

Nina Harvey

From: Tom Bartlett
Sent: Wednesday, September 03, 2008 11:24 AM
To: Joe Power; Isidro Figueroa; Maureen Tamuri; Nina Harvey
Subject: FW: LOW INCOME HOUSING IN THE GENERAL PLAN

Another comment letter from another Saratoga resident.

From: Michael Hafken
Sent: Wednesday, September 03, 2008 11:01 AM
To: Tom Bartlett
Subject: FW: LOW INCOME HOUSING IN THE GENERAL PLAN

From: Bob Adelman [mailto:mensche@mindspring.com]
Sent: Tuesday, September 02, 2008 8:55 AM
To: info
Cc: bgrovesman@earthlink.net; jwolf99@aol.com; washburnd1@aol.com; jrbozajian@earthlink.net; maureredge@earthlink.net
Subject: LOW INCOME HOUSING IN THE GENERAL PLAN

September 1, 2008

Members of the City Council
Members of the Planning Commission
City of Calabasas
100 Civic Center Way
Calabasas, CA 91302

**Re: City of Calabasas 2030 General Plan
Draft Environmental Impact Report**

As residents of Saratoga Hills & Ranch, we are pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the Draft EIR for the City of Calabasas 2030 General Plan. We strongly and loudly object to the Plan's recommendations to fulfill the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). There are significantly better, safer and healthier alternatives to the Proposed Plan with less environmental impacts and more community support.

The central issue is the Project's recommendation on low and very low income housing at the Rancho Pet Kennel site.

The Rancho Pet Kennel ("Kennel"), consisting of 6.6 acres, is unacceptable as the site for the proposed high-density development. The Kennel site fails miserably to support the Plan's themes of *Environmental Responsibility, Community Character and Quality of Life*. Saratoga Hills & Ranch, as we current residents well know, will be severely and negatively impacted forever if this project proceeds.

Our concerns are many as follows:

Safety

A major flaw with the EIR is that it does not address the fact that resident safety would be significantly jeopardized if the Kennel site is used. **As you well know, we residents of Saratoga have one and only outlet**

that immediately goes to a very narrow freeway bridge. Any traffic incident creates virtual gridlock as drivers exit the freeway and enter our community. Our morning school commute creates significant traffic delays, which will be dramatically and significantly increased with 132 new unit owners.

The City of Calabasas does not have standards on the number of homes that should be served by one outlet. The County of Los Angeles does and its standards recognize the safety problems associated with any community that has a single access road. Los Angeles County Code Section 21.24.020 mandates for single access that 150 units is allowed and that a maximum of 300 would only be allowed if there were a plan to improve access. *The Plan proposes to add 132 units to the existing 270 homes in Saratoga for a total of 402 units.*

The rationale for Section 21.24.020 is that during emergencies, if you have more than 300 units, residents are unable to flee and will become trapped. The Code was developed by the same County Fire and Sheriff Departments that serve our City. The only way to address this paramount safety issue is to reject the Kennel site.

If the Kennel site is used, our safety will be at risk as it would be unsafe/impossible to exit our community in earthquakes, fires and other emergency situations. It now can take 45 minutes to exit our community with freeway accidents and that time will increase in a fire or earthquake with required evacuations. We suffered significant damage from the Northridge earthquake and we are practically daily at peril from fires. The fire on August 26, 2008 was a recent reminder on the safety issues associated with an emergency. **As we just saw with this latest fire, even without an evacuation order, ingress and egress through Lost Hills was completely blocked. With an evacuation order, our lives and our children's would be placed in great jeopardy as we would be absolutely be prevented from fleeing!** It will be almost impossible to obtain medical or other assistance in a timely manner as a result of these emergencies.

It is unclear how the Plan's theme of *Quality of Life* is achieved by creating zoning that is 102 units or 34% above the County Code for a single access development. If this zoning is approved and constructed without significant access improvements, Saratoga will no longer be a safe place to live.

Traffic

The adverse traffic impacts from the Kennel proposal are significant. The City of Calabasas traffic Level of Service (LOS) standard for freeway intersections is LOS D, but the planned construction *The Summit at Calabasas Project* at Lost Hills Road and the 101 Freeway will increase that to E. The Lost Hills Bridge District will never have more than 50% of its required funding for the bridge improvements. There is always hope for funding, but the City should not be up-zoning property that will further increase a traffic condition that does not meet City standards.

Air Quality

There are significant air quality issues for projects close to freeways. The Kennel borders the freeway fence. Health studies report the increased health risks, particularly for children. The proposed finding that the increased health risks are *significant but manageable* is absurd. Manageable? **If only a few of our children get sick, is that what the report means by "manageable"?**

Noise

Noise is another serious issue for the proposed site. The EIR indicates that 70 dBA is considered "*Normally Unacceptable*" for new construction and development should generally be "discouraged". The EIR, in TABLE 4.9-2 indicated that the current maximum measured noise level on Canwood Street, adjacent to the freeway and ending at the Pet Kennel, is 73.4 dBA. The EIR states that the impacts can be mitigated. We believe that houses can be constructed to mitigate noise, but it is unclear how children can be protected outside of the home.

Saratoga is a quiet single family community that has existed for over 40 years. The Plan up-zone increases our density by 50% at an unacceptable location. There are significant environmental impacts for new and existing residents that include safety, traffic, air quality and noise. All of these impacts must legally be addressed in the EIR. The 132 low to very low income units should not be built in the Saratoga community.

The General Plan themes of *Community Character and Quality of Life* are not served by the Kennel proposal. Fortunately other far better and more sensible alternatives are available. Las Virgenes 2, the golf driving range and Las Virgenes 1 are all better sites for the proposed development.

One of the great benefits of the EIR process is the required development of alternatives to the Proposed Plan. Saratoga Hills & Ranch reviewed those alternatives and believes that there are superior alternatives that will respond to Plan themes, reduce environmental impact, improve services for RHNA-zoned property, and provide greater support from the community.

Recommendations

Following are the Saratoga Hills & Ranch recommended changes to the proposed General Plan:

1. Change the Rancho Pet Kennel zoning to single family.
2. Rescind the plan to change City of Calabasas multi-family zoning from 1/16 per acre to 1/20 per acre because the increase will not be needed with the proposed recommendations.
3. Retain the Plan recommendation for Las Virgenes 1 to be single family.
4. Retain the Las Virgenes 2 Planned Development designation with 160 low to very income units and commercial.
5. Achieve the total required 223 low to very low income RHNA units by adding 63 units in one of the two following ways:
 - a. The preferred approach is to create a Planned Development (PD) for the Driving Range site and assign 63 low to very low income units and commercial allocations as appropriate.
 - b. If the Driving Range site cannot accommodate all of the 63 units, it is recommended the low to very low income unit designation for Las Virgenes 2 be increased to achieve the total 223 units needed and adjust the commercial allocations as appropriate.

We appreciate the efforts to present comprehensive alternatives with complete environmental reviews. The information provides an excellent opportunity to evaluate and make clear choices for our view of the City of Calabasas up to 2030. We residents of Saratoga demand that the Planning Commission and the City Council support our recommendations in the General Plan. We believe our recommendations will improve the Plan's response to the stated themes of *environmental responsibility, community character, and quality of life*.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert A. Adelman, Esq.
Maya Shulman, Esq.
Residents of Saratoga Hills & Ranch

ROBERT A. ADELMAN, ESQ., CFLS
ADELMAN & SEIDE, LLP
16055 VENTURA BLVD.
SUITE 712
ENCINO, CA 91436-2610
(818) 981-8810

This e-mail contains information that may be confidential or attorney/client privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, any disclosure or other use of this e-mail or the information contained herein or attached hereto may be unlawful and is strictly prohibited. If you have received this e-mail in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete this e-mail without reading, printing, copying or forwarding it to anyone. Thank you for your kind cooperation