

Wayne Meseberg and Lucy Burger
7421 Tranquil Dr.
Tujunga, CA 91042

December 28, 2003

Los Angeles City Planning Department
Maya E. Zaitzevsky
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

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CITY OF LOS ANGELES
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ENVIRONMENTAL
UNIT

RE: ENV-2002-2481-EIR; SCH# 2002091018
Canyon Hills Project-DEIR Comments

Dear Ms. Zaitzevsky,

We have lived in the Hillhaven community of Tujunga for almost twelve years, and our home is very near development area A of the proposed Canyon Hills Project. We have looked at the DEIR, and we have many concerns, including the fact that the DEIR fails to adequately address the total impact of the development upon the culture and lifestyle of the Tujunga community. We will direct our comments to a few areas of special concern to us.

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1) Wildlife.

As the owners of almost 3 acres of open land at the corner of Tranquil Dr. and Glen-O-Peace Parkway, we have had ample opportunity to see coyotes and hawks every day. On one occasion we saw a bobcat sitting on our hill, and on Christmas day one year a mountain lion was sitting on our driveway. Most important, we want to tell you that we have seen a Peregrine falcon sitting in the branches of our eucalyptus forest several times. We often go and sit in the forest in the afternoon, and the Peregrine falcon perches above us on the lower branches of the tree for twenty minutes at a time. We do not see the peregrine falcon mentioned in the DEIR, but it is here without a doubt, and it is a special status species in the state of California. What a beautiful bird, and what a beautiful wildlife area right here in the city of Los Angeles! This wildlife area is a treasure, and we believe that the high density housing area which is being proposed will significantly harm the wildlife habitats existing today. Please preserve the natural life of this area by insisting that Whitebird develop its land within the requirements of the current laws and community plan. These are the laws and requirements which we the citizens of California have created because we treasure the land and have envisioned a slow-growth, semi-rural

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community here. We have something very special right here in Los Angeles. Let's keep it.

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2) Equestrian Lifestyle.

The high density housing which has been proposed reduces the lot sizes so that the homes are no longer truly adequate as horse properties. Horsekeeping requires adequate space for boarding and corralling, and the lot sizes proposed do not provide enough space for this. Whitebird proposes a small 3-acre, open-to-the-public equestrian center as an appeasement for the loss of the ability to have a semi-rural equestrian culture in our Verdugo Mountains. This is preposterous. Three acres is a very small equestrian facility and does not begin to compensate for the loss of the opportunity for a genuine horse-keeping lifestyle on private properties in the Verdugo Mountains- a lifestyle which can exist in the Verdugo Mountains provided that Whitebird develops the property according to the existing zoning requirements, which is what we are insisting upon.

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3) Lifestyle of the Open Community.

We understand from the Canyon Hills Project meetings that the proposed development is a modern gated community. The DEIR does not address this at all. For years we have been walking and hiking every morning on the roads of the Verdugo Mountains as do many other people. This is a real part of our culture. Friendships are made, information is passed among neighbors on the morning walks, and everyone is welcome to enjoy the God-given beauty of the Verdugo Mountains. Let us not exchange our culture and beautiful open roads for a gated community which limits access to the land.

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4) Project Alternatives.

We believe that alternative B (development of area A only) is completely unacceptable because it changes nothing in terms of density. It will negatively affect our culture and wildlife areas in all the ways that we have previously addressed in this letter, and it changes nothing of the noise light and traffic effects on our area either. There is no advantage in this alternative over the original plan. Alternative C is also unacceptable for every reason mentioned above except that the traffic flow would change a little bit.

We believe that project alternative D is acceptable because the low density would preserve the culture and quality of life in a manner consistent with the environment we have now. Although alternative D does not provide for dedication of open space by donating the undeveloped area to the Santa Monica Conservancy, we do believe that this is preferable to the proposed Canyon Hills Development. As long as private owners of all those areas build according to the current laws and community plan, we believe that the beneath of the land, the semi-rural culture of the area, and the wildlife would be preserved in a better way under alternative D than in the currently proposed project.

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Wayne Meserberg