



Transit village approved for South Hayward BART

By Eric Kurhi
The Daily Review

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HAYWARD — A key mixed-use project surrounding the South Hayward BART station won unanimous approval from the City Council on Tuesday, while the developer acknowledged that given the economic climate, exactly when it will go up remains anyone's guess.

The 12-acre area along Dixon Street near Tennyson Road and Mission Boulevard will ultimately be turned into a transit-friendly village, with 788 high-density residential units above retail space. More than 200 of those units would be reserved for low-income seniors and families, through a partnership with Hayward-based nonprofit developer Eden Housing.

Connecticut-based developer Kurt Wittek, who partnered with football great

Joe Montana on the \$300 million project, thanked the city for moving forward quickly on the required zoning change and preliminary plan approval that were granted Tuesday.

And he said that by teaming with Eden Housing, they are looking at "the only type of construction that can get financed these days."

But he added that tough economic times add uncertainty to the project's timeline.

"We can only do what the market allows, when the market allows us to do it," Wittek said. "We are assuming that the world is not going to remain where it is indefinitely."

The project will be completed in phases, the first of which involves building a Safeway store with affordable housing and senior apartments above it. Wittek said they are still negotiating rent terms with Safeway, and that the earliest they hope to start building that part would be late 2010.

Later phases include a large BART parking garage that would be seven stories tall, with 910 spaces. That would make up for about 70 percent of the

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1,200 spaces lost in the current surface-level parking, which will be used for most of the mixed-use development.

The large BART lot was cause for concern from council members, who feared it could turn out to be an eyesore, detracting from the value of the housing units.

"There's a lesson to be learned in Dublin about what can happen if you build a terrible-looking garage structure," said Councilwoman Barbara Halliday.

Lee Williamson, who lives in a nearby mobile home park, said he is concerned about the height of the garage and about people parking on nearby streets.

"Back in the day, when more people had jobs, you couldn't find a space at the BART station lot after 10 a.m.," he said. "It made street parking difficult for residents."

Details on the design of the parking garage still need to be worked out, and a Wittek-Montana representative said they are looking into ways of making it aesthetically pleasing.

As far as the street parking, an

additional report from BART is expected, and a plan still needs to be developed regarding where an interim lot can be set up during construction.

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