

New SP residential project planned

DEVELOPMENT: The man behind the Vue is considering building 134 town homes over a full block on and around Beacon Street.

By Donna Littlejohn
DAILY BREEZE

Yet another multistory residential project featuring lots of glass and harbor views is being eyed for San Pedro.

Raffi Cohen, developer of the 16-story Vue glass tower under construction at Fifth and Palos Verdes streets, is considering a development encompassing a full block — bordered by 13th, 12th, Beacon and Palos Verdes streets — for a five-story, 134-unit town house project.

It would replace mostly rental duplexes and 1960s-era apartment buildings in a neighborhood that has been hit by crime, including shootings, in recent years.

Dubbed the “Beacon Street Development,” the project received good reviews earlier this month from the Central San Pedro Neighborhood Council’s planning committee.

“There was no one at the meeting who didn’t like it,” said Sue Castillo, communications officer for the council. “What’s existing there is basically blighted buildings.”

The 168,400-square-foot project, just south of the main post office on Beacon Street, is only in the conceptual phase. Cohen of Galaxy Commercial has not purchased the land but says he has an

option to do so. He hasn’t submitted plans to the city yet — the project would require a zone change — but he has been showing preliminary drawings to gauge reaction within the community.

Included would be a large central courtyard with contemporary-style town houses surrounding it and opening out onto all four bordering streets. Parking, mostly underground, would be shielded from the street. It would be broken up by elements such as pedestrian bridges and would be set back from the property line to allow for improvements along the street, such as canopy-style trees. Central Neighborhood Council members also would ask the developer to contribute to improve Plaza Park, a grassy sloped area with a stairway connecting Beacon Street to Harbor Boulevard below.

Financial assistance would be provided for any existing tenants who would be displaced by the project if it goes forward.

The proposal could raise more concerns about density in San Pedro and will require density and height variances. Hundreds of new condominium units are either under construction or in the planning stages in and around downtown San Pedro.

On the other part of town, another developer is proposing a 2,300-unit development along Western Avenue.

Castillo, however, said the proposed development so far is being well received.

“People who choose to live in downtown are rather accepting of density,” she said, “as long as it improves the neighborhood.”