

Elizabeth D'Amico and Patrick Houghton
4734 San Feliciano Drive
Woodland Hills, CA 91364

April 5, 2007

David Somers, Environmental Review Section
Los Angeles City Planning Department
200 North Spring Street, Room 750
Los Angeles, CA 90012

PROJECT NAME: Vesting Tentative Tract No: 61553

EAF NO: ENV-2005-2301-EIR

PROJECT LOCATION/ADDRESS: 22255 Mulholland Drive, Woodland Hills

COMMUNITY PLANNING AREA: Canoga Park, Winnetka, Woodland Hills-West Hills

COUNCIL DISTRICT: CD-3

Dear Mr. Somers,

We are responding to the draft environmental impact report (DEIR) that was prepared on the above referenced project. We are three houses down from the proposed project and will be directly affected by this project.

We are not experts in this area; however, we felt it was important to respond to the DEIR as we have many questions regarding the validity and accuracy of the report. In addition, we are fortunate to be members of Save Oak Savanna (SOS), an organization which will be representing us and other neighbors in reviewing this document. We are in full support of the SOS position and comments they submit on our behalf.

Because one of our main concerns is related to the project's impact on traffic, we will focus mainly on that issue in this letter.

One of our main concerns related to this project is the additional traffic that it will bring to San Feliciano Drive. The traffic report section of the DEIR indicates that the traffic analysis was done in November 2004 in some places and in October 2004 in other places. It does not give an exact date so it is difficult to know if the analysis was done over a holiday period and on what day of the week it was conducted. We would like to know the exact dates that the traffic analysis was conducted. Additionally, the traffic analysis was conducted almost 3 years ago. We have lived on San Feliciano Dr. since 2001 and during this 5 year period, changes have occurred in the immediate surrounding area due to increases in traffic. Most of these changes took place beginning in 2004.

1. On March 11, 2004, a determination was made to install a stop sign at San Feliciano Dr. and Ybarra due to excessive speeds on San Feliciano Dr.
2. On August 2, 2005, a determination was made to install a stop sign at San Feliciano Dr. and Cerillos due to excessive speeds on San Feliciano Dr.
3. An application for speed humps due to excessive speeding on Dumetz between San Feliciano Dr. and Topanga Canyon was sent to Councilman Zine in September, 2005. Speed humps were subsequently installed on Dumetz between San Feliciano Dr. and Topanga Canyon.

As you will note from the above changes, several comprehensive traffic engineering studies were conducted in this area to make these determinations. Two of these occurred AFTER the DEIR traffic analysis was conducted. Thus, the DEIR needs to now account for these changes in the neighborhood and traffic patterns in this area as traffic has increased considerably since 2004, when the original traffic analysis was conducted. The analysis is therefore outdated and needs to be repeated to more accurately reflect the current traffic conditions and excessive speeding in our neighborhood. Adding 37 condominiums or 29 homes to an area that is already experiencing problems with traffic and excessive speeding is irresponsible. Thus, the DEIR Alternate 2 is not acceptable as there will be too many homes (29) added to the area, which will severely impact traffic congestion in the neighborhood, particularly as one of the exit gates is supposed to lead out directly onto San Feliciano Dr.

Of note, the exit gate that is proposed from the development for San Feliciano Dr. is to be on the slope of the hill of San Feliciano Dr. before the stop sign at San Feliciano Dr. and Cerillos. This is a dangerous place for an exit gate as people come down the hill at excessive speeds (as noted above and one of the reasons for the additional stop signs) and there is a curve in the road. Exiting onto San Feliciano Dr. at this juncture would likely increase accidents and traffic substantially. In addition, many “commuters” already use San Feliciano Dr. as a “cut through” street instead of using Topanga Canyon, perhaps for perceived time savings. Having two exit gates from this community that go through from Mulholland to San Feliciano will likely only increase the problem of people speeding down our street to avoid traffic congestion on Mulholland and Topanga Canyon. In 2004, we had three hit and run accidents and two cars totaled on just the 4700 block of San Feliciano. Since 2003, there have been five cars totaled on just the 4700 block due to excessive speeding. The majority of the accidents occurred at the curve at the bottom of the hill at Cerillos because people come down the hill too fast. Thus, the exit gate that the development is proposing in that area is very dangerous and it would be a mistake to place it there.

We propose that NO exit gate be put onto San Feliciano Dr. We propose instead that the developer provide an exit gate using the light on Mulholland at Mulholland Highway. This is a more responsible exit and will help with traffic congestion in the area. In addition, with only one exit available from the property, the potential for “cutting through” from Mulholland to San Feliciano Dr. is no longer an option.

The project indicates that it is located within the Los Angeles Unified School District, but then discusses the Calabasas school district schools (e.g., Calabasas Elementary and El Camino Real High School) indicating that these schools serve this community. There is no mention of Woodland Hills Elementary School, which is within .5 miles of the property and is part of LAUSD. This school is closer to the property than the other schools that they refer to in their report. This school already has problems with traffic congestion during school hours. This past year, they had to build gates to close off the streets around the school to avoid some of the traffic problems that occur during the morning and afternoon pick up and drop off. The DEIR needs to address the impact of this project on Woodland Hills Elementary School. There is also no mention of Alice C. Stelle Middle School, which is on 22450 Mulholland Highway, 1.5 miles from the proposed development. This school will also be impacted by the increased traffic congestion. This needs to be addressed.

In terms of the alternates that the developer proposes, DEIR Alternate 1 and Alternate 3 are acceptable. A more responsible option to the DEIR alternate 2 would be a development that was consistent and compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, as required by the Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan (MSPSP), specifically but not limited to MSPSP Guideline 50. Our neighborhood consists of 1 story ranch style homes on large lots, averaging over 13,000 square feet. We hope to see a development here that is responsible and complies with the applicable zoning, guidelines of the MSPSP with no exceptions, and which limits the number of homes to lots that are over 13,000 square feet, like the surrounding neighborhood homes.

In summary, we see no public policy justification to certify an EIR that does not comply with the MSPSP, and all City Codes without any exceptions, or to approve a project that will result in unavoidable, significant adverse impact to our neighborhood. We believe a much smaller project, of substantially lower density, with higher value homes can meet both the developer’s and the community’s needs. We don’t want our small neighborhood street, San Feliciano Dr., to turn into a traffic congested street, like Topanga Canyon.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth D’Amico and Patrick Houghton

Cc: City Clerk, 200 N. Spring Street, Room 360, Los Angeles, CA 90012
Councilman Dennis Zine, 19040 Vanowen, Reseda, CA 91335
Gail Goldberg, Director of Planning Dept, 200 N. Spring St, Rm 525, Los Angeles, CA 90012