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1435 Webster St, Alameda, CA
Request for waiver from multifamily construction regulations

Dannan Development is requesting a waiver from Alameda regulations governing the construction of multifamily buildings in the city since the development of a series of duplexes or individual units over ground floor retail, which would be consistent with current regulations, would not be architecturally or commercially appropriate along a major business thoroughfare such as Webster St and would not comply with the city's own Webster St Vision guidelines. Maintaining a continuous storefront along the street is vital for pedestrian interaction and creating a cohesive and articulated facade.

The option of constructing a project in line with Alameda's multifamily building restrictions was thoroughly explored in the base plan presented as part of the project's application, revealing several serious flaws with such a scheme.

From both an aesthetic and environmental point of view the separation of the buildings appears artificial with no practical purpose. Such an elevation would be visually unappealing, detracting from the architectural impact of the street and causing several hazards.

Under such a scenario the project would be divided by dark alleyways between the buildings. Not only would these look unattractive, they could quickly turn into a public nuisance by providing an attractive spot for vagrants, graffiti, vandals, public urination, weeds etc.

The artificial separation of the building would also be highly inefficient. More than doubling the number of exterior walls would require a significant increase in the amount of insulation and siding needed and would reduce the efficiency of the building envelope. It would require construction of more utility services, stairwells, street doorways, entrance foyers, hallways and common areas, and detract from the sense of community that a larger building with a shared entrance, elevator, and other common areas would likely foster.

Fragmenting a project of this size and importance to Webster St would also detract from the appeal of its retail space and limit the chances of getting commercially viable tenants whose presence could help boost the entire retail district. One retail unit would need to front entirely onto Taylor St which is not viable from a commercial perspective. Additionally, constructing three or four separate building would severely limit the flexibility of the retail spaces, by restricting

them to the footprint of the individual buildings. In contrast having a single building allows the developer to offer potential tenants flexible sizing to suit their needs.