

I-357 David R. Shibley

Comment Letter I-357

**From:** David R. Shibley <shibley1@cox.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 14, 2017 2:52 AM  
**To:** Smith, Ashley  
**Subject:** Newland Sierra Comment Letter

Ashley: Resent with address included at closing.

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, PDS2915-REZ-15-001, PDS2015-TM-5597, PDSXXX-HLP-XXX

Ms. Smith: I have reviewed the EIR and find it to be a very comprehensive document that appears to cover all basis and I applaud its thoroughness. Rather than extoll all the virtues I am sure have been submitted by others in favor of the project such as: addressing the housing shortage etc. I will concentrate on some less obvious reasons why I support the EIR and this project.

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Every home built at this location will be one less home built in Riverside and one less home built in the back county which is the area the General Plan Update is seeking to protect from increased development.

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I do not know how long you have worked for the County but the previous owners for this project made an initial application in 1998. At that time they were presented a map showing the proposed densities under a proposed General Plan 2020 Update, the name of which was later changed to General Plan Update as hearings that dragged on for years on some days made it seem possible that the new plan would not be completed until 2020. The previous owners were also informed that any proposed development would be subject to the Update unless a vested tentative map could be completed within a 2 or 3 year time frame. That was a kiss of death for many large land owners because not even God knew how long and how much it would cost to complete a vested tentative map. My point is even though the formal Update was approved around 2012 or 2011 thus allowing opponents of this project to claim the plan is only about five years old is nonsense. The moment that map of 1998 was released with all its proposed downzoning it effectively became the new general plan and formal adoption was simply a formality. Consequently this project proposal with final approval projected in 2018 would already make the Update 20 years old not the five years from formal adoption and if approved construction at the earliest would commence in 2020 taking the plan out another two years.

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I was a member of the 2020 Interest Group for about three years representing an organization of about 3,500 land owners fighting the Update named Save Our Land Values (SOLVE). One of the biggest fights was making sure that General Plan Amendments would be allowed thus offering flexibility to keep the Update current and preventing having to do another arduous expensive 14 year Update. Twenty years have passed since the Update started and the world now changes much quicker than it used to. The General Plan Update previous to the one that commenced in 1998 was done in 1979.

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Another contentious element produced by the Plan was Conservation Subdivisions on large parcels of land where clustering would be allowed in the back county areas thus preserving large areas of open space such as the 1,200 acres

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of open space at Sierra. Hello; that is exactly what the Sierra project is with its six clustered residential areas and one clustered Town Center. Current zoning allows 2 million sq. ft. of commercial at the Town Center. Newland/Sierra is proposing 81,000 sq. ft. so it appears the tradeoff is allowing more residential units in lieu of massive commercial. I notice those residential areas will have large fire buffers and homes will be built with fire resistant materials. The advantages of protecting seven clustered areas with easy paved road access from fire versus trying to protect 99 large estate homes with long individual driveways under the existing zoning is a no brainer. This total project is 1985 acres and total grading of all seven sites plus all paved roads is about 750 acres. In essence removing 750 acres of FUEL has to be a huge increase in safety for an undeveloped area of this size west of I-15 that has never had a large recorded fire. This also helps protect existing homeowners in Twin Oaks and the cities of Escondido, Vista, San Marcos and Oceanside because if the last big fire had jumped I-15 it may have burned all the way to the Ocean.

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Cont.

I-357-6

I particularly like the 1,200 acres of preserved open space as it opens it to public use for all citizens of San Diego County with its multi-use trails. Those trails also connect to the existing equestrian trails throughout the Twin Oaks area and tie into the only public horse park in the County at Walnut Grove Park. The project also has a horse staging area. For the first time ever all the wonderful view sites in the elevated areas of this project will not only be open to future residents but all residents of San Diego County. Currently the only use this land is getting is from trespassers with fire causing motorcycles, illegal dumping, camping with campfires and illegal gun ranges. Once homeowners and trail users are established watchful responsible citizens will prevent all those uses. Newland/Sierra has spent thousands of dollars installing large steel gates to keep people out, established patrols, made arrangements with the Sheriff's Department and routinely sends letters to nearby owners requesting their assistance and asking they call the Sheriff's Department. Response times are not the greatest and neighbors that have confronted trespassers have been show guns and will no longer challenge illegal users who are belligerent and destroy at will large steal gates.

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Not stated in the above paragraph but by inference these aggressive illegal uses indicate to me the compelling fact that the central location of this large undeveloped area is extremely attractive because all the communities to the east, west and south are much higher density. I.e. San Marcos, Escondido, Vista, Hidden Meadows, and Lawrence Welk. It is like the Balboa Park of North County only all current uses are illegal. Take note this project is also within the sphere of influence of San Marcos and Escondido as determined by LAFCO many years ago and is west of I-15 (the second most busy freeway in the County with eventual possibility of commuter lanes to Riverside and maybe a high speed rail line) and centrally located in respect to the communities listed in the previous sentence. Classifying this project as sprawl would be ludicrous. Also note that master planned communities are timeless where infill projects sometimes are not. Case in point would be Rancho Bernardo where homes look just as new today as they were when built in the 60s and 70s.

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I also notice that the main accesses to the project at Sarver Lane to the west and Mesa Rock/I-15 to the east may relieve some traffic congestion of Deer Springs between those two points.

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The last issue I have is the overall lack of developable land left in the County. Much has been made of increasing densities within our cities and towns and folks generally vote for it until it starts to become a reality in their particular neighborhood. Not all cities are going to accept those increased densities and not everyone is going to want to live in attached housing. This projects brings forth much needed single family detached (SFD), some attached and some senior housing that will provide some balance to our future housing needs.

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I strongly support Certification of the EIR and approval of the new zoning and the General Plan Amendment.

Sincerely,

David R. Shibley  
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