

## I-112 Mike Dummer

Comment Letter I-112

### Newland Sierra Draft EIR Opposition Letter:

8/11/2017

Planning and Development Services  
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### RE: NEWLAND SIERRA DRAFT EIR

Dear Ms. Smith:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Newland Sierra Development. **After reviewing the document, I have a list of questions and concerns outlined below that cannot be answered by simply referencing the DEIR as the information provided is not complete nor competent; please provide new and additional detailed information in your responses:**

I-112-1

I submit the following as a homeowner on Buena Creek Road, Twin Oaks community member, resident of San Diego County, and a taxpayer.

A quick check of Zillow for the project zip code will inform any homebuyer that there are plenty of houses for sale in the area and there is no housing shortage or crisis.

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San Diego County used to be a great place to live. Then the county approve impressive amounts of sprawl and overdevelopment. Quality of life has cratered in just a few generations. My new wife and I moved to the Twin Oaks Valley area to enjoy a rural life in San Diego and this project will destroy the remnants of our dream.

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Residents of all ages are leaving the area and there is no wondering why. The San Diego County government is failing at its job and many in and outside of the county recognize that fact. It's not providing for an acceptable quality of life for its citizen taxpayers. Traffic on Buena Creek Road (BCR), the 78, and the I-15 in the areas surrounding the Newland Sierra development is deplorable, services (including parks and outdoor recreation) are marginal, public safety resources are delayed or unresponsive, the air quality is failing, water is scarce, wastewater

I-112-4

systems are over spilling, and the county has no credible plan to remediate these issues. Public safety and security is the function of governments which ensures the protection of citizens, organizations, and institutions against threats to their well-being – and to the prosperity of their communities and ensures quality of life. As noted above, many San Diego County residents quality of life has diminished due to developments like Newland Sierra and the county's inability to provide adequate infrastructure to accommodate the surging population. Fix the roads, fix the traffic, protect public safety, increase quality of life, and control the growth. The county must fix these issues before focusing on new developments and the additional infrastructure that new developments will require. NEW DEVELOPMENT IS NOT THE ANSWER; IT'S THE PROBLEM.

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10-30%, by the county's own public transportation study estimates, of the nearly 20,000 Residential Average Daily Traffic Volume from the proposed Newland Sierra Development, will use the transit stop at BCR and S Santa Fe Ave. BCR is a narrow, dangerous two lane country road that already has a failing grade in multiple traffic studies. The county planning department has publicly admitted at multiple meetings and elsewhere on numerous occasions that they have no plans to enhance BCR due to the roads many regulatory and permitting challenges. The proposed Newland Sierra project will only exacerbate the challenges on BCR and lengthen the already failing wait times at several of BCR's intersections.

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I found this over 8,000 page DEIR very difficult to read as there were many inaccuracies and information referenced across many sections which referenced other sections. In addition, some references were improperly referenced or the purported data was not available. In addition, the comment period was too short to read the DEIR in its entirety. This document would require reading nearly 180 pages per day. The DEIR should have at least 1 day of comment period per 20 pages for the general public to have time to adequately read the DEIR after they finish their 40+ hour work week.

I-112-6

- Will the county extend the DEIR comment period to at least 1 day of comment period per 20 pages?
- Will the county fix the inaccuracies and multiple reference and make the DEIR easier to read so I can thoroughly understand the document and comments to the fullest extent?
- Will the county reissue the DEIR and reopen the comment period once the document is edited to fix many of the false statement, omissions, and incorrect references?

After 10 years of meetings between County residents and staff, not to mention the millions of the dollars spent on the development of the General Plan, the County Board of Supervisors approved the County's General Plan. When the plan was approved, the Supervisors not only agreed to protect this area from over-development, but they agreed to downzone the entire property to 99 units from 200 units. In an effort to support and respect the integrity provisions of the General Plan, I urge you to recommend against the Newland Development and continue to safeguard this sensitive rural corridor.

I-112-7

- Why isn't the county following its General Plan?
- How does the county plan to pay for each of the non-mitigated impacts of the project? Please itemize the response to each non-mitigated impact.

## Comment Letters

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- How will the county pay for the lawsuit without using public funds if it approves this project?

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### Aesthetics:

This project will add additional housing that is not in the characteristic of the rural community and will ruin the unique atmosphere of the neighborhood. The area is zoned for 1 home on every 20 acres or less than 99 homes total.

- Why is the county even considering violating the General Plan and forcing this project on our rural community?
- How will this project conform to dark skies requirement in the area?
- What are the mitigating measures of light pollution?
- How will this project preserve the community's rural culture?

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### Air Quality:

I am very concerned about the impacts that this project will have on air quality, especially on sensitive populations in my house and for my neighbors including the impacts on children, seniors, and those with medical conditions such as asthma and other respiratory issues. I do not believe that the mitigating actions taken in the report are sufficient, nor do I believe the monitoring to be frequent enough. I am also concerned about the excess particulate matter requiring more frequent cleaning of my house, including windows, patio, etc., and my car. This particulate matter will cause me to keep my windows closed and used the air conditioner more often increasing my electric bill.

- Why is the air quality monitoring not continuous or more frequent?
- How will this project address my additional cleaning needs including requiring a housekeeper, window cleaner, additional car washes, and increase electricity bill due to not being able to open my windows?

I-112-9

### Biological Resources:

There are very few open space areas left in the county West of the 15 freeway. The rural community preserves open space for a myriad of flora and fauna to thrive including mammals like large predators that control vectors, a diverse range of birds including some protected by the endangered species act, and reptiles which also control vectors.

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- How will this project mitigate the loss of habitat connectivity west of the 15 freeway?
- The DEIR mentions the Multiple Conservation Species Plan (MCSP). This document is not publically available for the project site. Please provide a detailed description of the MCSP for the project site, before re-submitting the DEIR for public comment.

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### Greenhouse Gas Emissions:

There are no details in the DEIR on how the project will comply with the county's Climate Action Plan. Greenhouse gases may be causing climate change which could have a serious impact on

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## Comment Letters

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our region and its resources. This project should comply with the county's Climate Action Plan to adequately manage these risks.

- Please explain how the project will comply with the county's Climate Action Plan?
- Why is the county utilizing my tax dollars to consider a project that does not conform to the general plan and its climate action plan when these funds could be better spent improving the failing traffic conditions on Buena Creek Road?
- How will this project conform to the county's Climate Action Plan estimations for public transit use and why was this not addressed in the DEIR?

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### Noise:

This project will have a significant impact on the noise level in the surrounding community. The current state of the community is quiet and peaceful. Songbirds can be heard and a near by mediation center is able to practice in solitude. This project would greatly increase the construction noise and the ongoing traffic noise. Many of the impacts noted can be mitigated with traditional measures including sound attenuating construction techniques and materials; however, the DEIR notes them as unmitigable or insignificant. Please add sound walls and sound attenuating construction techniques and materials to all road ways impacted by the project and surrounding areas.

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- Where will the construction laydown areas and repair areas be located on the project site?
- Where will the blasting occur and on what schedule?
- How much explosive material will be used in each blast?

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### Population:

The County Board of Supervisors spent millions of dollars and 10 years developing a General Plan that protected, in fact down zoned, this area. A few years ago the Board of Supervisors voted to approve the plan and protect this area from development.

The size of this development (population of the city of Del Mar) will degrade the rural characteristics of the community and the county. In addition, the surrounding infrastructure cannot handle such an increase in capacity even with the planned upgrades. The county's projected growth is socially, environmentally, and economically unsustainable. These impacts can be mitigated by adhering to the General Plan.

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- How does the county plan to maintain its commitment, through the General Plan, to the rural characteristics of this community?
- There is little to no mention of how this project will affect the Twin Oaks Valley Community. Please revise the plan and resubmit for public comment with a detailed analysis of the project's impacts to the Twin Oaks Valley Community in the same detail as was done for the North County Metro impacts.

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### Transportation and Traffic:

The proposed project will generate 28,000 new trips per day on our local roads. The I-15 freeway, 78 freeway, Buena Creek road, and many of the surrounding project areas have received failing traffic ratings. This project proposed to exacerbate the problem and leave the

I-112-19



taxpayers responsible for traffic improvements to the aforementioned roads. Contacts with Caltrans has revealed that they will not be improving on and off ramps as mentioned in the DEIR.

- How will this project mitigate impacts to the 78 and 15 freeway to downtown San Diego which already has a failing traffic grade during peak traffic time?
  - See image of stopped traffic on I-15 towards downtown San Diego. This is not acceptable nor habitable conditions.



- How does the county plan to upgrade Buena Creek Rd. for the additional traffic and utilization of the sprinter station, which using county estimates will add somewhere around 1,500 ADT?
- How will this project resolve the impacts to the Buena Creek sprinter station crossing traffic backup of up to 0.5 miles up Buena Creek Rd under current traffic loading?
  - The below image shows the typical traffic backing up well beyond (around the corner) my house at 2014 Buena Creek Road, Vista, CA 92084. adding more unmitigated car trips to BCR is unacceptable and a public safety disaster.

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- How will the county mitigate the impact of this project on the 78 freeway onramp at Sycamore?
- How will the project provide sustainable transportation methods including bike paths and curb and sidewalks leading to safe and sustainable public transportation in line with BOTH the county's Climate Action Plan and the SANDAG Complete Streets Policy?

### Utilities:

The water and sewer infrastructure in the area is already beyond capacity and no capital improvements plan has been outlined to modernize these facilities to meet the current demands, let alone the future permitted demand, not to mention the additional demand from the 6,000 residents that this project would add, if approved. The Vallecitos Water District (VWD) projects a water supply deficit for the next 20 years. The VWD's Water Supply Assessment requires a 36% water supply cut to existing customers in order to serve the Newland Sierra development. As this project is not approved under the General Plan this would be unfair to VWD, its current customers, and the taxpayers left with the bill to improve the infrastructure.

- How will utility, including water, sewer, power, and other, infrastructure improvement costs be paid for?
- If by HOA or Mello-Roos, how much will the HOA and Mello-Roos fee be?
- How will this project meet the water demands without compromising the current residents usage?
- What impact will this project have on sewer overflows in gallons per spill per year? Please provide the mathematical justification for your response.

### Schools:

The Newland Sierra project has set aside only one small 6 acre space designated as a school site for more than nearly 800 students living in the development. Since the site is served by San Marcos and Escondido Districts the developer should increase the one planned site from 6 to 10 acres and set aside another 10 or more continuous acres within the SMUSD boundaries.

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I-112-29

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## Comment Letters

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The current 6 acres set aside for the school abuts the 15 freeway. This area needs to be evaluated to see if it meets the legally mandated learning environment objectives for public schools including but not limited to noise, air quality, and acreage.

- How will the county ensure that schools are not impacted by the additional student population that this project will bring? Please include the current student to teacher ratio and the proposed future student to teacher ratio and any additional resources and funding required to meet the future student to teacher ration.

### Fire

Newland Sierra is proposed in a **“Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone.”** Newland Sierra does not provide enough emergency access routes in the event of a fire. Gridlock during an evacuation would compromise the public safety and security of the entire region. Public safety should be the county’s number one priority.

- Please provide a comprehensive plan for evacuation with input and approval from relevant EMS agencies and the public.
- What routes will this project use to evacuate it over 6,000 residents noting that the surrounding residents in the Twin Oaks community will also be evacuating on the same roads used by Newland Sierra residents?
- If roads are already Failing to handle current peak traffic volumes, how will these same roads handle an emergency evacuations?
- How will the county preserve the public's safety in times of disaster?

The DEIR is incomprehensible, incomplete, and inadequate. The county would be negligent not to revise and resubmit the DEIR. For these reasons and many more, I implore the county to deny the DEIR until proper mitigations can be made.

In addition, In an effort to support and respect the integrity provisions of the General Plan, I urge you to recommend against the Newland Development and continue to safeguard this sensitive rural corridor.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Mike Dummer

2014 Buena Creek Rd  
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