

To the Mayor, City Council members, and members of the Planning Commission:

On October 10, 2022, the Venetian Golf and River Club Community Association board voted unanimously to support the contents of the attached letter, written by the Venetian Property Owners Association (POA) and submitted to both the Venice Planning Commission and Venice City Council on August 31, 2022. This letter addressed the proposed commercial development planned to be directly across from the entrance to our community on Laurel Road near the junction with Jacaranda Blvd.

The Venetian Golf and River Club Community Association (www.vgrcca.us) was established in 2008 and serves as an advocate for our community of almost 1,400 households. We respectfully ask that you consider our position when making a decision on this important development issue affecting our community.

Thank you,
Roger Efron, President

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8/31/2022

To Planning Commission and City Council Members,

This letter is a follow-up to the message the Venetian Golf & River Club ("Venetian") Property Owners Association ("POA") provided during the City Council meeting of May 24, 2022. At that time, our message concerned the proposed new Land Development Regulations, with clear focus on how the new regulations would affect our community. We made our point, clearly referencing the Commercial Development proposal that the developer, Pat Neal, had presented to our community in early March. With the filing of the Application to Amend the Milano PUD submitted to Zoning & Planning on June 14, 2022, this issue is no longer just a proposal. The Property Owners Association Board, in collaboration with the Venetian Community Association Board, opposes this Commercial Development for the reasons enumerated below.

The VGRC POA and Community Association Boards conducted a joint, professional survey of our community, with the response being that a large percentage of residents oppose the proposed Commercial Development. A number of those people have appeared in front of City Council clearly communicating that message in letters, emails and press articles. Our community opposition message is grounded in the fact that the proposed development is incompatible with the existing and future development of adjacent and nearby lands outside the Milano PUD. As such, the proposed zoning modification would "adversely influence living conditions in the neighborhood" that residents of both the Venetian and Milano PUDs were seeking when the PUD applications were originally approved by the City of Venice. It should be noted that neither of those original Milano PUD Applications contained any indication of a Commercial Use being included.

We do understand that 86-130 (r) of the Land Development Code, allows for up to 5% of area to be dedicated to commercial use. We also understand the developer, like any property owner, has rights. As indicated immediately below, the **clear intent** of that language, though, is that "Commercial uses located in a PUD (as proposed in the Milano PUD), are intended to serve the needs of the PUD and not the general needs of the surrounding area (other developments or region). As further clarification of the intent, "areas designated for commercial activities normally **shall not front on exterior or perimeter streets**, but **shall be centrally located within the project** to serve the residents of **the PUD.**"

(r) *Commercial uses.* Commercial uses located in a PUD are intended to serve the needs of the PUD and not the general needs of the surrounding area. Areas designated for commercial activities **normally** shall not front on exterior or perimeter streets, but shall be centrally located within the project to serve the residents of the PUD.

If not for the word 'normally' being included in the regulation, there would be no interpretation issue. Developers know the intent of the ordinance. The City knows the intent of the ordinance. Only after Neal Communities received approval for his Milano PUD, did he then try to justify one Commercial Development serving the 5,000-6,000 new homes that have or will be built "within the surrounding area." Additionally, after conducting a Public Workshop on January 6, 2022, Mr. Neal revised the proposed retail store options, including an even more incompatible option of a Convenience Store with Gas Pumps in the application he filed on June 14, 2022. Nowhere in the City of Venice PUD Standards are "Gas Pumps or Gas Stations" found in the Permitted Principal Uses and Structures list. Most shopping centers are "normally" located in areas zoned for commercial activities or are located centrally within a large Residential Development to serve that development. Gas stations are, as well. The one proposed for the Milano PUD does not meet the "normal" consideration and, more importantly, does not meet the intent of the ordinance.

As has been communicated by a number of our residents, there are traffic flow concerns entering and exiting our community, as Laurel Road is expanded to four lanes near our entrance. This is especially a concern if a Commercial Development is added, as proposed. We understand that a traffic light is likely to be placed at the corner of Jacaranda and Laurel to support the Fire and Rescue station and, as a result, one may not be able to be included at Veneto and Laurel. Furthermore, we have been told that there is insufficient room for a round-about at our Veneto entrance and we believe that is good news for our community. This would leave the potential for only indirect ways of turning left out of or into our community, if the Commercial Development is built. The design of this exit and entrance area is of great concern to us, as noted during the August 23 City Council meeting comments we jointly made with our Community Association. Special attention will need to be paid to ingress and egress along Laurel Road as it is expanded and as it approaches our Veneto Boulevard entrance. Because of the combination of the Laurel Road expansion and the proposed Commercial Development, we are considering the hiring of a Traffic Engineer to confirm the impact of the combination of these projects. Lastly, with the water that is in the area, including the proximity of Myakka River, we have a real concern for drainage of water from the site of the proposed Commercial Development.

To reiterate, we urge you to join us in opposing this Commercial Development which is incompatible as noted in the Land Development codes and adversely influences the living conditions in the neighborhood and the surrounding residential area.

Respectfully,
William E. Schaid
President, VGRC Property Owners Association