

COMMENTS	RESPONSES
<p style="text-align: center;">Comment Letter RI6</p> <p>April 9, 2018</p> <p>Planning & Development Services 5510 Overland Avenue, Suite 310 San Diego, CA 92123</p> <p>Attention: Ashley Smith</p> <p>Reference: Harmony Grove Village South Project, PDS2015-GPA-15-002, PDS2015-SP-15-002, PDS2015-REZ-15-003, PDS2015-TM-5600, PDS2015-MUP-15-008, PDS2015-ER-15-08-006</p> <p>To Whom It May Concern,</p> <p>This letter is in response to the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report developed for the above referenced project, referred to as Harmony Grove Village South. As this revision is only addressing proposed updates related to Green House Gas (GHG) emissions, which the developer updated in response to recent changes in legal interpretations, this letter will only address those portions of the DEIR which have been changed. Please see our letter dated June 19, 2017 for concerns related to other issues with the development.</p> <p>The developer does appear to be proposing a plan that on paper makes attempts to satisfy legal requirements to mitigate GHG. However, in reality, these mitigations will reduce the GHG's produced by the creation of the development but will not reduce them enough to zero out the GHG's caused by the development. In other words, the development will have a significant effect on increasing GHGs. The main reason for this is that the development is far away from where the residents will work. They will have to leave the community, drive on the already clogged I-15 or I-78, to get to their jobs in San Diego, L.A., Escondido, or elsewhere in San Diego County. This development is not going to be creating significant numbers of jobs for residents to work where they live. There is a small amount of commercial space proposed but that will not employ the residents of 425 homes. There is no public transportation within walking distance of this community. It is insufficient for the developer to offer information on public transportation and ride sharing programs the residents can access elsewhere in the County. The developer should make arrangements with North County Transit District to bring public transportation to the community. The cost of increasing bus routes into the development should be absorbed by the developer. In addition to public transportation, which is inadequately addressed by the RDEIR, increasing bike accessibility is mentioned. The developer plans on having bike stations and trails in the development. That is nice for pleasure bike riding but is insufficient to encourage community members to bike to work to reduce GHGs. To leave the community, bikers would have to ride on Harmony Grove Road which has inadequate space for bike riders. Currently, bikes are frequent on this road on the weekends but can create a hazard as car drivers have to cross the double yellow line in order to pass the bike or bikes. Add the increased car traffic from Harmony Grove Village South as well as the bike riders, and you</p>	<p>Response to Comment RI6-1</p> <p>The County acknowledges these introductory comments. Regarding your letter of June 19, 2017, please refer to DEIR Responses to Comment Letter I37. No additional response is required.</p> <p>Response to Comment RI6-2</p> <p>The comment generally states that the Project will have a significant effect on increasing greenhouse gases (GHGs) due to the length of vehicle trips for employment. Please see the Global Responses to Regional Plan Conformity in this FEIR regarding the Project location and adjacent services, jobs, and shopping opportunities. Relative to travel on I-15 and SR-78, please see Subchapter 2.2, <i>Transportation/Travel</i>, in the EIR. Project trips make up a very small percentage of peak hour trips on those facilities. Information as to each of these issues is additionally briefly summarized below.</p> <p>Regarding the location of the Project and the distance drivers would have to travel to access their jobs, please see the Global Responses to Regional Plan Conformity. The Project parcels are sited in the western part of the County, on and near roads accessing the cities of Escondido and San Marcos (via Country Club Drive (both cities) as well as via Harmony Grove Road to the City of Escondido. These routes also take area residents directly to SR 78 and toward I-15, which link to other area cities. As described in Subchapter 2.2, <i>Transportation/Traffic</i>, and the Project Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA) (Appendix D to the EIR), no Project-related significant impacts to I-15 or SR 78 would occur. The Project TIA looked at existing roadway configurations as well as configurations following the Project and other future improvements. The Project vehicle miles traveled (VMT) modeling (based on the San Diego Association of Governments' model) accounted for this; which resulted in the Project VMT falling just under the regional average. The Project is also located within 3 miles of a Sprinter and bus hub at the Nordahl transit station, which is very unusual for residences in County unincorporated lands. As described in the EIR and cited below in Response to Comment RI6-5, the location of the Project is near shopping and services as well as employment.</p>

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	<p>The mobile source emissions were calculated using an industry standard model: the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod).</p> <p>The Project was analyzed to generate approximately 4,500 average daily trips (ADT), with an average trip length of 7.88 miles/trip. This is actually a conservative (greater impact) analysis. This is because traffic study was initially prepared prior to identification of the Project-proposed number of homes and types (single-family and multi-family) unit counts. The Project is proposing 193 single-family units projected to generate 10 trips (each equating to 1,930 ADT), and 260 multi-family units projected to generate 8 trips each (equating to 2,080 ADT). Thus, the actual total ADT would be 4,010, and not approximately 4,500. Documentation of this is provided in the Project Final TIA, EIR Appendix D in a memorandum titled “HGVS -- Trip Generation Comparison.” This is a reduction in traffic volume of 490 ADT, or roughly 10.9 percent from the analyzed Project. The associated mobile source GHG emissions, therefore, also are overstated by approximately 458 MT CO₂e from what was originally modeled under the 4,500 ADT scenario and from the conservative numbers provided in the 2018 recirculated RDEIR. Regardless, CalEEMod relies upon emission factors for each vehicle model year and type based on individual counties, air basins, air districts, and statewide averages for all fuel types. The emissions associated with on-road mobile sources includes running, idling, starting, and evaporative loss emissions.</p> <p>The County finds that the Project documents accurately reflect the industry standard modeling and mitigation is proposed consistent with state law. Project GHG emissions would be addressed through the mitigation identified in Subchapter 2.7, <i>Greenhouse Gas Emissions</i>, which proposes mitigation through carbon offsets of the full Project rather than simply the “additional” residences/uses proposed under the GPA, and also would further reduce GHG contributions through the benefits identified as part of the landscaping plan, discussed in Response to Comment RI6-6, below. The Project would therefore actually result in a projected net decrease of GHG emissions in the County over continuation of on-site existing conditions.</p>

Response to Comment RI6-3

The comment generally states that the developer should provide public transportation and that it is inadequately addressed in the RDEIR. The County disagrees. The North County Transit District is responsible for provision of bus service within their service limits. They have indicated that they find the Project consistent with their standards and that no impacts to bus stops would occur at this time (see DEIR letter L3). The comment does not specifically state what the REIR should have analyzed with regard to public transportation; therefore, no further information can be provided. In addition, an area within the developable portion of the Center House will be reserved for dedication for a transit stop for bus service when a local transit line is extended to service the Harmony Grove Village/Harmony Grove Village South area, rendering it “transit ready.” The Project’s proposed circulation network of sidewalks, trails, and bicycle routes, will connect to the transit stop to further provide a regional alternative transportation system.

Response to Comment RI6-4

The comment generally states that the developer should provide a “safe bike route” from the development to Escondido or to the coast. CEQA requires a nexus. The County agrees that not all residents would or could (or would want to) ride bikes to work. The purpose of the multi-purpose trails associated with the Project is to address multiple uses. Not all GHGs are generated by individuals going to and from work. Some are generated through travel to shop, access recreational areas, visit friends, etc. To the extent that opportunities to do any of these things are located within the Project, or between the Project and Harmony Grove Village, these trails provide nonvehicular transportation options that allow residents (as well as existing adjacent community residents) the ability to comfortably walk or ride rather than reaching for the car keys. The comments regarding current activities of bike riders during congestion and projected issues are noted. The number of individuals anticipated to ride bikes during peak rush hours, however, is unknown and speculative. Both bike riders and drivers are responsible for using existing roadways in a responsible fashion. There is no nexus to require the Project developer to provide a “bike only route to Escondido or to the Coast” and no ability to require private property owners along the route to yield their property to accommodate such a use on behalf of a private project. The planning of bike routes and trails is the responsibility of

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	<p>land use planning agencies (the County, area cities). The Project is consistent with the County regional trail system and local planned trails.</p>

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<p style="text-align: center;">Comment Letter RI6</p> <p>have a potentially deadly situation for bike riders during rush hour traffic. The developer should be required to create a safe bike only route for bicyclists to safely travel either to Escondido or to the Coast in order to reach their jobs.</p> <p>The RDEIR proposes to meet GHG emission standards, and reports that the homes in the development will have “net zero GHG emissions” through “a combination of energy efficiency enhancements to the building envelope and regulated loads, and the provision of on-site solar.” Even if we were to assume that the developer’s consultants on energy usage were accurate that they can outfit the homes with the amount of PV panels to balance out the electricity used by the residents under perfect circumstances, there does not seem to be any accountability for less than perfect circumstances. The developer plans on informing the home buyers on how to conserve energy but what if they don’t? What happens during cloudy days, or if the panels cannot be placed on the actual homes to maximize solar absorptance? Who will hold the developer responsible if HGVS residents use more electricity than they produce? What about the energy used in all the car trips by the residents?</p> <p>Finally, the RDEIR inadequately mitigates the GHGs emitted from HGVS because whatever GHGs they cannot mitigate on the property, they proposed to mitigate through buying carbon offsets. This is a proposal for paper, not reality. First, these carbon offsets are not even local so do nothing for the local air quality, drain on local energy resources, or local temperature rise from the heat effects of asphalt and cement where there had previously been plants and soil. The developer proposes to use standard building and landscaping practices to keep the temperatures from rising but these practices don’t work as evidenced by the noticeable increase in ambient temperature when walking down Country Club Lane from the open space where HGVS is proposed, across the creek and up past Harmony Grove Village. Another reason carbon offsets are poor mitigation is that there is no reason to believe that there are enough carbon offsets available to mitigate all the developments in the state that want to buy offsets. If the development is approved, despite all the community opposition, and the fire danger to all the residents, then the developer should be required to provide all of the mitigation for any GHG’s caused during construction and the existence of HGVS, either in the development or locally through various means (e.g. planting native vegetation on mitigation lands, PV panels on parking lot covers, providing more EV charging stations, solar tracking stations, or building to LEED Platinum Certification standards).</p> <p>Thank you in advanced for considering our concerns regarding the RDEIR. It is our sincere hope that you will take all of the community input into advisement and choose to develop this parcel as it was originally zoned, for 25 rural homes. It’s what the County experts felt was appropriate for this parcel given the environmental constraints and county needs as originally zoned in the San Diego County General Plan.</p> <p>Sincerely, Debbie O’Neill Jonathan Dummer</p>	<p>Response to Comment RI6-5</p> <p>The comment questions the analysis regarding solar panels proposed by the developer that will offset 100 percent of the electricity use. The ability of the Project to attain offset energy needs through on-site solar is documented in the ConSol Report in Appendix J to the EIR. Both single- and multi-family designs of this Project were analyzed by ConSol, including assumed conditions in which panels could not be placed on south-facing directions. The results of the ConSol Report modeling indicate that 100 percent of the average energy use for each building type on-site energy needs can be met with this system through proper design. The modeling conservatively assumed that not all buildings could be placed in optimal orientation and on-site reductions would still be adequate. Solar panels actually do work on cloudy days; although they produce less power than on sunny days, they still do continue to produce power (https://cleantechnica.com/2018/02/08/solar-panels-work-cloudy-days-just-less-effectively/).</p> <p>In addition, on very sunny days, it is expected that more energy would be put into the grid than would be required so that it balances out over the year. Although the Applicant will provide homeowners with information that may lead to some reductions in energy consumed, there is no way to accurately project the extent to which that might occur. As a result, no deduction was taken based on future resident actions on that point. The energy used in car trips, and the emissions that result from that use, were fully factored into Project impact analyses. Please see Subchapter 2.7, <i>Greenhouse Gas Emissions</i>, as well as Section 3.1.1, <i>Energy</i>, of the FEIR. Please also see the Global Responses to Carbon Offsets, in this FEIR, for information regarding overall Project reductions to net zero.</p> <p>Response to Comment RI6-6</p> <p>Please see the Global Responses to Carbon Offsets, in this chapter of this FEIR, for information regarding the nature and location of offset credits and their efficacy. As discussed in the global response, GHG emissions and climate change are a global, cumulative issue. It should also be noted that several state agencies and regulations (including CEQA) recognize carbon offsets as mitigation. The Project has incorporated all feasible mitigation measures cited in the County Climate Action Plan (CAP) as well as the California Air</p>

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	<p>Resources Board’s Scoping Plan Update (see Appendix J to this EIR). All feasible mitigation measures have been applied to the Project, even those from the CAP, even though it was approved after the Revised DEIR was submitted for circulation. This includes on-site reductions first, followed by off-site credit purchase. The Project therefore adequately mitigates GHG impacts to less than significant, as adequately detailed in the FEIR.</p> <p>As described in Subchapter 2.6, <i>Air Quality</i>, of the EIR, criteria emissions associated with the Project would be less than significant; there are no significant effects to the local air basin (the San Diego Air Basin) and mitigation is not required. Similarly, there are immediately abutting energy connections. Please note that the Project would offset 100 percent of its energy needs through use of on-site photovoltaic panels, and would be built to the latest code (see EIR Table 1-2, <i>Project Design Features</i>, and Subchapter 2.7), requiring additional energy reducing elements/amenities; such as Energy Star appliances, low-water landscaping, low-flow fixtures, use of recycled water, plumbing for EV-charging stations in residential garages, etc. Project energy consumption related to construction (equipment use); operations, including stationary demands (e.g., electricity, natural gas, water, wastewater); mobile energy needs (fuel for vehicular trips); and waste of non-renewable energy are all addressed in FEIR Section 3.1.1, <i>Energy</i>. Impacts were quantified (see Tables 3.1.1-8 through 3.1.1-10), and as described in text, both direct and cumulative impacts were found to be less than significant.</p> <p>Regarding local temperature rise, it is acknowledged that blacktop reflects greater heat than soil or vegetation and that the Project site currently primarily contains non-native grassland and scrub habitats. The Project does not propose large expanses of blacktop, however, and expressly proposes use of concrete and surfaces such as decomposed granite for sidewalks and pathways. Please also see FEIR Subchapters 2.3, <i>Biological Resources</i>, and 2.7, <i>Greenhouse Gas Emissions</i>, for information on replanting of native vegetation areas associated with biological open space and Escondido Creek, and GHG reductions due to landscaping sequestration, etc., respectively. Specifically regarding the landscaping, the Project would plant a minimum of 2,045 trees. Relative to GHG emissions, the sequestration provided by those trees would roughly double</p>

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	<p>the amount provided by the current on-site vegetation. The canopies of those trees also would cast shade and minimize heat sink in their vicinity. Additional shrubbery and ground cover also would contribute to absorption, rather than reflection, of heat.</p> <p>Solar tracking stations are not necessary for this Project. Modeling for the rooftop solar shows that it can accommodate projected on-site energy needs without such a station (see the ConSol Report in EIR Appendix J. With respect to complying with LEED Platinum standards, the Project would consistent with Title 24 and include the design features provided above in this comment related to use of solar photovoltaic panels, low-water use, high-efficiency appliances, etc.</p> <p>Comments regarding community opposition and fire danger do not raise an issue concerning this Revised DEIR pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5(c). For a full description of the scope of recirculation for this EIR, please see the Recirculation Readers Guide, dated February 22, 2018. Relative to areas not addressed in the Revised DEIR; community opposition is not a CEQA topic per se. Proposed amendments of the existing General Plan and Community Plan, however are addressed in the Global Responses to General Plan/Community Plan CEQA Impacts Analysis. Fire hazards are expressly addressed in Section 3.1.3, <i>Hazards and Hazardous Materials</i>, of the FEIR, in the Project Fire Protection Plan, and in the Global Responses to Fire Hazards Impact Analysis, and Adequacy of Emergency Evacuation and Access in this FEIR.</p> <p>Response to Comment RI6-7</p> <p>The statement that County experts felt that 25 rural homes was appropriate for this parcel is incorrect. The General Plan land use designation is SR-0.5. This reflects the best judgment of the County as a land use planning agency and CEQA lead agency. The remainder of the comment is comprised of conclusion comments. They do not raise specific issues regarding the content of the Revised DEIR, but the opposition to the Project is noted and will be included as part of the administrative record and made available to the decision makers prior to a final decision on the Proposed Project.</p>

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<p data-bbox="751 240 926 261" style="text-align: center;">Comment Letter RI6</p> <p data-bbox="218 342 554 537">cc: Ashley.Smith2@sdcounty.ca.gov sarah.aghassi@sdcounty.ca.gov bill.horn@sdcounty.ca.gov ron-roberts@sdcounty.ca.gov dianne.jacob@sdcounty.ca.gov greg.cox@sdcounty.ca.gov kristin.gaspar@sdcounty.ca.gov efhgtc@gmail.com marsenault@realcapitalsolutions.com</p> <p data-bbox="743 591 1003 646" style="text-align: center;">Address Attachments RI6-8</p>	<p data-bbox="1062 164 1428 191">Response to Comment RI6-8</p> <p data-bbox="1062 201 1990 305">The attachments to this letter were composed of submittals made on the DEIR as part of Comment Letter I37. Please see the DEIR Responses to Comments I37-1 through I37-61.</p>