
From: Lynn Stanton
Sent: Monday, July 21, 2025 12:04 PM
To: Supervisor Candace Andersen; Everett Louie; Clerk of the Board; Cameron Collins; Jen Quallick
Subject: Submission re:CDLP23-02046
Attachments: BOS Appeal ltr.pdf

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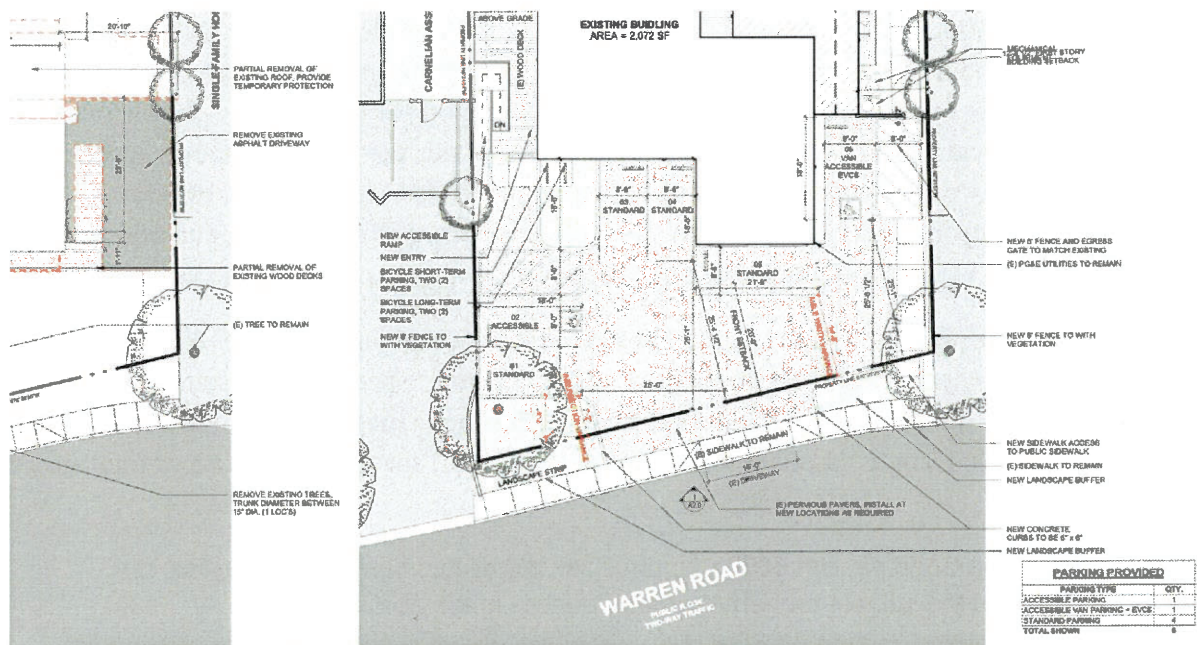
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Dear Board of Supervisors,
Please find attached my letter regarding the Carnelian expansion project.
Thanks,
Lynn Stanton

To the Board of Supervisors,

I live on Warren Road in Walnut Creek and I am writing to you in support of the Eckhaus/Ostrander appeal of the Carnelian Expansion Project. I ask that you deny the Carnelian's application both because it is a business use that is incompatible with a single-family residential neighborhood, as well as because it requires two variances which do not meet the requirements for the granting of variances under Government Code section 65906. They do not meet these requirements as they have failed to demonstrate any "special circumstances" and that they would be deprived of a right enjoyed by other property owners.

Variance



Government Code s.65906

The Carnelian has requested a variance for the width of their driveway aisle and a variance for the driveway aisle intersection in order to accommodate the required parking spaces for their expansion. There is an inadequate basis for granting these variances as there are no "special circumstances" of "size, shape, topography, location or surroundings" that warrant it, and no privilege denied it that are enjoyed by other property in the vicinity.

The grant of variances to owners of property covered by comprehensive zoning plans is governed by Government Code section 65906, which states: "**Variances** from the terms of the zoning ordinances shall be granted **only** when, because of **special circumstances applicable to the property, including size, shape, topography, location or surroundings, the strict application of the zoning**

ordinance deprives such property of privileges enjoyed by other property in the vicinity and under identical zoning classification.”

Orinda Association v. Board of Supervisors [182 Cal. App. 3d 1163] (emphasis added)

Special Circumstances

The staff report does not find that there were any “special circumstances” based on “size, shape, topography, location or surroundings” that deprived the owners of “privileges enjoyed by other property” as it must by law.

An administrative grant of a variance must be accompanied by administrative findings. A court reviewing that grant must determine whether substantial evidence supports the findings and whether the findings support the conclusion that all applicable legislative requirements for a variance have been satisfied.

Topanga Association for a Scenic Community v. County of Los Angeles [11 Cal.3d 506]

Those required findings have not been made here. The staff report describes the location of the building and the addition and then declares that the need for six striped parking spaces means that they need a variance and so one should be granted. The previous staff report for the Zoning Administrator declared that “Due to the location of the the existing development on-site, the strict application would deprive the subject property of having a dedicated parking area, which is a right enjoyed by other properties.” The current staff report describes the parking area currently there as one of long duration and that the new configuration would be an improvement, and therefore suggests granting the variance.

This argument is inadequate and inaccurate. Neither staff report identifies any “size, shape, topography, location or surroundings” of the subject property that constitute “special circumstances”. Using the word “location” to describe the buildings on the property is not a magic charm to invoke variances. The Board of Appeals in *Orinda Association* made clear the kind of special circumstances finding necessary for a variance:

Government Code section 65906 emphasizes disparities between properties, not treatment of the subject property's characteristics in the abstract.

Orinda Association v. Board of Supervisors [182 Cal. App. 3d 1146]

and there would be no evidence to support such findings since there is no special circumstance depriving the Carnelian of privileges enjoyed by others. The driveway in question is a typical driveway for the neighborhood, and **the lot is a typical lot-there is no creek, slope, public utility easement or other non-typical physical property of the lot-so there is no notable difference in size, shape, topography, location or surroundings.**

In *Orinda* the Court observed that where there was:

no affirmative showing that the subject property differs substantially and in relevant aspects from other parcels in the applicable zone, we conclude that the

variance granted by the Board amounts to the kind of "special privilege" explicitly prohibited by Government Code section 65906.

(Topanga Assn. for a Scenic Community v. County of Los Angeles, *supra*, 11 Cal.3d at p. 522.)

Here, there has been no comparison of the subject property with other parcels in the zone, only a discussion of the location of improvements on the property and the desirability of the striped spaces to the development. "The limited depth between the front of the building and the street limits the opportunities for reconfiguration circulation or meeting current driveway aisle standards." (Findings and Conditions of Approval, pg. 6) **There is no comparison to other properties or any physical characteristics of the site itself(as opposed to the development on it).**

The staff report also observes that "Approval of the variance requests will provide individuals who come to the site with an improved on-site parking design that is more functional and safer for use." (*Ibid*, pg 7) The desirability of the improvement is not a basis for the grant of a variance.

...data focusing on the **qualities of the property** and Project for which the variance is sought, the **desirability of the proposed development**, the attractiveness of its design, the **benefits to the community**, or the economic difficulties of developing the property in conformance with the zoning regulations, lack legal significance and **are simply irrelevant to the controlling issue** of whether strict application of zoning rules would prevent the would-be developer from utilizing his or her property to the same extent as other property owners in the same zoning district.

Orinda Association v. Board of Supervisors [182 Cal. App. 3d 1146];Broadway, Laguna etc. Assn. v. Board of Permit Appeals, 66 Cal.2d at pp. 773-781.)
(emphasis added)

The desirability to the County of this project, the necessity of the spaces to the current location of the buildings, or the improvement of the layout for the parking over the existing layout are all **irrelevant** to the necessary findings that would permit a grant of variance.

Privileges Enjoyed by Other Property

The property has already been described as having parking spaces, so it is not being deprived of having dedicated parking as enjoyed by other properties. It is only being deprived of having six striped parking spaces **which is not a right enjoyed by any other properties in the area**. Warren Road is a single family residential street along it's entire length. There are no other properties along it's length with striped parking spaces, let alone six of them, so the Carnelian is not being deprived of a right enjoyed by other property owners. If it were being so deprived it is a result of its own choice in the placement of the improvements (buildings) on the site that limits its parking options.

The only reason the Carnelian needs six striped spaces is because it is trying to expand its business into a size which is too large for its residential neighborhood location. (The plan now requires two variances in order to accommodate six full-size spaces after trying to use compact spaces exclusively in the previous application.) The fact that its lot is not big enough to accommodate six spaces is an indication that the business is too big, not that there is any unfairness to the Carnelian that requires a variance. **Instead, granting these variances would be a grant of special privilege to the Carnelian.**

Zoning

A zoning scheme, after all, is similar in some respects to a contract; each party forgoes rights to use its land as it wishes in return for the assurance that the use of neighboring property will be similarly restricted, the rationale being that such mutual restriction can enhance total community welfare.

Orinda Association v. Board of Supervisors [182 Cal. App. 3d 1146]

Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly were statutorily created to be, and typically are, 6 beds in a single family home. In this way they can seamlessly blend into a single family neighborhood. The Carnelian, however, is currently a 30 bed facility contained within three adjacent buildings. This application lists only one of those buildings, the one at 2374 Warren Road, but the impact on the neighborhood cannot be evaluated without taking into account the effects that the Carnelian as a whole has on the neighborhood.

While "residential" might be in the name of the Carnelian's service, they are without a doubt a business. The use of the word "residential" is not proof by itself of compatibility. The Carnelian is running a business much larger than any other RCFE on a residential street. Already, as a 30 bed facility, the Carnelian has an outsize impact on the neighborhood as compared to any of its neighbors. During the Planning Commission Hearing, a training meeting was described as having 30 employees in attendance. While these staff may work in shifts, they are supplemented by county nursing and social work staff who visit the site. The size of its staff and inadequate parking offsite for even the full-time staff means that many of their full time staff park on the street. Then the large volume of part-time staff, as well as the many visiting nurses, social workers, doctors, and family visitors means that the streets are often already filled with cars parked on both sides at its current size.

No single family residence uses that much street parking; and no single family residence has **deliveries every week via big rig** (Costco 18-wheelers, C&L Produce, Horizon Oxygen, Iron Mountain Document Shredding to name a few) that, since there is no off-street loading area, double-park in the street and create a hazard in a neighborhood like ours with narrow streets and almost no sidewalks. Additionally, the facility also has frequent emergency vehicles that also have to double-park in the street in order to respond to the Carnelian's calls. They have generators, paper shredding services and food oil pumping all of which are excessively noisy and make it difficult for neighbors to work or quietly enjoy their property. Now, they want to increase that impact on the neighborhood by 40%.

This is too big a business for our small residential street. **The quality of the care provided at the facility and the desirability of having more senior care beds available in our county is irrelevant to the fact that locating a business of this size here on a small single family residential street is**

inappropriate and will have a negative impact on neighbors' property values, ability to safely walk and bike in the neighborhood, and is an unfair burden on the neighborhood which has already borne the impacts of a large 30-bed facility as it is.

Conclusion

The staff report's findings are inadequate to support a finding of special circumstances as compared to other lots in the area as well as the deprivation of a right other property owners enjoy. The grant of variances currently proposed would be a grant of special privilege which is specifically disallowed by California Government Code, not an effort to bring them into substantial parity with other homeowners in the neighborhood.

At 30 beds, regardless of how the lot lines are drawn around the property, the Carnelian is much larger than any other RCFE located on a residential street. If they were operated on a 3 or 4-laned road that wouldn't be a concern, but increasing this business to 42 beds requires the neighborhood to accept a big business with all its big rig deliveries, large volume of staff and visitor parking and monthly parties on our little street. (Especially when undeveloped lots languish on Boulevard Way, just 3 blocks away.) This is not a fair burden to place on those of us who live in the neighborhood.

While the Carnelian as a property owner has a right to build on their property within the zoning limits (which by right would be a six bed facility) anything else requires an examination of the appropriateness of the proposed change. The Board should vote against this expansion project based on the limits of the zoning requirements; they cannot fit the expansion and required parking within the property without asking for **grants of special privilege** and they are asking to locate an incompatibly large business within a small residential single family neighborhood street.

Requests:

If the Board, despite all this, does approve the Carnelian's project I would request the following in mitigation of the effects it will have on our neighborhood:

- Ensure adequate parking off-street for all full-time staff either at the facility or at another location
- Require a break room so that staff are not camped on the sidewalk, smoking, eating, littering and blocking the sidewalk
- Require the continued provision of off-street parking for parties
- Require notice to be given to the neighborhood of the dates and times of parties
- Require an off-street location for deliveries to be made so the street won't be blocked

Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
c/o Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
1025 Escobar Street
Martinez, CA 94553

Re: County File # CDLP23-02046

July 21, 2025

Dear Members of the Board of Supervisors,

I am reaching to you today not to describe The Carnelian as we are, but to share what moves me about what we could become and my hope to continue the legacy my family has built here.

There's a moment that comes to many of us in the quiet hours before sleep – when the day's noise fades and our truest thoughts rise to the surface. In those still moments, we find ourselves wondering.

We wonder about the lives we're building, the people we love, the future that hovers just beyond our reach. In that reflective space, away from the day's distractions and demands, we dream.

We think of what could be, despite what is. We imagine possibilities not yet realized, stories not yet written, a world still kinder than the one we know. And even if the weight of reality presses down – our fears, our limits, countless daily challenges – something endures. A longing. A small fire that refuses to be extinguished. Hope that tomorrow holds more meaning, more brightness, more possibility.

I know that feeling well.

I find myself returning to that place of dreaming – not as escape, but as compass. It is from this quiet space of reflection that I speak to you today about The Carnelian and the vision that keeps me awake with *possibility* rather than worry.

This place has practically shaped who I am. When my grandmother started The Carnelian, she began with the simplest and most profound intention – to provide for her family. She cared for her own mother, then welcomed her children, and as time came, their children too. What started as humble care for one generation became something larger: a refuge that could nurture family across time.

I find myself on that very same path today. As I try to provide for my family, I am hopeful that this place will outlive me and become a legacy built from those same humble beginnings – simply providing for family. I dream of The Carnelian continuing to serve as sanctuary not just for my future children, but for their children, and their children's children. We are building more than just halls and beds; we are building a home for my family and the generations to come. This establishment represents an unbroken promise – that each generation will have a place of refuge, care, and wisdom, creating a foundation that honors what my family has built while nurturing what they will become.

But my vision extends beyond my own family's story. I envision The Carnelian redefining what assisted living can be – proving it is far more than just a building where people *wait*. I want our community to discover that this space brings life to seasons when most expect only endings.

Here, aging isn't merely about needing help; it's about sharing decades of stories, experience, and connection. I see The Carnelian as a place where intergenerational populations naturally meet and learn from one another – where children discover wisdom in weathered hands that have built and rebuilt, where young parents find guidance from those who have walked similar paths, where our elders rediscover purpose and meaning through the fresh energy and curiosity of visitors. In these exchanges, both generations thrive: the young gain perspective and the elder find renewed vitality.

I envision The Carnelian functioning almost like a community hearth – a gathering place where people come not just to visit, but to connect, to learn, to find purpose and hope for the future. This won't simply be a home but a living community unto itself, resembling the close-knit neighborhoods of generations past where wisdom flowed naturally between young and old, far removed from the sterile institutions that assisted living has too often become.

Most importantly, I dream of families finding not just a place for their loved ones, but true partners in care. And I dream of our seniors themselves discovering not just shelter, but a place where their light continues to shine – where the wisdom in their weathered hands and the stories in their eyes are treasured, not overlooked.

I see residents who feel not just cared for but celebrated for all they still are and all they continue to give. In my vision, aging doesn't diminish worth – it deepens it. Here, every person discovers that their years have not been a countdown, but a building up of something precious that deserves to be honored.

I grew up within these walls, and The Carnelian shaped my understanding of what it means to care. When we took the mantle to steward The Carnelian, we embraced the

responsibility to offer refuge, support, and comfort – to become part of each family's story and each resident's continuing journey. Now I carry that understanding forward, expanding this legacy to embrace more souls, more families, and more stories. We are not merely a place to age, but people committed to walking alongside residents and families through life's most sacred chapters, honoring both the individual journey and the family bonds that endure.

This is the dream I carry in those quiet moments before sleep. This is the vision that refuses to be extinguished. As I stand before you, Members of the Board of Supervisors, I ask that you reflect on this dream and consider how it can become a reality in our community. The answer, I believe, lies not in what we build, but in what we choose to nurture. I choose to nurture this dream.

By approving the Carnelian Project today, you are not just signing off on a project; you are choosing to nurture this dream alongside us. You are helping create a place where the fire of hope burns not just in the hearts of dreamers, but in the very walls that shelter our most precious generations. I hope you will choose to help it grow.

Thank you for sharing this moment of possibility with me.

Jay Grutas
Carnelian Assisted Living
Owner

From: Katherine Dunphy <kdunphy@carnelianhome.com>
Sent: Monday, July 21, 2025 1:29 PM
To: Clerk of the Board
Cc: Adlai Grutas; Katherine Dunphy
Subject: County File # CDLP23-02046
Attachments: Opposition to Appeal of Land Use Permit Approval #CDLP23-02046; Residential Care Facility for the Elderly BOS Hearing.pdf; Request to Approve Land Use Application County File #CDLP23-02046 BOS Letter.pdf

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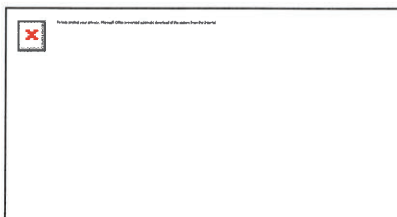
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To the Honorable Board of Supervisors -

Please refer to the attached letters.

Best regards,
Katherine Dunphy
Carnelian Assisted Living, LLC
2380 Warren Road
Walnut Creek, CA 94595
925-478-7528 direct

"The Carnelian exists to serve seniors and their families with the intention of building relationships filled with affection, dignity, and hope"



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July 21, 2025

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
Contra Costa County Administration
1025 Escobar Street
Martinez, CA 94553

RE: Carnelian Holdings LLC County File # CDLP23-02046

Dear Honorable Board of Supervisors:

My name is Katherine Grutas-Dunphy, and I serve as the CEO and co-owner of the Carnelian Assisted Living. I am writing today to respectfully urge you to **deny the appeal** submitted by Mr. Joshua Eckhaus and Ms. Jennifer Ostrander regarding our land use permit application county file #CDLP23-02046, which received *approvals* from Mr. Ruben Hernandez, Zoning Administrator, on February 3, 2025 and Members of the County Planning Commission, on April 23, 2025.

The appeal filed by Mr. Eckhaus and Ms. Ostrander does not present any new information, substantive evidence, or legal basis to justify reversing the Zoning Administrator's approval, nor the County Planning Staff's recommendation in support of the project. Rather, it reflects a personal opposition to the project—not a procedural or factual flaw in the approval process.

An appeal rooted in disagreement cannot outweigh the broad community benefit, the intentional and considerate design of this expansion, and the five-decade legacy of responsible stewardship that define The Carnelian.



CARNELIAN

— ASSISTED LIVING —

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While on paper this may appear to be a straightforward expansion plan, for me and my family, this is a deeply personal endeavor. It is not just about growing our physical space. It is about honoring a 50-year legacy of caregiving, preserving a sanctuary of comfort and belonging, and ensuring that both the people who inspire us today and those we have yet to serve will always have a place to call home.

Let me share who this project is truly for.

It's for **Gladys**, who passed away earlier this year just short of her 101st birthday. Gladys was more than a resident—she was a friend, advocate, and someone who believed in our mission wholeheartedly.

At 100 years old, she stood beside us at the Zoning Administrator's hearing in January—something I'll never forget. Her family's relationship with the Carnelian spanned decades. She entrusted three loved ones to our care: first her brother, then her husband, and eventually Gladys chose to live with us herself. She had witnessed the full circle of life unfold within our walls, and she often reminded us that The Carnelian wasn't just a senior home; it's family.

On Thanksgiving, I wrote a letter to her and her children, Janet and Rob:

"Gladys, we have nothing but love and admiration for you. You've shown us how to cherish relationships and care for others in the truest sense. Taking care of people like you is what makes our work so meaningful and rewarding. Thank you for choosing us to share this journey with you."

Gladys was our champion. She believed deeply in what we do—and her family continues to support us with the same unwavering spirit. I think of Gladys often as I persevere to move this project forward. She reminds me of exactly who and what we are fighting for.

This project is also for **Bob**, a gentleman who joined us in October after moving down from Seattle. Bob was living with Alzheimer's, and while his time with us was brief, his impact was lasting.

Just before Halloween, our team had spent the day transforming our driveway into a whimsical pumpkin patch for the neighborhood. Bob was captivated. As he admired the decorations, he gently gestured for me to follow him across the street. He didn't say much, but he positioned



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me to stand beside him and look back at our work from a distance. “Now look”, he said. And I did.

From across the street, I saw it differently—more fully. The colors, the scale, the joy—it took my breath away. In that quiet moment, Bob helped me realize something I hadn’t seen before: when you’re in the middle of the work, you can miss the beauty of what you’re creating. Sometimes, you must step back to truly take it *all* in.

Bob passed away in March, but I carry that moment with me. He gave me a gift—a new lens. A reminder to pause, look up, and see the bigger picture. Bob’s quiet wisdom stays with me as we move this project forward—as we aspire for growth to remember and appreciate what we’ve already created, who it’s for, and why this mission matters.

This expansion is also for **Guy**, who toured the Carnelian in April for his wife, Cynthia. Cynthia spent her life as a compassionate physician, serving families affected by HIV. Today, at just 67 years old, she is facing early-onset Alzheimer’s. Guy and I walked the houses and the garden together. We talked, not just about care plans and room options, but about what it means to walk alongside someone you love through such a heartbreaking diagnosis.

After his visit, he sent me this thank you note:

“You opened my eyes and heart to a better way forward. It is my hope that you will welcome Cynthia and me into your community. Thank you for what you and your family have created. Very impressive.”

Guy and Cynthia have since joined our growing waitlist. Though they haven’t moved in yet, we are already holding space for them—for their future, their peace of mind, and their sense of belonging. This expansion ensures that when families like theirs are ready, there will be a place waiting. Not just rooms for care, but a place of refuge— one filled with dignity, comfort, and hope during life’s most difficult moments.

And then there’s **June**, a vibrant 90-year-old woman who recently visited with her son and daughter. She toured our home, enjoyed lunch in the garden, and as she sat with the sun warming her face, she said, “*I could spend hours out here.*” Before she left, she looked me in the eye and said, “*Katherine, put me at the top of your list.*”



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These are not just names—they are lives woven into the heart of The Carnelian. Their life, their stories, and their hope are the reason we do this work—and the reason we *must* do more.

The Carnelian has been in this neighborhood since 1973—long before many of the surrounding homes were built. In truth, the neighborhood grew around us. Some have raised concerns that we are now the largest senior home in a residential neighborhood. But I ask—why is that a problem? Shouldn't we be proud that this neighborhood is home to a longstanding community that cares so deeply for its elders?

The opposition have expressed concerns that our expansion is too large, too commercial, too disruptive. But respectfully, I ask—what is so overwhelming about making room for 12 more seniors to live quietly, surrounded by nature, and the people they love? What is so commercial about a 90-year-old woman finding peace in a garden or a devoted husband trying to make the transition gentle for his wife? What is so disruptive about a walk through the pumpkins with someone slowly losing their memory?

To say that The Carnelian is incompatible with the neighborhood is to ignore the fact that we've operated within it for over five decades—quietly, respectfully, and in harmony with our neighbors. We are not proposing a change in use. We are simply extending our ability to serve. Contrary to claims of commercial overreach, we are not introducing a new business—we are enhancing an existing home. This not a shopping center or a hotel. It is a home. Our presence is not an imposition—if anything, we're trying to restore a deeply human approach to eldercare—bringing it back into the heart of the community, where it belongs.

This expansion is modest and respectfully designed. Our seniors no longer drive, and their families come in waves, not crowds. Yes, more care staff will be needed, but they will park respectfully, just as they always have. We're not asking to disrupt a neighborhood. We're asking to serve it.

Some have argued that our expansion will negatively impact surrounding property values. However, data simply doesn't support this claim. Reputable studies consistently show that well-run, thoughtfully maintained care communities like The Carnelian do not diminish nearby home values. And if our presence truly had such an effect, then those who have purchased their homes near us years ago would have done so at a "discounted" price—meaning they've already benefited from our long-standing existence in the neighborhood. To now suggest that our continued presence or this modest expansion, poses a threat feels less like a concern grounded in fact and more like an effort to shape public sentiment through fear and



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misinformation. That's not only misleading—it's wrong. The Carnelian is, and has always been, an asset to this community—not the liability the opposition claims it to be.

It's easy to assume that any development is driven by profit. But no one takes on a project they cannot financially sustain. If our motive were purely financial, the simplest choice would be to do nothing. We could preserve the status quo, avoid the cost, effort, and scrutiny of expansion, and wait to sell in the future. But my brothers and I have chosen the harder path—the one rooted in purpose.

We've built our careers challenging the status quo and investing not just our time and resources, but our hearts, into continuing the legacy of care our grandmother began over five decades ago. We will continue to reinvest in our people, in our programs, and in the families who trust us with their loved ones. This expansion isn't about short-term gain—it's about securing The Carnelian's future so it can continue serving this community for the next 50 years and beyond.

That's not opportunism. That's stewardship. And we take that responsibility seriously.

This expansion is **for the people who inspire us**. At its core, our work is rooted in relationships. We are not just a name on a sign. We are a home built on trust, love, and a deep commitment to doing things differently. This project isn't simply about increasing our footprint—it's about deepening our impact. It's about honoring the legacy of a woman who, over fifty years ago, believed in care, in community, and in creating something better. She believed in this neighborhood and what it could mean for the seniors she loved. This expansion is our way of keeping that promise.

This is a legacy project. It's about making space—for more love, more care, more dignity, and more hope. It's for the Gladys' and Bob's we've known and cherished. It's for the Guy's and June's we have yet to welcome. It's for the families who are quietly praying that, when their time of need comes, a place like The Carnelian will still be here.

We ask our community to consider the scale of the benefit—just 12 more seniors gaining access to high-quality care in a safe, nurturing environment. These aren't strangers. They are the very people who helped shape this neighborhood—the ones who built the homes we now live in, raised families here, and contributed to its character and charm.



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To deny them the chance to return to a familiar, peaceful setting in their final years doesn't feel like progress—it feels like forgetting.

The Carnelian is a living, breathing community rooted in service, dignity, and purpose. We are not just preserving a building—we are stewarding something truly special. We respectfully ask that you uphold the thoughtful work already completed by the County Planning Staff and Zoning Administrator and allow this modest but meaningful expansion to move forward.

Please **deny the appeal** filed by Mr. Eckhaus and Ms. Ostrander, and let this project continue—for the sake of our aging loved ones, for the people who built this neighborhood, and in service to those who hope to come home to it once more.

Thank you for your time, understanding, and consideration of this project. We appreciate you and the entire Board of Supervisors for your time and efforts on our behalf.

Respectfully,
Katherine Grutas-Dunphy



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Honorable Board of Supervisors
Contra Costa County Administration
1025 Escobar Street
Martinez, CA 94553

RE: Carnelian Holdings LLC County File # CDLP23-02046

Dear Members of the County Planning Commission:

My name is Katherine Grutas-Dunphy, and I serve as the CEO and one of the proud owners of Carnelian Assisted Living, affectionately known as "The Carnelian". Today, I am writing to respectfully request the approval of our land-use permit application (County File # CDLP23-02046), which will allow us to expand our residential care community by adding 12 new beds. This project will increase our capacity from 30 residents to 42 total residents, enabling us to meet the growing demand for high-quality, specialized care services in our community. The purpose of this letter is not only to advocate for this permit but also to offer insight into the heart of who we are as an organization and why this expansion is so vital to fulfilling our mission. We are deeply committed to creating a home where every resident feels valued, every family feels supported, and every team member feels empowered to make a lasting difference. This project represents the next step in our journey.

In 1973, our grandmother, Doreen Dubose, came to Saranap/Walnut Creek, with a heartfelt vision, to create a place where seniors can age-in-place in a home-like, non-institutional, and gracious living environment.



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Five decades later, the Carnelian remains to be a unique age-in-place community, staying true to its core promise: to honor, serve, and support seniors and their families through life's most challenging moments.

As we honor our grandmother's vision, The Carnelian has evolved to meet the growing needs of today's seniors. Today, The Carnelian offers both high level assisted living and memory care services. What makes us unique is not only our ability to support residents through every stage of their care, but also our expertise in caring for seniors with complex health challenges.

Unlike many facilities, families don't have to worry about moving their loved ones elsewhere when their care needs become more demanding. This is why The Carnelian is highly sought after by families who want the reassurance that their loved one will be cared for with dignity and compassion, no matter what health challenges arise.

In addition to our caregiving services, we also provide care management - a service that sets us apart from most other senior living communities. We understand that even with professional care, families can still feel overwhelmed by the many tasks and decisions that come with caring for a loved one. Our care services go beyond custodial care, partnering with families to take on these burdens, allowing them to focus on quality time with their loved ones, a sense of relief and peace of mind. This level of holistic partnership is exactly what so many families need, and it's at the heart of who we are as a healthcare organization.

None of what we do would be possible without the extraordinary people who make up our team. We are incredibly fortunate to engage individuals who share the same values as ours and are dedicated to living a purpose-drive life. Our team is composed of the most loving, devoted, creative, and friendly people you will ever meet. It's this generosity of spirit, friendship, and love that allows us to carry on the important work of caring for our seniors and our community.

The Carnelian is blessed to collaborate with talented men and women whose passion and creativity breathes vibrant energy into our home. Their commitment allows us to provide dynamic activity programs that enrich the daily lives of our residents, filling



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each day with joy, beauty, and a sense of adventure. Sadly, many memory care communities lack the kind of engaging programming that is essential for those facing physical and cognitive decline.

At The Carnelian, we take immense pride in having one of the best activity programs in the county—thanks to the commitment of our long-standing activity partners. Their involvement and the high-quality activities they provide every day are what truly set us apart, offering not just entertainment, but essential mental stimulation, physical engagement, and emotional fulfillment which are so important for our seniors' overall health and well-being.

And then there's our garden—what an incredible gift of beauty and space we get to enjoy every day. Whenever I take people on tours and they see this garden, their reactions are often deeply emotional. Some cry, some gasp in awe, and many are instantly excited to move in. They realize not only they have found a place that can meet their loved one's care needs—they've also discovered a sanctuary where their loved ones, and they themselves, will feel at peace and at home for many years to come.

Our garden is more than just a place of beauty and comfort; it is a space for connection, belonging, and shared experiences. It serves as the heart of many of our celebrations—moments where families and friends can come together to enjoy each other's company, celebrate holidays, and exchange stories. We understand how difficult it can be for families to organize a gathering with an elderly loved one, especially one with cognitive sensitivities or physical limitations. There are so many details to consider, from energy levels to logistics, and sometimes the effort feels overwhelming for what might only last an hour.

But at The Carnelian, our celebrations take away those challenges. We provide the opportunity for families to be together on special occasions, allowing them to focus on what truly matters—each other. For many of our families, these moments become treasured memories, often the most special ones they hold onto. It's remarkable how a single day of fun and joy can leave such a lasting impact. For that one day, families can set aside the burdens of illness and focus instead on the spirit of love, friendship, and



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togetherness. A true gift it is!

Thirteen years ago, my young, confident self, thought I had found a place I could work on. What I didn't realize at the time was that all along, this place was working on me. Over the last decade, my brothers and I have been given the incredible opportunity—and immense responsibility—to steward The Carnelian and its people.

Of all the milestones we've achieved, the one we are most proud of is what we call our 'unreasonable hospitality'—showing people the transformative power of giving more than what they expect.

This value is at the core of everything we do. It's evident in how we care for our residents and their families, in how we treat our employees, and in how we connect with the community.

It shows up in moments like when our team organized a small, intimate celebration for Paul, one of our residents, so he could mark his 61st wedding anniversary with his wife, Judy. Paul passed away the following year, but that celebration became a cherished memory for his family. It shows up in the unique benefits we offer our employees, like our dependent life-enriching program, which ensures that employees with young families never have to worry about how they'll afford music, art, or sports programs for their children. And it shows up when we fill a van with toys and clothes to deliver to the local foster care organization, doing our part to extend care and kindness beyond the walls of our home.

These are the moments we are most proud of. The Carnelian is unique in so many ways—from its history, to its people, to the many residents and families who call it 'home.' Every day, we celebrate the efforts and achievements of all the individuals who fearlessly and persistently dedicate their life's work to make the work we do today possible.

Most importantly, we have the chance to create magic in a world that desperately needs more of it. And that's the greatest privilege of all—bringing a sense of joy, love, and connection to the people and community we serve.



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Today, we come before you with our proposed expansion plan, which represents not just a vision for a new building but a transformative step toward creating lasting impact in our community.

For many years. The Carnelian has been known for having a 3- to 6- month waitlist, we want to address this challenge by increasing our capacity to better serve the families who seek our help. However, we also recognize that even this expansion, wait times, may still exist due to the severe shortage and limited availability of high level of care options in our area. The Carnelian is one of the few homes equipped to support families facing complex health challenges.

Furthermore, we aspire to grow as a unique model for senior care - one that is sustainable, home-like, vibrant and thriving. We plan to enhance our services by increasing our staffing level and partnering with more talented activity providers, which will allow us to offer a wider range of programs that can extend into the community.

Additionally, this expansion provides us the opportunity to manage our operational cost effectively, enabling us to avoid raising our rates excessively in response to economic impacts, while continuing to deliver on the exceptional care our residents deserve without compromising on quality or accessibility and ensuring our dedicated team has the support, they need for their families to thrive.

I hope our story highlights the heart behind this incredible endeavor. If you were to ask me why this expansion is so important to me, it's because, just like my grandmother 50 years ago, I imagine a place where seniors and their families can truly feel 'cared for'— not because that's all that's available, but because it's what they deserve. It's about injecting a transformative level of hospitality into an industry that too often feels sterile and devoid of inspiration.

This project signifies much more than the construction of new facilities, it represents our desire to foster a positive ripple effect throughout the neighborhood.

We believe that thoughtfully designed space can be a catalyst for change, creating genuine connections, and uplifting the spirits of not only our residents but also the



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surrounding community. It's important to recognize that sometimes the full impact of our efforts can only be understood once we take the leap to build something meaningful.

I acknowledge that some of our neighbors have concerns about this new development, and I assure you we have done our best to address their concerns conscientiously. Your perspective is invaluable to us, and we're committed to engaging with you throughout this process. I genuinely believe that this project will enhance our neighborhood in ways that will benefit all of us.

Ultimately, the true legacy of The Carnelian extends far beyond the services we provide. It lies in the love and friendship we're able to cultivate and share. This expansion is not merely an opportunity for us to grow; it signifies an incredible chance for us to as to be deeply intentional on our commitment to serving our seniors, our families, our dedicated team members, and our community. By approving this land-use permit, you are helping us continue a legacy of transformative care and making it possible for us to extend our reach to more seniors and their families during their most vulnerable moments.

Thank you for your time, understanding, and consideration of this project. We appreciate you and the entire Board of Supervisors for your time and efforts on our behalf.

Respectfully,
Katherine Grutas-Dunphy

From: Adlai Grutas <agrutas@carnelianhome.com>
Sent: Monday, July 21, 2025 1:57 PM
To: Clerk of the Board
Cc: Katherine Dunphy; Jay Grutas; Everett Louie
Subject: Carnelian Project: CDLP23-02046
Attachments: By The Numbers - Carnelian.pdf; Project Brief Reduced Size.pdf; Compromises discussion in Zoning Administrator.pdf; Compromises discussion in Planning Commission.pdf; Beyond the Myths- How Senior Living Facilities Impact Neighborhood Property Values.pdf

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Good afternoon,

Attached are the following documents that we previously submitted to the Zoning Administrator and Planning Commissioners:

1. Carnelian By the Numbers
2. Project Brief
3. Compromises discussion in Zoning Administrator Hearing
4. Compromises discussion in Planning Commission Hearing
5. Beyond the Myths: Senior Living Communities and Property Values

Warm regards,

Adlai Grutas

Carnelian Assisted Living

Phone (925) 938-0200

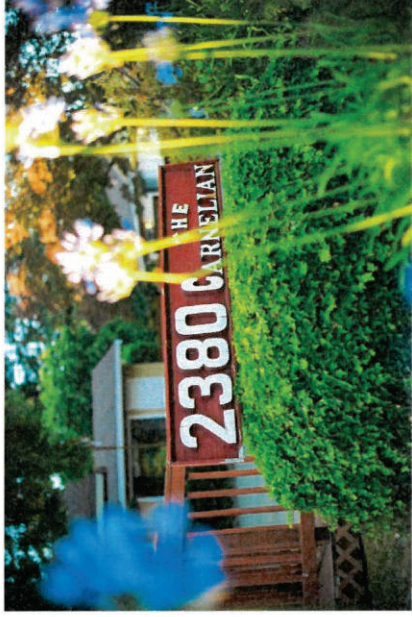
Direct (925) 478-7557

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The Carnelian exists to serve seniors and their families with the intention of building relationships filled with affection, dignity, and hope

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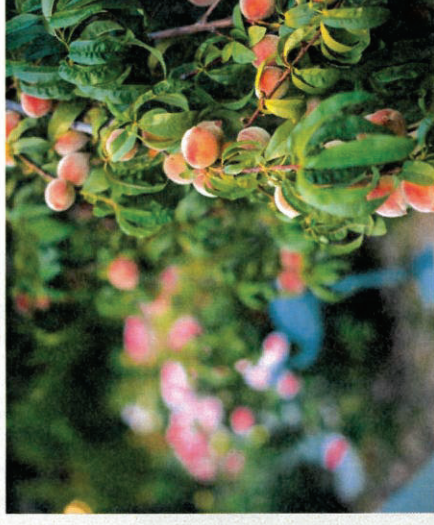


BY THE NUMBERS

CARNELIAN ASSISTED LIVING

MISSION

The Carnelian exist to serve seniors and their families with the intention of building relationships filled with affection, dignity, and hope.



VISION

We aim to challenge industry norms by reimagining spaces that foster genuine connections, where we can share our experiences, build new friendships, and discover a renewed sense of purpose.



OUR CULTURE

All of us truly love the work we do. We are driven by our unique care culture—knowing we are different, and we like it that way. We believe the work we do makes a difference, continuing this legacy of giving hope and healing through serving our most vulnerable seniors and their families.





EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

National Average: 42.8%

- Source: McKnight's Senior Living (Jan. 2024)

California Average: 45.7%

- Source: Seniorly.com (Apr. 2024)

The Carnelian Turnover Rate: 16%

Departures Breakdown:

- 2 pursued higher education
- 2 left to shorten a 90+ minute commute
- 1 separated due to performance
- Carnelian Tenure Average: 5 years
- We only hire Full-Time Employees

Key Point: Our turnover rate is well below the national and state averages, reflecting our supportive work culture and strong employee retention.



WAGES IN 2025

Bay Area Assisted Living Average: \$18–\$21/hour

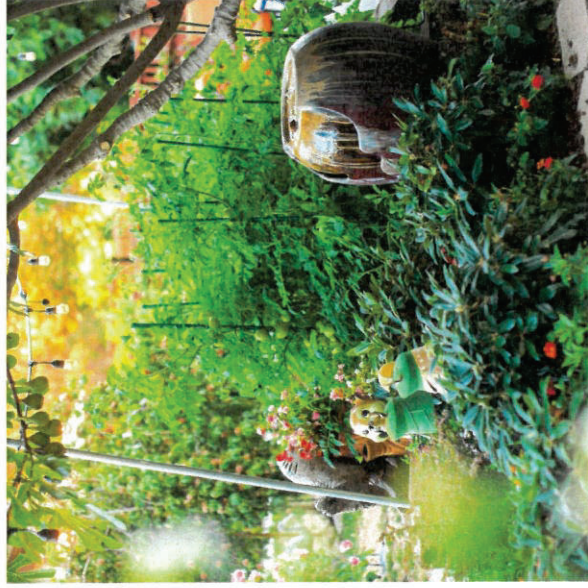
- Sources: Indeed, CALA Compensation Study (2024), BLS (May 2023)

Fast Food Minimum Wage: \$20/hour minimum

Assisted Living associated with Hospital Group: \$21/hour minimum

Carnelian Average Wage (2025): \$23.34/hour

Key Point: We exceed local wage benchmarks, showing our commitment to fair and competitive compensation.



BENEFITS

1. 100% Medical Coverage (Gold Tier) for Full-Time Employees
2. Subsidized Medical Insurance for Dependents
3. Dental & Vision at \$15/month
4. No-Cost Life, AD&D, Short & Long-Term Disability
5. HSA Contribution: \$1,000 for participating employees
6. 401(k) with Matching
7. Dependent Life Enrichment Program
8. Wellness Spa Program
9. Tuition Assistance Program
10. Free Financial Wellness Offerings
11. 50 Hours of Paid Sick Leave annually
12. 150 Hours Average of Paid Time Off annually (increases with tenure)

Key Point: Our comprehensive benefits foster employee wellness, security, and job satisfaction.

WE BELIEVE

We believe that delivering exceptional care to our residents begins with investing in our employees' well-being and professional growth. By offering competitive wages, comprehensive healthcare coverage, and a host of additional benefits—such as dependent care support, paid leave, and ongoing development opportunities—we foster a workplace where team members feel valued, motivated, and empowered to provide the highest standard of care.



HOW WE PROVIDE EXCEPTIONAL CARE

At The Carnelian, exceptional care means prioritizing the emotional and physical well-being of our residents. We create meaningful connections through positive interactions with our team and their families, fostering a supportive and engaging environment. Our activities and social opportunities promote community and enrich daily life. To ease the responsibilities of families, we provide comprehensive care services, including medication administration assistance, care coordination, health monitoring, and regular communication with care providers. This holistic approach ensures that our residents receive attentive, personalized care while their families gain peace of mind.





MONTHLY CARE

Carnelian Average (2025): \$14,500
Other Assisted Living (Memory Care): \$14,000–\$30,000+

Common Reasons for Leaving Previous Assisted Living Communities:

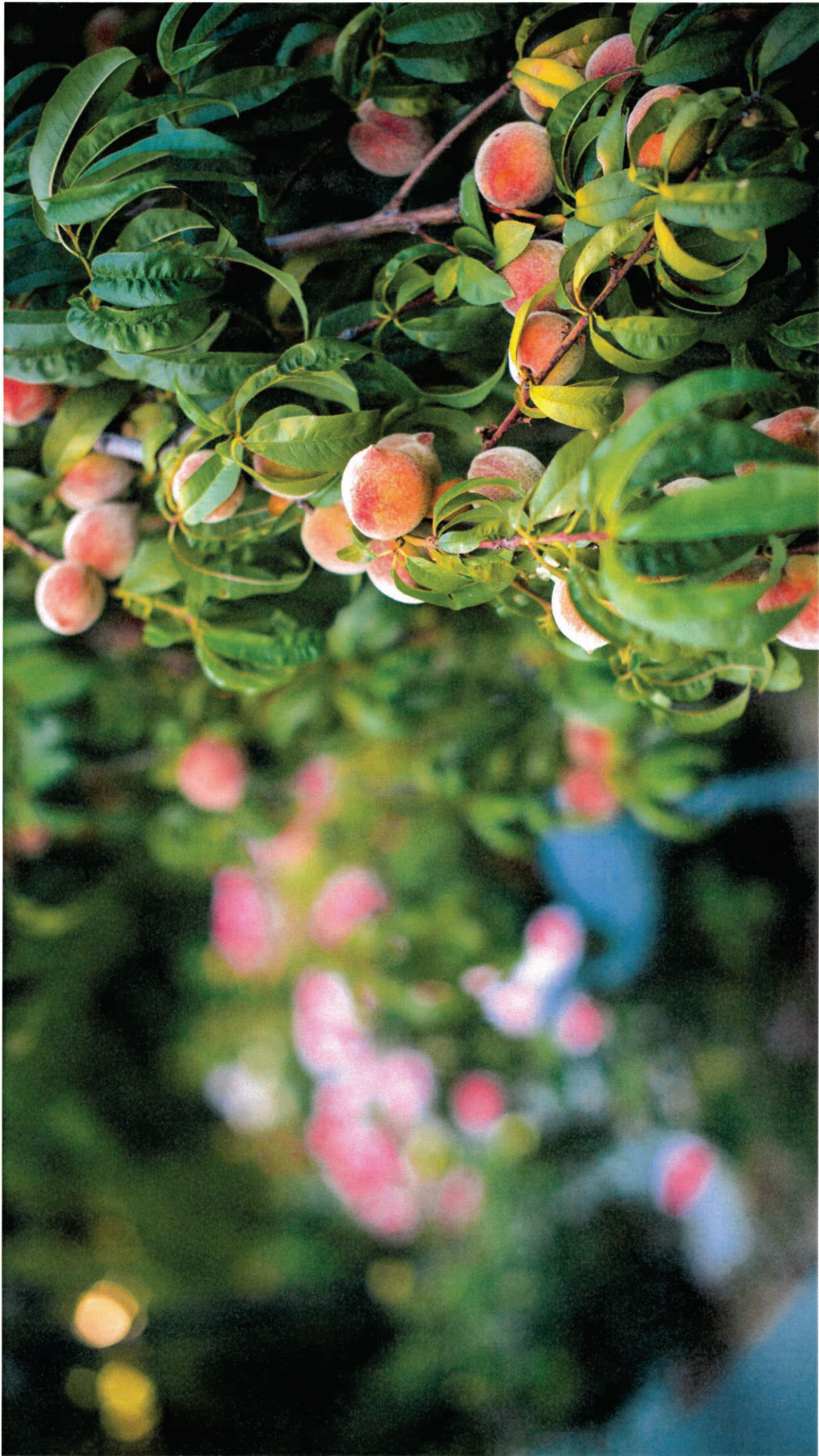
1. Facilities may be unable to provide higher-level care or meet evolving needs.
2. Families are often required to hire private caregivers to supplement existing services.
3. Limited support and communication fail to meet expectations.
4. Some facilities charge extra, piecemeal fees for additional services and care.

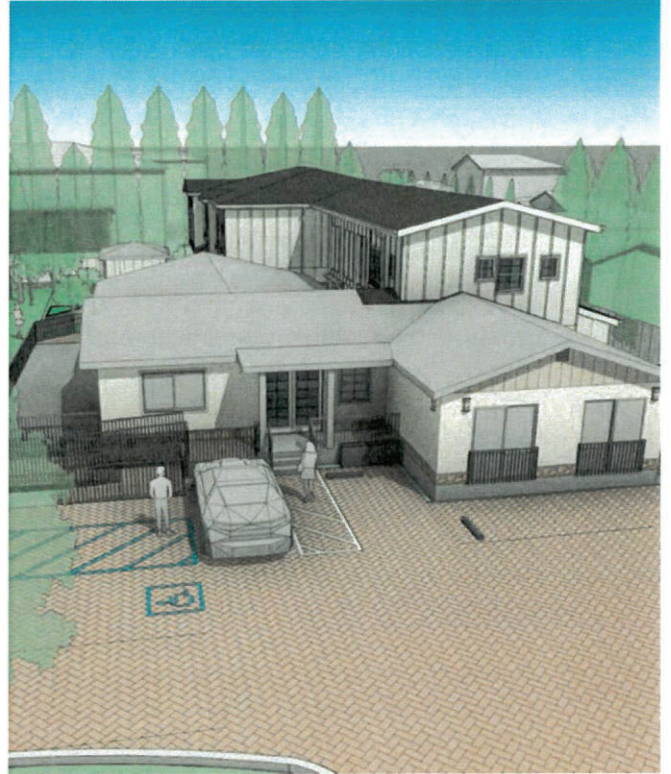
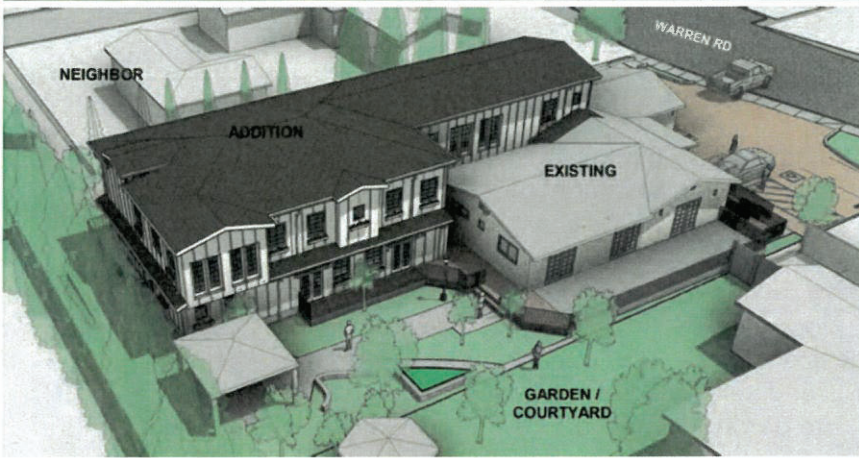
Key Point: We deliver advanced, compassionate care while remaining affordable.



OTHER FACTS

1. Carnelian maintains one of the lowest caregiver-to-resident ratios at 1:5, supplemented by additional support/float staff. Other AL Communities (Memory Care) operates on a 1:8 to 1:12 ratio.
2. We have a solid track record with the Community Care Licensing Division, the governing agency for RCFEs.
3. Carnelian provides a welcoming, home-like setting for all seniors. We are not a locked community, always prioritizing respect and dignity.





The Carnelian Project

Project Brief

Project at 2374 Warren Road, Walnut Creek
Project File #CDLP23-02046

Who we are

In 1973, our grandmother, Doreen Dubose, came to Saranap/Walnut Creek with a heartfelt vision: to create a place where seniors could age in place in a home-like, non-institutional, and gracious living environment. Five decades later, The Carnelian remains a unique age-in-place community, staying true to its core promise—to honor, serve, and support seniors and their families through life's most challenging moments.

Today, The Carnelian offers both high-level assisted living and memory care services. Families turn to us not only because of our ability to support residents through every stage of their care, but because of our deep expertise in caring for seniors with complex health and cognitive challenges.

Our model of care is rooted in relationships. We are a home built on trust, love, and a deep commitment to doing things differently. From our joyful activity programs to our deeply supportive care management, our model of care is thoughtfully designed to lift burdens, create connections, and bring light into the lives of our residents and their families. It's in these everyday choices: how we show up, listen, and respond, that our approach becomes something truly personal and impactful.

One of the most cherished spaces in our home is our garden. It is a sanctuary of connection, celebration, and quiet restoration: where life slows down and relationships deepen. For families navigating the complexities of cognitive or physical decline, the garden offers more than just beauty; it offers a gentle kind of relief. It's a space where the demands of caregiving momentarily soften, and loved ones can simply be together: sharing a meal, celebrating a birthday, or just sitting side by side in the sun. In a time when life moves fast and can feel so overwhelming, our garden creates the conditions for presence—to share laughter, hold memories, and let purpose take root.

Our expansion is for the people who inspire us. It's about making space: for more love, more care, more dignity, and more hope. It's for the families quietly praying that when their time of need comes, a place like The Carnelian will still be here. Because the people we serve are not strangers. They are the very people who shaped this neighborhood and built its homes, raised families here, and gave it its charm and character.

This is a legacy project—honoring the legacy of a woman who, over fifty years ago, believed in care, in community, and in creating something better. She believed in this neighborhood and in what it could mean for the seniors she loved. We are not here to disrupt a neighborhood; we are simply asking to serve it.

The Carnelian is more than just a name on a sign. We are a living, breathing community rooted in service, dignity, and purpose. We are not just preserving a building; we are stewarding something truly special. This is our way of restoring a deeply human approach to eldercare, bringing it back into the heart of the neighborhood, where it should always belong.

Most importantly, we have the chance to create magic in a world that desperately needs more of it. And that's the greatest privilege of all—bringing a sense of joy, love, and connection to the people and community we serve.

That's not opportunism. That's stewardship. And we take that responsibility seriously.

We are Carnelian Assisted Living. We are here for our people. And we are here for you.



Carnelian Project

Site Location: 2374 Warren Road, Walnut Creek, CA

Project Overview The Carnelian Project will add 12 new residential care beds at our 2374 Warren Road location, specifically designed for seniors with dementia who need specialized memory care in a home-like setting.

Our Community Today The Carnelian has been a trusted part of Walnut Creek since the 1970s, operating as a licensed Residential Care Facility for the Elderly. Today, we care for 30 residents across three neighboring properties, all connected by shared gardens that create a true sense of community.

What We're Building We're adding a new two-story addition with a 2,590-square-foot footprint that will blend seamlessly with our existing community. At 25 feet tall, the addition is designed to feel like home, not an institution. This expansion will bring our 2374 Warren Road property from 6 licensed beds to 18 beds

Why This Matters The senior population is growing rapidly, and the need for quality memory care is critical. Families are looking for places where their loved ones can receive specialized care while maintaining dignity and connection to community life.

Project Details

- Single-site expansion at 2374 Warren Road (our other properties remain unchanged)
- Located in a fully urbanized area with no environmental sensitivities
- Architectural design that honors our existing community character
- Focuses on creating familiar, comfortable spaces for residents with dementia
- Maintains our commitment to personalized, compassionate care

Partnership We're proud to be working with HGCI, Inc. from San Rafael, California, who will serve as both the contractor and architect for this project.

Community Impact and Benefits

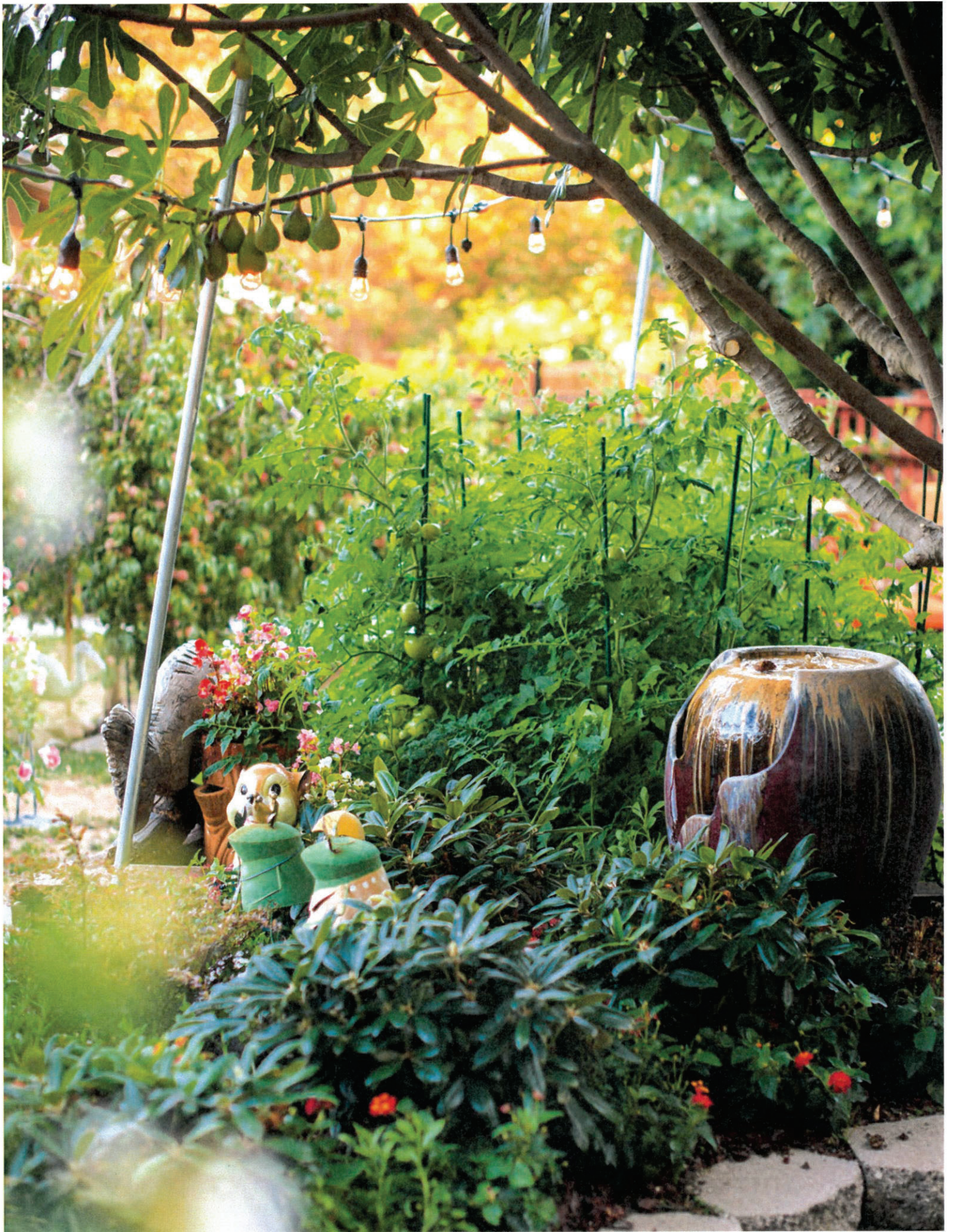
Deepening Our Neighborhood Roots After five decades as proud Saranap residents, we've built lasting relationships with our neighbors through community events, informal gatherings, and daily interactions that make this area feel like home. Our expansion represents a renewed commitment to these relationships - we're investing in infrastructure that will serve this community for generations to come. We understand that being good neighbors means more than just maintaining our property; it means actively contributing to the quality of life that makes Saranap special. Our operations will continue to respect the residential character that drew us here in 1973, with thoughtful design choices that complement rather than compete with our surroundings.

A New Vision for Senior Living Our expansion showcases an alternative to institutional senior care that other communities can learn from and adapt. The design prioritizes spaces where natural intergenerational connections can flourish - where neighborhood children might visit with grandparents, where local book clubs or garden enthusiasts can share activities with residents, and where the wisdom and experience of our seniors becomes a community asset rather than something hidden away. This model demonstrates that senior living facilities can be neighborhood anchors that enrich community life rather than isolate residents from it.

Keeping Families Together The shortage of quality senior care options forces difficult choices on local families every day. Adult children face the heartbreak of moving parents away from lifelong friendships, familiar doctors, and the community connections that provide meaning and comfort. Our expansion means more families can keep loved ones close, allowing for regular visits, continued participation in local activities, and the peace of mind that comes from knowing their family member is receiving excellent care without sacrificing proximity to everything familiar.

Strengthening Community Connections Beyond caring for residents, we serve as a vital resource for families navigating senior care decisions and challenges. When people face difficult questions about aging parents or caregiving responsibilities, we provide guidance, referrals, and support. Our holiday celebrations, garden tours, and community events create opportunities for people to connect with each other and with our residents, fostering relationships that extend beyond our property lines. These gatherings help build the social fabric that makes communities resilient and supportive, creating a space where the wisdom and experience of our seniors becomes a valued part of community life.

Investing in Our Shared Future This expansion creates approximately 8-10 new full-time positions with competitive wages and comprehensive benefits, supporting local families and contributing to the area's economic stability. Our increased property tax contribution helps fund the schools, parks, and services that benefit all residents. Additionally, we source supplies, services, and equipment locally whenever possible, creating a multiplier effect that supports other neighborhood businesses. This represents a significant financial commitment to the community that has supported us for five decades.



How We've Engaged with Our Community

We believe meaningful community engagement means meeting people where they are, listening carefully to their concerns, and demonstrating through our actions that their input shapes our decisions.

Our Outreach Efforts

Personal Connections We went door-to-door throughout the neighborhood to share project details and have one-on-one conversations with residents, ensuring everyone had the opportunity to ask questions and voice concerns directly.

Comprehensive Information Distribution We created informational flyers and hand-delivered them to over 350 homes, not just once but across several weekends, ensuring every household had access to project details and our contact information.

Visible Community Notice We posted informational signage in front of The Carnelian so anyone walking by could learn about the project and how to get more information or ask questions.

Accessible Information Sharing We set up weekend Q&A booths in the neighborhood, creating informal opportunities for people to stop by at their convenience, review plans, and provide feedback without the formality of scheduled meetings.

Formal Public Process We actively participated in Zoning and Planning Commission hearings, where community members could speak publicly and ensure their concerns became part of the official record and review process.

Neighborhood Meetings We hosted dedicated information meetings where residents could examine detailed building plans, ask technical questions, and meet us face-to-face.

Ongoing Communication We've maintained an open-door policy, welcoming continued dialogue through email, phone calls, or in-person visits for anyone wanting to discuss the project further. We also created a dedicated project website at carnelianproject.com where people can access current information and updates.

Responsive Changes Most importantly, the feedback we received directly influenced our project decisions. Based on community input, we modified our elevator design, relocated staff parking and delivery areas, and enhanced landscape privacy buffers.

Our Commitment We view neighborhood collaboration as essential to The Carnelian's success and remain committed to active dialogue with the community throughout this project and beyond.

How We Responded

Over the past several months, we've made it a priority to listen closely to feedback from our neighbors through extensive community engagement. Our goal has always been to create a welcoming environment for our residents while preserving the friendly, comfortable character of this neighborhood. The improvements we've made directly reflect the thoughtful input shared by community members throughout our outreach process.

1. Parking and Traffic: Making Everyday Life Easier

What We Heard:

Warren Road can become congested, especially during large events. Neighbors asked us to find ways to reduce traffic and parking issues in the area.

What We Did:

- **Staff & Delivery Relocation:** We moved staff parking and all deliveries over to Flora Avenue. This shift has already cut down on day-to-day traffic along Warren Road.
- **Event Parking Plan:** When we host bigger events, we now use an offsite parking lot and shuttle guests to the Carnelian. This keeps visitor cars away from residential streets and makes for a calmer environment on Warren Road.
- **Parking Analysis:** Our team conducted a parking study confirming we'll have 17 onsite parking spaces, which is more than the county-required 14.

Why It Matters:

These changes not only ease congestion but also create a safer, more pleasant atmosphere for everyone in the neighborhood—plus, guests arriving by shuttle have a smooth, stress-free transition onto the property.

2. Building Design Changes: Aligning with Neighborhood Character

Based on public comments, we carefully updated our design to address concerns about building mass, solar access, and maintaining the neighborhood's cozy feel. Below are the key topics and our solutions:

Key Topics & Our Solutions:

1. Elevator Shaft Location

What We Heard: The front-facing elevator shaft was distracting from the homey feel of the neighborhood.

What We Did: We moved the shaft to the rear of the building, lowered it by 2.5 feet, and made its roofline flush with the rest of the structure.

Benefit: This helps reduce the perceived mass of the building from the street, making it appear more like a typical neighborhood home and avoiding a "commercial" look.

2. Protecting Neighboring Solar Panels

What We Heard: Neighbors wanted to be sure that the proposed building wouldn't create unwanted shade on solar panels.

What We Did: We conducted two shadow studies—one by HGCI and one via ShadeMap. Both confirmed no shading impact during the summer solstice; during winter solstice shading will be mostly due to existing redwood and cypress trees along the fenceline, not our proposed building.

Benefit: This ensures we're not negatively impacting our neighbors' renewable energy sources and demonstrates our commitment to environmental responsibility.

3. Two-Story Addition vs. Single-Story

What We Heard: Some neighbors preferred a single-story addition.

What We Did: After exploring a single-level design, we found it would reduce bed capacity, encroach on our essential garden space, and compromise the financial viability of the project. Instead, we:

- Lowered the Building Height by 1.5 feet to 25 feet, aligning with other two-story homes in the area.
- Increased the Second-Floor Setback from 10 to 14 feet on the east side, effectively stepping the building back and reducing massing.
- Resized Certain Ground-Floor Rooms to minimize the overall footprint.

Benefit: Preserves critical garden space for residents with dementia or Alzheimer's, meets operational needs, and reduces the building's overall visual impact on neighbors.

4. Neighborhood Character

What We Heard: Our neighbors value the cozy, residential feel of Saranap Neighborhood.

What We Did:

- **Resized Certain Ground-Floor Rooms** to minimize the overall footprint.
- **Architectural Changes:** We introduced board-and-batten siding, added more windows to break up the façade, and integrated dormers for a simpler, more traditional roof design.
- **Fenceline Privacy:** We plan to plant Italian cypress trees along the fence line to provide an attractive visual barrier.

Comprehensive Landscape Approach: We've partnered with a local landscape architect to design a lush softscape, incorporating full-grown trees, fast-growing vines, and various shrubs and flowers.

Benefit:

- **Reduced Massing Effect:** The additional landscaping creates a softer, more natural border around the building, helping it blend into the neighborhood and reducing the perception of mass.
- **Improved Aesthetics:** Mature trees, colorful flowers, and green vines will make the exterior inviting and peaceful, enhancing curb appeal for everyone in the area.
- **Enhanced Privacy & Noise Buffer:** Dense foliage offers a protective screen, minimizing noise while improving privacy for both our residents and adjacent homes.
- **Community Harmony:** These efforts underscore our commitment to maintaining the distinctive charm of Saranap, ensuring our project complements the neighborhood's existing character.

3. Why These Changes Matter

All these modifications—big and small—help us meet two major goals:

- **Supporting Our Residents:** By maintaining a comfortable environment and preserving our garden space, we're ensuring a better quality of life for those with memory-related conditions like dementia and Alzheimer's.
- **Respecting Our Neighbors:** We're working hard to ensure that any growth remains compatible with the character and needs of the Saranap community.



What We're Asking For

As we approached the Board of Supervisor Public Hearing on July 22nd, we respectfully request your support in the following areas:

Permit Approval Within Current Guidelines

- We are not seeking rezoning or major variances from existing regulations
- The project operates within the parcel's current residential-care use and zoning designation
- Our application requests a standard land use permit to responsibly expand senior living services in compliance with local requirements

Thoughtful Support at the Public Hearing

A supportive stance (where appropriate) or public comments acknowledging:

- How the project has evolved through community input
- Its alignment with County goals for housing and aging-in-place services
- Its thoughtful, neighborhood-appropriate scale and design

Collaborative Leadership

- Help ensure accurate understanding of the project's purpose and scope among all stakeholders
- Demonstrate to the community that this project has been carefully developed through genuine dialogue
- Create opportunities for future collaboration on senior care, housing, and health services throughout the region

We're grateful for the opportunity to bring this project forward through transparent community engagement and appreciate your time, leadership, and thoughtful consideration.

Have Questions or Want to Learn More?

We're committed to ongoing dialogue and transparency with our community. We welcome your questions, feedback, or concerns at any time.

Contact Us:

Email: project@carnelianhome.com

Website: CarnelianProject.com

Phone or in-person visits welcome

Owners

Katherine Dunphy

kdunphy@carnelianhome.com

Adlai Grutas

agrutas@carnelianhome.com

Jay Grutas

jgrutas@carnelianhome.com

We believe the best projects come from listening to our community and working together toward solutions that benefit everyone.

Board of Supervisors
1025 Escobar Street
Martinez, CA 94553
RE: CDLP23-02046 – Land Use Permit

Good afternoon, Board of Supervisors, neighbors, and fellow community members. My name is Adlai Grutas, and I am one of the owners of The Carnelian. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss with you how we responded to your suggestions and concerns regarding the Carnelian project. I am here today to update you on the tangible actions we have made and to highlight how these changes will benefit both our residents and the community as a whole.

Over the past several months, we have listened closely to your feedback. Our goal has always been to create a welcoming environment for our residents while maintaining the friendly, comfortable feel of this neighborhood. To that end, we've made specific improvements that address both the Zoning Administrator's requests and the thoughts shared by our neighbors.

We heard that Warren Road can become congested, especially during our large events. To alleviate this, we relocated staff parking and all deliveries to Flora Avenue, which has significantly reduced everyday traffic on Warren Road. For our bigger events, we now use an offsite parking and shuttle service for our guests, creating a safer, calmer environment for everyone. We also did a parking study, which confirms we will have a capacity for 17 parking spaces — exceeding the county-required of 14 spaces.

We also recognized the importance of staying in close contact with neighbors about the design and potential impacts on the area. Following the Zoning Administrator's recommendation, we held community meetings on May 27, June 10, and October 1, 2024, and personally visited over 200 homes to gather input and share updates. We also maintain an online project webpage where anyone can check our latest progress or provide feedback. This transparency helps build trust, and we deeply value every comment we've received.

In response to design-related feedback and the recommendation of the Zoning Administrator, we made several changes to align with the neighborhood's character and to address concerns about building mass and solar access. The street-facing elevator shaft, for example, was relocated to the rear of the building, lowered by 2.5 feet, and made flush with the roofline to minimize its visual impact. We also conducted two shadow studies—one by HGCI and another via ShadeMap—to ensure we wouldn't create unwanted shade on neighbors' solar panels. Both studies confirmed that there is no shading impact during the summer solstice, and winter shading is largely due to existing trees rather than our proposed building.

Per Zoning Administrator recommendation, we explored the possibility of a single-story addition but found that it would reduce bed capacity, encroach on our very important garden space, and compromise the project's financial viability. Instead, we lowered the overall building height by 1.5 feet to 25 feet, increased the second-floor setback from 10 to 14 feet, and resized certain ground-floor rooms to minimize the proposed building's footprint. These measures preserve critical garden space

for our residents with dementia or Alzheimer's, meet our operational needs, and reduce the building's overall visual impact.

Knowing how much our neighbors value the warm, residential feel of the Saranap neighborhood, we updated the exterior facade into board-and-batten siding, added more windows to break up the wall facade, and integrated dormers for a simpler roof design. We plan to plant Italian cypress trees along the east fence line for privacy and have partnered with a local landscape architect to create a lush softscape with full-grown trees, fast-growing vines, shrubs, and flowers. These steps will help the building reduce the perception of mass, blend more naturally into the neighborhood, provide a noise buffer, and maintain the distinctive charm of Saranap.

All these modifications help us meet three main goals: supporting our residents—particularly those with memory-related conditions—respecting our neighbors by keeping the project compatible with the area's character and needs, and satisfying the recommendations of the Zoning Administrators..

We know that change can be challenging, and we appreciate the time you've spent with us—through public hearings, neighborhood meetings, and one-on-one conversations—to help shape a better project. While we recognize that we may not be able to meet every demand of our neighbors, we believe we have arrived at a compromise that benefits both parties. Therefore, we respectfully ask the Board of Supervisors to approve this project so we can move forward in creating a home that meets our residents' needs and remains an asset to the neighborhood. Thank you again for listening and for considering these updates. We remain committed to continuing this positive dialogue and welcome any further ideas or concerns you may have.

Thank you,

Adlai Grutas
Carnelian Assisted Living

Board of Supervisors
1025 Escobar Street
Martinez, CA 94553
RE: CDLP23-02046 – Land Use Permit

What we build today becomes the foundation for how we ourselves hope to age tomorrow—with grace, dignity, and the embrace of familiar surroundings.

Good afternoon, Board of Supervisors, neighbors, and community members. I'm Adlai Grutas, and I'm one of the owners of The Carnelian. Thank you for letting me share our vision: a vision for creating a place where our most vulnerable neighbors can age with dignity, right here in the community they've called home for decades.

For over fifty years, The Carnelian has been more than just a building in Saranap—it has been a sanctuary, a lifeline, and a beacon of compassionate care in our community. Today, we stand at a crossroads where the choices we make will shape not just the fabric of our neighborhood, but the emotional landscape of countless families facing the challenge of memory care for their loved ones.

From the very beginning of this journey, we've recognized a fundamental truth about community development: meaningful progress requires balance—between vision and compromise, between individual interests and collective benefit, between hearing concerns and maintaining the heart of what makes this project vital for those who need it most.

Our approach to the Carnelian project has been rooted in genuine connection with our neighbors. We've walked these streets, engaged in meaningful conversations, and listened intently to concerns both directly expressed and subtly conveyed. These weren't simply boxes to check—they were bridges to build between what is and what could be.

This commitment to meaningful dialogue began in earnest when traffic concerns emerged during our first public hearing. Rather than offering vague promises, we responded with immediate action. Within a week, we had already relocated staff parking and deliveries to Flora Avenue, demonstrating that good neighbors don't just listen—they act.

That moment set the tone. Over the months that followed, we reached out in every way we could. We held three neighborhood meetings for open conversation. We went door-to-door to over 200 homes for personal conversations. We hand-delivered more than 350 flyers, not just once, but across several weekends, so that no mailbox got left behind.

We also launched a project website and shared detailed FAQs to answer the most common questions. We posted signs outside The Carnelian so anyone walking by could learn more. We held weekend tabling sessions—low-key, approachable, a chance to talk without the formality of hearings. And we showed up, fully and consistently, at every county hearing. Through it all, our goal wasn't just to be visible—it was to be understandable.

But real engagement isn't just about numbers—it's about impact. It's about whether concerns raised turn into real changes made. And because of your feedback, this project looks—and works—very differently than it did at the start.

When neighbors shared their worries about Warren Road becoming congested, we acted quickly and decisively. We moved staff parking and deliveries to Flora Avenue—a significant operational adjustment that

required us to rethink our daily routines and staff protocols. For larger events, we've committed to using an offsite parking lot with shuttle service, accepting this additional expense to keep visitor vehicles away from residential streets. And while the county only requires 14 parking spaces, we've planned for 17—using every bit of space we have to reduce the burden on the neighborhood.

We also heard concerns about the height and visibility of the building. So we went back to the plans and made some changes. We relocated the elevator shaft to the back of the building, lowered it by 2.5 feet, and made it flush with the roofline so it's less visible. We also conducted shadow studies to make sure there would be minimal impact on nearby solar panels.

When requests came in for a single-story design, we took them seriously. We spent four months working closely with our architect, exploring alternative single-story alternatives. Unfortunately, after careful evaluation, we determined that a single-level option would significantly reduce our bed capacity, substantially encroach on our garden space and ultimately compromise the project's financial viability.

So while we couldn't accommodate a single-story plan, we still made substantial changes. We lowered the overall building height to 25 feet, which is 10 feet below what the county allows. We increased the second-floor on the eastside from 10 feet to 14 feet to reduce visual impact on adjacent homes. We adjusted ground-floor rooms to minimize our overall footprint and strengthened our landscape barriers — doing all of this while protecting the green outdoor spaces that are so essential to our residents.

We also redesigned the exterior to better match the character of the neighborhood. We used board-and-batten siding, added dormers and more windows to soften the facade and create a more traditional residential feel. And to help the building blend seamlessly with its surroundings, we brought in a landscape architect to add layers of trees and plantings that provide beauty, shade, and privacy.

Despite our efforts, however, I must acknowledge that not every conversation has been easy. We want to acknowledge that what started as open dialogue turned into formal opposition, mischaracterization, and legal correspondence.

In facing this challenge, we've chosen to remain steadfast in our commitment to respectful engagement, maintaining open communication with the broader neighborhood while honoring boundaries with those who prefer formal channels. This approach reflects our belief that even when full agreement feels out of reach, dignity and respect in dialogue never should be.

We fully understand that change can be concerning. New developments alter familiar landscapes and daily routines. These feelings deserve acknowledgment and respect. Yet we also believe in the profound promise this project holds—a promise that would fade if every objection became an insurmountable barrier.

The path to community harmony isn't about perfect consensus or giving each party exactly what they want—an approach that would often render projects impossible— it's about ensuring all voices are heard, all perspectives considered, and all feasible adjustments embraced. This is the delicate balance we've sought to maintain.

At its heart, this project embodies a simple but powerful principle: We all deserve to age with dignity in the neighborhoods where our memories live. For over five decades, The Carnelian has been a quiet guardian of this principle, offering sanctuary when minds begin to wander but hearts still know where home is.

Our expansion isn't about adding square footage and beds—it's about creating space for more stories to continue in familiar surroundings. It's about ensuring that when memory fades, the comfort of community remains. It's about allowing families to find specialized support without saying goodbye to the neighborhood

they cherish. This vision of inclusive neighborhood planning recognizes that truly vibrant communities accommodate residents across all stages of life.

As one of the few homes equipped to support individuals facing the fog of dementia and Alzheimer's, The Carnelian offers something increasingly precious in our fragmented world—continuity. The comfort of familiar surroundings becomes a lifeline when other certainties begin to slip away.

After careful review of our modifications and extensive community engagement efforts, the Zoning Administrator has determined that our project meets all necessary requirements. While we recognize that no project can satisfy every concern of every neighbor, we believe our approach represents a thoughtful balance that honors both our mission of care and our commitment to neighborhood character.

In the end, finding this balance isn't about splitting differences exactly down the middle—it's about creating harmony from diverse perspectives, reasonable accommodations, and the recognition that thriving communities make room for all stages of life, especially the most vulnerable ones.

We deeply appreciate the time, thought, and heart our neighbors have shared—whether in hearings, gatherings, or quiet conversations. Each voice has helped make this project better.

We respectfully ask the Board of Supervisors to uphold approval of both the Zoning Administrator and the Planning Commission, so we can continue our legacy of care while remaining thoughtful stewards of the community we all call home.

Just as we began with a commitment to balance, we end with a vision of harmony—where the needs of our most vulnerable neighbors are met within a community that protects its character while embracing its responsibility to care for all. The bridge we've built through this process connects not just differing perspectives, but different generations—those who call Saranap home today and those who hope to remain here tomorrow, even as their needs change.

Thank you for your consideration. The door to dialogue remains open, and we welcome the opportunity to continue this journey together.

Thank you,

Adlai Grutas
Carnelian Assisted Living

“We all deserve to age in place in the neighborhoods we love. Let’s build communities that work for everyone.”

Beyond the Myths: Senior Living Communities and Property Values

The truth about what happens when senior housing development joins your neighborhood

When word spreads that a senior living community might be moving into the neighborhood, the whispers begin. Property values will plummet. Traffic will increase. The character of our beloved neighborhood will change forever.

These fears are understandable. For most of us, our homes represent not just shelter but our largest investment and a cornerstone of our financial future. Any perceived threat to that investment naturally triggers concern.

But what if those fears are based on myths rather than reality? What if decades of research and real-world examples tell a completely different story?

While most of us believe that people with disabilities and seniors with special needs deserve to live in community settings rather than institutions, this conviction often wavers when a residential care facility announces plans to open nearby. The principle we support in theory—integration over isolation—suddenly feels different when it materializes next door. This gap between our values and our immediate reactions is a natural human response to change, rooted in uncertainty rather than opposition to the needs of our most vulnerable neighbors.

The Gap Between Perception and Reality

Right now in Saranap, we’re witnessing this dynamic play out. The Carnelian, a long-established senior living community, is planning an expansion. Predictably, some neighbors are worried about what this means for their property values.

But here’s what the evidence actually shows: properly designed and operated Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFEs) don’t harm surrounding property values. In fact, they often have no impact at all or even contribute positively to neighborhood stability and home values.

This isn’t speculation—it’s backed by rigorous research. The American Planning Association’s comprehensive review of over 50 studies concluded that group residences have no negative effects on neighboring property values, even for homes located right next door [American Planning

Association, 1997]. These facilities frequently blend seamlessly into residential areas, maintaining or even enhancing neighborhood aesthetics with their well-maintained properties.

When researchers in Finland analyzed housing sales, they found that senior housing developments had a "significant positive impact on residential property values" within a 500-meter radius, with the strongest benefits in moderate-value neighborhoods [Kurvinen and Tyvima, 2016].

The Carnelian: Five Decades of Coexistence

For skeptics, The Carnelian itself provides compelling evidence of successful integration. Since the 1970s, this senior living community has been a fixture in Saranap, and during those five decades, local property values have consistently risen alongside broader market trends, with no evidence of negative impact. In fact, many current neighbors deliberately chose to purchase their homes with full knowledge of The Carnelian's presence—a clear indication that it hasn't deterred investment or diminished the area's appeal.

Some concerns mistakenly classify The Carnelian as a "commercial building," but this fundamentally mischaracterizes its nature. It's officially designated as a Residential Care Facility for the Elderly, with "Residential" being the operative word. Unlike true commercial developments that generate significant traffic and noise, The Carnelian maintains quiet routines, low visitor traffic, and stable patterns—qualities that align perfectly with residential neighborhood expectations. The Carnelian blends so seamlessly with its surroundings that most people in the neighborhood are unaware an assisted living facility exists in the area.

The Sufism Sanctuary: When Opposition Proved Unfounded

Still unconvinced? Consider another local example: the Sufism Reoriented Sanctuary in Saranap. While not a senior facility, this 66,000-square-foot development faced fierce opposition when proposed in 2010-2011. More than 700 letters and petition signatures opposed the project, with property values being a central concern.

What happened after the sanctuary opened in 2017? The evidence speaks volumes:

- Before construction (2011): Homes typically sold for \$600,000-\$800,000
- After opening (2017-2018): Home prices soared to well over \$1 million
- By 2024: Values reached approximately \$1.6 million—a 160% increase matching broader Walnut Creek growth
- By early 2025: The median property value in Saranap hit \$1.9 million

Most tellingly, properties directly across from the sanctuary—those theoretically most vulnerable to negative impacts—sold at market-high prices. A nearby 4-bedroom home sold for \$1.2 million in 2019, above asking price, completely in line with other area sales.

The community's concerns shifted entirely within a few years. By 2016-2018, during planning for another development called Saranap Village, some residents weren't worried about declining values anymore—they feared new development would make homes and rents too expensive (East Bay Times, 2016)!

California Sources Confirm Findings

It's not just academic research that supports these conclusions—California's official sources tell the same story. A report by the California Research Bureau states that studies "conclude that residential care facilities do not have a negative affect on neighborhood safety and property values" (California Research Bureau, 2014). This matches California's broader policy approach supporting community-based care options for seniors.

Legal precedents reinforce this view. In *Hall v. Butte Home Health, Inc.* (1997), California's Court of Appeal found "no evidence the operation of the facility has had any effect on property values in the area" (*Hall v. Butte Home Health*, 1997). The court specifically noted that professionally operated facilities that match their surroundings don't create the negative impacts that many neighbors fear.

The California Department of Housing and Community Development's 2022 guidance confirms that "numerous studies, representing decades of research, have found that fears [of lowered property values] are unfounded" (California HCD, 2022). According to HCD, these facilities often blend so seamlessly into communities that residents may not even realize they exist.

The California Senate Health Committee's 2017 review also found no evidence that licensed group homes reduce surrounding property values (California Senate Health Committee, 2017). Across these sources—from research bureaus to courts to housing agencies to legislative committees—the conclusion is clear: well-designed and managed facilities integrate smoothly into neighborhoods without negative property impacts.

The Carnelian Project: Successful Neighborhood Integration for Senior Living

The quality of integration significantly influences how senior living communities affect their neighborhoods. The Carnelian's current expansion offers a valuable case study in how key integration principles translate from theory to practice through thoughtful implementation of design elements specifically chosen to protect neighborhood character.

Four factors stand out as particularly important in successful integration:

1. **Architectural Compatibility:** Facilities that reflect the surrounding architectural character gain greater community acceptance. The Carnelian Project maintains a 25-foot height similar to surrounding two-story homes while incorporating distinctly residential features: board-and-batten siding, additional windows, and traditional roof dormers that help the facility look like a home rather than an institution. These design cues from the Saranap neighborhood

ensure the building "looks like it belongs," making neighbors more likely to welcome it.

2. **Thoughtful Site Planning:** Strategic building placement and orientation create appropriate transitions between the facility and neighboring homes. Instead of expanding outward, the Carnelian's design builds on an underutilized concrete area of their property, minimizing disruption while providing necessary space for residents. The increased setbacks on the east neighbor fenceline create breathing room between the facility and adjacent properties—a change with significant impact on preserving privacy and neighborhood feel.
3. **Comprehensive Landscaping:** Professional landscaping does more than create visual appeal—it provides natural buffers, screens views, reduces noise, and enhances overall neighborhood beauty. The Carnelian's landscaping strategy, developed by a local landscape architect, includes full-grown trees, fast-growing vines, and diverse plantings that create natural screens and reduce noise. Italian cypress trees along the fence line provide an attractive visual buffer that enhances rather than detracts from neighborhood aesthetics.
4. **Traffic Management:** Senior housing generates fewer vehicle trips than most residential uses, with different peak patterns than surrounding single-family homes. The Carnelian has moved staff parking and deliveries to Flora Avenue, reducing daily traffic along Warren Road. For larger events, an offsite parking arrangement with shuttle service keeps visitor vehicles away from residential streets altogether. Other measures include designated delivery times and comprehensive staff parking plans.
5. **Operational Considerations:** Beyond physical design, how a facility operates significantly impacts neighborhood relations. Regular maintenance, scheduled deliveries, and responsive staff all contribute to harmonious integration. Facilities with high operational standards protect property values by ensuring they remain assets rather than potential nuisances. The Carnelian also maintains an excellent track record with the licensing body, further demonstrating their commitment to quality operations.

Even the building's perceived scale—a common worry for neighbors—has been carefully managed through setbacks, an articulated façade, and residential architectural features that help the expansion feel appropriate for its surroundings.

Most importantly, the design process has actively incorporated community feedback, addressing concerns early and building foundations for positive long-term relationships. This collaborative approach recognizes that successful integration isn't just about physical design—it's about becoming a valued part of the neighborhood fabric.

Beyond Property Values: The Broader Benefits

While property values remain a primary concern, thoughtfully integrated senior living communities like The Carnelian deliver numerous additional benefits to their neighborhoods. These facilities enhance

local aesthetics through professional landscaping and park-like grounds that contribute positively to the area's overall character and visual appeal.

More fundamentally, senior communities serve as stable neighborhood anchors, fostering community identity and continuity in an era of frequent change. This "aging in place" opportunity represents perhaps the most significant benefit—creating intergenerational connections and preserving neighborhood history and knowledge that might otherwise be lost. When longtime residents can remain within their established communities as their housing and care needs evolve, everyone benefits from the continuity, wisdom, and community memory they provide. The Carnelian has proudly served hundreds of seniors from Saranap, Rossmoor, and the broader Walnut Creek area, allowing these longtime residents to age in place within the community they call home.

The Fear Factor

The persistent belief that senior living facilities harm property values reveals something fascinating about human nature: we tend to fear what we don't fully understand. When faced with neighborhood change, it's natural to imagine worst-case scenarios.

But when we look past fear to facts, the evidence consistently tells a different story. Well-designed, well-maintained senior living facilities have coexisted with residential neighborhoods for decades while surrounding property values have continued appreciating with broader market trends.

For concerned homeowners, the research offers reassurance: your home's value is typically more influenced by school quality, crime rates, market conditions, and inherent property characteristics than by a thoughtfully designed senior living community nearby.

By focusing on collaborative approaches rather than opposition, communities and senior living providers can create developments that enhance both property values and quality of life for all residents—including the seniors who deserve to live with dignity in the neighborhoods they call home.

After all, with longer lifespans and an aging population, many of us will eventually need the very communities some oppose today. By embracing thoughtful integration now, we're not just protecting our property values—**we're investing in our own futures.**

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Most importantly, the design process has actively incorporated community feedback, addressing concerns early and building foundations for positive long-term relationships. This collaborative approach recognizes that successful integration isn't just about physical design—it's about becoming a valued part of the neighborhood fabric.

Beyond Property Values: The Broader Benefits

While property values remain a primary concern, thoughtfully integrated senior living communities like The Carnelian deliver numerous additional benefits to their neighborhoods. These facilities enhance

local aesthetics through professional landscaping and park-like grounds that contribute positively to the area's overall character and visual appeal.

More fundamentally, senior communities serve as stable neighborhood anchors, fostering community identity and continuity in an era of frequent change. This "aging in place" opportunity represents perhaps the most significant benefit—creating intergenerational connections and preserving neighborhood history and knowledge that might otherwise be lost. When longtime residents can remain within their established communities as their housing and care needs evolve, everyone benefits from the continuity, wisdom, and community memory they provide. The Carnelian has proudly served hundreds of seniors from Saranap, Rossmoor, and the broader Walnut Creek area, allowing these longtime residents to age in place within the community they call home.

The Fear Factor

The persistent belief that senior living facilities harm property values reveals something fascinating about human nature: we tend to fear what we don't fully understand. When faced with neighborhood change, it's natural to imagine worst-case scenarios.

But when we look past fear to facts, the evidence consistently tells a different story. Well-designed, well-maintained senior living facilities have coexisted with residential neighborhoods for decades while surrounding property values have continued appreciating with broader market trends.

For concerned homeowners, the research offers reassurance: your home's value is typically more influenced by school quality, crime rates, market conditions, and inherent property characteristics than by a thoughtfully designed senior living community nearby.

By focusing on collaborative approaches rather than opposition, communities and senior living providers can create developments that enhance both property values and quality of life for all residents—including the seniors who deserve to live with dignity in the neighborhoods they call home.

After all, with longer lifespans and an aging population, many of us will eventually need the very communities some oppose today. By embracing thoughtful integration now, we're not just protecting our property values—we're investing in our own futures.

References

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2. Kurvinen, A. T., & Tyvima, T. (2016). The impact of senior house developments on surrounding residential property values. *Property Management*, 34(5), 502–519. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/pm-11-2015-0059/full/html>
3. Zahirovic-Herbert, V., & Gibler, K. M. (2019). Neighbouring house transaction response to assisted living facilities and nursing homes. *Housing Studies*, 35(2), 195–213.
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5. California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform (CANHR). (2025). Overview of Assisted Living / Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFEs).
6. Jolanki, O. (2020). Senior housing as a living environment that supports well-being in old age. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 8. <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/public-health/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2020.589371/full>
7. California Research Bureau. Lisa Foster. Residential Care Facilities in the Neighborhood: Federal, State, and Local Requirements.
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9. California Senate Health Committee. (2017). SB 786 Legislative Analysis.
10. Hall v. Butte Home Health, Inc. (1997) 60 Cal.App.4th 308, 70 Cal.Rptr.2d 845.
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12.KQED. (2012). Comments on the Proposed Sufi Sanctuary in Contra Costa County.

13.East Bay Times. (2016). Contra Costa: Sufism center to open soon; 'Village' still pending.

14.Abio Properties. (2023). Saranap – Walnut Creek Neighborhood.

From: Susan Weiss <
Sent: Monday, July 21, 2025 2:12 PM
To: Clerk of the Board
Cc: project@carnelianhome.com
Subject: County File #CDLP23-02046 - Letter to Board of Supervisors in support of The Carnelian Project (Public Hearing 7.22.25 at 3 pm)
Attachments: CDKO23-02046 - Ltr in support of The Carnelian expansion (SWeiss 7.21.25).pdf

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Report Suspicious

To the Clerk of the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors:

Enclosed is my letter to the Board in support of The Carnelian's Expansion Project, Land Use Permit/County File #CDLP23-02046. This matter is currently scheduled for Public Hearing before the Board on **Tuesday, July 22, 2025, 3-5 pm.**

Please forward my letter to the Board and District 2 Supervisor Candace Andersen so that it may be considered in connection with the public hearing. Unfortunately, due to my work schedule I will be unable to attend the hearing in person.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Regards,
Susan Weiss

Susan Weiss
360 Grand Ave., PMB 137
Oakland, CA 94610

VIA EMAIL
July 21, 2025

Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
Attn: District 2 Supervisor Candace Andersen
County Administration Building
1025 Escobar Street
Martinez, CA 94553
clerkoftheboard@cob.cccounty.us

Re: Land Use Permit/County File # CDLP23-02046
The Carnelian Assisted Living Facility Expansion Project
Public Hearing Date: Tuesday, July 22, 2025, at 3:00 – 5:00 pm

To the Board of Supervisors and District 2 Supervisor Candace Andersen:

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed expansion of The Carnelian Assisted Living facility ("The Carnelian") at 2380 Warren Road in Walnut Creek. I have signed the general petition being circulated within the community, but I felt it was important to file a separate letter of support outlining my personal experience with The Carnelian.

My mother, Dorothy Weiss, lived at The Carnelian from January 2022 through June 2024. She died in June 2024 after suffering a series of strokes over a period of years leading to vascular dementia and, ultimately, her death.

Having sole responsibility for the care of my mother for over 10 years, I became very familiar with every aspect of elder care. For the first years my mother remained at her home with 24/7 care. She then moved to an assisted living facility near my home. As her illness progressed, I hired companions to sit with her during her waking hours. Finally, it became apparent that she needed a higher level of care. That is when I found The Carnelian, a truly amazing and one-of-a-kind care facility. I feel so fortunate to have found this special place for my mother.

I looked at many dementia facilities in both Alameda and Contra Costa counties when I was preparing to move my mother to a higher level of care. Generally, these facilities were dismal and dark places. Often the residents would be crowded around a television in recliners and watching TV with few caregivers in attendance. This is not what I wanted for my mother. Finally, through a recommendation from a hospice nurse, I discovered The Carnelian. When I walked in the first day, I realized this was a very special place. I immediately got on the waiting list and, ultimately, my mother moved into The Carnelian in January 2022.

The Carnelian is a cheerful and caring facility with a home-like setting. For my mother, I found it to offer the highest quality of care with a genuinely kind and capable caregiving and med tech staff. The Staff assisted me with all aspects of medical, dental, therapy and palliative/hospice care for my mother, and their expertise and contacts/referrals in all areas of elder care was exceptional. Outside of caregiving, there were the excellent meals, the amazing and joyful activities/performances/events arranged for residents and their families, the educational lectures for families and caregivers, and the spectacular garden where I spent most visits with my mother. In the garden, we enjoyed many private meals and group holiday luncheons under the canopy tent. As my mother deteriorated, the garden became our refuge where we sat together, smelled the roses, and circled the paths in her wheelchair admiring the extensive fruit trees, azaleas, maple trees, and roses. When my mother was unable to meaningfully participate in activities or talk, she found happiness and peace in the magical garden. Residents and families treasure the garden setting between the three cottages, strolling its paths and dining together at one of the many private patio tables nestled within the garden space.

I have recommended The Carnelian to many friends in the Bay Area who, like me, struggled to find a quality facility for their ailing parent. One of my friends' mothers is now a resident and both are delighted.

I know first-hand how difficult it is to find high quality care for parents with dementia in the Bay Area. There are simply not enough high-quality facilities for seniors in need of care. I strongly encourage the Board of Supervisors to approve the proposed expansion of The Carnelian so that more families can have the opportunity to place their loved ones in this special place and receive the unparalleled level of care it provides.

I understand that County Staff has already recommended approval of permit # CDLP23-02046. I hope this letter and my personal experience with my mother can provide additional support for the Staff's findings.

Unfortunately, due to my work schedule, I cannot attend the Board of Supervisors meeting in-person on July 22, 2025. Should you have any questions or would like to speak with me directly about my experience at The Carnelian or this letter of support, I can be reached at (510) 325-2259 or susyl.weiss@gmail.com.

Sincerely,



Susan Weiss

cc: project@carnelianhome.com

June McHuen

From: Adlai Grutas <agrutas@carnelianhome.com>
Sent: Monday, July 21, 2025 2:51 PM
To: Clerk of the Board
Cc: Katherine Dunphy; Jay Grutas; Everett Louie
Subject: CDLP23-02046 - Carnelian Project - Additional Letter of Support *Villena*
Attachments: Marina Villena.pdf; Geri Thomas.pdf; Eddie Orton.pdf; Judy Fassler.pdf; Susan Niceley.pdf; Tiffany Wohlers.pdf; David Miles.pdf; Claude Grillo.pdf; Michel McCoy.pdf

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Good afternoon,

Attached are additional letters of support for the Carnelian Project.

You can also use the following link to view and download all letters of support for the Carnelian Project. As of today, the folder contains a total of **308 letters of support**.

 [View Letter of Support](#)

Kindly confirm receipt at your earliest convenience.

Warm regards,

Adlai Grutas

Carnelian Assisted Living

Phone (925) 938-0200

Direct (925) 478-7557

Email agrutas@carnelianhome.com



The Carnelian exists to serve seniors and their families with the intention of building relationships filled with affection, dignity, and hope

CONFIDENTIAL: *This electronic mail (email) transmission contains confidential information, some or all of which may be protected health information as defined by the federal Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule. This transmission is intended for the exclusive use of the individual or entity to whom it is addressed and may contain information that is proprietary, privileged, confidential and/or exempt from disclosure under applicable law. If you are not the intended recipient (or an employee or agent responsible for delivering this email transmission to the intended recipient), you are hereby notified that any disclosure, dissemination, distribution or copying of this information is strictly prohibited and may be subject to legal restriction or sanction. Please notify the sender by email or telephone to arrange the return or destruction of the information and all copies.*



CARNELIAN

— ASSISTED LIVING —

2380 Warren Road, Walnut Creek, CA 94595
Ph (925) 938-0200 Fax (925) 210-0497
mail@carnelianhome.com
License No: 075601536, 075601537, 075601538

Re: Land Use Permit CDLP23-02046

Dear [City Council/Planning Board/Other Authority],

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed expansion of The Carnelian Assisted Living facility. As a member of this community, I deeply appreciate the care and services The Carnelian provides to our seniors, and I believe this expansion is essential to ensure that more of our loved ones can receive the quality care they deserve.

The Carnelian has been an integral part of our community, offering a safe, welcoming, and compassionate environment for seniors who need assistance and specialized care. By expanding the facility, The Carnelian will be able to serve more people, meeting the increasing demand for elder care services in our area.

I believe that this expansion will bring several important benefits to our community, including:

- **Better Access to Care:** The additional space will allow The Carnelian to accommodate more residents, ensuring that seniors in need of care have a place they can call home.
- **Enhanced Services:** The expansion will create opportunities to offer more specialized services, including memory care, physical therapy, and a wider range of enriching activities that promote a higher quality of life for residents.
- **Economic Growth:** The project will create new job opportunities for local residents, from healthcare professionals to support staff, contributing to the local economy.
- **Community Well-being:** With the expanded capacity, more families will have peace of mind knowing their loved ones are receiving excellent care in a trusted and familiar environment, close to home.

I strongly urge you to approve this expansion proposal. It will not only help The Carnelian continue its mission of caring for seniors but will also benefit our entire community. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I hope you will consider supporting this important project.

Sincerely,

Marina Villena

San Pablo

California

94806

om

TITLE	Project Expansion Support Letter
DOCUMENT ID	252015819245051
DOCUMENT PAGES	1
STATUS	COMPLETED
TIME ZONE	America/Los Angeles

DOCUMENT HISTORY

	Signed	Jul 21, 2025 12:58 PM	Signed by (Marina.villena@gmail.com) IP: 76.132.107.51
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2380 Warren Road, Walnut Creek, CA 94595
Ph (925) 938-0200 Fax (925) 210-0497
mail@carnelianhome.com
License No: 075601536, 075601537, 075601538

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Sincerely,

Geri Thomas

1

Alameda California 94502

TITLE	Project Expansion Support Letter
DOCUMENT ID	252008000666042
DOCUMENT PAGES	1
STATUS	COMPLETED
TIME ZONE	America/Los Angeles

DOCUMENT HISTORY

	Signed	Jul 20, 2025 05:17 PM	Signed by (geri2mt@gmail.com) IP: 73.71.239.4
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2380 Warren Road, Walnut Creek, CA 94595
Ph (925) 938-0200 Fax (925) 210-0497
mail@carnelianhome.com
License No: 075601536, 075601537, 075601538

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Sincerely,

Eddie Orton

Orinda California 94563

eorton@ortondevelopment.com

TITLE	Project Expansion Support Letter
DOCUMENT ID	252005440542040
DOCUMENT PAGES	1
STATUS	COMPLETED
TIME ZONE	America/Los Angeles

DOCUMENT HISTORY

	Signed	Jul 20, 2025 10:40 AM	Signed by (eorton@ortondevelopment.com) IP: 73.170.220.240
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2380 Warren Road, Walnut Creek, CA 94595
Ph (925) 938-0200 Fax (925) 210-0497
mail@carnelianhome.com
License No: 075601536, 075601537, 075601538

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Sincerely,



Judy Fassler

Lafayette California 94595

(925) 209-0959

TITLE	Project Expansion Support Letter
DOCUMENT ID	251997388228071
DOCUMENT PAGES	1
STATUS	COMPLETED
TIME ZONE	America/Los Angeles

DOCUMENT HISTORY

	Signed	Jul 19, 2025 03:29 PM	Signed by (Jfassler@astound.net) IP: 2a09:bac2:655e:1246::1d2:13
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2380 Warren Road, Walnut Creek, CA 94595
Ph (925) 938-0200 Fax (925) 210-0497
mail@carnelianhome.com
License No: 075601536, 075601537, 075601538

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Sincerely,

Susan Niceley

Susan Niceley

Walnut Creek California 94595

TITLE	Project Expansion Support Letter
DOCUMENT ID	251996193578072
DOCUMENT PAGES	1
STATUS	COMPLETED
TIME ZONE	America/Los Angeles

DOCUMENT HISTORY

	Signed	Jul 19, 2025 01:03 PM	Signed by (susan.niceley@sap.com) IP: 73.189.142.56
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CARNELIAN

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2380 Warren Road, Walnut Creek, CA 94595
Ph (925) 938-0200 Fax (925) 210-0497
mail@carnelianhome.com
License No: 075601536, 075601537, 075601538

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Sincerely,

Tiffany Wohlers

Walnut Creek California 94595

TITLE	Project Expansion Support Letter
DOCUMENT ID	251986092098066
DOCUMENT PAGES	1
STATUS	COMPLETED
TIME ZONE	America/Los Angeles

DOCUMENT HISTORY

	Signed	Jul 18, 2025 01:50 PM	Signed by (tiffanylauren@gmail.com) IP: 73.202.137.133
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2380 Warren Road, Walnut Creek, CA 94595
 Ph (925) 938-0200 Fax (925) 210-0497
 mail@carnelianhome.com
 License No: 075601536, 075601537, 075601538

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Sincerely,

David Miles

CONCORD California 94521

(408) 679-9959

1et

TITLE	Project Expansion Support Letter
DOCUMENT ID	251985641426060
DOCUMENT PAGES	1
STATUS	COMPLETED
TIME ZONE	America/Los Angeles

DOCUMENT HISTORY

	Signed	Jul 18, 2025 11:52 AM	Signed by (thepaintmaster@sbcglobal.net) IP: 2601:644:8203:cb10:cc5e:6fb6:1
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Katherine Dunphy <kdunphy@carnelianhome.com>

FW: Carnelian Expansion

claudegrillo1943@gmail.com <

Fri, Jul 18, 2025 at 12:13 PM

To: Katherine Dunphy <kdunphy@carnelianhome.com>

My Support for Carnelian expansion. Claude

From: Claude Grillo <claudegrillo1943@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, July 18, 2025 12:11 PM

To: clerkoftheboard@cob.cccounty.us

Subject: Carnelian Expansion

I am in FAVOR of the expansion. I moved to 23 Green Bay Ct 2021.. That's off Warren Road. Since then I have purchased three lots and homes in the Boulevard area. There has been construction and workers parking on Warren from the day I moved here. Lots of improvements and temporary noise are neasery on older homes and buildings. I also remodeled twice. I will start my third remodel off Warren at one of my houses on 23 Peterson way August 2025. I have never had an issue with traffic, workers,safety or any one blocking our streets. Expect maybe on garbage day. Know big deal. I knew when I moved from the east side of Walnut Creek to the Boulevard area that it was a Mix use area of residential, apartments, commercial, medical. My feeling is that Carnelian expansion will not have any effect on my home values. Resident of Warren area Claude Grillo

Supervisor Candace Andersen
Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
Re: County File #CDLP23-02046

Michel McCoy

Berkeley, Ca 94707

Dear Supervisor Andersen,

I write this note in support of the Cernelian expansion project. I will keep my comments brief and to the point.

My wife, Linda, suffers from the most diabolical and rare affliction you and almost everyone else have never heard of. It is called Progressive Supranuclear Palsy (or PSP for short). It slowly takes away all functions, walking, talking, decent vision, swallowing, and impulse control while leaving the victim cognitively capable of internalizing everything that is happening – in this case, Linda is watching herself die.

After struggling for a few years trying to keep her home and after three trips to emergency for lacerations in two weeks, I threw in the towel. Some wise nurses told me of a “unicorn” facility called The Cernelian. I had previously struggled vainly trying to identify a facility capable of addressing Linda’s symptoms in a comprehensive and loving way.

She has been there since October 27, 2024. Without their care and help that provided me with the confidence not to be by her side every minute of the day, I think I would have collapsed under the strain. This is a marvelously managed facility, impeccably clean with a kind, receptive and knowledgeable staff.

I know you have to balance permission to move forward against possible back pressure from constituents and neighbors. From what I have seen, parking has not been a problem for them nor noise either. I will say, in all honesty that having been through what I have been through, the Cernelian is a paradigm of what will be needed in vast numbers as we baby boomers approach the end.

Best wishes

Michel McCoy

From: Epi DeLeon < . n>
Sent: Monday, July 21, 2025 10:06 PM
To: Clerk of the Board
Cc: project@carnelianhome.com
Subject: Regarding County File # CDLP23-02046
Attachments: Physician Letter.pdf

This Message Is From an Untrusted Sender

Report Suspicious

You have not previously corresponded with this sender.

Dear District 2 Supervisor Candace Andersen,

Please see attached Physician Letter in support of The Carnelian.

Thank you,
Epifanio de Leon. MD

fax (800) 508-4347

<https://www.doximity.com/pub/epifanio-deleon-md>

<https://www.johnmuirhealth.com/doctor/Epifanio-DeLeon-MD/1124194907>

EPIFANIO DE LEON, MD

MEDICAL LICENSE A75985

DEA BD7773042 NPI 1124194907

<https://www.doximity.com/pub/epifanio-deleon-md>

PHYSICIAN ATTESTATION

07/18/2025

Regarding County File #CDLP23-02046

Dear District 2 Supervisor Candace Andersen,

My submission of this letter is to explain why the Carnelian Expansion Project should move forward from a physician's perspective. I share not only my views, but those of my clinic's and Hospice physician colleagues.

I have been a doctor to patients of The Carnelian for 23 years, since 2002. My clinic is 1.5 miles away. Initially, The Carnelian would bring patients to my office for routine visits. In 2013, I added Hospice services to my practice and began seeing terminally ill patients in-person at The Carnelian. By 2014, I was driving to 6 Bay Area counties to see Hospice patients. Few people have personally visited as many Board & Care facilities in the Bay Area as I have. This is why I feel confident in my assessment.

I can wholeheartedly say that there is not even a close 2nd place Board & Care facility when compared to The Carnelian. There is above and beyond, and there is way past above and beyond. The people at Carnelian continually think about how to make their ecosystem better. Upon entering the facility, one notices their secure yet subtle security measures. At the front door there is always masks, hand sanitizer, and gloves provided. The bedrooms consist of newly laundered linens and towels, freshly wiped wheelchairs, and even the garbage cans are clean. But what really stands out is the detailed décor, the live music, and the fresh smells. Inside and outside is filled with beautiful flowers and trees. There is the aroma of fresh, homemade bread or soup. The counters have perfectly arranged presentations of oranges, apples, bananas, and all in-season fruit available for all residents, families, and visitors. And the meals are 5-star restaurant level, made by their amazing, hand-picked chefs.

The care provided is outstanding. No facility can boast the near-zero bed sore statistics that The Carnelian has. This is a testament to their staff ratios and attention to detail. They truly live by the healthcare mantra, "The secret to caring for the patient is caring for the patient." In my career of tending to end-of-life patients, no facility has demonstrated love towards patients the way that the staff at The Carnelian does. The patients are treated as family, and they feel it. This is truly heartwarming.

The home blends in with all other homes in the neighborhood. And in my 12 years of visiting, I have never encountered traffic congestion or difficulty parking.

To anyone acquainted with The Carnelian, it is absolutely no surprise that there is always a long waiting list for a room. There is no place I would rather be when my time comes. It is for all of these reasons that The Carnelian has earned this need to expand. For the good of our community, please take high priority in upholding the Zoning Administrator's and the County Planning Commission's decision to approve this project. If you have any questions at all, please call or email me.



Epifanio de Leon, MD

From: Renée Boone
Sent: Tuesday, July 22, 2025 2:32 AM
To: Clerk of the Board
Cc: project@carnelianhome.com
Subject: Letter of Support for The Carnelian

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Dear Supervisor Candace Andersen,

This letter is written in support of The Carnelian Home.

Since 2020, my family has been supported and loved by the Carnelian family and staff. Without their efforts, we would not have been able to provide my mom with dignified and unfailing comfort during her most dire time of need. In addition to what Carnelian provided to her directly, they gave our entire family an understanding and wisdom that sustained us.

We recognize that not everyone is fortunate enough to find a care facility as warm and welcoming as that of The Carnelian, but every effort they make to provide such a place is to be commended and condoned, not constricted nor curtailed. Their work for the greater good should not be diminished by a few.

Please know that our personal feelings are shared by countless others. No one ever visits The Carnelian without remarking on the abundance of warmth and professionalism that is consistent and present throughout the home. Given the horror stories we have all seen, heard or feared about the low standard of care found in too many facilities for the aging, we hope and pray that The Carnelian's place in the community as a safe refuge will remain and grow in the years to come, offering peace and relief to many, many families and standing as a leader and example of what exceptional care-giving looks like.

Sincerely,

Renée Smith Boone

From: Tim Boone <timboone@carnelianhome.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 22, 2025 7:33 AM
To: Renée Boone
Cc: Clerk of the Board; project@carnelianhome.com
Subject: Re: Letter of Support for The Carnelian

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I think it's perfect!

On Tue, Jul 22, 2025 at 2:32 AM Renée Boone <rsmithboonie@gmail.com> wrote:

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Sincerely,

Renée Smith Boone

To: Supervisor Candance Andersen,

My name is Alison Albert. I'm a Recreation Therapist with 35 years of experience in health care and have been an independent contractor at The Carnelian Assisted Living for nearly 5 years. Throughout my career across the Western United States and Canada in various facilities, including hospitals, skilled nursing, and assisted livings, I have not come across one as unique as The Carnelian. It excels in providing exceptional care, a home-like environment, family and community inclusion and a high quality of life for seniors. Their formula makes them one of the premier facilities in Northern California, if not in the Western United States, and it should serve as a model for senior care institutions across the country. That being said, the owner's siblings recognize the necessity for expansion to enhance the experience of their facility in the community. This facility is a Recreational Therapist dream, along with the multitude of activities provided to improve the quality of life for their seniors, the addition of their Garden, the "Crown Jewel" of their facility provides a home like environment that is beyond compare. Home being the key word.

Seniors the wise and wonderful backbone members of our residential communities. Have raised families, built friendships and watched the world change from their front porches. They deserve to feel safe, valued and connected. But let's be honest: aging in a place can come with challenges. Mobility, access to

health care, social isolation-these are real concerns. As a community, we must ask ourselves: what are we doing to make life easier, safer and more meaningful for our older residents. Creating home-like, senior friendly residential facilities like the Carnelian provides health care, social activities and the dignity of independence. Programs like community gardening, seniors walking through Saranap and intergenerational events are not just “nice extra’s” – they’re bridges. They help connect generations and remind us all that aging isn’t about decline, it’s about legacy and continued contribution. All things the Carnelian Sibling owners are trying to share and expand with this project.

To our seniors: we see you we honor you, and we are grateful for the foundation you’ve built. To everyone else: Lets’ make sure our neighborhood aren’t just places to live-but places where people of every age feel truly at home.

From: Benjamin Dunphy
Sent: Tuesday, July 22, 2025 9:27 AM
To: Clerk of the Board
Cc: project@carnelianhome.com
Subject: Letter of support: County File # CDLP23-02046

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Dear Supervisor Candace Andersen,

I am writing to express my support of the applicant for County File # CDLP23-02046, Carnelian Assisted Living. Below is a copy of the public comment I presented for the Planning Commission on April 23, 2025.

In today's appeal, the opposition argues the current expansion will lead to the following issues:

1. Safety - more people is a safety hazard, especially in an emergency that requires evacuation.
2. Incompatibility - it's a commercial building that doesn't fit well with the neighborhood
3. Development and property values - Construction is a disturbance and property values will decrease

So I found it quite interesting to watch the opposition's own attorney stand at this podium to invalidate each of these points. When Mr. Bovee argued that their concerns would be satisfied not by stopping the expansion directly, but by making this into a single story building, it was a direct argument against each of the opposition's core arguments.

Moreover, a single story is not without impact – it would require construction on an existing building which would displace 9 residents, require layoffs, and impact the financial viability of the company.

As to other arguments, that "This is a large overpowering structure":

This is simply not true. The Carnelian is placing its second story a full 25 feet BEHIND the existing 1-story building facade. That's a full 55 feet from the sidewalk. Add in the canopy of trees that cover the area, plus the existing cypress trees on the side property fence, and you will barely even notice it unless you're actively looking for it. And it's 14 feet from the side fence, not 10.

And as opposition's own attorney stated for the record: he went to visit the Carnelian and couldn't find it because it blended in with the neighborhood so well. The current expansion is done in a respectful manner that maintains this character. As to disturbance from construction: Construction is a fact of life, things need to get built, maintained, improved. The very homes the opposition live in at one time were constructed, and at some point will require maintenance or expansion.

I empathize with the arguments of traffic safety. I have a 19-month old and the street we live on a residential street where traffic still exists. This is just the reality of living in a high-density area such as the Bay Area. There is no evidence to suggest any of the incidents brought up by opposition today are a direct result of the Carnelian's operations.

I just wanted to close with a bit of context: it was the State of CA Licensing Division that requested the Carnelian Assisted Living to be built. In 1970, they called RCFE pioneer Doreen Dubose out of retirement to request that she do for Contra Costa County what she did for Marin County. Ms. Dubose came out of retirement to establish the Carnelian, and she chose Saranap largely for its proximity to Rossmore. Ms. Dubose is the grandmother of the applicants Jay, Adlai, and Katherine, and they continue her legacy today.

I urge you to affirm the prior rulings of the Zoning Administrator and the Planning Commission and to approve the application.

Thank you,

Benjamin Dunphy

1 Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

From: Adlai Grutas
Sent: Tuesday, July 22, 2025 9:36 AM
To: Clerk of the Board
Cc: Katherine Dunphy; Jay Grutas
Subject: Carnelian Project: CDLP23-02046 - A. Grutas Opening Statement
Attachments: Public Hearing Opening Speech 2025.07.22.pdf

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Good morning,

Attached is my opening statement, which I will be presenting at today's Board of Supervisors public hearing. I hope it provides a clear and concise overview of our goals, mission for care and vision.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration,

Adlai Grutas

Carnelian Assisted Living

Phone (925) 938-0200

Direct (925) 478-7557

Email agrutas@carnelianhome.com



The Carnelian exists to serve seniors and their families with the intention of building relationships filled with affection, dignity, and hope

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The Honorable Board of Supervisors
Contra Costa County Administration
1025 Escobar Street
Martinez, CA 94553

RE: Carnelian Holdings LLC County File # CDLP23-02046

Opening Speech

Good afternoon Supervisors, neighbors, and fellow community members.

My name is Adlai Grutas, and I am one of the owners of The Carnelian—a small assisted living and memory care home here in Saranap.

Over these past months - through hearings with the Zoning Administrator and Planning Commission - we have discussed the evolution of this project. We have presented our plans, demonstrated our commitment to community engagement, actively listened to feedback from both the community and county, and made meaningful changes to our project based on that valuable feedback. We come before you today with a project that is stronger and more responsive because of that process.

As we return today seeking final approval for our expansion project, I want to step back from those technical details for a moment. Instead, I want to share something we haven't fully explored together. Behind every measurement on our blueprints, behind every design choice we've made, lies a philosophy. Today, I want to share the 'why' behind our proposal — our fundamental belief about creating a truly exceptional environment for seniors. This project is more than a building; it is the physical embodiment of our philosophy on senior care.

Our mission is simple: We exist to serve seniors and their families with the intention of building relationships filled with affection, dignity, and hope.

That mission began in 1973, when my grandmother, Doreen Dubose, moved to this neighborhood with a quiet but revolutionary idea: that seniors deserve something better than institutions. That they deserve homes. That even in the hardest moments of aging, there is still joy, connection, and purpose.

We carry her vision forward today, and it guides us as the needs of our community evolve. Now, as more families face the complex reality of dementia, her core belief that care must honor the person remains our bedrock. That is why we see a memory care diagnosis not as an ending, but as a calling—a call to lead with greater compassion and to honor the humanity that always remains.

So, what does that truly human approach look like? A story from my sister and co-owner, Katherine, is the best answer I know.

She told me about our resident Bob who joined us last October. Bob was living with Alzheimer's, and his time with us was brief—but I have to say, his impact was lasting.

Just before Halloween, our team had transformed the Carnelian driveway into a pumpkin patch. Bob was captivated. As he admired the decorations, He gently gestured for Katherine to follow him across the street. He didn't say much, but positioned her to stand beside him and look back at their work from a distance.

"Now look," he said.

Katherine said that from across the street, she saw their work differently—the colors, the scale, the joy. In that quiet moment, Bob gave her a gift: the perspective to see the full beauty of what they were creating.

Bob's gift to Katherine is our 'why'—a quiet call to always look deeper at what care, community, and presence can mean.

That quiet call from Bob—to be truly present—is not just about a single moment. It's about where we root ourselves. It's why we believe so strongly that this kind of care shouldn't be separated by gates or isolated on the city's commercial artery, away from the familiar sights and sounds of home. It belongs here, as a quiet and steady presence in the neighborhood.

Because aging touches every block, and the people we care for are, and have always been, this community. They built the homes. They raised the kids. They helped shape the Saranap we know today.

So when we ask for your support, we're not asking to bring something new into the neighborhood—we're asking to hold space for the people who already made it what it is. We've designed our expansion to be a quiet, seamless part of the neighborhood fabric—a true home, not a disruptive facility.

Our vision is to challenge the norms of this industry. To reimagine what assisted living can feel like. To move beyond institutional care and create places that foster real connection. Where people can feel safe, and also feel seen. Where joy still has room to grow, even in decline. Where families rediscover the possibility of just being present with one another.

That's why we're expanding—not to grow in size, but to grow in capacity to care. To say yes to more families. To offer more dignity. To stay rooted in this neighborhood, while serving it more fully.

Because for us, this isn't just about adding space. It's about deepening a promise. A promise that began as a quiet idea—and over time, has become something more.

We've often been asked what we're building. And sometimes, gently, people ask, "Will this still feel like a home?" We understand that concern. In a world where senior care too often becomes institutionalized—where facilities grow larger and more impersonal—we've chosen a different path.

The truth is, we're not building a facility. We're not just adding rooms. We're shaping a way of caring—one that reflects the spirit of this neighborhood: close-knit, personal, and deeply human.

We've designed this expansion to preserve the intimacy that defines The Carnelian—no long hallways, no separation from community, no compromise on human connection. What we're building is still a home, just with room to say yes to more families.

And lately we've been reflecting: When does that kind of care become part of a community's identity? Maybe it's when neighbors start to recognize it as their own. When a family says, "This changed how we see aging." When a caregiver brings that sense of dignity home with them. When our small acts of presence quietly shift expectations.

That's what we hope for.

Not to grow into something apart—but to grow with and through the neighborhood.

Not to stand at the edge of community, but to remain part of its daily life—

A home that belongs here, because it grew from here.

Supervisors, this isn't just a building. It's a belief. That even in the final chapters of life, there is still time for meaning. Still time for connection. Still time for beauty. We're proud of what we've built. We're proud of how we care. And we're honored to continue this work—together—with your support.

Thank you.

From: C Merhoff <
Sent: Tuesday, July 22, 2025 10:11 AM
To: Supervisor Candace Andersen; Clerk of the Board
Subject: CDLP23-02046 BOS Opposition to Land Use Permit Approval for RCFE Facility in R-10 Zoning District

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Dear Supervisor Andersen and Members of the Board Of Supervisors:

My husband and I are concerned residents of the Saranap neighborhood. We are deeply concerned that the proposed expansion of the Carnelian Residential Care Facility for the Elderly (RCFE) will disrupt the character of our neighborhood, lead to more traffic, congestion and noise, and will significantly impact the value of our property and the investment we have made therein.

The Carnelian is not a single property, it is **three properties** put together to house 30 residents currently without the expansion. This project as presented by the Carnelian only addresses a single property. That single property in the proposal cannot function without the other two properties. It is a large commercial entity, not an in-home care facility, which usually houses 6-8 residents. Even the state licensing agency treats the three together when they do an inspection as the reports are exactly the same for all three buildings. If this proposal is approved, then it will lead to piecemeal development of the other two properties, which would make the facility even larger. By declaring only one building with 6 residents, the Carnelian is claiming exemptions applicable to small RCFEs when in fact the total facility of 30 beds should be evaluated.

The Carnelian's application asks for a zoning variance for which there is no legal basis. In addition, the proposed building does not include a second exit stairwell. Lastly, the application tries to include compact parking spaces which are not allowed.

The height and size of the proposed building does not fit into the neighborhood of single family homes. It will look down into the yards and house of the neighbors behind thereby decreasing their privacy and consequently their property values. This would affect the entire neighborhoods property values if their properties sold and were use as comparisons.

The argument that the apartment building net door is two stories is not a valid one. The apartment sits lower than the existing Carnelian building and was already in existence when the neighbors bought their home, therefore it will not affect the current values of existing homes. The argument of a 2 story house in the neighborhood are not a good comparison due to the size of the project.

Though the Carnelian has somewhat cleaned up the parking on Warren Road since it was brought to their attention, we do not believe it will continue once the project is approved and construction is underway. Now, however, at times, Flora Avenue is now congested and difficult to get through on. In addition, in the last 6 months, they have had some work done and the contractor's equipment and trucks were parked along Warren Road, making it almost impossible for two cars to pass together. It basically became a single lane road for cars. Though the residents do not have cars, their family,

friends, care providers, fire trucks, ambulances, etc., do and will need more parking than what will be provided. With additional residents, will come additional staff who will need a place to park while they work.

We live on the corner of Camino Posada and Warren Road. We cannot tell you how many trucks on a daily basis use our street turn around. They back up onto Camino Posada, then turn back toward the Carnelian. In some cases, they have hit our curb and shrubbery. When they do this traffic on Warren Road has to stop until they have turned around.

We have concerns with evacuating the neighborhood in the event of a fire. We did have an Evacuation Warning on 10/27/2019 due to a fire at the Lafayette Tennis Club. So it is possible. Evacuating 30 plus residents and staff, plus all of the neighborhood could result in a traffic nightmare and potential loss of life. How will the residents of the second floor be evacuated safely?

We and our neighbors recognize that The Carnelian is providing a useful community service in terms of elderly care. We did not object to a minor increase in capacity. We very much object to the manner in which the application has been considered and processed. We feel that this Board cannot make the required findings on the strength of this application but that a substantively complete application with construction alternatives could lead to an approval consistent with zoning and use permit requirements. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this application for a land use permit be denied.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns,

Sincerely,

Cathy and Eric Merhoff

11111 11111, CA 94033

Dear Board of Supervisors,

I am writing in support of the proposed expansion of the Carnelian Assisted Living Facility at 2374 Warren Road, Walnut Creek, California.

Alzheimer's cases in California are expected to double by 2040. Our communities need more assisted living facilities that provide the kind of unique and loving care the Carnelian provided for my father and brother-in-law for over four years. The need especially for memory care can be seen in the omnipresent waiting list of desperate families needing full-time care for their loved ones.

Regarding the daily parking, I never had an issue parking or having to take a neighbor's spot during my many visits over a four-year period. The event parking is now off site with valet service.

Neighbors of the Carnelian recently stated in a letter that "additional profits with no apparent concern for others and with the entitlement that their business interests outweigh the needs and interests of the permanent residents."

Nothing could be further from the truth. The desires of the Carnelian are much more about satisfying the needs of the community, residents, and their staff than any profit margin. The staff and family are some of the most caring and considerate people I have ever known. They take great pride in making the facility a clean, comfortable, and happy place for residents and family members. You can see the staff's appreciation for their employer by their loyalty and longevity to the Carnelian. Their community outreach is demonstrated in many ways including hosting countless community education opportunities to educate families on elder care.

Increasing the number of beds will help

alleviate a huge and growing need for
compassionate senior care.

Please allow this plan to move forward.
You or your loved one might need this wonderful
place some day.

Sincerely,

Joan Grier

Dale Dickerson