



Jefferson Park United Neighbors

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Councilman Rick Garcia
City Council; District One
2785 Speer Blvd., Suite 246
Denver, Colorado 80211

RE: Proposed Re-development of the 6.5-Acre Baby Doe's parcel; Jefferson Park, Denver.

Dear Rick:

This letter updates you on our progress with A.G. Spanos, the California-based developer who has the 6.5-acre Baby Doe's restaurant site under contract for a 357-unit rental project. We continue to work in good faith with Spanos. We have offered that Spanos would receive the approval from Jefferson Park United Neighbors' (JPUN) Land Use Committee for a rezoning to a PUD if Spanos agreed to provide a certain amount of retail, affordable rental and for-sale units.

We are saddened that, based on recent discussions with Bruce O'Donnell (agent for Spanos and a member of the Denver Planning Board), Spanos may choose to attempt to circumvent the public process and build its 357-unit rental property as a *Use by Right* in the Platte River Valley (PRV) zone district, thereby muting the neighborhood's involvement.

JPUN opposes the rezoning; it is our intent not only to outline explicitly why we are opposed to this project as currently proposed, but, in the spirit of constructive dialog, also put forth ways in which we could support this plan.

Jefferson Park is a historic, small neighborhood bordered by Speer Blvd. on the north, the Platte River on the east, Federal Blvd. on the west and Colfax Ave. on the south. The neighborhood is composed of only 2,200 dwelling units. According to the Piton Foundation and other sources, more than 75 percent of the dwelling units are rental units. Spanos proposes a 357-unit, market-rate development comprised entirely of rental apartments on one of the most prominent parcels in our neighborhood. Though Spanos seeks Residential Mixed-Use-30 zoning, the current proposal provides the neighborhood with no retail or commercial space. The provision of a meaningful amount of retail/commercial is a keystone for neighborhood acceptance

At the January JPUN General Membership meeting a draft version of Spanos' plan was opposed by a vote of 68-2. At a February Land Use Committee meeting, agents of Spanos proposed modest revisions to their plan. Although we agree that some progress was made with respect to the design of the building exteriors, we believe that the core issues underlying our opposition to this project were not addressed. Our issues with the scope and scale of the project are the following:

- Neighborhood Impact Jefferson Park is a small neighborhood. This 357-unit project would increase the number of dwelling units by 20 percent and further skew what is already a great imbalance between rental units and owner-occupied units. The scope and impact of this project would be immense on this small neighborhood. Providing retail space and offering for-sale units would mitigate the impact of so many rental units.
- Buffer There is no buffer between this massive project and the most heavily impacted part of the Jefferson Park neighborhood, the historically significant residences along River Drive. Further, although Spanos seeks *Residential Mixed-Use* zoning, they have offered no true retail as part of the project. Retail would help to buffer the Spanos project and integrate it more seamlessly into the neighborhood.
- Scale The texture and the fabric of the project are on a scale that is far too intense for our small neighborhood. The proposed plan fails to respect the small-scale single-family homes that are dominant in Jefferson Park. Despite an attempt at articulation, the Spanos project is essentially two large buildings of nearly 700 feet each. The scale and texture of huge buildings that read, for all of it's nearly half-million square feet, as one really large building with a single uniform look, is out of character with the neighborhood.

The Jefferson Park *Neighborhood Plan* emphasizes that new projects should fit the human scale and character of the neighborhood; that projects should provide retail space, and; that new projects should provide opportunities for those of lesser means to reside in the neighborhood. While we are strongly opposed to the plan in its current form, we continue to work in good faith with the Spanos group. The Land Use Committee of JPUN could support the Spanos rezoning application as a Planned Unit Development (PUD) if the following three, readily-achievable components were added to the Spanos proposal:

- 10,000 to 20,000 square feet of neighborhood-serving retail;
- 80 for-sale units (composed of at least 10-percent deed-restricted units to those earning less than 80-percent of *Area Median Income*), and;
- Ten-percent of the rental units provided to those earning less than 80-percent of *Area Median Income*.

Should the Spanos project meet the three goals of JPUN, (retail space, for-sale units and affordable rental units) the Land Use Committee of JPUN will support a PUD application for the Baby Doe's site. Without meeting these goals at a minimum, it will be very difficult for our neighborhood to get behind this project. (Note that Land Use Committee approval is not tantamount to General Membership approval, but it is an important step.)

Thank you for your continued support of important neighborhood issues such as this.

Sincerely,

Jefferson Park United Neighbors