

I-192 Ginger Hitzke

Comment Letter I-192



July 18, 2017

Ashley Smith
Project Manager
Planning & Development Services (PDS)
Project Processing Counter
5510 Overland Avenue, Suite 110
San Diego, California 92123

**RE: NEWLAND SIERRA, LOG NO. PDS2015-ER-15-08-001; SCH NO. 2015021036.
PROJECT NUMBERS: PDS2015-GPA-15-001, PDS2015-SP-15-001,
PDS2015-REZ-15-001, PDS2015-TM- 5597**

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am writing in support of the proposed Newland Sierra project and I am writing to dispute any public claim that this housing development is located in the “back country.”

By the time the community meeting in San Marcos concludes tonight, I will have driven by the Newland site 4 times – not an unusual amount of driving for those of us who commute to San Diego county for business. Myself and thousands of other vehicles would not be passing by a site in the “back country” on a regular basis.

I commute into San Diego county for business because that is where many of my business and personal ties are. My family moved from the Chicago area to Vista in 1990 when I was a teenager. We experienced housing price ‘sticker shock’ when we first moved to this beautiful part of the country but we acclimated and figured it out.

By 2002 when I had a professional salary sufficient enough to buy my first home, I was already priced out of the city in which I worked. I worked as a project manager for an affordable housing developer in Escondido and I could not afford to buy a starter home in North County. I was going to have a significant commute no matter which direction I headed and so I headed north. Lake Elsinore was the closest city where I could find a home that I could afford. A few years later, I earned enough to buy a move-up home but the closest I could get was Temecula. This meant I had to drive to Escondido and my husband, an enlisted member of the Navy, was commuting to 32nd Street.

Our story is a very normal story for many people who work in North San Diego County. Lake Elsinore, Murrieta, Menifee, Winchester, Hemet and Temecula are all bedroom communities for San Diego County.

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At a time when both climate change and housing affordability are at crisis levels, we need to seize opportunities to build housing near where people already work. Building off of Deer Springs Road and Interstate 15 is near where people already work. It is certainly much closer to North County employers in Escondido, Rancho Bernardo, San Marcos and Carlsbad than Southwest Riverside County.

My company, Hitzke Development Corporation, develops high density, transit-oriented, infill, mixed-use rental housing for low-income households. Of course, what I want to see is as much new housing in this category as possible because the need is dire. However, what I'm seeing is that we are in such dire of housing at every level that I'm taking a firm stand in favor of the Newland Sierra project because our lack of **all** housing stock is a crisis.

The lack of new starter and move-up homes is putting pressure on existing starter and move-up home prices. The pressure on those prices is keeping more people in rental housing longer than they would normally be. The record high occupancy levels of 'market rate' rental housing is pushing up the sales prices of existing rental housing buildings / complexes. High sales prices of multifamily prices pushes up rents. Lack of new apartment stock keeps prices high for even the lowest class of multifamily product. High occupancy rates of low-end multifamily housing is pushing more families to overcrowding and homelessness. There is a direct connection between a lack of new market-rate, for sale housing and the rise of homelessness in San Diego County.

I strongly support this project because it will reduce the impact on climate change and because it will increase housing stock in San Diego County. I also support it because of the extraordinary amount of public infrastructure that this development will provide.

I close with two questions:

- (1) Because this project will increase the housing stock near North County jobs, will the air quality analysis provide a credit to the Newland project for a reduction in vehicle miles traveled?
- (2) How is the existing general plan land designation addressing the housing shortage in the county?

Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please feel free to contact me at ginger@hitzkedevlopment.com.

Sincerely,



Ginger Hitzke
President

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Cont.

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