

**I-328 Kathe Robbins**

Comment Letter I-328

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August 9, 2017

From: Kathe Robbins

To: Planning and Development Services

5510 Overland Ave. Ste. 310

San Diego, California 92123

Attn: Ashley Smith

Re: Newland Sierra, Log No. PDS 2015-ER-15-08-001; SCH No. 2015021036

Project Nos.: PDS 2015-GPA-15-, -001, 2015- SP-15-001, PDS 2015- REZ-15-001,

PDS 2015-TM-5597, PDS XXXX-HLP-XXX

Dear Ms. Smith:

Please confirm receipt of this letter.

I have many concerns about missing, inaccurate and confusing information contained in the draft EIR for the Newland Sierra Housing Project. I requested and was denied extra time to review this DEIR.

In addition, I never received a reply to my letter regarding the NOP, March, 2015.

I am a property owner, business owner, small fruit grove rancher, voter and tax payer.

My property faces the Merriam Mountain range across North Twin Oaks Valley Road.

We have views of North Twin Oaks Valley Road, Deer Springs Road to the I-15, and the

Palomar Mountain Range.

We will be direct recipients of noise, dust and traffic created by this Development.

I have noted a few of the following issues with the draft EIR. Other concerns that I have will be addressed by other members of our local community.

I-328-1

I-328-2

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I-328-4

**Schools 3.5-17**

a. Only one potential school site has been set aside on 6 acres located about 460 feet from the I-15 freeway. (In violation of state law ) (Section 17213 CA Ed Code Section 21151.8 CA Public Resources Code. **It needs to be analyzed for health and environmental issues for students and staff.** I doubt residents want to send their youngsters to a school located so close to air pollution and noise.

I-328-5

a. Originally, as I remember, the developer indicated that a school site would be located at a higher elevation more to the west than the current school site.

This site was described as a “charter school” The newer designated school site has been changed to a “non-defined” school site. Is it going To Be a public school within the Escondido Elem. District? **Will San Marcos USD Agree to an inter-attendance agreement? How are the School Districts responding to the DEIR?**

I-328-6

b. There is no school land set aside for SMUSD.

c. **There must be a site allocated for a K-8 school.** The SMUSD enrollment projections are undergoing a revision due to higher birth rates and multi-family housing. **The EIR’s student enrollment projections are several years old and need to be updated.**

d. It needs to be mentioned that the number of housing developments “coming on line” In the next few years will probably put the SMUSD schools back on a year- round and Multi-grade tracking system. District residents are just seeing the great results of the Last two school bonds they passed and these additional students arriving without bringing enough money for schools, teachers and support services will not be received well. The \$10 million Newland will owe in “fees” is just a drop in the bucket to the cost of Teaching more that 500 new students. The last large development, located in the city of San Marcos, traded fees for land for three schools that were funded by the schools. Part of the money for those schools came from Bond funds. Those funds are gone and the money owed to the District by the State is not enough to fund schools made necessary by new construction. The situation in EUSD and EUHSD is less clear but Escondido is facing several other large developments within the school boundary. **How can this not cause a disruption to the community environment?**

I-328-7

**2. Camino Mayor Street**

a. The applicant does not have easement rights to this path up and down the mountain. (See letter from Walker/Morris 8-7-17.) The applicant informed the community In 2015 that this would be built as a two- lane road ONLY for horse trailers to access A horse park and access to the development would be gated and locked and used Only for emergencies. Newland is now saying that the fire dept. will not allow a locked Gate due to fire hazards and this steep and dangerous proposed “road” will be accessed at all times of the day and night by residents and others.

I-328-8

- b. The intersection of N. Twin Oaks Valley Road and the “path” known as Camino Mayor is known to the county to be a dangerous section of road due to the heavy trucking, and steep and winding road with little roadbed. An intersection at this point is a death trap. I-328-9
- c. North Twin Oaks Valley Road is the only north south exit from the North Valley Area. In case of fire or other emergency evacuation, it would be impossible for residents, employees of all the nursery operations, horse trailers to get to South Twin Oaks Valley. A log jam would occur at that intersection with cars unable to use Deer Springs, Buena Creek and Sycamore. The community faced these issues in previous fires when heavy Smoke from Escondido made it impossible to breathe and sparks were being carried west to our Valley. Newland residents attempting to get down the road could be trapped, unable to exit onto Twin Oaks Valley Rd. I-328-10

**3. Land Uses**

- a. There are many residential and agricultural wells in North Twin Oaks Valley. If construction through blasting and grading damage private wells, immediate supply of alternated water supply and long- term mitigation of restoring water to wells must be guaranteed as well as assumption of liability for loss of income agricultural businesses. I-328-11
- b. Quarry. Newland is now the owner of an abandoned Quarry located to the north of the project. I found little mention of how the damage to the granite wall of the “mountain” is to be mitigated. Does Newland intend to re-open the Quarry to use for their construction needs? I-328-12
- c. Residential There are homes located across from the project to the west/southwest. These properties will be the most likely to sustain damage from blasting. These properties already face an onslaught to noise, windows and walls shaking and rattling from activities at Camp Pendleton located to the north and miles away. There was little or no assessment of these properties in the DEIR. They were not included in studies of noise or traffic impact. I-328-13
- d. **Leapfrogging.** The City of San Marcos is to the south of the mountain and is not part of the Twin Oaks area. The Arco Gas Station is used by I-15 freeway users. The fire station and Mobile Home Park do not constitute a community center. Stand at the intersection for a few hours and see for yourself that this is only a traffic stop for gas and sodas. I-328-14

**4. Noise**

- a. Five sound studies at locations 5’ above ground and some out of line of sight were not enough. Homes located in the hills across from the project, and on Sarver and Solar Lane were not tested. I-328-15

b. Rock Crushers. The DEIR was totally inadequate in discussing Rock Crushing. This needs to be studied and reported, not "hidden in countless different documents". The sounds of crushing rocks, big and small is of primary concern to residents.

I-328-16

c. Sound rises and my property at 1200 feet catches a cat's meow below in the Valley at midnight. How much more noise will be created by construction traffic? by more horse traffic? by back yard bbq's and bands? How much will the new residents complain when the coyotes catch a rabbit at 2 am? The quiet of our environment is highly prized.

I-328-17

## 5. Wildlife and Biology

a. No one can tell me what happens to the rattlesnakes. They are a primary predator to rodents. If the developer doesn't kill or catch them, then the bulldozers and blasting will chase them out and on to my property. If they must keep dirt and dust under control, what about the rattlers? Evacuation of small animals was not covered in the DEIR.

I-328-18

b. The description of small animals forced to use only trails through the chaparral area is not true. Large mammals such as coyote, bobcat; and smaller creatures such as skunk and opossum run through heavy brush at will. The brush is so dry it breaks up. I challenge the biologist reports on wildlife in general.

I-328-19

## 6. Aesthetics

a. Palomar Observatory - The San Diego Light Pollution Code should apply to the lighting in the Newland Project. The DEIR does not mention how night lights will be controlled in individual yards after homes are occupied.

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b. What Aesthetics? This report needs to be rewritten. No clues are given as to how many one and two story handicapped accessible homes are to be built. How many one -story homes will be in the senior community. Mailbox height to access mail. Pool with wheelchair access?

Exterior design of homes to be Middle English? Tudor? Pink? Green? Purple? Vineyards along bike trails attract bees. Vineyards next to roads attract dust. Grapes attract grape pickers. Where's the commercial value to all these grape vines shown along all the roads? Has the developer been in serious consultation with viniculture experts? Pictures of the grapevines are prominently displayed in Newland's promotional materials.

I-328-21

## 7. I-15 Interchange

a. As of 8/03/17 it was reported that Cal Trans has no current plans for improving the ramps at the I-15 and Deer Springs. How can the DEIR make such assurances?

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Summary

If the county is to consider over-riding the General Plan, then some kind of truly unique Plan and rationale must be presented because there is no housing shortage in San Diego.

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This project is a rubber stamp of San Elijo, a community begun almost 15 years ago, and still not complete. It's not new, it's not meeting the needs of the new home buyer, nor looking forward to new technology and construction methods.

Newland has planned Two and three- story homes on narrow lots, tiny parks, limited street parking, no front porches, no tying or grouping homes together in small block communities, no focus on multi-generational families, nor "families" of unrelated singles, no new home design for handicapped and very elderly and Alzheimer patients living in homes, no different housing designs of alternative construction, (hay bales/cement/heavy glass.

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Are there any tiny homes? Or environmentally engineered very small and efficient homes grouped together? How about homes designed with two single- parents in mind?

This project is reportedly financially backed by Sekisui House, Ltd. of Osaka, Japan. The CEO, Isami Wada says they want to build homes "that extend healthy life expectancy" and create homes that "take into account differences in physical ability." The Sekisui website is filled with pictures of unique and beautiful communities built for people all over the globe.

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This project proposal does not live up to the name Sekisui.

And this project is not worthy of destroying the Merriam Mountain Range, the community of Twin Oaks and the Golden Door.

I-328-26

Sincerely,

Kathe Robbins

