

NEIGHBORS FOR AN IMPROVED COMMUNITY
458 East 32nd Street
Los Angeles, CA 90011

Thursday, February 22, 2001

Lateef Sholebo, Project Coordinator
Environmental Review Section
Los Angeles City Planning Department
221 N. Figueroa, Room 1540
Los Angeles, CA 90012



RE: Draft EIR 2000-3577, Los Angeles Sports and Entertainment District

Dear Mr. Sholebo:

Neighbors for an Improved Community was formed in June, 2000 by residents, parents, and block clubs, and religious groups who work and reside in the community near the Staples Arena. Our main purpose is to bring issues affecting our community to the attention of residents and that the community has an active role in the resolution of issues, ultimately improving and strengthening our community. We are very much interested in the Sports and Entertainment District Plans.

We are writing to provide our comments to the draft EIR for the proposed Sports and Entertainment District. We are most concerned about how the proposed project will affect community residents in the area, who are predominantly low-income people of color. We believe the people living in the neighborhoods surrounding the existing Staples Center already suffer negative impacts from current operations, including the ongoing elimination of affordable housing; dramatically increased traffic and associated air and noise pollution; a marked rise in crime and vandalism; and decreased pedestrian and public safety. While the rest of the region benefits from the Staples Center operations, the residents who live and work closest to Staples bear the heaviest environmental and economic burdens.

However, with the proposed 3.75 million square foot project expansion, we believe these residents will be even more negatively impacted by both the proposed 7-year construction plan and ongoing operations of the project. We are most concerned about the failure of the draft EIR to adequately address the imminent gentrification of the surrounding community, including physical deterioration of buildings due to neglect and the loss of affordable housing in the area; the complete lack of an environmental energy analysis in the draft EIR; the identified negative air and noise quality impacts of the construction and operations; and the possible violation of water quality regulations.

Specifically, we request the following:

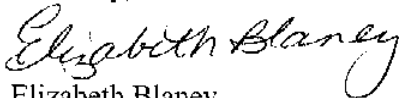
1. The City properly and thoroughly address the significant environmental impacts identified in the draft EIR through mitigation measures that are community developed and community based;
2. The City review and implement the requests for additional analysis and mitigation measures developed by the Figueroa Corridor Coalition for Economic Justice in their comments to the draft EIR;

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3. The City request that a full energy analysis be completed in the final EIR, including appropriate mitigation and conservation measures as required by CEQA; and
4. The City provide all of the final EIR materials translated into Spanish so that community residents can take can active part in this important decision-making process. To refuse to translate the materials would be a violation of civil rights law, and bad public policy.
5. The City request that the Developer incorporate into the Project proposal community benefits such as affordable housing, quality jobs and community services that will help mitigate negative Project impacts. These benefits are outlined in the FCCEJ's comments to the DEIR.

We are sure that you are aware of the significant impact the Staples development will have on our community and the importance of addressing community needs. We look forward to your response to our concerns.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Blaney
Community Organizer

Cc: Figueroa Corridor Coalition for Economic Justice