

April 2, 2022

TO: **The Planning & Economic Development Commission (PEDC)**, Town of Mammoth Lakes
Chairman Vanderhurst, Vice Chair Burrows, Commission Chang, Commissioner Kennedy

CC: Mayor Salcido, Council Member Rea, Council Member Wentworth, Council Member Sauser,
Council Member Stapp, Director Mobley

FROM: Robert Frichtel, San Joaquin Villas, E2

SUBJECT: Villas III Development – Quality of Life

Commissioners Vanderhurst, Burrows, Chang, & Kennedy,

I am deeply concerned about the proposed Villas III duplexes (units 22-25) directly behind my home. I live at 61 Callahan Way, in San Joaquin Villas Unit E2 with my wife Andrea and our 2 children, Lila (9) and Zeke (7). I work at Mammoth Hospital as a Purchasing Analyst and have been employed there full-time since March 2017, and my wife works at the hospital also. Our children go to school at Mammoth Elementary. Andrea and I chose to move to Mammoth Lakes in 2016 to increase our family's quality of life, to enjoy a supportive community, and to participate as active community members.

Mammoth Lakes is a family orientated community with natural beauty and open spaces, which was a large draw for us to move here. We did not want to feel crowded and wanted a quiet and stable location to recharge after work and help our children with schoolwork and learning. We looked for a place with dependable neighbors and a healthy environment. We were very happy to find and buy our SJV home and it has been a wonderful place. Up until now.

The planned Villas III units 22-25 will be 30' from our home and will have a very negative impact on my family. I am very concerned about their property's **noise at night, nightly renters, loss of sunlight and increased shade, loss of privacy, negative impact to our emotional state, increased heating expenses, and dangerous ice in our emergency exit.** If these 2 duplexes are built the **Quality of Life drops significantly for my family and my neighbors.**

IF units 22-25 are built just feet from our home:

Noise. Their conversations, parties, music, and TV noises from residents and overnight renters will keep us up at night and wake us up. Open windows and their 2nd floor balconies will be a never-ending source of disturbed sleep and rest for my family and me. We go to bed between 8pm and 10pm nightly, and everyone in my family wakes up for work or school at 5:30am daily. Noise near our bedroom windows will be a huge problem. Poor sleep will affect our children's learning, and poor sleep will decrease our performance at the hospital where Town residents need us at our best.

Use Permit. The application for overnight rentals should be denied. Overnight renters right behind us will be a huge problem, and all the Commissioners talked about their own problems with overnight renters at the February 9 PEDC hearing. Renters come and go at all hours of the night and are loud and increasingly disrespectful of Town residents, and Villas III renters will not know that SJV is workforce

housing. Transient use creates so much unpredictability for us residents - when will we be woken up? When can we enjoy our home in privacy?

The Lodestar Master Plan does not guaranty transient use rentals for this land, and this Villas III development **does not inherently have the right for overnight rentals**. This development will only be allowed transient use renters IF the PEDC chooses to approve the Use Permit. How can the PEDC vote for the Use Permit when it causes so many negative mental and physical health affects to my family and SJV residents? Before a Use Permit can be approved the Town's code requires that it "not be **detrimental to the public health... in the vicinity because of transient use.**" SJV residents are definitely "in the vicinity" and the thought of transient use is causing extreme levels of emotional distress, sleepless nights, and mental health concerns for SJV residents. If approved, our health is jeopardized.

Privacy. We will lose all sense of Privacy in our own homes. These Villas III units will have balconies and windows that face directly into our bedrooms and living room. Why build multi-million-dollar homes staring into workforce housing? As permanent full-time residents we need our privacy at home to rest and "recharge." One of our favorite weekend activities is relaxing on our deck in the morning, enjoying family time with our coffee and sunshine. If built, our privacy will be completely lost. Their balconies and windows stare down on SJV decks, and the units block our sunshine.

Sunlight. If built, these duplexes will block all rays of sunshine to our home in winter, and most of the time in fall and spring. We will be in constant shadow and our home will be much colder. The lack of sunlight will likely affect our children emotionally. There is a common disease called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) that is caused by too little sunlight that we want to avoid. Medical research proves that SAD is a type of depression, and it makes concentrating and learning difficult for children and adults. Daylight is already limited from Fall to Spring, especially here at Mammoth's elevation. These 2 duplexes will be a WALL over 100' wide x 35' tall that blocks the sun and puts us in the shadows.

Shadows. In addition to the duplexes blocking our sunlight, the snow piled up on their roofs will block more sunlight and cast larger shadows. There is very little pitch to these Villas III duplexes and snow is going to accumulate by 3, 4, maybe 6 feet or more. SJV's roofs have a high pitch but they are still covered with 3' to 4' of snow in winter before the roof is cleared by professional snow removal crews. After a big storm these roof crews are in short supply and high demand across Town. Any kind of true shadow analysis needs to factor in the added roof snow throughout winter into spring.

Heating Expenses. To state the obvious, all the shade from these duplexes will block the sun's radiant heat, and our home will become significantly colder. Our home's heating expenses will go much higher, and this is negative for our budget. These higher costs won't only impact E2, all my SJV workforce housing neighbors in the E and D buildings will pay higher bills too. Some neighbors already work with a very tight budget, and higher heating bills will make it worse.

Snow. These 2 duplexes, if built, would run parallel to our building for over 100' and stand only 20' from our property. Our backyard will be buried in snow all winter and spring. Snow from their 35' tall roofs will blow off into my yard and deck. When their roofs are cleared of snow, their roof closest to SJV will unavoidably be shoveled towards us. I know the Staff Report says those roofs will slope away from SJV, but this misses the point. When roofs are cleared that snow piles up away from their building and those

snow piles will often be 10' - 15' tall. Those Villas III piles of snow will fall and expand onto SJV property that is only 20' away.

Shoveling. I already spend many mornings shoveling snow from my back deck after storms and roof clearings (See Attached Photo). As an example, SJV's roofs get so much snow they must be cleared multiple times every winter when 3' to 4' of snow piles up. This was needed twice during this past December's storms. (See Attached Photos of our deck that faces south). As a full-time employee at the hospital and full-time father I don't have the time or energy to be shoveling unwanted snow coming off luxury duplexes built way too close.

Ice & Safety. Please try to imagine the volume of roof snow from both SJV and Villas III units 22-25 in the 30' gap between SJV and Villas III. This snow will be 100% in the shade and will not melt all winter and spring. On the first warm day the top surface will melt and then re-freeze overnight. Our backyards will be icy and dangerous for my children, my wife, my neighbors, and me for many months and into summer.

Except for the front door, SJV's back door to this area is our only emergency exit and ice and snow will be a danger to our community's safety.

Wildlife. My family and I enjoy viewing wildlife from our back deck. We have watched a mama bear raise two sets of cubs these past few years and it connects us to nature. We regularly see bears climb up the big tree behind our home and sleep in the branches all day, then climb down in the evening. This exceptionally large tree provides a resting place for even the biggest bears, or a family of bears like this mama (see Attached Photos) and provides them with a safe haven. Bears run to and climb this magnificent tree when they're scared by a dog, aggressive human, or anything threatening. The mama bear and cubs rest and play near the base of this tree knowing it provides the perfect safety escape (see Photo). Unless this development's goal is to permanently extinguish bears in this area, this tree should be preserved along with others that offer safety.

I do understand the land is owned by the developer and he has rights, but this development will kill an incredibly wonderful wildlife corridor for bears and other animals. This very parcel of land, that the developer plans to clear-cut, has a Black Bear population density that is one of the highest anywhere on Earth according to scientists.

Scientific researchers conducted a DNA-based CMR "hair-snare" study just a hundred feet south of SJV, according to my SJV neighbor living here at the time. That study collected hairs from bears on this parcel over a 3-year period and the scientists ran DNA tests on those hairs. They found that dozens of bears pass through this land regularly, and the research is published and highly respected. Fusaro, Jonathan L., *Estimating Populations of Black Bear in Mono County, CA* (2014), and Fusaro et al., *Comparing Urban and Wildland Bear Densities* (June 2017).

My neighbor also tells me that Steve Searles of Mammoth Lakes and global "Bear Whisperer" fame spent lots of time right behind SJV viewing bears. As you probably know, Searles had an international TV show that video recording only in Mammoth Lakes, and many scenes are of this land planned for Villas III. "The Bear Whisperer" episodes are available on Amazon Prime video today. Many people believe it is Mammoth's BEARS and this international show that attract more international visitors to Mammoth Lakes than anything else. We should not cut down their habitat needlessly. At a minimum, **this tree**

should not be cut down since it allows scared bears to climb up-and-away from trouble (and people) rather than flee into the street and neighborhood and endanger people and itself.

Callahan Way. Additionally, I am also very concerned about adding more traffic on Callahan Way. This road is the only vehicle entrance and exit for SJV residents, and an accident, stalled car or road delay will block essential workers from getting to their work and serving the community. SJV residents work at the hospital and the schools, drive buses and provide transportation, clear snow from roadways and roofs, work for Mammoth's water district and the Town's waste disposal, fix and install plumbing and utilities, provide ski lessons on the mountain and golf lessons on the course, work at restaurants and storefronts and office buildings, work construction projects, manage their own small businesses, and so much more. Callahan is the only route to drive to our workplaces and more congestion creates a problem for services throughout Town.

Dangerous. Callahan Way already poses a dangerous situation to drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. To get to it from Main Street there is a downhill sharp right turn onto the Frontage Road and then an immediate left onto Callahan Way. This corner is busy with vehicles and people who are coming and going from the Loco Frijole restaurant on the corner.

Callahan Way is a long downhill road with homes close on one side and a fence on the other. This road should not be used by out-of-towners trying to navigate and find their rental, especially in the dark or when it is snowing. Callahan gets icy in winter thru early spring and SJV residents walk up and down the street on their way to or from work, shopping, Main Street, and school. Strangers driving on Callahan will pose a significant safety risk to our children that play and ride bikes here. Callahan should only be used as an emergency exit for Villas III, if built. There is no place to stop or to turn around except in SJV's parking lot, and there are many children that play in and around our community.

Gate. Villas III's Tentative Tract Map proposes putting a gate right next to my building. This is a crazy idea. This is a narrow road that requires ongoing snow plowing for safety and access for SJV workers. A gate will prevent snowplows from clearing the road. Vehicles at their gate would block SJV residents from accessing our parking lot. There is no room to turn around on Callahan and it is all downhill.

Snow Storage. There isn't enough snow storage for the 500' long Callahan way now. That snow is piled high and wide next to and behind my building (see Attached Photos). A neighbor says the land behind my building was intended by the developer for Callahan snow storage. This is the perfect place to store Callahan's snow, and Villas III units 22-25 should either be 70' further south or eliminated.

I respectfully request, **do not approve Villas III to build units 22-25 so close to my home.** These buildings will destroy our Quality of Life - for **my children, our family, and our neighbors.**

Sincerely,

Robert Frichtel
SJV, Resident and Homeowner

San Joaquin Villas E2. My back deck, facing south-southeast.



E2's deck facing directly south, after shoveling my deck after a snowstorm.



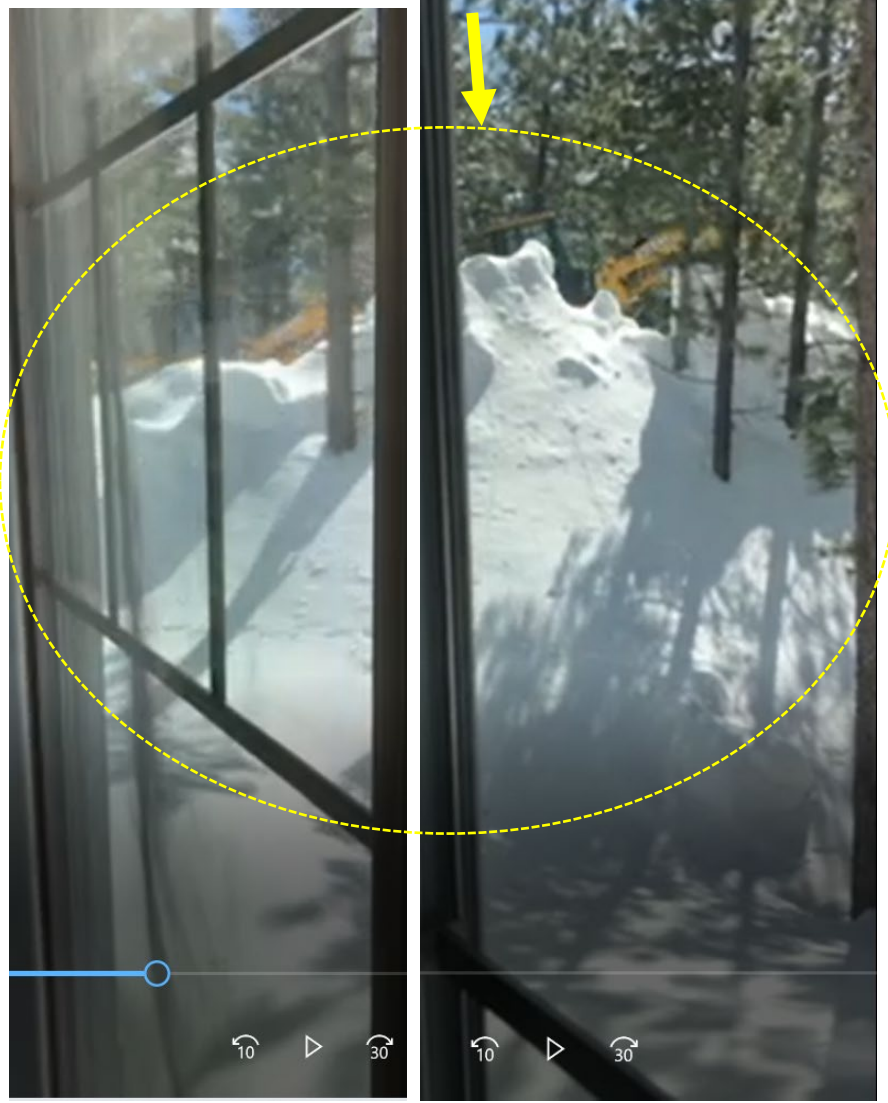
Mama bear and cubs we have watched from our home.
This is the second set of cubs we've seen her raise
on this property to south.



Mama and cubs at the base of their "safety tree."
Ready to climb up and away when threatened.
This tree should be preserved.



SJV E2 from 2nd Floor bedroom. Facing south-southeast at 30' tall pile of snow storage at south end of Callahan Way / behind SJV. (2 clips below are from 1 video I took of Loader moving snow further behind SJV E building). This snow storage for Callahan Way is about 100 feet long, 30 feet high, and 35 feet wide.



SJV E2. My back deck, facing directly south.
30' tall pile of snow storage from Callahan Way behind E building.



SJV E2. My back deck, facing south-southeast.
30' tall pile of snow storage at end of
Callahan Way / behind E building.



From SJV E2 back deck facing south-southeast. South end
of Callahan Way & behind SJV E building snow storage.
Home on Joaquin Road in background.

