

# Restaurants, residents give each other food for thought

**BUSINESS:** Devonwood Estates homeowners say they're prepared to fight McDonald's move.

**BY BLYTHE BERNHARD**  
The Fountain Valley View

Representatives from McDonald's and Panda Express met with about 60 Devonwood Estates residents last week in a second attempt to compromise on plans for new restaurants near the homes.

"I understood that they weren't going away but I was very interested to see how they had listened to what we said (in January) and how they had addressed it," resident Jo-An Hawley Verstraete said.

The proposed site for the restaurants is a vacant lot at Brookhurst Street and Niagara River Avenue, which leads into the housing tract. Cars would enter and exit the restaurants through both streets.

Since learning of the plan, residents have expressed concern about additional traffic cutting through their neighborhood, effects on home val-

ues and the proximity to Moiola Elementary School. They are also worried about potential noise levels, trash and odors.

"The biggest problem you have is they already have an existing condition with cut-through traffic (between Brookhurst and Garfield Avenue)...their obvious feeling is that we're going to exacerbate that," said Don Ikeler, McDonald's project manager. "We want to minimize our impact to them and try to be the best neighbors we can be."

Revised plans include a no-right-turn sign to stop traffic from heading into the housing tract through Niagara River.

In addition, trash cans were moved away from behind the four homes that back up to the vacant lot, the space between the homes and parking spaces was increased to 20 feet, and shields were added to the proposed light poles.

Verstraete said the changes made to the plan since the community meeting in January didn't go far enough.

"They thought if they just put a little sign that that's gonna solve everything," Verstraete said. "They mixed up the parking, moved the trash

cans, that's it. They didn't talk about noise, about smells, about (the traffic)."

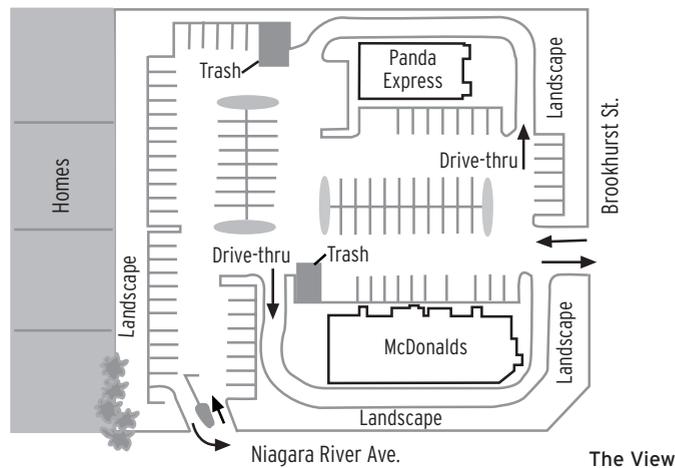
The discussion got heated as residents wearing "We're not loving it" pins pounded the McDonald's representatives with questions about moving to the vacant lot, which is currently used in October and December for pumpkin and Christmas tree sales.

Ikeler said there were many questions he couldn't answer at the meeting because the city would be hiring its own traffic and noise experts to conduct studies and make recommendations.

The franchisee of the existing McDonald's across Brookhurst wants to move before the lease expires in 2010. Representatives of the restaurant

## Preliminary plans

Representatives of McDonald's and Panda Express presented this revised plan to residents last week. The restaurants will now take the proposal to the Planning Commission for consideration.



said they looked at "a number" of other sites before deciding the vacant lot was best in terms of accessibility, cost and size.

The new McDonald's would have 90 seats and an indoor playground in a 5,000-square-foot building. Plans for the Panda Express call for a separate, nearly 2,400-square-foot building. Both restaurants would have a drive-through and a total of 106 parking spaces.

The restaurants still need approval from the city before construction starts. Plans could be submitted to the city within two to three weeks, Ikeler said.

Residents are prepared to fight the proposal.

"These properties are worth \$800,000 to a million dollars," Verstraete said. "We're gonna make it difficult for them to not (go away). We've got the heart, and we've got the money."

Ikeler said the McDonald's would provide 30 to 40 jobs and assistance to youth sports and other community events.

"We've been a part of this community and we want to continue to be there," he said.

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