

I-399 Paul Von Normann

I-399-1 The commenter states that he lives near the proposed project and he is against it.

The County acknowledges the comment and notes it expresses the opinions of the commenter, and does not raise an issue related to the adequacy of any specific section or analysis of the Draft EIR. The County will include the comment as part of the Final EIR for review and consideration by the decision-makers prior to a final decision on the project. No further response is required or necessary.

I-399-2 The comment states that the project under the name Merriam Mountains was already rejected for good reasons by the Board of Supervisors and the proposed project is not that different. The comment states that voters have demonstrated that they do not want large housing developments by voting against the Lilac Hills proposal for Valley Center.

The previous project denial has no bearing on the current project or its environmental analysis because: (a) the prior project was considered and rejected more than seven years ago under different factual and legal circumstances, (b) the prior project was subject to different environmental analyses, and (c) the prior project involved different features, plans, and amenities. The Draft EIR for the proposed project has been prepared in compliance with CEQA, and represents a substantial size reduction when compared to the prior project, as it would develop approximately 20% fewer homes, preserve an additional 17 acres of open space onsite plus an additional 218 acres off-site, and generate approximately 7,000 fewer daily trips overall. Additionally, the proposed project has no bearing on the Lilac Hills proposal for Valley Center. Nonetheless, the County will include the comment as part of the Final EIR for review and consideration by the decision-makers prior to a final decision on the project. No further response is required because the comment does not raise an environmental issue requiring any further response under CEQA.

I -399-3 The comment states that there would be additional traffic on Twin Oaks Valley and Deer Springs Road. The comment states that there would be 27,764 more cars/

It should be noted that the proposed project was determined to result in 22,208 net daily trips, as described in **Section 2.13, Transportation and Traffic**, of the Draft EIR. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in “27,764 more cars.”

This comment does not raise an issue related to the adequacy of any specific section or analysis of the Draft EIR. The County will include the comment as part of the Final EIR for review and consideration by the decision-makers prior to a final decision on the project. No further response is required or necessary.

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I -399-4 The comment states that there would be additional students to overcrowded schools in San Marcos and Escondido. The comment states that there would be 605 and 209 additional students to San Marcos and Escondido schools, respectively.

As stated in Section 3.5, Public Services, of the Draft EIR (page 3.5-17):

The proposed project would generate the following number of students, whom would attend a school in the San Marcos Unified School District: 317 K–5th grade students, 85 6th–8th grade students, and 98 9th–12th grade students. In addition, the proposed project would generate the following number of students, whom would attend a school in the Escondido Union School District: 132 K–5th grade students, 45 6th–8th grade students, and students whom would attend in the Escondido Union High School District: 119 9th–12th grade students. Combined, the project would generate approximately 449 K–5th grade students, 130 6th–8th grade students, and 217 9th–12th grade students (see EIR, Table 3.5-2 for a breakdown of these numbers).

Therefore, the commenter’s calculations of the number of new students who would attend San Marcos and Escondido Unified School District are not accurate.

The threshold for impacts to public services is whether a proposed project would “result in *substantial adverse physical impacts* associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, *the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts*, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services.” (emphasis added)

The proposed project reserves an on-site K-8 school site. As explained on Page 3.5-18 of the Draft EIR,

“After the on-site school is built, K-8 students generated by the proposed project would have the opportunity to attend this new school, which would have adequate capacity and would provide relief to overcrowding in the San Marcos Unified School District. Even with the addition of a school on-site, the project would be subject to assessment of applicable school fees in all three districts at the appropriate rate. Although existing schools in San Marcos are over capacity, the school districts’ practice is to use relocatable classrooms or bussing to schools with capacity to temporarily house the additional students...”

The potential impacts of the on-site K-8 school have been analyzed through the Draft EIR. As noted above, grade 9-12 students would attend existing high schools, which,

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should those schools be require additional capacity, it is anticipated that relocatable classrooms could be used to temporarily house students.

The Draft EIR further contemplates that the proposed project would either enter into agreements with the various school districts or pay state-mandated school fees. Revenues to the District(s) from either for these payments are used for capital improvements which are part of each district's master plan for school facilities.

Lastly, Section 3.5.5, Cumulative Impact Analysis, analyzes the potential for the proposed project, in combination with other cumulative projects, would have an impact on school services. The analysis determined that:

“The increase in demand for school facilities could result in the expansion of existing, or the construction of new facilities, which could have adverse impacts on the environment; however, all new or expanded facilities would be required to undergo environmental review and be required to demonstrate compliance with the General Plan. The proposed project would be subject to assessment of applicable school fees at the rate in effect at the time a Certificate of Compliance is issued; therefore, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to the additional demand on existing school facilities within the districts, nor result in a significant cumulative impact. Impacts would be less than significant.”

This comment does not raise an issue related to the adequacy of any specific section or analysis of the Draft EIR. The County will include the comment as part of the Final EIR for review and consideration by the decision-makers prior to a final decision on the project. No further response is required or necessary.

I -399-5 The comment states that the roads are not equipped to handle an evacuation and fire fighters may not be able to reach the area in time to fight fires.

The County acknowledges the comment and notes it expresses the opinions of the commenter, and does not raise an issue related to the adequacy of any specific section or analysis of the Draft EIR. The Newland Sierra Wildland Fire Evacuation Plan (Appendix N-2 to the Draft EIR) anticipates the potential for bottlenecks, accidents, and other issues on roadways. On page 20, the plan indicates that the estimated evacuation times may be up to 2 hours, double that (4 hours), or more, if the wildfire scenario did not “enable pre-planned traffic management measures”. Should this situation be realized, the Wildland Fire Evacuation Plan offers descriptions of contingency options that would enable evacuations to cease or be partially implemented, while residents are directed to remain in their ignition resistant,

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defensible homes for the short duration that wildfire would burn in the fuels at the outer edges of the Project's code exceeding, wide fuel modification zones.

As indicated in Sections 1.0, 2.0, and 6.0, of the Newland Sierra Wildland Fire Evacuation Plan, wildfires are fluid events that require situational awareness, scenario pre-planning, and contingencies. It is anticipated that the worst-case Newland Sierra evacuation would occur in a similar manner to many other San Diego County planning areas. In the event of a wildland fire in the area, evacuation and contingency plans are an early part of a wildfire's tactical planning process by an Incident Command team. A contingency plan is one of the immediate priorities for development by Incident Command when a wildfire event occurs in a wildland-urban interface area. Community evacuation plans, like the Newland Sierra plan, will be integrated into the contingency planning process to assist and coordinate evacuation planning for all residents requiring evacuation. It must be recognized that wildfire and other emergencies are often fluid events and that the need for evacuations are typically determined by on-scene first responders or by a collaboration between first responders and designated emergency response teams, including Office of Emergency Services and the Incident Command established for larger emergency events. As such, and consistent with all emergency evacuation plans, this Emergency Evacuation plan is to be considered a tool that supports existing pre-plans and provides for citizens who are familiar with the evacuation protocol, but is subservient to emergency event-specific directives provided by agencies managing the event.

Please refer to Appendix N-1, Newland Sierra Fire Protection Plan (Dudek 2017) for details on the Proposed Project's redundant, layered fire protection system, which is consistent with designated shelter in place communities.

The County will include the comment as part of the Final EIR for review and consideration by the decision-makers prior to a final decision on the project. No further response is required or necessary.

- I -399-6** The comment states that escape routes are few and limited and that many of the roads in the area are small, narrow, and are already congested. The comment states that traffic congestion already occurs in the area, specifically during weekdays mornings and evenings, because of individuals traveling to a nearby school and university.

Please refer to **Response to Comment O-235-5** for details on the Newland Sierra Evacuation Plan's approach to wildfire evacuations. In summary, early evacuations would be the focus when time allows. When time does not allow, and evacuations were considered unsafe, such as if Deer Springs Road were already experiencing heavy ambient traffic, then contingency options are available to emergency decision makers that would enable the community's residents to remain in the community.

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Because evacuation impedances have been contemplated and provided mitigation through evacuation contingency options, the comment does not raise an issue related to the adequacy of any specific section or analysis of the Draft EIR. The County will include the comment as part of the Final EIR for review and consideration by the decision-makers prior to a final decision on the project. No further response is required or necessary.

- I -399-7** The comment states that approved zoning should be maintained and no exceptions should be made to those existing designations.

The County acknowledges the comment and notes it expresses the opinions of the commenter, and does not raise an issue related to the adequacy of any specific section or analysis of the Draft EIR. The County will include the comment as part of the Final EIR for review and consideration by the decision-makers prior to a final decision on the project. No further response is required or necessary.

- I -399-8** The comment states that low-income housing would not be met by the project.

As stated in Table 1 of Appendix DD, Land Use Consistency Table:

“The County does not presently have or enforce a requirement that projects include an affordable housing component when proposing a General Plan Amendment, however, the project’s various neighborhoods have been planned to accommodate the housing needs of a wide range of consumer life stages and income levels. For example, the project would include 325 age-qualified housing units, 15% of the total housing proposed in the project, in its Sierra Mesa neighborhood. In addition to these age-qualified units, the project would include 762 multi-family townhome and row townhome-style units in its Town Center, Terraces, and Valley neighborhoods and 173 units in family clusters in its Valley, Knolls, and Summit neighborhoods. Finally, the project’s Hillside neighborhood will include age-targeted housing units, including single-story units and units with the master living space on the ground floor. In combination, these housing types constitute over 60% of the project’s proposed units, providing an important housing type for young professionals, first-time homebuyers, growing families, empty-nesters, retirees, and seniors. The balance of the project’s housing would be in the form of more traditional single-family homes and accommodate many of these same demographic groups. Collectively, the project’s mix of housing types includes sufficient housing options for a wide range of consumer life stages and income levels. “

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Accordingly, the DEIR concluded the proposed project is consistent with Policy H-1.9 of the Housing Element. It should be noted that the proposed project does not preclude the future development of affordable housing units. The 762 multi-family townhome and row townhomes style units and 173 cluster units and 325 age-qualified units could be considered viable affordable housing types.

The County acknowledges the comment and notes it expresses the opinions of the commenter, and does not raise an issue related to the adequacy of any specific section or analysis of the Draft EIR. The County will include the comment as part of the Final EIR for review and consideration by the decision-makers prior to a final decision on the project. No further response is required or necessary.

- I -399-9** The comment states that the project would destroy sensitive wildlife and would leave few places for wildlife to live.

The comment raises a general subject area, biological resources, which received extensive analysis in the Draft EIR, specifically Section 2.4. The County notes the comment expresses the opinions of the commenter, and does not specifically state which impacts to wildlife would occur. As the comment does not raise any specific issue regarding that analysis, no more specific response can be provided or is required. The County will include the comment as part of the Final EIR for review and consideration by the decision-makers prior to a final decision on the project.

- I -399-10** The comment states that the area is still in a drought and that water must be conserved as much as possible. The comment states that building more homes would result in additional water consumption.

The County does not disagree that the proposed project would result in additional water demand. However, the County has determined that there are sufficient, available, and reliable water supplies to meet the water demand of the Project in addition to the planned and other future land uses in VWD's service area during normal/average years, a single dry-year, and multiple-dry years over a 20-year planning horizon. (See also Draft EIR, Section 2.14.1, Water Supply and Service.) Please refer to Topical Response UTL-1.

Additionally, the comment is general in nature and does not raise an issue related to the adequacy of any specific section or analysis of the Draft EIR. Given that the comment is general, a general response is all that is required. (*Paulek v. California Dept. Water Resources* (2014) 231 Cal.App.4th 35, 47-52.) Therefore, no further response is required or needed.

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I-399-11 The commenter thanks the County for the opportunity to provide comment on the Draft EIR. The County acknowledges the comment; however, it does not raise an issue related to the adequacy of any specific section or analysis of the Draft EIR. The County will include the comment as part of the Final EIR for review and consideration by the decision-makers prior to a final decision on the project. No further response is required or necessary.

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