

BAREC / Win6 Development concerns

The BAREC site is the last 6-acres of undeveloped land for miles in any direction. With all the other “modern” development around this site (over 3 million square feet of retail, housing and office), don’t you think that we could create something that honors our heritage as an agricultural community and points to the future of more sustainable land use? The current plan is over 12 years old. It creates the usual fenced-off living environment for our seniors in 165 “apartments” of 500 square feet each. There is nothing else on the site! This land plan fails to connect in any way to the surrounding community. Is this how we would like to see this last piece of vacant land developed?

The City is going through a process right now to select a developer for this site. Unfortunately, the City’s “Request For Proposals” (RFP) has conditions that will make innovative development impossible: like, preference is given to Charities Housing and Methodist Retirement as the “developers of choice” for the senior housing; or, the City’s failure to recognize the need to assess the environmental impacts of a new development plan; or the failure to engage the community in shaping the final development plan. This “request for proposals” is just going through the motions because it sets constraints which squelch innovation. But, these and other constraints could change if the City Council took charge and directed the City Staff to open up the selection process to new ideas and new development plans.

This site could be developed to integrate senior and market rate housing, food production, a farmers market, artisan shops, and public gathering places. Which land plan would you rather have: a typical fenced community or a plan where seniors can thrive?

The City Council needs to hear from you. The developer selection process needs to encourage, not discourage, innovation. Here are some suggestions:

Email address: mayorandcouncil@santaclaraca.gov
Suggested Subject line: **BAREC RFP – 90 N Winchester Blvd.**

- Change the BAREC RFP from a mere formality in a process that has already been decided to one that genuinely solicits new ideas.
- Open up the process for more senior housing developers than just Charities Housing and Methodist Retirement
- Recognize that a new development plan will require environmental analysis that will make it impossible to start construction by January 2017. The City needs to commit to provide leadership to streamline this process.
- Engage the community in finding out what they want to see, instead of just going through the motions.

