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Reno, Nevada 89509

Appellant Team Member

Date: April 20, 2025

RE: LDC24-00016 Plumas Redevelopment-Item 1.1 April 23,2025

To: Mayor Schieve and Council Members,

The following is a rebuttal to Andy Durling from Wood Rogers correspondence regarding appellant meetings and written community concerns.

As a member of the appellant's team, I appreciate your decision to allow constituents a 90-day period to collaborate with the developer and seek mutually agreeable compromises and solutions for the proposed 273-unit apartment project.

I was optimistic; however, the outcome did not address the concerns of the community. At the start of our third meeting, we encountered strong resistance from TT and their attorney regarding: McCarran egress, Fire safety, Lakeside egress, Safety and traffic concerns for the Lakeridge neighborhood, Plumas and McCarran congestion.

Summary:

The appellant was given 90 days to collaborate with TT. The purpose was to discuss fire evacuation safety, issues on McCarran Blvd., Plumas and the exit on Lakeside. Safety concerns for cars exiting Lakeridge Terrace community, Lakeridge Green community, traffic, congestion, and vehicle volume related to this project.

The appellant sought to discuss the architectural design and height specifications of the proposed four and five-story buildings.

Terry Rupert and her team attended the first zoom meeting, providing suggestions and examples for architectural consideration. Terry said she was unavailable for the next meeting although her team was. Due to developer's urgency and the attorney's request to include the proposal in the early March City Council agenda, meetings were scheduled without the appellant but included the appellant's team, the developer and her attorney.

Meeting 1: The appellant's team submitted architectural and color examples to TT. Any plan changes made by TT were expected by the appellant team a day or two before the next meeting. The plan changes were received 15 minutes prior to our meeting, leaving no time for review or comments.

Meeting 2: Our team requested Grading Plans, Renderings, and Cross Sections. The request was met with frustration although provided. By providing the fore mentioned suggested that TT was open to working with us on changes. Significant time was spent improving and creating possibilities to reduce the apartments monolithic presence. The 3rd meeting was scheduled though the appellant remained unavailable.

The 3rd meeting was shut down before the appellants team was given an opportunity to present their work. Thompson Thrift's attorney refused further discussion. Naomi Duerr made efforts to provide suggestions, though shared, were not accepted.

In my opinion, the developer did not focus on improving the building beyond cosmetic enhancements. This significant 4/5 story apartment building should not have received planning approval.

The appellant's team consists of accomplished professionals who are instrumental in the economic development of Reno. The team includes: a commercial landscaper, a real estate broker, an investor specializing in commercial property, which includes apartment buildings, an educator/administrator and a retired ER nurse.

Correspondence and rebuttal:

A. Below is a bullet list of concerns that the Appellant and the neighbors raised, followed by Thompson Thrift's response. **Followed by one of the appellants teams responses in bold lettering.**

1. Architectural Design Modifications

Numerous modifications have been made to the buildings' exterior design, color, and materials. See attached response to Lakeridge Committee Concerns and "Before and Revised" renderings.

The architect for TT received concepts and suggestions for color and architectural changes from our team. TT built something almost identical in Florida. We were scheduled to see plan changes before meeting 2, but they arrived 15 minutes prior to our meeting. The delay did not allow sufficient time for review. Additionally, the architect has not been to Reno and or the property.

2. Decrease Density

We have considered your request; however, we have reduced density from the current approval of 34 d/u per acre and 314 units to 29 d/u per acre and 273 units, which is less than permitted at 45 d/u per acre and 419 units. Any further reduction makes the project economically unfeasible.

This apartment building has 429 bedrooms, the condominiums had 437 bedrooms. The volume and congestion of vehicles are influenced by the number of bedrooms and residents rather than units.

3. Decrease Building Height

We have considered your request; however, our buildings are less than the allowable height (max.65 ft/5 stories). Given the site's grade constraints, the 55-foot building height at the rear of Building 1 is necessary to accommodate daylight basement units needed to meet target density. (Ref. cross sections provided in "Before and Revised" exhibit

A commercial landscaper with numerous years of experience worked diligently and spent considerable time reviewing the grading plan, cross sections, and retaining walls. It took significant effort to devise solutions to reduce the visual impact of this large apartment building. On Meeting 3 there was no consideration to discuss these possible solutions. The attorney stated there would be no further negotiations. We were subjected to aggressive behavior by TT's attorney, whose conduct was highly inappropriate and unprofessional.

4. Access onto McCarran

On April 28th 2021 the existing egress onto McCarran Blvd. was approved for the condominiums. There are currently 12 entrances and exits onto eastbound McCarran Blvd. between Plumas and Kietzke Ln.

We have considered your request and presented it to RTC. We met with RTC representatives and city staff on March 3rd to suggest an entrance onto McCarran from our site. Existing access separation (Plumas to Lakeridge) does not meet minimum standard requirements. Therefore, NDOT / RTC would not support an additional mid-block access. (Ref. attached NDOT standards and spacing exhibit.)

On April 28th 2021 Loren Chilson, an engineer from Headway pointed out the approved egress/exit onto MCCARRAN from the condominium property. Andy Durling from Wood

Rogers spoke at this meeting stating; “The McCarran egress would help with the impending congestion from the development.” The infrastructure in this area does not accommodate the volume of vehicles this PROJECT will bring to Plumas St. Plumas St. is a neighborhood artery with only 2 lanes.

5. Restrict Access onto Lakeside We have considered your request, however the existing driveway onto Lakeside is owned by the multifamily development to the south. Our project is granted an access easement. City staff is not requiring any restrictions for this access nor would our neighbors voluntarily restrict their existing access.

The unrestricted turn from McCarran onto Lakeside poses a significant safety risk, with the potential for accidents. This area experiences heavy traffic from school vehicles, children walking to school, and distracted drivers. Additionally, the nearby Starbucks generates substantial traffic on Lakeside. It raises questions regarding the Planning Commissions’ approval of this project.

6. Regrade Site to Lower Building Elevations

Not possible. This site has tremendous grade issues with a fall of 30+ feet from the Plumas entrance to the Lakeside entrance. Wood Rodgers has invested a lot of time, effort, and creative problem solving to arrive at the proposed grading/site plan.

Suggestions from an experienced commercial landscaper were not accepted at meeting 3. The developer and her attorney dismissed suggestions to reduce the impact of this structure, with the attorney treating us disrespectfully and condescendingly, and unprofessionally.

7. Provide Grading Plan, Elevations, Renderings, and Cross Sections Completed. Thompson Thrift and Wood Rodgers prepared and provided the requested information.

Thompson Thrift provided plans and renderings, showing willingness to consider our input. A member of the appellant’s team collected the plans and spent considerable time on the project. Despite presenting her findings, neither the developer nor her attorney engaged in any conversation.

8. Design for future McCarran Widening McCarran improvement plans are currently at 15% design and plan to get to 30% this summer. Wood Rodgers will revise our site plan following City Council approval to plan for the future widening.

The widening of McCarran has been planned for a considerable period. Why weren’t the apartment plans designed to accommodate this change. We were misled about mature trees concealing the large construction. It is regrettable that we have all been deceived.

B. Thompson Thrift's proposal exceeds the following City of Reno development standards:

1. Increased Setbacks

- a. Code requires min. 10-foot building setback
- b. Provided 80-foot building setback

The setbacks are essential components of the building's infrastructure, rather than being considerations for achieving a harmonious outcome.

2. Increased Parking

- a. Applied our 1:1 parking ratio standard
- b. 437 spaces provided; 305 spaces required by City code.

429 rooms, max 858 persons. (See Plumas Redevelopment Conditional Use Permit for these numbers) Additional parking is necessary for this building. Vehicles may seek out additional parking in the neighborhoods where streets already have a high volume of cars.

3. Increased Trees

- a. 309 trees provided; 219 trees required by City code
- b. Will replace trees that will be removed to accommodate McCarran widening in the future.

TT, Planning Commission, and Wood Rogers claimed the large established trees would help shield the structure from the street. However, these trees will be removed due to McCarran's widening. Will they be replaced with mature trees or replaced at all?

4. Increased Landscaping

- a. Provided one (1) additional acre of landscaping above what is required by code

5. Decreased Density:

The statement provided is incorrect. There will be 429 bedrooms in this project. The condominiums had 438 bedrooms; this represents a minor adjustment.

- a. Decreased from current approval of 45 d/u per acre to 29 d/u per acre (max. 45 d/u per acre permitted)

b. Decreased number of units from 314 to 273 (max. 419 permitted)

Misleading, the units may be fewer, but there are 429 bedrooms, which is only 9 bedrooms fewer than the condominiums.

6. Decrease in Traffic Impacts

a. Reduced average daily vehicle trips from current approval

429 bedrooms = 429 cars. This development aims to attract 30-year-olds, who are likely to have cars. The apartment is not within walking distance to grocery stores, bus stops or shopping centers. What measures will be implemented to manage traffic?

a. Reduced delay times at intersections from current approval: **Could you please provide an explanation? The traffic study has not been clarified by NDOT/RTC despite inquiries.**

Thank you for your time and efforts,

Jori Benjamin
Appellant team member

Date: April 20, 2025

RE: LDC24-00016 Plumas Redevelopment - Item I.1 April 23, 2025

Dear Mayor Sheive and Reno City Council Members,

I am a near neighbor of the proposed project referenced above, and I acknowledge that a project will be built here, someday. I am writing to ask you to please *vote for the Appellant* in the Plumas Development project, and to *REJECT Thompson Thrift's (TT's) proposal* to build 4- and 5-story apartment buildings at the Lakeridge Tennis Club site for the following reasons:

1. **Fire evacuation safety.** It will not be possible to safely evacuate the additional people, animals, and cars from the existing homes in Reno's entire south and western side when (not if!) the next wildfire occurs. Presently, *only two streets can evacuate these adjacent residents to McCarren Boulevard to flee an incoming fire.* Adding hundreds of additional people, animals, and vehicles to the already overburdened intersections of *Lakeside Dr. (rated 'E') and Plumas Street (rated 'F' on a scale of 'A' - 'F')* is courting disaster!

When, not if, the next major fire hits this part of town, people and animals will die, property will be lost, and all eyes will be on the Reno City Council, who approved this debacle of a project that clogged the roads and brought even more cars to an already failed traffic design. Do not forget the lessons we must learn from the recent Paradise, Lahaina, Alta Dena, and Pacific Paradise fires. Reno does not have to be next!

2. **Any project to be built here must have redesigned vehicular traffic entries and exits** to allow ingress and egress for eastbound cars on McCarren Bl. Thompson Thrift says *they cannot do this*, even though an existing entry/exit on McCarren already sets this precedent.
3. Thompson Thrift says *they cannot redesign nor reconfigure the Lakeside Dr. entry/exit* because it doesn't belong to them. If that is true, then they have no business designing a project where *hundreds of people's lives depend on a ladder truck accessing the site from Lakeside Drive on the east, while at the same time, this entry/exit must evacuate hundreds of cars from this site. The present configuration of that vehicular entry is insufficient to do either, much less both at the same time!* If you haven't seen it, I urge you to do so and take a ladder truck there to have it tested! That "S" curve was only designed to access a few parking spaces, not an entire development when it was built!

4. Thompson Thrift's entire defense of their project is based on comparing it to what was previously approved. **This new project has nothing to do with the previously approved project**, yet all the applicant can do is compare itself with it. We all know the previous project configuration will never be built. Therefore, any design up for approval before you must meet Reno City Code criteria ***on its own merit.***

5. **This project does NOT meet the compatibility requirement findings.**

NOTE: Even though the zoning regulations for City of Reno changed in Jan. 2025, I am proceeding with my analysis based on what was applicable at the time of the proposed project's submittal.

At the previous presentation, the Case Planner *failed* to come up with a definition of "compatible", saying "there was no quantifiable criteria for the Commissioners to go by when determining compatibility or sustainability, and that compatibility is "to coexist with the surrounding without conflict." However, ***there is a quantifiable definition given in the Reno City Code***, as copied below in blue typeface, (bold, underlined, and italicized black or red font has been added by me):

Reno Land Development Code: Chapter 18.12 GENERAL DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN STANDARDS, Article III. SITE AND BUILDING DESIGN STANDARDS
Latest version.

(a) **Applicability.** The provisions of this section **apply to residential site development or redevelopment where the original subdivision is over 30 years old, and where a majority of property within 600 feet has been developed** **This applies to this project!**

(b) Purpose. It is the general intent to have new structures placed on the site so as to recreate and/or **maintain the typical setback pattern and architecture established in the neighborhood.** **This applies to but DOES NOT reflect the applicant's project!**

(c) Front Yard Setbacks. The front yard setback of any principal structure for new construction should be equal to that front yard setback of the existing structures on either side of the proposed building site. If the principal structures on each of the abutting sites have two different front yard setbacks, then the new principal structure shall be preferably set back at the same setback as the abutting principal structure that is closest to the street; and the maximum setback for the new principal structure shall not exceed the setback of the largest setback of the abutting existing structure. See

Figure 18.12-10. This applies to the applicant, but none of us are able to evaluate this due to the future, inevitable, already preliminarily designed, widening of McCarren Bl, which will reduce the construction setback from McCarren Bl. The Applicant has refused to show this on their site plan because it will dramatically impact the view from McCarren for thousands of Reno residents passing by and adversely affect the adjacent property owner's daily quality of life. Thomson Thrift says they will "revise their site plan after the City Council approves the project". But HOW CAN YOU APPROVE A PROJECT WHO'S SITE PLAN DOES NOT SHOW WHAT WILL BE BUILT???

(d) Compatibility Findings. In reviewing a building permit, ALL OF the following findings must be made:

(1) *The proposed development fits within the established pattern of building height and setback for the area.* This applies to and DOES NOT reflect the applicant's project! The proposed project is at least twice as tall, monolithic in appearance, bulk, and mass, and multiple times the size of any adjacent existing building in the entire area.

(2) *At least one of the following:*

a. The *building and roof style conform to the established style in the area;* or . This applies to and DOES NOT reflect the applicant's project! The proposed project is at least twice as tall, with a flat roof, monolithic in appearance, bulk, and mass, and multiple times the size of any adjacent existing buildings in the area.

b. There is no particular established building and roof style in the area. Actually, there is—the existing residential roof styles are compatible, making the neighborhood cohesive and compatible. This project's building and roof style do not reflect nor are they compatible with the existing neighborhood.

c. The proposed development represents a creative opportunity to improve or contribute to the quality of the neighborhood. This DOES NOT reflect the applicant's project! The proposed project does not contribute to the quality of the neighborhood. It decreases the desirability of this established, high-end neighborhood and will lower its real estate values. Thompson Thrift tries to capitalize on the "Class A" rating of this existing neighborhood, which is due *exclusively* to the qualities these residents have built over time, including the stores, parks, open spaces, schools, jobs, low crime rate, and % of ownership to rental units. THE EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING THIS A "CLASS A" PROPERTY, and this project will do nothing but degrade what the existing homeowners have

built! WE made that possible and WE want it to stay that way! SO WE HAVE A RIGHT TO DEMAND A COMMENSURATE PROJECT BE BUILT IN THIS LOCATION!!!

(3) The proposed development incorporates design features, architectural details, materials and building massing common to the area. **I REPEAT: This DOES NOT reflect the applicant's project! The proposed project is at least twice as tall, with a flat roof, monolithic in appearance, bulk, and mass, and multiple times the size of any adjacent existing building in the area.**

(e) Allowed Modifications. Variances shall not be required for modification of principal building setbacks if necessary to achieve compliance with this section. **If a variance has been granted to make this project proposal possible, it should be rescinded, as there is no way this project can achieve compliance with this section!**

Bottom Line: this project is NOT compatible with this neighborhood, per the CITY OF RENO Land Development Code: Chapter 18.12 GENERAL DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN STANDARDS, Article III. SITE AND BUILDING DESIGN STANDARDS.

6. We did not get a chance to rebut the applicant's last presentation, where they said (several times) that there was a five-story Wells Fargo bank building right across the street. **There is no such thing!** It is three stories tall with exceptionally wide setbacks for each story, (as opposed to the absolutely vertical massing of the proposed architecture with zero horizontal setbacks! **Wells Fargo Bank building across Plumas Street is categorically NOT a five-story building.** So to say this project is compatible with the neighborhood is at best a stretch of any definition of imagination, and at worst a **bald-faced lie!**

No matter if an ill-gotten variance or modification in the building code would allow a taller, more dense project, it would only mean that such a monstrosity in this neighborhood would be ***even more ludicrously incompatible!*** **Just because you can doesn't mean you should!!!**

If you approve such an incompatible project, the uproar and intensity from this community will be fierce. This neighborhood is active, remembers who does what when it counts – and we vote!

According to the Code, this project MUST make ALL the findings of compatibility, and you MUST deny it if it does not! This proposed project is as far from what exists in this neighborhood as possible! Regardless that Thompson Thrift's architects (who have never even been to Reno) changed the façade to be almost *identical* to an apartment building Thompson Thrift built in Sarasota, Florida, called The Concord, please don't feel they have gone above and beyond the call of cooperation to do so to try to be good neighbors. Why would they try to build a sea-level south Florida building

in the Sierra Nevada foothills? Talk about an incompatible project!

Require the project built on this site to stand on its own merit and reflect the community it is to be built in—and this one does NOT—in so many ways! We need a project at this site that reflects and honors this existing “Class A” rated neighborhood, not a cookie-cutter generic building you can find anywhere, which will only detract from this neighborhood!

Please vote ***for the Appellant*** in the Plumas Development project, and ***REJECT Thompson Thrift’s proposal to build 4- and 5-story apartment buildings*** at the Plumas Redevelopment site.

Thank you for voting to reject this project, even if it isn’t what the Reno budget balancers, Thompson Thrift’s lobbyists, influence peddlers, or special interest representatives want you to do. I know Thompson Thrift has offered to “*make a financial contribution toward a neighborhood improvement*”, but ***I sincerely hope your vote can’t be bought!*** Make the project that gets built here worthy of the site, and of the neighbor’s ***(YOUR CONSTITUENTS’)*** approval!

Whatever gets built, will be here long after we’re gone, so make it the best it can be, even if that means waiting for a different project that is actually compatible with the neighborhood. (This is not it!) Thank you!

Sincerely,

Marianne Merriam
8600 Lakeside Dr.
Reno, NV 89511

