

COMMENTS

RESPONSES

14 June 2015

To: [beth.ehsan@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:beth.ehsan@sdcounty.ca.gov)

Re: Valiano Plan, PDS2013-SP-13-001, PDS2013-GPA-13-001, PDS2013-REZ-13-001, PDS2013-TM-5575, PDS2014-MUP-14-019, PDS2013-STP-13-003, PDS2013-ER-13-08-002

Ms. Ehsan:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Valiano project. We live on Camino de la Cima, due west of the project. The impact to us personally is tremendous and has not been assessed as part of the published study. For example, our view will contain this new neighborhood instead of the rural open spaces we bought the house to enjoy.



Wild bobcat next to the house, Valiano proposed site in background

The noise impact of sounds carrying up from the valley will be tremendous. We currently hear every event that Stone Brewery puts on, and this project adds several hundred families' worth of noise in between that establishment and us.

The back side of the retaining walls described in the Visual Impact Analysis will face our home (and we did not see any plan to fully finish the up-to-20'-high wall on the back to blend in with our current view). The relative seclusion of our house will be no more.

We have a worst-case mental picture of people hanging out, throwing cans and cigarette butts into our brush, looking up at our once-private home from behind a graffiti-covered cinderblock barrier and wandering off into our yard when they want additional privacy. Naturally, we are concerned. But there are also intrinsic problems with this project that have nothing to do with us personally.

AO-1 See Response K-11c regarding views over the Project from Camino de la Cima. Project residences would be generally below the direct line-of-sight to the very expansive views enjoyed by the viewer from these high locations, and as demonstrated in the photograph from the home included in this comment. As shown in the commenter's letter, views would not generally be focused downward. The terrain falls away rapidly, and the eye is drawn to the horizon line of high hills and sky in the far distance.

AO-2 The Proposed Project would be primarily residential in use, and would not include areas that would host events similar in scale to those held at Stone Brewery. Incidental neighborhood noise generated from general residential activities may be audible at the commenter's residence but would be widely distributed throughout the area. Activities at the Project's park areas and private Recreation Facility may also be audible at the commenter's residence, but given the distance between the noise source and the residence would not be of the size or type to significantly increase noise. Project related noise sources shall be required to comply with the County Noise Ordinance, as discussed in Subchapter 2.6.

AO-3 The noted retaining walls are proposed to hold back soil from a generally east-facing slope. They would therefore back up against the retained hill, with their westerly sides against (retaining) the hillside and their easterly sides providing a wall interior to the Proposed Project and within the yards of Lots 153-159 and 161. The back side of the retaining wall

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A0-3  
cont. would not face homes to the west, as the wall would be downslope from, and retaining, the hill on which these homes are located. The walls themselves would not be expected to be visible to viewers from the west and above, as indicated in Response AO-1.

AO-4 The vertical and horizontal difference between the pads of the homes in Valiano and the homes to the west would result in privacy being retained and it is not expected that trash from this downslope development would enter your property. These walls would be vertical, downslope, and facing away from your residence (i.e., also facing easterly, not westerly). Because these retaining walls would be interior to private back yards, no graffiti-covered walls are anticipated. There are no Project trails in this area. Residents in these homes would not have access to or “wander off” onto your property.

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AO-5 When looking at the impacts of this development on the surrounding area, it is important to take the reports together in conjunction, rather than each on its own. These impacts are all inter-related. By far, the largest issue is fire protection.

For example, in Technical Appendix L, emergency response times were assessed based on current traffic on Country Club Drive, and even then the response times exceeded the required five minutes, showing seven at a minimum (Section 4.1).

AO-6 Meanwhile, the Traffic Impact Analysis (Technical Appendix H) also indicated that there would be a significant direct impact to traffic on Country Club Drive between Auto Park Way and Hill Valley Drive (Section 9.1.2) that would significantly increase this time, even during normal non-evacuation conditions.

AO-7 We have recent real-world nearby experience in emergency conditions. To travel the 2.1 miles from the corner of Craven and Twin Oaks Valley Road to Camino de la Cima during the Cocos fire in 2014 took **28 minutes**.

AO-8 If over 1000 homes are being evacuated at once from Valiano and Harmony Grove Village, all via the same rural route, fire equipment will be completely blocked. This is true even if a notional new fire department is built in Harmony Grove Village 2.22 miles away, farther than the distance in our example.

AO-9 In 2014, the emergency response equipment on Barham Drive was forced to drive westbound in the eastbound bike lane to make any headway through the crowds. There is no such planned bike lane on Country Club Drive.



Fire truck attempting to navigate gridlock on Barham Drive, May 2014

AO-5 See Response I-55 regarding calculation of travel time. As discussed in Section 4.1 of the FPP, with the temporary Harmony Grove Fire Station that is now operational, response times would meet the required five minutes. The permanent station is expected to be operation in late 2018.

AO-6 See Response E-12 regarding proposed improvements to Country Club Drive and the intersection with Auto Park Way, Response K-167 regarding the analysis and mitigation of that intersection, and Response AN-5 regarding traffic and mitigation along Country Club Drive.

AO-7 See Topical Response: Fire/Evacuations regarding fire evacuations.

AO-8 See Topical Response: Fire/Evacuations regarding fire evacuations and Response AD-10 regarding status of the Harmony Grove Village fire station.

AO-9 The picture shows a fire truck only partially within a bike lane, and also shows commuter traffic moving over to the left onto the opposite shoulder and other lanes of traffic to create room for the fire truck as is typical for commuter vehicles to do when emergency vehicles are attempting to bypass a crowded area. A bike lane would not be necessary for a fire truck to pass as vehicles would be able to move onto the opposite shoulders or other lanes as demonstrated in the included picture. See Topical Response: Fire/Evacuations for additional information regarding fire evacuations.

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There is no means of egress from Valiano from the north, south, or west. While the Fire Protection Plan indicated that a fire coming from the west was unlikely, that is exactly where the fire came from in 2014 (there is a perpetual west-to-east breeze at all times). With no other means of escape, though, FIREWISE 2000's report that the most likely scenario is an east-to-west fire should not be of any comfort.



Proposed Valiano site after the Cocos fire in 2014

AO-11

In addition, the environmental impacts of the planned community were bounded by the borders of the lots in question. However, the planned road alterations, additional infrastructure, and other supporting development needed to sustain a neighborhood of this size will also have lasting impact on the wildlife and ecological resources currently in that open space.

Our home is situated in an area with extensive wildlife. In addition to snakes, rodents, and other smaller creatures, we have populations of deer, coyotes, and bobcats on-site. Their habitats have already been devastated by the fires, but have a chance to come back. Building hundreds of houses there will not provide the habitat with the chance to return.



Pack of coyotes on our driveway

AO-10

See Topical Response: Fire/Evacuations regarding fire evacuations and K-59 regarding the Cocos Fire.

AO-11

All road improvements and infrastructure extensions were evaluated for environmental impacts. The site is situated at the western edge of existing residential area, thus, connectivity for wildlife to areas to the north, east, and south of the site is already limited. The Project site is not considered a priority area for conservation under the draft NCMSCP, as discussed in Response K-32. Mitigation for impacts to biological resources is consistent with County and Resource Agency requirements.

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Sampling of wildflowers on the property (all photos taken 17 May 2015)

We moved here because we prefer a rural way of life. For a developer to plunk a giant subdivision right in the middle of our rural community goes against the core identity of who we are. It's not a densely populated area, so the number of individuals able to rise up and protest this development is smaller, but our views are no less important. Beyond that, the residents who would move there would clearly not be safe in wildfire conditions.

We strongly object to the plan to develop the Valiano project as proposed.

Thank you for your time,  
 -Carolee and Charles Eubanks

AO-12

AO-12 Your objection to the Project is hereby included as part of the record and made available to the decision makers prior to a final decision on the Project. Your views are important in responding to the EIR. The County Guidelines for Determining Significance and The Report Format and Content Requirements provide objective analytical tools to evaluate a proposed project. Comments received on circulated CEQA documents are reviewed relative to input on CEQA compliance, not based on the number of comments or the status of the commenter.

See Topical Response: Fire/Evacuations regarding the Project and your safety during wildfire.

Your objection to the Proposed Project is noted.