developer as well, but still there has been no follow up. Since the Airport Area does not have existing residential amenities, it makes it a challenging region and therefore requires careful and thoughtful examination of projects.

The two approaches with these two projects could not be more different. The collaborative approach we experienced with Newport Crossings can mark a good prototype for major project applicants and should be something we all strive for in the future. The “meet, but make no changes” approach from the Koll team did not work for SPON and has the very real potential to lead to a lengthy public process, litigation, and referenda.



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Mindful of this, we ask that the City Council and Planning Commission to encourage staff—when working with development teams of other projects—to embrace a more collaborative approach before their entitlement process begins, to provide more thoughtful project design solutions that reflect community sentiment, and to follow the adopted plans.

Sincerely,

Marko Popovich

President

cc:

City Council
City Clerk
Planning Commission
Jaime Murillo, City of Newport Beach
Rosalin Ung, City of Newport Beach
Sean Matsler, Cox, Castle and Nicholson
Dan Vittone, Starboard Realty

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