

TREES

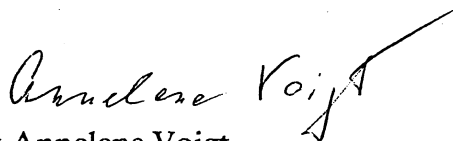
Living in La Crescenta, I am a citizen of Glendale. When I wanted to remove a sick and dying oak tree from my property, I needed an inspection and a special permit from the City. Therefore, I am very concerned that the Whitebird, an out-of-state developer, demands a free hand in killing 232 mature, old, 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 reseeding 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.

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.

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!



Respectfully submitted by Annelene Voigt
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December 29, 2003

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

RE: Comments on Draft Environmental Impact Report no. ENV-2002-2481-EIR,
Canyon Hills Project

Dear Planning Commissioners,

I am limiting my comments to the wildlife corridor section of the DEIR. However, this is not to imply that other portions are adequate—they aren't. Living alongside a major wildlife corridor for the last 7 years makes me somewhat of an expert on this particular topic.

The project and its alternatives are environmentally insensitive. The wildlife corridor section of the environmental impact report has significant omissions and errors.

In view of these significant and serious omissions and errors in the information contained in the draft environmental impact report (DEIR), the environmental impact report consultant should incorporate the suggestions for revision of the DEIR and re-circulate the DEIR for public comment. We ask for these revisions to be made and recirculation to be made under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guideline Section 15088.5. The errors and omissions are of a significant nature that would require re-circulation under Section 15088.5.

First let's talk about coyotes. I quote, "*It is difficult to determine the exact number of coyotes; however based upon documented home range sizes for coyote, it is expected that up to **five** coyotes would use the project site and Duke Property at any given time.*" (IV.D-141) Please!! I have that many every 5 minutes walking the corridor behind my house in the evening. The report then goes on to contradict their own statement. For instance, "*GLA studies indicate that coyotes are still common in the Verdugo Mountains where areas of open space occur adjacent to residential development.*" (IV.D-150) "*As depicted on Figure IV.D-21, coyotes are common within the project site...*" (IV.D-151)

What is most troubling to me is the report's total disregard for not only adequate wildlife corridors for coyotes, but more importantly, for human safety at the urban-wilderness intersection. "*Because of the high level of adaptability exhibited by the coyote and their ability to operate and thrive at the wildland/urban interface, the provision of a corridor for coyotes is unnecessary.*" IV.D-151 "*Coyotes and gray foxes, both of*

which were detected using this local movement path, (i.e. referring to the street being paved), would easily adapt to this change in the character of Verdugo Crestline Drive.” (IV.D.-154) So now our residential streets are supposed to be enhanced for coyote travel?! It gets more preposterous. D.3-5 “mitigation measure” (IV.D.-161) - *“The project homeowners’ association(s) shall maintain openings in walls at key locations within the Development Areas to maintain local movement paths.”* Breaks in walls in between houses are not a safe nor sufficient wildlife corridor. It appears the coyotes then have to cross a residential street in order to continue on their way on their “wildlife” corridor. (At drainage 4 corridor.) Hope the kids aren’t playing kick ball at the time....

Speaking of kids and coyotes, a few leisurely Saturday late mornings ago, as I sipped coffee while enjoying my canyon deck, there was a coyote with a live chicken in its mouth within my neighbor’s fenced back yard. Along with the chicken-thieving coyote, was a male adult, a 3 year old and 5 year old child, and 2 mid-size dogs. Yes coyotes adapt...all too well. A coyote unafraid of man is a dangerous thing. Do we really want to force them onto our streets and through holes in our walls only to become more “adapted” to man? Coyotes frequently try to attack my dog – a chow – through my chain link fence. They certainly are not afraid of me. When I come out to “shoo” them, my childhood comes back---Wiley Coyote’s snicker.

“Wiley coyote” reminds me of The Roadrunner. We have roadrunners here. I don’t see them mentioned in the “Flora and Fauna” main section of the DEIR. Why not? They frequently flee as I park my car....and perch on my deck railing as my indoor cats peer out trying to figure out what the devil they are. The roadrunner omission needs to be corrected.

Another area I have expertise on is the “Duke property”. We spent several years...as you know... addressing the problems with this proposed development. The Canyon Hills DEIR includes the Duke land in its assessment of the adequacy of wildlife corridors. Curiously, in figure IV.D.-4, the Duke land is included as part of the project itself. This is sloppy work to say the least. Are they planning on buying the land or not? This is reason enough to send the DEIR back for revision. Nevertheless, they include evaluation of the Duke land without the approved Duke housing development considered, i.e, as if it is undeveloped. Cumulative developmental impacts would include the impact of both parcels of land being developed. (In truth, the land may remain undeveloped if Santa Monica Conservancy’s purchase of the land is finalized. In which case, the Canyon Hills DEIR should evaluate the development’s impact on the open space park.)

However you look at it, the analysis of the cumulative impact with the Duke land is misleading. The DEIR makes it sound as if the Duke property abuts civilization, which it doesn’t. *“First, animals that exit the Duke Property to move east along La Tuna Canyon Road encounter heavily developed areas that begin at the intersection of Tujunga Canyon Blvd. and La tuna Canyon Rd.”* Yes, but there is a canyon after the Duke property and before Tujunga Canyon Blvd.! There is one major canyon that extends north for about a mile, and there are numerous connected steep canyons that extend up all the way to Tujunga Canyon Blvd. from La Tuna canyon that support wildlife. Throughout the

Canyon Hills DEIR these canyons next to Duke are ignored, despite clearly being seen on Figures IV.D-21. Why didn't the DEIR consider the land east and northeast of the Duke property line? It's not as if the topography and wildlife corridors stop at the arbitrary property line. If they did, they would have to consider the impact to the major Crystal View housing development. The canyon east of the Duke property, was not considered part of the "study area". (IV.D.-1270) "In addition to the focused surveys of the project site and Duke Property described above, other portions of the Study Area beyond the limits of the project site and Duke Property were carefully surveyed in the ways noted above for wildlife or their sign including (a) both sides of La Tuna Canyon Road (e.g., shoulders, pathways or walkways, etc.) west and east of Interstate 210..." (IV.-D.-135) "*Movement is possible to the east from the eastern edge of the project site along La Tuna Canyon Rd; however, as discussed above, this is essentially a "dead end" for any animals that move along La Tuna Canyon Rd. to the east from the project site or from the Duke Property.*" (IV.D.-145) The animals displaced, particularly during grading, are left in my "dead end" canyon.

This project is estimated to be built over a 5 year time span... *dependent upon local economic conditions* (III-4). The DEIR is remiss in not discussing impact to wildlife during this extended, and potentially never-ending, construction. As evidenced since the 1998 Duke area arson fire, the displaced animals have exponentially populated the canyon east of Duke and Canyon Hills. The creation of the road at the southwestern portion of my canyon further isolates the animals in this canyon. After 10 rattlesnakes in my yard per summer, coyotes too many to count, and severe rat infestations, I ask that you realize that the area East of the Duke property is not "cut-off" as the DEIR proclaims, but rather is teeming with life that we don't want cut-off from the Canyon Hills property. Nor do we want all this teeming life abiding in only 1 small canyon. Animal corridors need to connect between this canyon east of the Duke property and the Canyon Hills project. The DEIR needs to adequately study this particular canyon's ecological concerns and wildlife corridors with the project site. The DEIR needs to be revised and re-circulated after this oversight is corrected.

In general, the Canyon Hills Wildlife Movement Study appears to be inadequate because observations were not done over a wide enough area. Even within the Duke land, the Duke EIR, (EIR, No. 89-1163-SUB{ZC/GPA}, SCH No. 93021045), published in May of 1997, discusses more species and wildlife corridors than those found in the Canyon Hills DEIR. A thorough DEIR would have referenced the previous Duke Wildlife study, and discrepancies would be addressed. As a scientific document, the Wildlife study is lacking by not describing the number of days, amount of time, and time of day when observations were made. Without this information, it is impossible to assess the adequacy of the study, and it should be returned for correction.

Looking at Figure IV.D.-21, the development is surrounded by coyote scat. Remarkably, coyote scat doesn't appear to have been found within the proposed development site. Why did the biologists ignore the significance of wildlife trails on the project site? (Appendix, pg 291.) Further, why weren't there tracking stations at the most impacted part of the development? There needed to be tracking stations at drainage 4 and on the

Duke ridge for instance. In general, there were no tracking stations where one would expect to see the most wildlife. Extremely critical to the "missing link" would have been a tracking station to determine whether this is a remaining regional link to the San Gabriel mountains.

Signs of a mountain lion in the project area would indicate at least a tenuous link to the San Gabriel mountains. Several sources have reported recently seeing a mountain lion. One of my teenage clients told me he and his friends no longer go up to the cross at night like they often did, ever since they ran into a cougar one night. Having grown up in Tujunga and coming from a family who frequents wilderness areas, he knows what a cougar looks like. A 12 year old neighbor boy reports seeing a mountain lion one morning in the canyon, no more than a couple hundred feet from his house. Both of these sightings were on the northern side of the proposed Development Area A. A Burbank staff report dated 4/2/02 states, "*Deer overpopulation is always a concern to the California Department of Fish and Game because it draws mountain lions into the Verdugo mountains...*" Where are they drawn from, the suburbs? The possibility of a missing link is too important to have been inadequately investigated.

Deer are the mountain lions' main food source. "*Mule deer are only on the south side of La Tuna Canyon*" (IV.D.-27). Yet, Table IV.D.-17 lists mule deer detected at Crestline Dr. and along the firebreak road along the northern edge of the project site. Given that there apparently ARE some deer north of La Tuna Canyon, are the corridors adequate during and after construction, for deer, not just coyotes and raccoons?

Speaking of animals not found on the site, I was delighted to read that I no longer have to worry about the ground squirrels, rabbits, and gophers destroying my vegetable garden, nor snakes coming after rats in my yard. Yes, that's right! GLA biologists noted "very low occurrences or evidence" of these nuisance animals on either the project site or the Duke property. Amazing! They must all just be hanging out at my canyon's edge, waiting for the spring planting... Because the canyon has such few rabbits, gophers, etc., there isn't sufficient food source for the American badger. In addition, the report goes on to say the ground is too difficult to burrow. I don't know the extent of the numbers of badgers in the area, (I've seen only one), but the above arguments are laughable. I find burrows all over the canyon. Non-reporting of prevalent animals in the area points out the inadequacy of this report more than any other finding discussed thus far. This DEIR must be corrected and re-circulated.

The wildlife corridor report needs to state such details as the width of the corridors, (which should be at least 500 feet), how close to houses and streets they will be, etc. The public cannot make an educated assessment of the DEIR without such information. Please insist this information be added to the DEIR and returned to the public for review.

The cumulative impacts of other developments on wildlife corridors cannot be evaluated from this document. The area is studied without consideration of the Duke property being built upon. As mentioned earlier, the document is very hazy when it comes to what is to become of this parcel. Similarly, we don't know what other nearby land the

development company owns outright or has options on, which could be developed. This information needs disclosed in order to evaluate all potential cumulative impacts on wildlife corridors. (In the same vein, comparative projects listed are business developments on Foothill Blvd. The project should be compared to other projects in the La Tuna Canyon/210 scenic corridor. Cumulative effects need to be evaluated for all development in the Verdugo mountain area, whether in Tujnuga or even outside the LA city limits.)

The Canyon Hills Project site is listed as Environmentally Sensitive Area No. 40. This document reflects a lack of genuine concern for the environmental needs of this special area. *“County SEA policies only apply to unincorporated areas within the County, while the project site is located entirely within the City. Therefore, the proposed project is not subject to any restrictions associated with SEA No. 40.”* (IV.D.-28) The DEIR needs to describe what the requirements would be in order to build in this area IF it were in the county rather than the city. One would suppose that if they were meeting the requirements they would have said so. This omission speaks volumes to the environmental damage potentially wreaked by this development. And yet, *“There would be no significant impact to regional or local wildlife movement....”* (IV.D.-153).

The wildlife movement study must be redone, correcting the mistakes noted in this letter. If this is not done, the EIR will continue to inaccurately report no significant impacts that cannot be mitigated. Thank you,

Sincerely,



Candace A. Young

To: Los Angeles City Planning Dept.
MAYA E. ZAITZEVSKY
200 NORTH SPRING STREET
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: ENV-2002-2481-EIR; SCH#200209101
CANYON HILLS PROJECT
DEIR COMMENTS

Dear Ms. Zaitzevsky
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12-28-03

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Response to the DEIR FOR THE PROPOSED
CANYON HILLS PROJECT.

IN READING OVER THE DEIR FOR CANYON
HILLS - I SINCERELY BELIEVE THAT THIS DEIR
IS NOT ACCURATE, AND IS UNDER RATING THE
IMPACTS ON THE EXISTING NEARBY HOMES, ON
THE SURROUNDING TOWN AND COMMUNITIES,
AND ON THE ENVIRONMENT. THIS IS A
HUGE PROJECT. THE DEIR, I FIRMLY
BELIEVE SHOULD BE REDONE WITH TOTAL
ACCURATE REPRESENTATIONS AND RELEASED
AGAIN FOR ANALYSIS AND COMMENT.

I ALSO WOULD FIRMLY INSIST THAT THE
CITY REQUIRE THAT THE PROJECT BE
HELD TO EXISTING RULES, ZONING, LAWS AND
ORDINANCES - E.G. THE CURRENT COMMUNITY
PLAN, HILLSIDE ORDINANCE, SLOPE DENSITY
ORDINANCE, AND A FINAL AND PROPER SCENIC
PRESERVATION PLAN, ETC. PLEASE DO NOT
ALLOW OUTSIDE DEVELOPERS TO COME IN AND
HAVE EXISTING ORDINANCES CHANGED TO SUIT
THEIR GOALS. IT IS NOT FAIR TO THE
INTEGRITY OF OUR CITY AND COMMUNITY.
AGAIN, THE DEIR DOES NOT ACCURATELY
STATE THE TRUE DEGREE OF THE IMPACTS.
TAKE THE YEARS OF CONSTRUCTION INTO
SERIOUS CONSIDERATION. THE DEIR TAKES
THIS AS A ROUTINE, MATTER OF FACT
PROCESS. MY HOME AND NUMEROUS OTHER
HOMES ARE EXTREMELY CLOSE TO THE

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Project SITE. Just a few hundred feet away, the noise level would be at an extremely high level. GRADING, DYNAMITE BLASTING, Big equipment engine noise, AND all construction related noise.

The air pollution from dust and debris, dynamite smoke and fumes, diesel fuel smoke and fumes, etc. etc. as I said, my home and MANY others are extremely close to the project site. Of course other homes in the neighborhood and community are not as close —

But, I have lived here — 9347 Reverie Rd. Tulum, since April 1988 and this entire canyon almost always has a breeze flowing through it, which would carry the dust, debris, smoke, fumes, etc. to the homes which are very close, and also to all the neighborhood areas.

This canyon also amplifies sounds. Even relatively low level sounds are amplified greatly. Construction noise would be horrendous. Very bad. Terrible construction pollution would be terrible. Extremely unhealthy. I am also writing to the Health Dept. on this issue. We who live in proximity to the project site need to carry on daily lives, earn a living and support our families — not live in an

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environment which threatens our very health - mentally, emotionally and physically for years and years - please be very aware of these factors when considering this project for approval/disapproval we need a new DEIR which is realistic regarding the construction phase and after construction. Now I would like to comment on other aspects of the project DEIR - PROPOSED EMERGENCY ACCESS:

→ Woodward Ave to McGroarty Street. ON Woodward Ave. is a school. It is a literal traffic JAMB when children are brought to and picked up from school - also many buses, my office is on the corner of Woodward and McGroarty. I know the conditions well. There is also a school 3 blocks east of Woodward on McGroarty. Increased traffic in that area also.

→ Inspiration Way to Hillhaven Foothill Blvd. Hillhaven is a steep road. It leads up to Alene Dr. which goes to Inspiration Way and Crestline Dr. - leading to the proposed access. Inspiration Way and Verd. Cr. Dr. are unimproved, substandard roads which cannot be adequately mitigated. Hillhaven and Alene Dr. are too narrow to allow for the 20 foot minimum.

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ACCORDING TO L.A. FIRE DEPT. THE RESPONSE TIME BETWEEN PROJECT SITE AND CURRENT FIRE STATION IS INADEQUATE. EVEN CURRENT CONDITIONS UP HILLHAVEN TO EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS IS DIFFICULT ENOUGH. IT IS A LONG WAY UP HILLHAVEN TO ALL AREAS OF THE PROPOSED SITE. AND A LONG WAY UP WOODWARD UP INTO THE HILLS AND INTO THE SITE. THESE PROPOSED ACCESS LOCATIONS ARE BAD. WORSE YET IF THEY ARE ALLOWED LATER FOR "NECESSARY CONSTRUCTION VEHICLES" AND EVEN WORSE IF LATER THE ACCESS LOCATION WAS OPENED UP FOR RESIDENT USE, AS WAS THE CASE IN THE CRYSTAL VIEW DEVELOPMENT IN TULUNGA. WHY TURN AN ALREADY DIFFICULT AND CHALLENGING SITUATION INTO A POTENTIAL HOLOCAUST. THE PROPOSED CANYON HILLS PROJECT DOES NOT IMPROVE OR HELP OUR COMMUNITY.

TRANSPORTATION / TRAFFIC:

AGAIN, I URGE THE CITY TO REQUIRE THE CANYON HILLS PROJECT TO STAY WITHIN ALL CURRENT EXISTING LAWS, CODES, AND ORDINANCE AS WELL AS WITHIN THE GUIDELINES OF THE SCENIC PRESERVATION PLAN AND THE COMMUNITY PLAN. UNDER THE CURRENT LAWS AND ZONING NO MORE THAN 87 HOMES ARE ALLOWED. EVEN 87 HOMES WOULD STILL HAVE SERIOUS EFFECTS ON THE AREA. 210 OR 280 HOMES WOULD BE BEYOND SERIOUS.

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THAT MANY WOULD BE EXTREMELY DISRUPTIVE AND DISTURBING TO ALL AREAS OF LIFE. IF THE PROJECT DOES GET APPROVED, PLEASE HOLD IT TO THE 87 HOMES. LA TUNA CANYON BLVD. DOES NOT ALLOW HEAVY TRUCKS. THE DEIR DOES NOT GO INTO THIS SPECIFICALLY, FOR GARBAGE TRUCKS AND CONSTRUCTION VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT. TO GET FROM THE PROJECT SITE TO FOOTHILL BLVD, THE NEAREST ROUTE WOULD BE TULUNGA CANYON BLVD OR LOWELL AVE. THESE ROUTES ARE VERY CROWDED, ESPECIALLY DURING THE MORNING AND LATE AFTERNOON COMMUTE TIMES. THE DEIR ESTIMATES 2700 VEHICLE TRIPS DAILY IN THESE AREAS. I BELIEVE THIS IS UNDER ESTIMATED, WHEN YOU CONSIDER THE NEW RESIDENTS, PLUS RESIDENTIAL SERVICE PEOPLE, GARDNERS, POOL SERVICE PEOPLE, DELIVERY TRUCKS, GUESTS, VISITORS, ETC. ETC. THE INCREASED TRAFFIC LOAD WOULD BE STAGGERING. THE DEIR INADEQUATELY COVERS THE WIDENING OF TULUNGA CANYON BLVD. FROM ONE LANE INTO TWO LANES - FROM LA TUNA CANYON RD. TO FOOTHILL BLVD. ANYONE INSPECTING THIS SECTION OF TULUNGA CANYON BLVD. CAN SEE THAT THERE ARE STRUCTURES AND HOMES ON BOTH SIDES OF THE STREET. NO WAY TO WIDEN THE STREET, UNLESS THEY DEMOLISH

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The STRUCTURES AND homes, which is out of the QUESTION.

Also consider the INCREASED TRAFFIC LOAD which will BE ADDED TO THE 210 FREEWAY. FROM MY HOME I LOOK DIRECTLY AT A SECTION OF THE 210 FREEWAY which is in the south end of the PROPOSED PROJECT. IN THE EARLY MORNING hours - 7 A.M. - 7:30 ~~PM~~ ~~AM~~ I see this 210 FREEWAY SECTION BOUND VERY FULL OF VEHICLES AND MOVING VERY SLOW, AND THIS PROPOSED PROJECT DOESN'T EXIST. AGAIN, PLEASE REQUIRE A NEW DEIR which is VERY ACCURATE AND SPECIFIC, A DEIR which could TRULY SUPPORT THE BUILDING OF 87 OR LESS HOMES - IF IT IS POSSIBLE TO SUBSTANTIATE THIS PROPOSED PROJECT. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS MY COMMENTS TO YOU AND THE PLANNING DEPT. MY NEIGHBORS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND MYSELF HOPE AND PRAY THAT THE CITY PLANNING DEPT. WILL CAREFULLY CONSIDER OUR COMMENTS. WE WHO LIVE IN THIS AREA NOT ONLY CHERISH AND LOVE ITS NATURAL BEAUTY, BUT ARE DEEPLY FAMILIAR WITH AND UNDERSTAND THE INTERRELATIONSHIP OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS THAT EITHER PRESERVE OR THREATEN ITS HARMONY AND UNIQUENESS. —

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→ Thank you very much -

Sincerely -

Ramana Zaratanya
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