



**Independent, locally owned and operated!**

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Published November 4th, 2015

## Slow Moving Project Making Progress

*By Cathy Tyson*

Developments taking ages before final approval seems to be trending in Lafayette. Lennar Homes first had study sessions in 2013 for a then 47-unit project at the corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Dolores Drive, the site of Celia's, plus two adjacent parcels that total two acres, which garnered a very unenthusiastic response from the Design Review Commission at the time.

The applicant recently unveiled a completely reconfigured, larger 66-unit design at a DRC meeting featuring three three-story buildings with an underground parking garage, anchored by a restaurant on the corner. This time around, it reaped some compliments, but also some suggestions for improvements. Residences in the proposed project will be for sale and include 26 two-bedroom and 32 three-bedroom units, with only 8 one-bedroom units.

Finding a balance between what Lennar wants and city concerns has centered on ingress and egress. Both the Circulation Commission and DRC evaluated plans and provided comments in 2014. At that point, the DRC let Lennar know that they would hold off on their critique until "appropriate access points" were spelled out.

Traffic, access and parking have been challenging from the start. Lennar took input from staff, neighbors and adjacent commercial property owners to heart and came up with a new and improved version of the project with a shared driveway on the far western edge of the property that calls for a traffic signal. Access from narrow sloping Dolores Drive has been nixed as well as a driveway in the middle of the block. The Circulation Commission approved this change in September 2015.

Owners of long-time Lafayette business Diamond Kay across the street still have concerns about how the project would affect their customers and deliveries, and urged commissioners to rethink the proposed angled parking along Mt. Diablo Boulevard.

At the Oct. 13 meeting planning staff explained their support for angled parking instead of parallel parking as it does not create needed additional on-street spaces. There are currently nine existing on-street parallel spaces, while there could be 21 angled spaces, a net gain of 12 new spaces.

The most recent feedback from commissioners praised the design team on their progress with the new plans, as well as working with neighbors, but still suggested improvements to make it feel more village-like and less monumental - more intimate and warm.

One resident called the newest iteration "frankly uninspiring" - something that could be found in Emeryville or Irvine.

The applicant is continuing to work on the project and will be back with more adjustments to this version that will return for more review in the new year.

Reach the reporter at: [cathy@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:cathy@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA