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Planning Department
Attn: Leigh Kienker - Environmental Review
1660 Mission Street, Suite 500
San Francisco CA 94103-2414

RE: 2004.0482E - 5400 Geary Blvd. - Alexandria Theater

PAR has been following this project with great interest and we have met with representatives of both an earlier developer and the current one. We have several issues which your environmental review should address:

- **Historical issues:** Does the Developer intend to restore the building to its original design by the Reid Brothers? This is of particular importance with the recent opening of the restored Reid Brothers Cliff House a short distance to the west. Photos of the original building, which we have given to the developers, show, for example, a handsome marquee which no longer exists. Will the interior incorporate elements of the original features such as the grand staircase? Will the tower, which is not original, be removed?

- **Parking:** The proposal indicates the use of stacked parking for the commercial users. Although we support such mechanical lifts for residential and all-day commercial use, we question if this is viable for users of the short-term, in-and-out retail facilities.

- **Parking for the YMCA:** Currently the YMCA, which is across the street on 18th Avenue, leases a portion of the parking lot for its staff and members. Will they replace this parking, or will its loss negatively impact the remaining street parking?

- **Parking garage:** Will the curb cut be wide enough for ingress and egress at the same time? We note that the relatively new building at the south-east corner of Geary Boulevard and Stanyan Street has a one-way driveway which does not work well and causes cars to collect along Stanyan Street. Is the garage designed for paid and/or validated parking and how will this affect traffic flow?

- **Traffic study:** Consideration must be given to the current MTA-Muni Geary Corridor BRT Study which, when completed, will greatly impact the intersection of Geary Boulevard and 18th Avenue. Current design configurations anticipate changes in the traffic flow, in the pattern and amount of metered parking, and with the pedestrian walkways.

- **Pedestrian safety:** The traffic study must take pedestrian safety into consideration. Argonne Playground is a half-block to the south, the Richmond Recreation Center is a block to the north, the Golden Gate Christian Church and the YMCA are directly across the street. Large numbers of children and seniors use this intersection at all hours of the day and evening - seven days a week.

- **Commercial space:** How will the 20,160gsf of ground-floor retail space above the parking garage on 18th Avenue be configured? Is it presumed to be a single-occupant space or divided? This affects the parking requirements, the potential need for a loading dock, etc. Also the YMCA across the street is reportedly interested in making an arrangement for this space.

- **North lot:** There is an additional lot (zoned RH-2) at the north end of the site. Will this be left as an open space buffer for the neighbors? If not, how and by whom will it be developed?

- **Housing design:** The housing wing will impact the homes to the rear on 19th Avenue. What will be

done to lessen this impact?

In general, PAR is very supportive of this project, particularly as it will retain at least one theater screen. (We would prefer two screens -- which could be feasible.) We also support preservation of this important historic building and the addition of housing along a major transit corridor. As a founding member of the Housing Action Coalition-HAC, PAR actively encourages mixed-use projects which eliminate "suburban style" surface parking lots in favor of housing.

Thank you for your consideration of the above comments. We look forward to working with the developer, the Planning Department and the neighborhood as this project proceeds.

Sincerely,

Ron Miguel
PAR President

CC: Alfonso Felder, San Francisco Neighborhood Theaters Foundation
David Heller, Greater Geary Boulevard Merchants Association
Woody LaBounty, Western Neighborhoods Project
Patrick Luy. Coldwell Banker
Jake McGoldrick, Supervisor District #1
David Silverman, Reuben & Junius
Robert Sindelar, Richmond YMCA
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