

Members of the Emeryville Community

Aug. 29, 2016

RE: Sherwin Williams Proposal; Alternative Site Plan

Dear Members of the Emeryville Community,

As a private citizen and business owner in Emeryville, long active as an architect in its development from an industrial town into a vibrant mixed-use urban center, I am writing to bring to your attention a special opportunity presented by the Sherwin Williams project. The project has the chance to create a significant urban design connection between the east side of Emeryville, the Triangle Neighborhood, and the proposed publicly accessible multi-acre landscaped park at the southwest corner of the site, a new open space intended for the whole community. In the applicant's most recent development plan proposal, the proposed park is bounded by development buildings to the north and east with visual access limited to those structures immediately adjacent to the space and circuitous pedestrian and bicycle access from the street grid to the east. It is a great space but not readily visible or accessible by the rest of the City.

The alternative site plan B proposes to create a "pass-through" for the public at the historic bldg. at Parcel A extending the site-line of 45th St. through its ground floor lobby and continuing with a new open space dividing Parcel B1 into a smaller south building and a larger Parcel B2 building to the north. The impact on the "historic" building would be consistent with an adaptive re-use of the structure in the service of a greater community benefit; conceivably such an adaptation would even enhance the identity of the building contrasting to its existing architecture. This passage could be reserved for pedestrians and bicyclists only, without provision for vehicular traffic. This passage would also require reducing the length of Parcel C building to accommodate a straight sight-line along the length of 45th St. from San Pablo to the new park. This clear line of sight and straight-line flow of pedestrian and bicycle traffic would create a visual axis between the east side of town at San Pablo that faces the Triangle Neighborhood and one block down from the new ECCL, thus uniting a variety of existing assets with the new open space asset planned for Sherwin Williams. 45th St. itself is currently well landscaped with mature trees and runs along the back side of the Pixar campus. (Please see attached maps.)

The advantages of alternative B are:

- 1) It would create a direct East-West link between existing underserved neighborhoods and a major new public park that makes access easy and welcoming.
- 2) It would provide an additional program open space indirectly connected to the ECCL.
- 3) It would enhance accessibility to the park for occupants of Parcel A Bldg. and improve the amenity value of the building.
- 4) It would help to extend the community benefit of the Sherwin Williams project effectively beyond its property lines and across the city.
- 5) It would secure for the project and the City an otherwise permanently lost opportunity to make a categorically superior environment for pedestrians, bicyclists, residents, office tenants, visitors, and even emergency response personnel.

Considerations:

The applicant graciously met with me at the site to review the concept and indicated concerns with the following issues:

- a) Costs related to creating a lobby and physical pass-through space for the public at Parcel A which is an historically protected building. Geometry and size of the opening that would be effective in signaling its public accessibility while preserving adequate leasable lobby space for tenants. (We envision a 2 or 3 bay glass lobby two stories tall that allows for an open air transit across the width of the building at ground level while maintaining a full story of the original envelope that bridges across the third level. A 2nd level glass bridge at the lobby would help to preserve transparency while connecting together the two halves of the second floor.) There are technical challenges of resolving the height difference between the first floor and the street level.
- b) Time delay in arriving at an approval for Alternative B. The applicant has been in the entitlement process for a year and is up against a deadline for securing approvals before the end of 2016. This concept at the 11th hour might delay the calendar of approvals. The applicant would want to have some level of confidence that the Planning Commission and the City Council would support this option. The applicant is unlikely to support anything that will delay the approvals process.
- c) Impact on square footage, unit count, and parking garage configuration for proposal. Alternative B contemplates no reduction in square footage, unit count, or number of parking spaces, however the applicant would have to analyze the detailed dimensional solution that could achieve this.

- d) Interpretation as to the number of additional bonus points such a modification to the present scheme would produce, thus contributing to the applicant's need to generate the requisite number of points for their proposal.

The applicant otherwise noted that they were not necessarily opposed to the concept at that time.

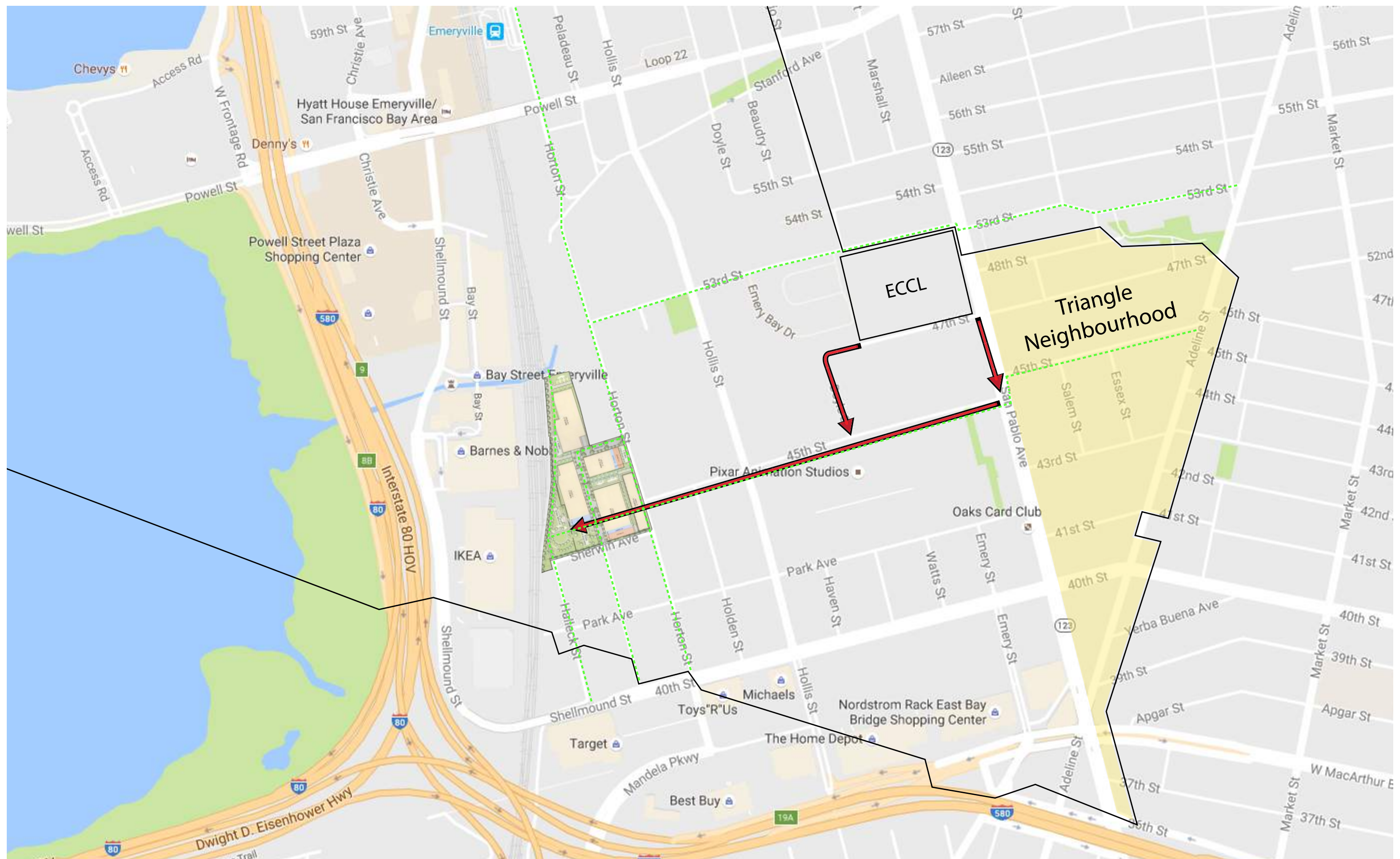
I urge the Planning Commissioners and City Council Members of Emeryville to consider supporting this proposed alternative and to direct the applicant to prepare designs reflecting its incorporation into their development plan.

Opportunities like this rarely present themselves. This is the sort of urban design axis that characterizes all great cities: Rome, Paris, London, Barcelona. This is Emeryville's chance to demonstrate how it recognizes the value that its urban scale physical pathways play in enhancing the lives of its community members.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink, reading "Philip Banta", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Philip Banta



Proposed alternative to allow direct access to proposed park from 45th St.

..... Bicycle



----- Bicycle
----- Pedestrian

A Most recent Site Plan as proposed by Lennar



B Proposed alternative to allow direct access to proposed park from 45th St.



B Proposed alternative to allow direct access to proposed park from 45th St.