

# Habitat project returns to council

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A controversial housing development proposal will head back to city council Monday night after being tabled in December.

The Habitat for Humanity project drew the ire of many residents near the proposed Monklands site on First Avenue N.W., adjacent to Ralph McCall School, and resulted in a full house at city hall the night of Dec. 21.

With more than 120 people in attendance and only a handful in support of the proposed redesignation of the 2.37-acre area from P-1 to R-4, it was clear more information was needed before a decision was made.

The proposed development called for a combination of condominium/townhouse style of 13 to 26 units per acre (UPA) and anywhere from 34-50.

An online petition produced close to 600 names at the time, while numerous letters, e-mails and phone calls had been flowing in to the city, as residents learned of the proposal.

Major issues with the development included traffic issues, parking, a potential loss of green space, as well as a perceived affordable housing complex next to two schools.

The parcel of land has been used as overflow parking for the Monklands soccer fields for the past 19 years.

Council ended up recessing the public hearing until Feb. 1 and asking for clarification of a traffic impact assessment study done in May by ISL Engineering and Land Services.

Habitat for Humanity president and CEO Andrew MacLachlan said a new traffic impact assessment was completed in mid-January and the results were the same. "There was a lack of understanding in the room on everyone's part," MacLachlan said of the first study. "The results of their second study only confirm the results of their first study back in May."