



20223 Elfin Forest Road
Elfin Forest, CA 92029

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Beth Ehsan
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO Planning & Development Services
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Dear Beth,

Following conversations with you and Kevin Johnston a few weeks ago re: clarifying intent of sewer prohibition in Harmony Grove, please find below the rationale for stating that the approved Community Plan clearly prohibits anything other than septic outside the Harmony Grove Village. We have gone through the plan and I think you will agree we demonstrate pretty convincingly that the prohibition is not only specific, but also supports the entire context of the policies which are designed to keep density outside the Community Development Pattern the same as the surrounding rural properties.

The Elfin Forest Harmony Grove Community Plan specifies the intention to prohibit sewage treatment methods other than on-site residential septic systems outside of Village boundaries (excerpts from the plan supporting this statement are shown below in indented italic text). Historically, limiting residential waste treatment to on-site septic systems has limited urban sprawl and helped to keep an area rural. That is why Elfin Forest has clearly prohibited any sewer systems other than single family septic systems. However, unlike Elfin Forest, Harmony Grove could not simply prohibit sewer systems because the hundreds of acres of agricultural use parcels destined to be densely developed in a Village pattern would require an intensive sewage treatment system.

p. 20 "Harmony Grove Village – The approved Harmony Grove Village project will have a small commercial town center that should serve the local community and provide public gathering places as well as opportunities for the sale of locally grown organic produce. This project also will have a wastewater reclamation facility that will provide sewage service to Village homes and create recycled water for irrigation."

The community was reassured by the County that despite not being able to prohibit sewer systems area-wide, the "Village Limit Line" would disallow any development that would require intense sewage treatment.

p. 27 "The Harmony Grove Village Boundary, shown on Figure 3 on page 25, is a growth boundary that identifies land to which development should be directed. Areas outside this limit line are not intended to expand and should retain the original Harmony Grove rural residential and agricultural character."

The original character of Harmony Grove is clearly described in the Community Plan.

p. 20 "The area infrastructure is rural, and utilizes mainly septic systems for waste disposal."

and

p. 16 "Some of the key elements of the Harmony Grove character and values include one- and two-story single family homes on large lots; large animal facilities on residential properties; no clustered development; no "cookie-cutter" developments; no walled developments, and no gated communities"

Because residents were still worried that future developments outside the Village Limit Line might seek County approval to “share” the Village sewer system, they added a policy to make this “sharing” impossible. Clearly there was no intention to allow sewer systems beyond the Village.

p. 49 “Policy SPA-2.2.6 The sewage treatment method selected must be sized for this project without the possibility for expansion.”

Protecting the area from further urban or suburban development is clearly identified in the Community Plan as an important issue for Harmony Grove.

p. 19 “The Harmony Grove community, working with County staff, designed a Village Development Pattern Model as represented in the General Plan Land Use Map. There still exists many large undeveloped parcels of land within Harmony Grove outside the footprint of the approved Village. Development of these parcels with an urban, clustered or suburban design would threaten the continued existence of the rural residential and equestrian character of Harmony Grove.”

p. 21 “The population of Harmony Grove is expected to increase dramatically as the Harmony Grove Village development pattern is built out. If the pattern shown on the General Plan Land Use Map is strictly followed, the final number of urban homes should approximately equal the number of rural homes in the neighboring communities and Harmony Grove should be able to keep its rural voice. However, there is continual pressure to put higher density residential or even industrial development in Harmony Grove beyond what is allowed by the General Plan Land Use Map. Several agricultural operations are finding that limits to their operations are leading them to consider re-zoning and re-development in the near future. In addition, non-resident land speculators have purchased local undeveloped land in the hopes that General Plan Amendments allowing higher density will be adopted by the Board of Supervisors. Residents will continue to work to preserve this historic 100-year-old community by implementing the Village Development Pattern that was negotiated.

ISSUES THAT NEED TO BE CONFRONTED: The Village development pattern as shown in the General Plan Land Use Map must be strictly adhered to as the formal development model for the area. Urban homes must not outnumber the rural homes to maintain the rural voice and preserve the rural heritage of this historic community. Annexation of Harmony Grove properties into adjacent cities allows landowners to escape the rural community development standards and must be discouraged.”

Therefore, to further preserve the rural character of Harmony Grove, and to clarify the intent to prohibit sewer systems outside the Village, the following issue, goal, and policy was approved for the Community Plan (note that section **2.10 Infrastructure and Utilities** has no community identity callouts restricting policies to an individual community and therefore all content refers equally to both communities, as is the case throughout the Elfin Forest Harmony Grove Community Plan.)

*p. 39 “ Issue CM-10.2 Septic systems are the sole and preferred sewage management for Elfin Forest, because they ensure that Elfin Forest - Harmony Grove will remain a rural community.
Goal CM-10.2 A sewage disposal system that retains the rural character of Elfin Forest - Harmony Grove
Policy CM-10.2.1 Require all proposed new development to use septic systems with one septic system per dwelling unit.”*

The Elfin Forest Harmony Grove Community Plan clearly states the intent to preserve the rural nature of Harmony Grove while accommodating a dense Village that requires a sewage treatment system. The Community Plan makes it clear that the sewage treatment plant is for Village use only, and that all future development beyond the Village will maintain the original waste systems in use through all of the remainder of Harmony Grove, which are residential, on-site septic systems.