

Section 3: Oral Comments and Responses

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Oral Comments and Responses

During the August 3, 2016 Planning Commission Hearings, the County had a number of speakers who gave public testimony during the public comment period of the Hearing. The list of speakers from the Planning Commission hearing is as follows:

- Greg Cowdery
- Annie Borrel*
- Alexander Ray Borrel*
- Joy Bedrose
- Angela Little
- Josephine Young¹
- Mariela Magana
- Hakan Jackson¹
- Michele Hasson
- Jerry Sincich
- Trip Hord
- C. Deitemeyer
- Janlee Watson*
- Norm Gritton
- Josh Bourgeois
- Theodore Gaines

Note: Only speakers who did not submit a comment letter are addressed in this section. All speakers who gave spoken testimony and also submitted a comment letter have been denoted with an asterisk () in the list above. Also note that two speakers donated their time to others who wished to speak, their names are annotated with a (1)*

Many of the public speakers also submitted written comments, which have been responded to in Section 2 of this document. For those who did not provide a written comment (in addition to a spoken comment), a response has been provided below.

Greg Cowdery

Mr. Cowdery noted that he is a resident of the community of Winchester and serves on the Winchester Town Association. Mr. Cowdery noted that he is neutral to the Project as a resident of Winchester, and that the Winchester Town Association has elected not to take a position towards the Project. Mr. Cowdery noted that the County is working alongside the community of Winchester in order to help create a viable community for the residents who live there. Mr. Cowdery expressed that the County must move forward with the Fifth Cycle Housing Element approval process to ensure the Project meets the State grant funding deadlines.

Joy Bedrose

Ms. Bedrose asked questions and noted concerns pertaining to the Nuevo Area Plan. Ms. Bedrose asked whether R-7 and MUA zones are interchangeable. Staff responded to explain that the R-7 and MUA zones are not interchangeable, although properties designated HHDR can be zoned R-7, and mixed-use designations involve an HHDR component, which would be implemented through the MUA zone. Ms. Bedrose noted concerns that the Fifth Cycle Housing Element would allow a fifty foot building could be constructed adjacent to her property in the Nuevo Area Plan without setbacks. Staff responded to explain that the County would ensure proposed developments adjacent to existing properties would respect adjacent land uses, and that the County would ask that developers scale down development in instances where development was proposed adjacent to SFR. Staff also explained that properties within the MUA/R-7 zones could have an allowable building height of 75 feet.

Ms. Bedrose expressed concern that the Project would allow apartment development to surround her property, which would jeopardize the rural lifestyle of the Nuevo Area Plan, and would cause parking and noise impacts. It should be noted that while there is potential for increased development capacity under the proposed project, all future development would be required to meet setback requirements as outlined in Ordinance No. 348, as well as undergo design review to ensure that appropriate buffering and site design techniques are incorporated into proposed developments.

Ms. Bedrose asked how residents would know if the County was planning on developing the parcels adjacent to her property, and noted that she has an easement on the adjacent property for her septic system. Staff explained that the County would take Ms. Bedrose's easement into consideration during future site design and survey. Staff also explained that multi-family dwelling development which has a commercial component would include a land use public hearing process, as they would not be considered a "use by right."

County staff noted that multi-family dwelling development without a commercial component would be considered a "use by right," and thus would not include a public hearing process. Ms. Bedrose asked whether she would be notified for "use by right" development adjacent to her property. Staff explained that the Fifth Cycle Housing Element includes a provision which requires a 30-day public comment period to allow residents to provide comments on the site design for consideration by the County Planning Director, but the proposed land use itself would not be subject to public comment. Ms. Bedrose noted concern that the County would fail to notify her of the 30-day comment period. The Fifth Cycle Housing Element incorporates a discussion pertaining to "use by right noticing." Noticing would include a direct mailing to adjacent property-owners to inform them that they could comment on the site design and where to submit those comments to the planning director. However, project noticing would not require newspaper publication.

Angela Little

Ms. Little noted that she feels that the Winchester Town Association and Land Use Committee's comments on the Fifth Cycle Housing Element were not fully addressed and that there are still significant challenges pertaining to infrastructure improvements and the neighborhood concept which the Project has overlaid on the Winchester Area Plan. Ms. Little's concerns have been noted, and the County intends to continue coordination with the Winchester Town Association to further integrate the proposed neighborhoods into the existing downtown area.

Ms. Little also noted that the Winchester Area Plan is an important component of the County as it is a logical extension of the Perris Valley Line, realignment of Highway 79, important area for transportation, commercial development, and HHDR development. County staff agree that the Winchester Area Plan is an important component of Riverside County.

Ms. Little requested that the County continue coordination with the Winchester Town Association during future projects which affect the Winchester Area Plan. County staff will continue to coordinate with the Winchester Town Association for current and future projects which may affect this area.

Josephine Young

Ms. Young indicated that she is opposed to the Project, and donated her time to Mariela Magana.

Mariela Magana

Ms. Magana noted that she works for the Leadership Counsel for Environmental Justice and Accountability. Ms. Magana's comments generally pertained to the Eastern Coachella Valley Area Plan. Ms. Magana noted concern that development which would be accommodated by the Fifth Cycle Housing Element would not be "equitable" for residents, particularly immigrant farmworkers and gardeners, living in the Eastern Coachella Valley. Staff provided an extensive analysis of underserved and special needs groups who require additional housing opportunities in the Special Needs Section of the Housing Element (Beginning on Page H-91).

Ms. Magana also noted that the Housing Element needs to incorporate a "holistic approach" to evaluate affordable housing, access to water and sewer, environmental injustices. These comments are noted; however, the Housing Element and EIR No. 548 thoroughly address public services including water and sewer (EIR No. 548 Section 3.14). Further, the EIR and Housing Element provide analysis of future development, impacts locally and cumulatively, and access to affordable housing units in order to provide equitable housing throughout the County.

Ms. Magana noted that the General Plan is not in compliance with SB-244, which assesses these needs to disadvantaged unincorporated communities. An SB-244 analysis was included, and is explained on page H-11 of the Housing Element. Further, Appendix P-2 of the General Plan includes the SB-244 analysis completed for this project.

Ms. Magana noted concern that the overlays proposed for the Eastern Coachella Valley Area Plan would not address the existing infrastructure issues which affect this area, which would detract affordable housing developers to come into those areas. As noted in the site selection section of the Housing Element (Page H-125), the Housing Element provides a thorough explanation of the process used during the site selection process. While not all site contained all desired features, the sites that included most of the desired site features were selected. Future infrastructure needs will be continually evaluated as the development of the proposed sites in undertaken.

Ms. Magana also opined that the EIR fails to evaluate alternatives which mitigate GHG impacts. Residents in Eastern Coachella Valley must travel long distances to access grocery stores, doctors, other amenities. An extensive analysis of greenhouse gas impacts has been provided in Section 3.7 of EIR No. 548.

Hakan Jackson

Mr. Jackson noted that he is opposed to the Project on their Speaker Card and donated his time to Michele Hasson.

Michelle Hasson

Ms. Hasson stated that the proposed project would further deteriorate air quality in rural areas of the County due to a lack of goods and services in proximity to proposed development. Ms. Hasson noted concerns regarding the baseline use in the document, as well as concern about a lack of discussion of Ozone in EIR No. 548. Ozone (O₃) is formed by a chemical reaction between volatile organic compounds (VOC) and nitrous oxides (NOX) in the presence of sunlight. VOCs are also commonly referred to as reactive organic gases (ROGs). Common sources of these precursor pollutants include motor vehicle exhaust, industrial emissions, gasoline storage and transport, solvents, paints, and

landfills. As O₃ is formed by precursor pollutants and not directly emitted, the SCAQMD and MDAQMD have developed thresholds of significance for NOX and ROG emissions in order to attain the O₃ National Ambient Air Quality Standard. Emissions from the project were quantified and analyzed in Section 3.3 of EIR No. 548 and all feasible mitigation was identified for potentially significant emissions.

Jerry Sincich

Mr. Sincich's noted concerns pertaining to the Lee Lake Community of Temescal Valley and indicated that he is opposed to the Project. Mr. Sincich noted concerns pertaining to the Project's notification process, explaining that his notification came when they looked at the Planning Commission Agenda. Mr. Sincich explained that the zoning proposed for the Lee Lake Community would be subjected to potential hazards. These hazards have been specifically addressed in EIR No. 548 Section 4.1.

Mr. Sincich also noted concerns with lack of jobs in Temescal Valley, and opined that the Project's proposed rezoning of existing commercial/industrial uses to residential would worsen the community's job outlook.

Mr. Sincich also noted concerns with the area's overall lack of public services, utilities, and recreational opportunities. Mr. Sincich opined that cumulatively considerable proposed development, in combination with the Fifth Cycle Housing Element, would exacerbate existing gridlock on I-15 and Temescal Valley Road. An extensive cumulative analysis, including traffic impacts, is included in section 3.0 of EIR No. 548.

Finally, Mr. Sincich requested that the 45.6 acres of HHDR proposed for the Lee Lake Community be removed from the Project.

Trip Hord

Mr. Hord noted concerns for the Lakeview Nuevo Area Plan (Lakeview Town Center) as a representative of Hillcrest Homes. Mr. Hord questioned whether the Fifth Cycle Housing Element is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Western Riverside County- Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (WRC-MSHCP).

Mr. Hord indicated that he is in possession of a list of individual APNs located within the Lakeview Town Center which are included in the proposed Project but are actually proposed for WRC-MSCHP conservation. Mr. Hord explained that Neighborhood 2 of the Lakeview Town Center includes 233 acres which should be identified as MSHCP and that approximately 108 acres of Neighborhood 4 are about to be purchased by RCA for MSHCP conservation. Mr. Hord requested that these parcels are excluded from Fifth Cycle Housing Element. The noted parcels have been removed from the project, and are included in the October 5, 2016 Planning Commission Staff Report Post Production Land Use Designation Change Document.

C. Deitemeyer

Individual did not provide oral testimony but indicated that they were opposed to the Project on their Speaker Card.

Norm Gritton

Mr. Gritton explained that the Fifth Cycle Housing Element affects his properties located in the Meadowbrook Town Center. Mr. Gritton indicated that he is not opposed to the Project but is concerned about how development accommodated by the Fifth Cycle Housing Element would occur with the lack of sewage facilities in the community.

Mr. Gritton is also concerned with the split zonings identified for the Meadowbrook Town Center, specifically along the corner of Meadowbrook, Greenwall, and Highway 74. Mr. Gritton requested to meet with the Planning Commission to resolve some of these issues. Staff agreed with Mr. Gritton's comments that split designations were an issue, but indicated that the proposed General Plan incorporates split designations as the County limited themselves to areas which were already proposed for higher intensity development. County Staff also noted that the proposed General Plan for the Meadowbrook Town Center is surrounded by community development foundation land use designations, so property owners with split designations could apply to expand their split designation to encompass their entire parcel or apply for a variable boundary in the form of a General Plan Amendment, and this way property owners would not be limited by the eight year foundation cycle requirements. Planning Director Weiss explained the "visionary" ideals of the Housing Element and that the County Planning Department would be in consultation with Mr. Gritton in order to rectify these issues.

Josh Bourgeois

Mr. Bourgeois indicated that he is representing the Southern California Environmental Justice Alliance and he is opposed to the Project. Mr. Bourgeois noted the written comments the Southern California Environmental Justice Alliance provided on the Fifth Cycle Housing Element Environmental Impact Report. These comments have been responded to in Final EIR No. 548, Response to Comment, Response 13.

Theodore Gaines

Mr. Gaines declined his opportunity to provide oral comments on the Project.