

El Monte Sand Mine & Nature Preserve

PDS2015-MUP-98-014W2, PDS2015-RP-15-001

Notice of Preparation (NOP) of Environmental Impact Report

Public Review Period

August 13, 2015 through September 14, 2015

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING COMMENTS

September 13, 2015

Mr. Jim Bennett
County of San Diego
Planning and Development Services
5510 Overland Ave, Ste 310
San Diego, CA 92123

Mr. Bennett,

Please find below my list of concerns pertinent to the EIR for this project:

1) Water quality for existing residents. Whereas the proponent has stated in their own documents they plan to dump all the effluent not usable back into the 90' deep pit in the ground, and whereas the water table is at 30' below grade, therefore it can be expected that any contaminants within the effluent not limited to nitrates and nitrites from existing and older agricultural uses, and some heavy metals which are prevalent, would therefore be free-floating and then miscible with the existing water in the aquifer. I and some hydrologists with whom I've spoken believe this will not only pose a problem to the immediate families in the area, but also to any who derive their water source downstream from the project, including Lakeside Water District and Helix.

2) Water levels for wells within the valley and surrounding neighborhoods. Sand mining is a heavy water user for dust mitigation. And water table could drop as the extraction process lingers on for years. Families, businesses and farms who

have Riparian Water Rights, by right must not have their water rights forfeited by a Discretionary Plan and if so, residents must be made whole into perpetuity so as not to have to carry any of the burden, financial or otherwise, for the proponents of this project.

3) According to the Scenic Highway Element, Section 1, Part VI, of the San Diego County General Plan, as revised by General Plan Amendment (GPA) 86-03, Item 7, Desert Subregional Plan, and that it was approved by the San Diego County Planning Commission on the 10th day of October, 1986 (GPA 86-03), El Monte Rd. and Willow Rd. are both listed and classified as Designated Scenic Roads, which by the further language in the document, thereby designates all of El Monte Valley as a "Designated Scenic Viewshed" or corridor, and needs to and must have the rights and protections as specified within the County's own General Plan and by the State of California's Scenic Highway and Roads stipulations.

4) As a Lakeside Community Planning Group member for the last almost five years and now the Chair, I have seen many projects come before our board which have rightly been turned down because they did not fit within the size, bulk and scale of the character of the community in which the project was located. This, in accordance with the General Plan most certainly DOES NOT fit within the rural, agricultural, equestrian and residential character of this community and also, exactly flies in the face of the rules governing the "splitting" of a community and needs to be addressed as so.

5) As attached in the email containing this document, I have included photographs, taken by myself, of rich archeological findings within El Monte Valley. Items such as morteros and pestles and natural grinding locations located under some of the older oak trees. This valley, as evidenced in "The River of Tears" is an archeological treasure trove with historical significance that cannot be overlooked. All due diligence with regards to the remains of the original Viejas people shall not be overlooked, or rather, shall be treated with the utmost of importance and reverence.

6) In the matter of using the old EIR and just supplementing it; this needs to NOT

happen. The old Golf Course project, as approved, would have had minimal impact and disturbance to the land, soil, water, traffic and would have blended nicely with the community character. THIS project, however will have MAJOR impacts on EVERY aspect of life, property, water rights, traffic, dust, noise, infrastructure and peaceful enjoyment of the community's resources such as El Monte Park and El Capitan Reservoir. There needs to be a thorough and complete NEW EIR as this is a completely new and 100% different project than the one previously approved. The only similarity between this project and the old one is the location. All else is different and has MAJOR negative impacts upon the community. Whereas the old project would have been a boon.

7) Whereas there is nothing within the proponents plan which shows a guarantee or method by which they plan to keep their end of the bargain to restore and then maintain the "habitat" they will have created at the end of this sand mining operation, an endowment and trust needs to be set up for future West Nile abatement, trail maintenance, and general upkeep of the property for the future generation of San Diegans who would otherwise have the beauty of this valley taken from them forever by a 200 acre, 90' pit in the middle of an otherwise pristine parklike environment.

8) Infrastructure: El Monte Rd. is a curvy, winding road with blind curves and also is narrow. It is frequented by bicyclist, horseback riders, El Capitan High School athletes who do their training, boaters and anglers, hikers, photographers, artists, and park goers. It is not set up for the type of heavy, industrial traffic which is to be expected once a project of this magnitude begins. So there are severe safety concerns for the citizens of the community who use this road. And nor are any of the connecting roads, including Maplevue, with all its school kids and traffic, nor Lake Jennings Park Rd. Especially with the foreseeable projects coming to the area around the 8 Freeway at Lake Jennings capable of handling this traffic. One fix would be to have to improve Willow Rd and have 50% of traffic leave that direction to ease the impact on El Monte, Julian, Maplevue and Lake Jennings. However, looking forward, none of these roads are fit for this type of project, as all that truck traffic will be severely impacting every residential neighborhood within and surrounding these roads.

9) Flood Control: The sand in the river acts as a natural “sponge” as it were, to help hold back and slow the velocity of runoff when we have large storms within our region. Once there is a 200 acre place where all that water can pick up momentum exists, it is surely foreseeable that flooding can most likely occur downstream. Therefore, a flood mitigation plan must be put into place to compensate all those who might be caused harm due to this project’s future impact upon its neighbors downstream.

10) Other concerns listed, but not limited to, include: Valley Fever, Trails, Dust, Noise, negative use of existing property rights and devaluation of said property, thereby lowering the tax base for an entire region of a community, Loss of business and possible bankruptcy for existing businesses in The Valley, Loss of business and harm to our already existing, local sand miners who will suffer severe economic impacts.

Thank you for your time and concern,

Warmest regards,



September 13, 2015

Signature

Date

Milton Cyphert, Chair, Lakeside Community Planning Group

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