To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing in regard to the Sid Commons Project, as a concerned citizen and immediate neighbor. I am at a loss of belief that this is still even being considered as it, is considering all of the issues surrounding the development and it’s approval over the course of the last couple years. Itemized concerns listed at the end, and reiteration here of the anxieties that come as a neighbor to this project including the nightmare that would be evacuation should it ever be necessary, the potential of flooding and damage to my home of 10 years, the traffic and so on. I am left feeling overwhelmed with concern, anxiety and questions, and disappointed that it doesn’t seem our public voices are not loud enough. I feel that we have elected officials to be the voice for the people that voted for them. We are the people that put your lawn signs in our yard, because we had attended previous meetings and felt you heard our concerns over this development. This is my voice on our neighborhood’s collective concerns.

I am more concerned that as citizens who have shown up to the meetings year after year and shared our overwhelming concerns regarding the project, it seems if there is enough money thrown at a project it can continue. Now as typical in many homes in our neighborhood, we send one adult to the meeting so that the other can stay with the children at home, I am writing so that I know I filled my civic duty by sharing my increasing concerns.

At what point does growth and development trump the quality of life of the city’s residents? Who is to say that 2,000+ car trips on an unmarked, uncontrolled street (Graylawn) is a comfortable style of living? I moved to Petaluma because it was a small town and our neighborhood is quiet and safe. With two small children and a neighborhood of children, the thought of having an additional 180 residences, considering the apartments will be brand new so assuming a dual income will be necessary – if not more than 2 incomes per residence, and a car per person, this could potentially be 360-450 additional cars on a street that already has issues. Where will all of these cars park? Surely they are not going to have even 1.5 spaces per unit to allow for a typical family with two cars let alone someone has a visitor. Payran cannot handle another stop sign, further disrupting the already nightmarish traffic that can happen on this small street. When will we stop using the ‘housing crisis’ as an excuse to develop and bring more people to a city when the infrastructure cannot support it. Trying to get around town has become riddled with traffic no matter which way you go. I believe this is due to over-development of the area and underdevelopment of the infrastructure to support. Why does our existing, quiet neighborhood have to suffer, so this developer can overdevelop a poorly located complex. With the times changing, these developers will never feel the dread of heaven forbid a 100 year flood or fire happen in our area with already thousands of people pouring out of our neighborhood and immediate surrounding areas onto ONE street? Maybe the development is a good idea for somewhere, but not this location.

Help me understand what is so important about this complex being built that is compromises the quality of life for me, my family, my neighbors and the surrounding area. Why is it so important now, that we go back and overturn an agreement that was made to protect our future selves? Why do we think we know better now, data and reports? Why 40 years ago was one outlet not enough, but today with the area and population growth since is it even being considered? I can obviously see the snowball effect of development in other areas of our city, so I would assume as city
council people you have seen this as well. Why would this new development provide enough parking when they don’t care if our streets become lined with their tenant and guest cars, as they already are with the smaller existing complex? Why do they boast these public parks and areas of recreation when in reality my neighbors and I have been literally chased off the small playground at Oak Creek with our small children in tow? Followed up by being told we cannot even bike through their parking lot. If the challenge is the additional outlet, why not require the developer to come up with one that does not utilize Graylawn/Jess/Payran. I don’t understand why we have to suffer as residents of this town and neighborhood of many years, to essentially double our immediate density with one complex that will not care about being good neighbors, because they take no ownership in the area. It does make a difference. I am proud of my neighborhood, I have loved living on Jess Ave for 10 years, why do I have to consider moving to feel comfortable in my home/neighborhood, so these people who don’t care about our city and neighborhood can move in? Locations sited in the report with similar anticipated traffic if the development were to go through - well, we chose not to move to these areas BECAUSE of the traffic and busy streets. How does it feel okay to strip us, and a whole neighborhood of this choice and impose this adjustment on us?

A listing of my concerns:

➔ Development there will increase flooding risk for both Payran neighborhood and Downtown.

➔ Development there will pave over the large flood-protection area, which has been protected for 38 years and will increase our neighborhood’s flood risk.

• Areas like this are essential in our City’s fight against sea level rise.

• Adding 180+ residences to this area is a disaster in the making.

• Neighborhood is land-locked by railroad chain fence on west and river on east.

• There is only one street out (Payran), which serves thousands more homes beyond our neighborhood. Emergency evacuation was not adequately analyzed in the EIR.

• 1982 flooding only escape for homes near Jess and Graylawn intersection, including Oak Creek was on foot, through the brush, over the railroad tracks. Luckily, there was no SMART fence.

• Future funding for river dredging will be challenging and unlikely, compounding flood risk.

➔ Negative environmental impacts of air and noise pollution and traffic congestion off-set the “green” or “sustainable” sales pitch developer is making.

• Sid Commons is not walkable, bikable or transit-accessible.

• It’s not green or sustainable to pave over land that slows storm water from entering the river, contributing to flooding.

• developer’s promise of a partial-solar and all-electric project is irrelevant because that will soon be a REQUIREMENT for all developments.

➔ Sid Commons will generate 1,650+ cars/day and increase traffic on Payran to 10,000 per day.

• Parked cars lining W. Payran obstruct fields of view and make getting onto the street dangerous.

• Currently very difficult and dangerous to pull out of driveways on Payran.

• Current critical level of side-swiped cars and other assets (signs, posts, trees, trash bins).

➔ Development there will remove City’s 1982 protection of Graylawn Ave. residents.

• More cars will destroy community for seniors who are prone to depression due to isolation.
● Noise and air pollution means no open windows and fresh air for inside homes.

● More traffic endangers children walking to school, play with each other. ○ Children are prone to social disconnection and obesity due to lack of physical activity.

● Child playing w/ others in street was struck by car this past year.

➔ Sid Commons EIR is missing analysis:

● Sediment buildup in the river not studied in EIR.

● Emergency evacuation was not adequately analyzed for Payran in the EIR.

● Impacts combined with Sea Level Rise not studied in EIR.

● New weather patterns of Atmospheric Rivers not included in EIR hydro model.
  ○ Sonoma County #1 in Atmospheric Rivers damage in 11 Western States: $5B in damages.

● Impacts on the Army Corps Flood Project not analyzed in EIR.
  ○ “Terracing” the river here put hydraulic pressure on the concrete weir/dam, which is key in Army Corps Flood Wall, which City paid $100 million for.

➔ Development there will remove the City’s 1982 protection of Heritage Oak Trees.

● Developer only says they will “evaluate” not cutting down.

● We all saw what happened with Baywood Oak trees: developer cut them down in violation and suffered no/minimal consequences.

➔ If this development causes the return of flooding in the Payran area, this will burden the City with risk liability of class action flood lawsuits.

Thank you for your time, and we look forward to attending Tuesday’s meeting.

Becky Sarlatte