

COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Joan Spilis
880 Hailey Ct.
San Marcos, CA 92078

June 7, 2015

To: San Diego County Planning and Development Services Staff
Cc: San Diego County Planning Commission, San Diego County Board of Supervisors; San Dieguito Planning Group; Town Council of Elfin Forest Harmony Grove; jdesmond@san-marcos.net; San Elijo Hills Community Board of Directors

Regarding: Valiano Development

I write this letter to provide some insights as a San Marcos resident and Cocos fire survivor. The resolution should be voted down to create the Valiano community and other home development projects in the already congested areas between San Marcos and Escondido. My concerns have to do with the following:

- **Fire Hazard** – which is a real threat based on the Cocos fire and others in the North County area on May 14, 2014. I was one of the residents trying to flee the fire area but was instead stuck in a car on Wild Canyon Road for 75 minutes as the huge black column of smoke turned into a gigantic plume of fire raging just over the hill. If it were not for a sudden wind change that blew the fire toward the East, we could have died there. North County is lacking major evacuation/escape routes. Example: We have only 2 evacuation routes; one of them was in the fire area and the other was jammed with traffic. As the flames shot high over the hill, the feeling of terror escalated as we drivers called 911 to get us out of there.
- **Increasing Drought** – makes current low water supplies dwindle with new homes added for water service, in addition to less water supply for fighting fires.
- **Increased Traffic** – to the already grid-locked roads at rush hour and other times in between such as school dismissal times; evacuation would be impossible.
- **Encroached Wildlife Habitats** – animals have had to migrate further east since their habitats are being taken over. This is evident in the San Elijo Hills area where much of the wildlife has had to move from here.

With all due respect for your positions, individuals who make decisions on housing expansion within the county should be required to physically drive around our communities during various times of day and evening to experience the objections of current North County residents. Valiano and other housing developments should not be located in an area that will have fires in the future, lack essential water supply and sufficient evacuation routes, cause more road grid-lock and take over wildlife habitats.

Why would decision-makers put women, men and children at risk when you know that these areas in drought-like conditions will have fires again and this time the outcome may be disastrous? This safety issue should stop all new home developments in our area until more escape roadways are created and drought conditions reverse.

Sincerely,
Joan Spilis
joan_spilis@aol.com

CR-1

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CR-1 Thank you for your comment; yours and other related comments resulted in clarifications in the EIR and FPP related to the Coco’s Fire. See Topical Response: Fire/Evacuations regarding fire safety and evacuation.

CR-2 Regarding water service for new homes, see Response K-99. Regarding fire water supply, see Section 4.3 of the FPP. Note that the RMWD has required the water tank on the Project site be constructed with the Project. This infrastructure would increase local water supply that can be used for fighting fires.

CR-3 See Topical Response: Fire/Evacuations regarding fire evacuation and Response BA-3 regarding traffic.

CR-4 Your appreciation of wildlife, native habitat and concern for its loss is understood. See Response BC-8.

CR-5 See Responses CR-1 through CR-4 regarding your concerns about water supply, traffic and wildlife habitat. The potential for fire in the Project site and surrounding areas has been adequately analyzed in the EIR and FPP, and appropriate planning to design ignition-resistant Project structures has been implemented. See Topical Response: Fire/Evacuations regarding fire evacuations.

Individuals who make decisions on housing expansion, including this Project, take into account residents’ concerns about the physical environment through the CEQA EIR process and the residents’ concern about the planning environment through the public planning process, especially though coordination with the Planning and Sponsor Groups. For example, an EIR public scoping meeting was held at the Elfin Forest-Harmony Grove Fire Department to obtain viewpoints directly from

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CR-5
cont.

locals before preparation of the EIR, in addition to this public comment period. A similar process occurred with the relatively recent planning and development of your neighborhood, San Elijo Hills, which likely raised similar issues regarding traffic, water supply, evacuations, and wildlife habitat from existing residents of the area. Your final question pointing out your opposition 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 Proposed Project.