

COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Dear Ms. Ehsan:

First, I want to thank you and your colleagues at Planning and Development Services for all the time and work you've put into reviewing the Valiano project. It really means a great deal to our community and appreciate that you are giving it the due diligence it deserves. My name is Angelique Hartman and I've lived on Country Club Drive in Harmony Grove for 2 years.

As you know, the project, as proposed, threatens to destroy the wonderful community we are part of and that has existed, undisturbed for over 125 years. It is a unique and special place in San Diego County, the last of its kind west of the 15, I'm afraid. I am taking the opportunity to provide my comments on the Draft EIR for this project in the hopes that the developer will seek to follow the vision of the General Plan, the HG Community Plan and that of the Community.

I personally urge you to reject this GPA, and make the responsible decision to honor what the Community negotiated over the course of several years in the GP Update. I personally urge you to help uphold our Community Plan, the Harmony Grove Village Plan, which clearly spells out what is acceptable in our rural community. While I have mentioned some items below, it is certainly not all encompassing. But, with human health and safety topping the areas of concern, I also ask that you carefully consider personal testimony and data that most of us living in the area can attest to first hand. For newer members of the community like myself, I can say that I presently live in one of the most unique places in the County. It is no shock that a developer would want to market such a wonderful area. We do seem to have it all. But with that said, we also have an obligation to make sure that responsible decisions are made with current data. We have a wealth of data that was overlooked or dismissed in this proposed DEIR. Please find below some of these omissions.

Community Plan:

Our community plan calls for a rural community with rural zoning and rural environment. The applicant claims it is a semi-rural development and claim to have rural themes. If houses tightly clustered together, with 1000 foot walls, 20 feet high, manufactured slopes, street lights, fencing and gates and cul-de-sacs can be defined as rural, I think they are looking at the wrong dictionary. Please, look "rural" up in the dictionary. Valiano is not it. For me, rural means no traffic lights, no street lights, dark skies, quiet peaceful day and nights, sounds of horses and large animals, great horned owls at night, loud calls of pacific tree frogs in the evening, creeks with bass, rattlesnakes in my backyard, deer in the valley, bobcats, tractors working their land, neighbors helping one another build a barn, wells, septic not sewer, unique homes-not cookie cutter planned with HOA's, private roads, community get together in corrals, farmers, horse trailers, large lots (minimum of 2 acres), two lane roads, hills with grasslands and chaparral, mountains surrounding our backyard. Valiano is none of these things. Not only is this a significant impact but it is an existential impact: our community would be destroyed if Orange County-style developments like Valiano are squeezed into our little bucolic valley.

AR-1 Thank you for your introductory comments. This comment indicates that the Project would threaten to destroy the community (character) and the EIR analysis does not come to the same conclusion. Your hope for the developer to follow the vision of the General Plan and your request for denial of the GPA is hereby included as part of the record and made available to the decision makers prior to a final decision on the Project. See Topical Response: General Plan Amendment and Subarea Boundary Adjustment CEQA Analysis and Responses G-7 (focused on sewer) and I-67 (focused on horses) regarding Project consistency with the Community Plan. Additional specific comments are responded to below.

AR-2 See Response U-2a regarding the clustered, or consolidated, Project footprint and rural nature of the Project, and AD-5 regarding the definitions of "urban" and "rural," manufactured slopes, etc., Please note that no new traffic lights are proposed as part of the Project.

Only the southern portion of the Project (Neighborhood 5) is located in the Harmony Grove Community Plan area that recommends the use of septic systems for each dwelling unit. See Topical Response: General Plan Amendment and Subarea Boundary Adjustment CEQA Analysis. The Proposed Project's clustered design and lot sizes would preclude the use of individual septic systems. The proposed WTWRF would be sited adjacent to County Club Drive in the southern portion of the Project, near the lowest elevation of the Project site. This would to allow the proposed sewer system to flow by gravity, minimizing the need for sewer pump stations. As discussed in EIR Subchapter 2.1, roadside landscaping would shield potential views to the WTWRF structures. Any views to the facility through the roadside and facility landscaping would appear similar to agribusiness uses historically or currently in the

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AR-2
cont.

vicinity (ponds, tanks, equipment sheds, barns, etc.). As discussed in EIR Subchapter 2.2, the odor control design for the facility would be such that no substantial offensive odors would be detected by nearby residences or other sensitive receptors. Chapter 4.5 of the EIR included an Off-site and Combined On-/Off-site Sewer Options Alternative that would remove the need for an on-site WTWRF. The Project site does not support creeks with bass, but great horned owls, bobcats, Pacific tree frogs, and deer were all detected on the Project site. The clustered design of the Project provides for 31.2 acres of biological open space with potential to support many of these species in the future, in addition to off-site mitigation. Although it does not include 2-acre lots and would have an HOA, the Project would include two lane private roads and steep slopes preserved in open space.

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Fire Safety:

AR-3 The 326 houses proposed will make evacuation a very difficult proposition. The DEIR does not show how evacuation will proceed during a wildfire event. The only egress, Country Club Road, will be at LOS F (according to the DEIR) and evacuation on this two lane road will be hazardous and create a fire trap. The GP should not be amended to allow a density increase in an already high risk area for severe fire and human health risk. On the other end of the valley, San Elijo Road (which is a 4 lane road emptying into a 6 lane road) had people sitting in their cars for over an hour as flames were visible overhead on Double Peak. Had the fire not changed direction towards Harmony Grove as they did, you would have had a tragedy on your hands. Country Club is only a 2 lane road with LOS F. It is facing evacuation traffic from 742 houses at HGV, 325 houses at Valiano in addition to the trailers for upwards of 180 horses in Eden Valley. The Fire Protection Plan (FPP) makes no mention of evacuating horse trailers and how that would impact evacuation. Please address this. We have twice as many horses in Eden Valley than we have houses. Trailers are slow, hard to maneuver, big and, importantly very hard to load animals on to. There is only one way out of that valley: Country Club Road towards Autopark way. If the fire comes west, like it did during Cocos there will be a massive traffic jam (LOS F means bumper to bumper traffic in non-evacuation circumstances) that could doom residents to a death trap. This is significant and not mitigated.

AR-4 During the Coco's Fire traffic was backed up on Country Club Drive going North. Residents from Harmony Grove were stuck in traffic for more than an hour trying to reach the 78. Traffic was also impacted by the number of Fire Engines trying to get in as residents were evacuating. None of this is discussed in the DEIR.

AR-5 Fire Storms have become more common in our area. 95% of all fires are started by humans intentionally or not. Fire Storms create a different kind of community disaster, whereby depending on how many fires are going at once, you may not have your most knowledgeable local fire station at your front door. Because outside resources must be used, these outside resources are not as prepared and knowledgeable of the unique circumstances that exist in each community. They may not know about all the access routes, or lack thereof, the location of a Fire Hydrant, the water pressure issues at some locations etc. This needs to be analyzed in the EIR. We should not have to keep relearning from disasters, like the 2003 Firestorm that took 23 lives right here in San Diego. The highways couldn't even support the 500,000 people trying to get to safety from the Fires.

AR-6 Adding more 'fuel' in the shape of 326 units, to create a wildland/urban interface is at best irresponsible and completely avoidable. Creating a death trap to the community is shameful.

AR-7 Our property burned in the 2014 Coco's Fire. I can testify at how fast moving this fire was. Within a couple of hours it went from plumes of smoke visible to a fire right on my ridgeline. I watched spot fires explode all along the Coronado Hills as we evacuated on Country Club Drive. I saw panicked people loading up their cars and trailers. What if this had happened at night? This is what keeps us up at night, what if...will we be able to evacuate with HGV built out. Valiano will be an insult added to injury to our already failed traffic and fire safety from taking our 'fair share' of growth with HGV. Because this was a Fire Storm event, we had a non-local engine come defend our house. There was

AR-3 This comment is substantially similar to comment AD-8. See Topical Response: Fire/Evacuations regarding fire evacuations.

AR-4 This comment is substantially similar to comment AD-9. See Topical Response: Fire/Evacuations regarding evacuations.

AR-5 In response to your comment and others, additional information about the Cocos Fire is added to the analysis in the FPP. See Topical Response: Fire/Evacuations regarding fire evacuation.

AR-6 It is true that fire storms are more common in recent history and that ignition is often human generated. The impact analysis in Section 2.9 of the EIR and the FPP does include fire modeling to include fire storm conditions. Infrastructure, access routes, and water pressure, have been all been included in the analysis and the County and Emergency agencies coordinate and communicate the response to fire and emergencies. Potential impacts have been identified and mitigation has been proposed. Also see Responses I-47 and K-184.

AR-7 See Response I-59 regarding how the proposed fire protection measures would improve fire safety for the whole community.

AR-8 Your experience of the Cocos Fire is hereby included as part of the record and made available to the decision makers prior to a final decision on the Project. See Topical Response: Fire/Evacuations regarding evacuation, I-59 regarding fire protection resulting from the Project, and C-5 regarding water flow for firefighting and the Project's construction of the R-7 reservoir.

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AR-8 cont. only ONE Fire Engine on my street (The southern terminus of Country Club Drive). We lost the most homes here in Harmony Grove (26 Homes all surrounding our residence- this doesn't include out buildings). How could this have happened? The Engine was from LA County, they stopped at our house only because we had a water tank. They had no water left on the engine. By the time they stopped and found my water tank empty (Due to the Level 2 Drought), they were running for their lives as the Fire exploded out of HG Spiritual Association- a 100 foot wall of fire racing towards them (Winds from the West). The only thing that save our home (and possibly their lives), was a drastic change in wind direction. It moved south. It gave them an opportunity to defend our house. They put out fires on our roof and front deck. We lost all of our out buildings, garages, landscaping, and much more. We lost our neighbors. Imagine this fire with an added 1000+ homes in the valley. This fire was not manageable with the existing density in HG.

AR-9

- The FPP should analyze the Fire Storm patterns and the repercussions of having to resort to outside Fire Districts that are likely NOT familiar with conditions on the ground. It should analyze the significant lack of available resources to adequately fight the fires in this kind of circumstance. This puts our lives and homes at risk, and the lives of our first responders at risk.

AR-10

- Lastly, the FPP focuses exclusively on the impacts to *the project* but no reference to how it will jeopardize the well-being and safety of existing community.

AR-11

Traffic: The intersection of Country Club and Autopark Way (the main ingress and egress of the project) is already majorly congested. The project should not be given a GPA, as the GP was put in place to allow for density in this area that the infrastructure is capable of handling. Even now, without HGV built out, we sometimes have to wait two light cycles just to turn left onto Auto Park Way. What's going to happen when all the houses from HGV and Valiano go in? This is an unacceptable, unmitigated impact. Citracado Parkway has not been funded yet and there is no indication as to when it might come online. The traffic study doesn't reflect that correctly. This also impacts safe evacuation during a Fire.

AR-12

- The traffic plan should work in unison with the FPP, with regards to an evacuation plan.

AR-13

Construction Related Impacts:

The construction calls for a large amount of blasting and grading for a period of at least 2 years, and in areas that are in close proximity to houses on hillsides as well as the valley floor. They are also within proximity to livestock and, particularly, horses, which

AR-9 On high/extreme fire danger days there are often multiple starts and engine companies are often deployed on other incidents. The FPP documents that SMFD resources, resources through mutual aid agreements with surrounding communities, state resources, and even national resources can provide emergency services required for the proposed Project, and thus there is not a lack of available resources to adequately fight fires. Fire authorities at SMFD will ensure that fire suppression personnel will be available for the potential ignition of a wildfire.

AR-10 This is a repeat of comment AD-13. See Response K-197 regarding fire safety features of the FPP and Response I-59 regarding how the proposed fire protection measures would affect fire safety for the whole community.

AR-11 Regarding the intersection of Country Club Drive / Auto Park Way, see Responses E-12 and K 167. Regarding Citracado Parkway, see Response E-15. See Topical Response: Fire/Evacuations regarding fire evacuation.

AR-12 See Topical Response: Fire/Evacuations regarding fire evacuation.

AR-13 This is a repeat of comment AF-31. See Response 149a for the requirement to prepare a blasting control plan and Response K-149b with respect to potential impacts to livestock and a Project alternative that minimizes grading and blasting.

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AR-13 cont. can be very sensitive to noise and vibration. Two years of blasting and grading will be a huge imposition on the local residences and create unsafe situations involving large animals.

AR-14

- A sound wall will not prevent horses from being spooked by large explosions which can cause a very unsafe situation for horse handlers and riders. It will also destroy the ability for property owners to use their properties in the way they choose (for equestrian purposes, for example).

AR-15

- The suggested mitigation measure of having livestock moved out of the blasting area every time there will be blasting, is unreasonable and infeasible. Remember, there are over 180 horses in Eden Valley alone. Moving large animals is a complicated and potentially dangerous job. Doing so on a large scale would be very impractical. Several properties adjacent to the project site have 20 to 120 horses onsite at any given time.

AR-16

- Blasting from the HGV development was very telling. Despite our home being outside of the deemed potentially impacting zone, our home shook like we were in an earthquake. Our house succumbed to cracks in the sheet rock of the walls, and it also cracked the marble tiles in our bathroom. We notified the Developer and they didn't agree with this finding. Mitigation should include a per-inspection of all homes in Eden Valley and Harmony Grove prior to blasting for per-existing condition data. The granite in our valley is very hard, and it required more blasting than HGV anticipated. This is data that should be analyzed in the DEIR for Valiano.

Air Quality and Green House Gases

AR-17 According to the DEIR, the project will have significant and unavoidable air quality impacts and no way to mitigate these impacts.

AR-18

- More than doubles the vehicle miles traveled (VMTs).
- They don't show that a project with fewer units is infeasible.

AR-19

- They claim green credentials by exceeding Title 24 standards from 2008, but newer standards are currently in place (2013) which are even more stringent (and they do NOT meet these standards). This seems disingenuous or at least erroneous.

AR-20

- There's a new executive order put in place by Governor Brown (4/29/15) which requires an even greater reduction of Green House Gases. The DEIR should be revised to show whether or not it meets this new reduction target.

AR-21

- How was air quality impacted by the Coco's Fire? There is an inversion layer in the valley, and because of the micro climate here air can become trapped for a long time that contains a high number of contaminants. Increasing the fuel load in

AR-14 This is a repeat of comment AF-32. See Response AF-32.

AR-15 This is a repeat of comment AF-33. See Response AF-33.

AR-16 It is outside of the scope of the EIR for the Proposed Project to address potential damage that occurred from a different project. The blasting analysis within the EIR is based on assumptions from information for the Proposed Project within the geotechnical report. As noted in Response K-148 and K-149a, a blasting plan is required to be prepared for the Project that would be required to demonstrate compliance with all County, federal, and other applicable regulations. As noted in Response K-148, all blasting activities would be required to conform to the final blast plan, which would provide detailed analysis regarding local soils damping characteristics and demonstrate that no significant vibration impacts to any affected structure would be anticipated as a result of blasting activities.

AR-17 This is a repeat of comment AJ-29. See Response AJ-29.

AR-18 This is a repeat of comment AJ-30. See Response AJ-29 with respect to VMTs. See Response K-26b with respect to Project alternatives with fewer residential units.

AR-19 This is a repeat of comment AJ-31. See Response K-27 with respect to compliance with the 2016 Title 24 Energy Code.

AR-20 This is a repeat of comment AJ-32. See Response K-51 with respect to Governor Brown's issued Executive Order B-30-15.

AR-21 The Cocos Fire was one of at least eight major fires burning simultaneously at the height of the May 2014 San Diego County Wildfires, the largest wildfires in the region since 2007. According to the UCSD Prather

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AR-21 cont. the valley also increase the odds of more airborne particulate of toxic concentrations during a wildfire.

Biological Resources

AR-22 “General biological surveys of the Proposed Project site were conducted, according to County Requirements, by HELIX on October 18, 2011, February 17, 2012 and November 21, 2012. The new addition of the Tentative Map was surveyed on February 17, 2012 and the sewer options alternative alignments were surveyed on July 22, 2014.

Comment: Despite multiple field reconnaissance surveys, there is no mention or analysis of the impacts from the May 2014 Cocos fire in the biological technical report. More than 90% of the project footprint burned in this fire, and all of the proposed biological open space areas have burned.

AR-23 Where onsite mitigation has been used, in these biological open spaces, there should be a restoration plan in place should the vegetation community not restore to its previous condition by which it was used for mitigation. The agricultural/non-native grassland interface with areas of native vegetation/sensitive vegetation communities are at a higher risk of becoming invaded by non-natives and invasive species post fire. If this is not possible, then mitigation may need to be applied offsite as well. This applies to the following vegetation communities (Table 2.4-8 MITIGATION FOR IMPACTS TO HABITAT/VEGETATION COMMUNITIES): Southern riparian forest (61300) , Southern riparian woodland –including disturbed (62000), Southern willow scrub (63320) Mule fat scrub (63310), Freshwater marsh (52400) , Herbaceous wetland (52510) Disturbed wetland (11200), Open water/pond (64140), Coast live oak woodland –including disturbed (71160) Diegan coastal sage scrub –including disturbed (32500), Southern mixed chaparral –including disturbed (37121) Eucalyptus forest (79100) , Eucalyptus woodland (79100), Non-native grassland (42200), Non-native vegetation (11000), Orchard (18100), Intensive agriculture (18200), Extensive agriculture (18300), and Disturbed habitat (11300) (this should be explained-disturbed what?).

Recommendation: Review the current biological resources post fire (Vegetation Mapping, biological surveys etc), and amend the data as necessary for each area. Provide a Restoration Plan for the biological open spaces to ensure that on-site mitigation is indeed of like-kind. If on-site mitigation is no longer feasible for these impacts, propose alternate mitigation measures or avoidance measures. We suggest that the biological open spaces be expanded and connected to allow for more species to move inside the local wildlife corridors, this will also protect the seedbanks so post fire vegetation will recover more successfully. The fire does not impact mitigation for pre-existing condition, but it does impact post fire mitigation onsite and offsite (still need

AR-21 cont. Research Group, air quality for Central and Southern San Diego County began to be affected by the wildfires in North County on May 16; this marks the beginning of the regional effects of the fires. Both particulate matter and ozone levels were rated as moderately high throughout the county. May 17 and 18 saw increased containment of the wildfires, but the air quality continued to deteriorate. Onshore winds transported the remnant smoke plume back over land on May 17 and stagnant conditions on May 18 resulted in increased particulate matter concentrations. By May 19 all fires were over 50 percent contained and particulate matter concentrations were already decreasing, indicating that air quality levels were returning to normal (<http://atofms.ucsd.edu/content/san-diego-wildfire-air-quality>).

According to the San Diego Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD), a major health concern of smoke comes from particulate matter, solid particles and liquid droplets found in air. In smoke, these particles often are very tiny, smaller than 2.5 microns in diameter. These particles can build up in your respiratory system, causing a number of health problems including burning eyes, runny noses and illnesses such as bronchitis. Healthy adults generally find their symptoms (runny noses, coughing, etc.) disappear after the smoke is gone (http://www.sdapcd.org/info/facts/wf_smoke.pdf).

The proposed development would remove existing vegetation and reduce the fuel load, not increase it. The newly developed landscaping and fire breaks may result in an overall decrease in fuel load and fire risk. Regardless, fires are considered discrete events with temporary impacts that quickly dissipate. As detailed above, the May 2014 San Diego County Wildfires resulted in regional deterioration of air quality that lasted only four days even with the low inversion layer.

AR-22 See Response K-35 regarding biological mapping of areas burned in the Cocos fire.

AR-23 See Response K-36 regarding mitigation. See Responses K-35 and K-36 regarding biological surveys and restoration plans. See Response K-37 regarding post-fire biological resources. “Disturbed habitat” is a vegetation/land use category that is described in EIR Subsection 2.4.1.1, along with all other vegetation/land use types on site.

See Response K-35 which addresses commenter’s recommendation to review biological resources post-fire.

A restoration plan is not required as all required habitat mitigation, including mitigation for Diegan coastal sage scrub, would occur off site. See Response K-36 which further addresses commenter’s recommendation to provide a restoration plan for on-site mitigation.

On-site biological open space has been expanded in Neighborhood 3, resulting in greater connectivity and a larger area for wildlife usage.

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AR-23 cont. to ensure that 1.8 acres of Diegan coastal sage scrub is mitigated for-even if offsite, for example).

Technical Appendices-Biological Technical Report Appendix D

According to Appendix D, Pages D-7 through D-9, there are several animal species of special concern and county group 2 species with moderate or low to moderate potential to occur. Many of these species were not properly surveyed for, which would require special survey. It is our conjecture that there should have been bat surveys and mammal trapping to determine if these special species of concern listed in Appenidx D are present. Bats are in abundance in this valley, particularly because of the fresh water features, the agricultural and non-native grasslands foster a lot of insects for foraging, dark night skies, minimal noise, and the tall trees and woodlands that provide potential roosting and resting elements. There are also a number of rocky outcrops on the western slopes just below Coronado Hills (where the project proposes extensive blasting) and nearby to the east along Country Club Drive that would provide roosting opportunities. Residents have had bats roost in there eaves, and there are reported bat boxes in the project area. Without a bat survey it would be difficult to determine what species are present, and how to mitigate for a nesting maternal roost site, and impacts to their foraging sites. Residents report a high number of bats in the warmer months, and have enjoyed this natural vector control for years.

AR-24 There are a high number of rodents in the project area, particularly because of the agricultural and non-native interface with native vegetation which is commonly used for many species. Because the Northwestern Pocket Mouse is a listed California species of special concern/County Group 2 species- and has a moderate potential to occur, it likely needs trapping surveys to determine its presence, we feel this is another survey that was missed in the Biological Resources Studies.

Recommendation: Conduct Mammal Trapping Surveys, and provide appropriate mitigation or avoidance measures. Conduct Bat Roosting and Foraging Surveys and provide appropriate mitigation and/or avoidance measures. Because Bat habitat is an understudied area of expertise, and most species are becoming protected, we recommend if roosting sites for bats are located, that they be protected and avoided. Rock outcroppings on the western side of the development for example, should be avoided.

From Table in Appendix D: SENSITIVE ANIMAL SPECIES WITH POTENTIAL TO OCCUR

AR-25 **Species that should be surveyed for include:** Pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*) low to moderate potential to occur, Northwestern San Diego pocket mouse (*Chaetodipus fallax fallax*) moderate potential to occur, Western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis californicus*) Low to moderate potential to occur, Small-footed myotis (*Myotis ciliolabrum*) Low to

AR-24 See Responses K-38, K-39, and K-40 regarding Project surveys, bats, northwestern San Diego pocket mouse, and mitigation measures.

Project surveys were completed pursuant to County guidelines and CEQA and are considered adequate for evaluating impacts to biological resources. Appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures are incorporated into the Project; mammal trapping surveys are not warranted. See Response K-39 for additional information.

Bat surveys would be conducted prior to demolition of structures or removal of hollow trees. See Response K-38 for additional information regarding bat surveys and mitigation and/or avoidance measures.

AR-25 Please refer to Responses K-38, K-39, and K-40 regarding Project surveys, bats, and northwestern San Diego pocket mouse. Protocol surveys for federally listed species are typically required when there is potentially suitable habitat on a project site. Thus, focused surveys for least Bell's vireo and coastal California gnatcatcher were conducted.

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AR-25
cont. moderate potential to occur, Long-legged myotis (*Myotis volans*) Moderate potential to occur, Yuma myotis (*Myotis yumanensis*) Moderate potential to occur.

It should be noted that the LBV and CAGN had a low potential to occur on site, yet protocol level surveys were conducted (we agree to this, just noting that other species surveys should be conducted given the higher potential to be present onsite).

AR-26 Indirect Impacts/Edge Effects (Guideline No. 8) Page 2.4-21

"Edge effects can result from increased noise, unauthorized trampling of habitat, introduction of pets and pest plants to open space areas, and effects of irrigation and lighting. Project implementation would potentially cause in direct impacts from construction noise, human access, domestic animals, exotic plant species, and lighting. ...Permanent fencing would be installed around biological open space, and signs precluding access would be posted to avoid potentially significant impacts from human access....The Proposed Project is residential in nature, so domestic predators (e.g., dogs and cats) may be introduced to the surrounding habitat. Although such introductions have potential to harm native wildlife species, the site is adjacent to existing rural residential development and is already subject to some level of disturbance and predation by domestic animals. In addition, the aforementioned permanent fencing that would be installed around the biological open space would preclude access by domestic predators to avoid potentially significant impacts."

Recommendations: The proposed fencing around the biological open spaces is supposed to keep out humans and predatory domestic pets like cats and dogs. It is a three strand wire fence. While we do not want a wall around the biological open space (wildlife should be able to fluidly come and go to breed/forage), we feel there should be strict regulations about allowing pets off leash and prohibit the residents of the Valiano development to let cats outside. This fence will not preclude dogs and cats, which are the most common predatory threats to wildlife in an urban/wildland interface. Therefore this fence is not a satisfactory mitigation measure in itself.

AR-27 In addition, because the biological open spaces are disconnected from one another, and circumvented by roads and structures, and FMZ, these islands of open space create a very dangerous and unfavorable situation for the wildlife. This should be included in the edge effects discussion. Wildlife will cross the roads and be subject to roadkill. Wildlife will seek other foraging opportunities and likely be killed by cars, or humans that do not welcome creatures like snakes, reptiles, and rodents. Urban minded people don't usually appreciate wildlife like their rural neighboring counterparts. In addition, the development should limit edge effects by limiting use of pesticides,

AR-28

AR-26 See Responses K-41 and K-42 regarding edge effects from domestic predators and fencing.

Three-strand wire fence, or similar, is typically placed around biological open space so that wildlife can pass into and out of these areas. Signs would be posted around biological open space to alert residents that access to these areas is prohibited. In addition, the County has a leash law for public areas and the homeowner disclosures provided to homebuyers would include this requirement to keep pets on leash in public areas, including trails. Signs posted along the trails would also remind users that pets must be leashed. Although domestic cats would not be prohibited from going outside, responsible pet-owners are aware of the risk of coyote attacks, which would likely cut down on the number of cats let outdoors.

AR-27 See Responses K-43 and K-44 regarding road kill.

AR-28 See Response K-44 regarding pesticides.

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AR-28 cont. herbicides, and other potential toxic sources that will have indirect effects to the wildlife and contaminate the natural water courses from which they depend.

AR-29 The Biological Open Spaces should be created in a way that allows for natural wildlife corridors that are already onsite. Preservation of these corridors will allow safer movement between foraging and possible breeding locations on the project site for wildlife. Many of the natural drainage features already on site would be good avenues for this connectivity and decrease the impacts from the proposed plan, if they were preserved.

AR-30 We propose further avoidance of impacts to natural resources by decreasing the number of units that are surrounding these biological open spaces, and by eliminating roads that circumvent them. Currently the project design by nature, does not allow for a less than significant impact.

2.4.5 Mitigation

M-B1-1a and b

AR-31 **Recommendation:** Because wildlife is consistently observed by residents using non-native grassland and extensive agriculture (pasture) for foraging particularly in Neighborhood 5, and seven County Group 1 animal species were observed in these areas, we propose that mitigation ratios should be consistent. NNG and Extensive Agriculture (pasture) should both be mitigated for at a ratio of 1:1.

M-B1-3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 3e

AR-32 **Recommendation:** Check for availability to mitigate these impacts with our local agency The Escondido Creek Conservancy (TECC)

M-B1-3f

AR-33 **Recommendation:** Mitigation for impacts to 6.7 acres of Coast live oak woodland should all be mitigated for at a ratio of 3:1.

M-B1-7

AR-34 **Recommendation:** In order to ensure compliance with the MBTA, a qualified biological monitor shall be present at all times during construction related activities if they are being conducted during the bird breeding season (February 1-September 1)

AR-29 See Responses K-32 and K-45 regarding wildlife movement.

AR-30 See Response K-45 regarding elimination of roads. Your conclusion that the Project design does not allow for a less than significant impact is hereby included as part of the record and made available to the decision makers prior to a final decision on the Project.

AR-31 See Response K-46 regarding mitigation ratios.

AR-32 See Response K-47 regarding The Escondido Creek Conservancy (TECC).

AR-33 See Response K-48 regarding coast live oak woodland mitigation ratios.

AR-34 See Response K-49 regarding compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA).

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Other mitigation recommendations:

AR-35

During construction, a biological monitor shall be present at all times to determine if there are any sensitive wildlife species that need to be removed/relocated that are in the project site before grading and earth moving. In addition a monitor will make sure that any animals that could become trapped in ditches/holes/construction features that are created by earth moving activities are removed safely. Given the high likelihood that sensitive species are in the area that can become trapped in man made structures/features (like Coastal Rosy Boa, Red Diamond Rattlesnake, Orange throated whiptail, coast horned lizard, Coastal whiptail, and Coronado skink) we feel this measure would mitigate for impacts to sensitive species that are not capable of dispersing.

AR-35 See Response K-50 regarding monitoring and relocation of wildlife.

AR-36

I urge you to oppose the HLP for impacts to 1.8 acres of CSS. The proposed project will directly and indirectly impact 1.8 acres of Coastal Sage Scrub (CSS) associated with the Valiano Specific Plan as shown on the attached Habitat Loss Exhibit dated April 23, 2015. Because the CSS habitat is in areas that are in proximity to the proposed Biological Open Spaces, it makes more sense to avoid this irreversible impact, and minimize the project footprint to incorporate this sensitive resource into a larger Biological Open Space.

AR-36 Coastal sage scrub occupies approximately 1.8 acres of the Project site. Proposed revisions to the site plan, including the removal of a road crossing and associated lots in Neighborhood 3, would conserve the majority of the largest stand of sage scrub on site in biological open space, totaling 1.2 acres in Neighborhood 3. Coordination with the USFWS on impacts to Diegan coastal sage scrub has occurred and proposed mitigation is commensurate with County and Resource Agency requirements.

Coastal Sage Scrub-land is a vital ecosystem of its own that is home to many species that are endangered or in need of protection. Too much of this land has already been destroyed in the name of urban development; the results of further destruction in our communities would be devastating.

This devastation does not only impact the ecosystem that is being destroyed. It is also harmful to properties surrounding the coastal sage shrub-land that have already been developed. These properties are quickly losing any protective buffer that the shrub-land affords from flooding during heavy rains. Coastal Sage Scrub vegetation is still slowly rebuilding itself from the massive destruction of the 2003 and 2007 wildfires, and the recent Coco's Fire from 2014.

Nearly one-third of the entire Coastal sage shrub-land in San Diego County was destroyed (32.6% or roughly 81,000 acres) in 2003. While this area is not known to be occupied by Coastal California gnatcatchers, there are populations less than a mile from the project site. Typically, coastal California gnatcatcher populations recover from fire within several years, the time that it takes coastal sage scrub to regenerate post-fire; however, the 2007 San Diego County census found extremely few California gnatcatcher territories had re-established after the 2003 Cedar Fire. The extent of the 2007 Witch Fire may have even longer-lasting effects on this species. What remains must be protected, not subjected to further destruction under the guise of urban progress.

COMMENTS

RESPONSES

AR-37 But also importantly, alternative regulatory mechanisms to ensure protection are not in place over large portions of the gnatcatcher's range. Not only are development threats unabated in many areas, including our own, but throughout the gnatcatcher's range, even in preserve areas, repetitive fires have wiped out gnatcatchers in many locations, with "type conversion" to inhospitable weeds a sign of permanent habitat loss. Finally, since the original listing in 1993, climate change has emerged as a threat, with models showing severe potential sage scrub loss. A wide range of occupied and suitable locations must be protected for long term survival and recovery. This includes areas that are known to be occupied, and areas that are not occupied for future growth of the species, and for the integrity of this unique and diminishing resource.

Sincerely,

Angelique and Gus Hartman
Harmony Grove Residents

Coco's Fire Survivors

AR-37 The threats to the gnatcatcher are well known and addressed by the HLP Ordinance, NCCP, and Draft MSCP North County Plan, with which the Project is consistent. The quantity of sage scrub on site (1.8 acres) is too small to support a breeding territory for coastal California gnatcatcher and focused surveys were negative. Nevertheless, the site plan has been revised to avoid the largest area of sage scrub on site.