

December 28, 2003

Maya Zaitzevsky, Project Coordinator
Los Angeles Department of City Planning
200 North Spring Street, Room 763
Los Angeles, California 90012

Re: Canyon Hills Project
ENV-2002-2481-EIR
SCH No. 2002091018
October 2003

RECEIVED
CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DEC 31 2003
ENVIRONMENTAL
UNIT

Dear Ms. Zaitzevsky,

I am a citizen of La Crescenta for over 20 years and live about 2-3 miles from the anticipated Canyon Hills Project. My whole neighborhood, as well as everybody living on both sides of the Verdugos will be drastically affected by the environmental impact such an undertaking will create. Gone forever will be the beautiful green hills and mountain tops and canyons, our hiking trails, streams and the sounds of nature. Gone forever will be our way of life as we enjoyed it and took it for granted all these years.

137-1

As I studied some of the DEIR filed by Whitebird with the City Planning Department and from attending several Community Meetings in regard to the Canyon Hills development plan, I understand that:

The existing given zoning, "City Hillside Ordinance" and "Slope Density Formula", at 887 acres of ownership allows the building of 87 housing units and not Whitebird's projected 280 homes. I desperately urge you to have the company abide by these ordinances and DO NOT CHANGE the existing zoning law in order to accommodate this out-of-state developer.

137-2

I am grateful to the City Council for passing the Scenic Preservation Plan. While the site plan of the Canyon Hills Project does not appear to conflict with the Scenic Preservation Plan in terms of constructing homes that would silhouette a Prominent Ridgeline, it frequently has it's proposed homes silhouetting principal ridgelines which, to me, still goes against the heart of the Preservation Plan. Additionally, the Community Plan DOES say there is to be no grading of PRINCIPAL RIDGELINES, something of which the Whitebird site plan is highly guilty and this, along with the homes built atop the graded plateaus, will be clearly visible from, and a blight to, the designated Scenic Corridor of La Tuna Canyon Road.

137-3

TRAFFIC

The DEIR states that there would be NO significant increase of rush hour traffic on the I-210 and the La Tuna Canyon Road. This is grossly understated! I live on Montrose Ave. on the south side of, and below, the I-210 and I can verify that the existing daily traffic is already too much. In the morning rush it is already almost impossible to enter the Fwy at Pennsylvania Ave. on-ramp into a stop-and-go slow traffic. Now add several hundred more cars every day, and what we will get is not an "INSIGNIFICANT" increase in traffic, but a complete traffic jam.

137-4

Since we have no sound-barrier walls on our – the south – side of the Fwy, the noise, especially from big trucks changing gears, is already very disturbing and the vibrations rattle my windows and have caused cracks in the walls and foundations. Now add several hundred more cars every day, plus heavy trucks and earth-moving machinery during the 5-years of grading and preparing for the Canyon Hills Project, and life below the I-210 will become unbearable.

137-5

Whitebird states in it's DEIR that the traffic increase will only amount to less than 0.65 vehicles per Canyon Hills household in the morning and less than 0.8 returning in the evening. I cannot quite follow that mathematics when I realize that the average home on their drawing boards will have 4-5 bedrooms and 3-4 car garages. Out of a 3-car garage, I am sure 2.5 vehicles will leave every morning and return every night – not 0.65! The DEIR indicates an almost 2,700 ADT over the current traffic volume, an almost 20% traffic volume increase, a SIGNIFICANT increment that can hardly be tolerated on the narrow, winding La Tuna Canyon Road with constant lane changes and the existing speed limits.

137-6

Let me add something else from my own observation. When I was still working at Lockheed, I traveled two times a day on La Tuna Canyon Road. At that time I would pass, more often than I would have liked, dead wild or domestic animals killed by traffic, and report them to the Dead Animal Pick-up Department. That was 20 years ago and I am sure things did not get any better since. But I hate to think what will happen when 2,700 extra car trips will add to that slaughter of wild and domestic animals in the Canyon.

137-7

Driving through the Canyon now, one is already confronted with the unpleasant sight of litter, of dumped debris and abandoned household goods, which is cleaned up only once a year. Now add to that area an increase of 20% of through traffic, one can visualize a 20% increase in litter and dumping. This will mean, that the area will not only become an eyesore for the residents of La Tuna Canyon Road, but also a health hazard. So I can only feel sorry for La Tuna Canyon residents, who have not only to deal with highly increased traffic, noise and air pollution in front of their doors, but also with the increase of debris piled up around their properties.

137-8

TREES

Living in La Crescenta, I am a citizen of Glendale. When I wanted to remove a sick and dying oak tree from my property, I needed an inspection and a special permit from the City. Therefore, I am very concerned that the Whitebird, an out-of-state developer, demands a free hand in killing 232 mature, old, healthy California Live Oak trees and I urge the City to please uphold such a demand. I understand that the City has already a Minimum Replacement Standard in their Municipal Code, which would require Whitebird to replant two live, healthy 15-gal or larger trees for any one tree removed. But according to the DEIR, Whitebird will not replace the trees at the area from where they removed the existing trees, but wants to plant replacement trees only at development entry points, common areas, private lots, etc., which will only benefit the Development in it's overall pleasant appearance, but would not help the damaged Riparian Habitat, so vital for the survival of wildlife. The proposal of reseeded these depleted areas with acorns I find quite Don Quixotic. Oaks are very slow growing trees to begin with and without the protection of a mature tree, acorns may germinate but cannot survive.

137-9

FIRE

It is only two months since we and the whole world became witness to the biggest fire catastrophe in California History. Whole communities were destroyed and lives were lost, communities that were built into woodland - wilderness - brush areas, into grassy hills and canyons, quite similar to the one in La Tuna Canyon. Therefore, I can only see another disaster in the making if the Canyon Hills Development will go ahead as planned. A gated community of 211 houses in the Development A Area with 831 residents and with only one escape route, namely the narrow, winding La Tuna Canyon Road is totally inconceivable. As I understand this Project built into an already highly vulnerable area to fire hazards, is not in compliance with the City of Los Angeles Fire Code, which specifies a maximum response distance for a fire truck of 1.5 miles. The nearest station to Canyon Hills, however will be 2.8 miles away from the proposed site of the single ingress/egress to the community. Taking into account fleeing inhabitants colliding with advancing fire trucks on the only access road, and the disaster is complete! In the DEIR, Whitebird assured us, that every home will be furnished with automatic fire sprinklers - I can only refer again to the 2300 homes lost in the October fires. I am sure, many of those homes DID have automatic fire sprinklers.

137-10

And now a last urgent plea to the City Planning Department:
Please do not deprive us and generations to follow of the last few green open breathing-spaces in this City and condemn us to live in another urban blight area!

137-11

Annelene Voigt

Respectfully submitted by Annelene Voigt
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