

CANYON AREA PRESERVATION

Information about preserving our canyons, hillsides, and the foothills.

Spring 2004

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VIEWS

LOCAL INPUT / LOCAL CONTROL



Open Space - The Pressure Is On

Have you ever noticed how much open space there is in Council District 2? Did you ever wonder why there are so many large lots in La Tuna Canyon, Shadow Hills, parts of Sunland/Tujunga, and Lake View Terrace? It has to do with zoning and the Community Plan.

The Sunland/Tujunga, Shadow Hills, Lake View Terrace, East La Tuna Canyon Community Plan determines land use in the area by zoning ordinances. It's what tells people where commercial areas are, where apartments are allowed, where industrial sites can be built, and where horses can be kept. Zoning and the Community Plan (plus Specific Plans and other land use ordinances/laws) are why you don't see stores in Seven Hills, why there's no facto-

ries on Osborne, and why liquor stores can't be placed near schools. Brentwood's or Encino's Community Plan calls for large home lots, and commercial areas near major roads. Ours works the same way.

Our Community Plan also says specifically that "**development located between the Sunland-Tujunga-Lake View Terrace-Shadow Hills-La Tuna Canyon Community Plan boundary line on the south, the DWP right-of-way on the northeast, and Sunland Boulevard on the northwest having a natural average grade of 2:1 or steeper shall be limited to Minimum Density.**" - Community Plan, Footnotes, Page F-2, Footnote 15.

This is exactly where Whitebird plans on building the
cont'd Pg.3 - "Pressure"

Whitebird Canyon Hills Update

The Whitebird Inc. Canyon Hills project is a proposal to build 280 homes on both sides of the 210 Freeway between La Tuna Canyon Road and Sunland Boulevard.

The developer completed the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), the community submitted over **200 letters in response**, and now we're waiting for the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) to come out, complete with answers to all the comment letters. It is expected at the end of May 2004.

The FEIR is supposed to incorporate any new ideas for changes to the project if the Planning Department thinks that any of the comments have merit. At the very least, every letter will be addressed so you'll see the staff's and Whitebird's responses. This is why it was so important to send a letter, because

your input is now part of the public record and you can pursue your ideas at the upcoming public review meetings. If you don't bring up an issue early and in writing, Planning staff can not address it in time to take any action.

Even if you missed the deadline to submit comments to the DEIR, attend all the public meetings. Get on our mailing list to be notified of the meetings.

Copies of the DEIR on CD-ROM can be purchased for \$7.50 at the Planning Department office, or call them at 213-978-1355.

Info on the web: www.lacity.org/PLN - Click on "Environmental/Draft Environmental Impact Reports"
www.verdugohills.net/canyonhills - Local activist site.
www.canyonhills.info - This is the developer's web site.
www.gcvoice.org - Glendale-Crescenta VOICE.

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Whitebird Woos S/T Business – In La Cañada!

Does the proposed Canyon Hills development benefit the business community of Sunland/Tujunga?

The answer? Apparently not the restaurants!

Unable (?) to locate a suitable venue for their latest lobbying effort at any restaurant, rental hall, or other Sunland/Tujunga business, land speculation company Whitebird decided to really impress the locals by inviting them to the La Cañada Flintridge Country Club.

If anyone expected to learn anything substantial about the project they were disappointed, according to several people who did attend. There were some maps, and people were asked to sign a postcard expressing support for Canyon Hills.

The irony of Whitebird's position that Canyon Hills will benefit local businesses is on full display in the Draft Environmental Impact Report:

"It is anticipated that construction workers would remain on site throughout the day." – so, no benefit to businesses from workers buying lunch for 5 years.

"The analysis shows that the proposed project...will result in a potentially significant cumulative impact at the intersection of Development Area A/I-210 west-bound ramps and La Tuna Canyon Road..." – in other words they say most of the traffic will be going onto the freeway, not the other 8 intersections in the area on Foothill Blvd.

Where's the benefit to local businesses? Ask yourself, who benefits from Canyon Hills and why.

Who Is Consensus Planning Group?

Consensus Planning Group (CPG) is Whitebird's public relations agency – but they're so much more! Check out their web site, <http://www.consensusp.com>.

Have you noticed that Whitebird has been holding a lot of meetings with small groups around town? That's CPG at work.

If you've been active in the Neighborhood Councils and the Chamber of Commerce you've probably met CPG people – either in the audience or giving a presentation.

Here's some interesting PR directly from their web site. See if you can recognize any of these tactics at work:

"Grassroots support is often critical in getting the necessary approvals for your projects. Utilizing cutting-edge strategies that employ new and old technologies, Consensus Planning Group provides the following services:

- * Identify and mobilize supporters to attend and speak at hearings, place phone calls, and email key decision-makers.
- * Produce materials and maps that show decision-makers the range and depth of support for your projects.

"Consensus Planning Group manages pre-existing opposition. Often the most contentious and difficult part of the planning process, Consensus Planning Group provides the information, tools and

resources necessary to communicate with and manage opposition to your project. Our services in this area are:

- * Solicit and gain support from adjacent residents and stakeholders.
- * Offset and manage the effects of hard-core opponents.
- * Facilitate constructive community meetings and dialogue.

With a Community Assessment Report, clients know in advance how much time, effort and money it will take to win approvals. Additionally, our early stakeholder contact lays the foundation for community support by reducing misinformation about the project, disseminating accurate information in a timely manner and creating a detailed plan for outreach."

I don't know about you, but to me this is scary stuff, especially the line about how they "offset and manage the effects of hard-core opponents", also the one about how they "produce materials and maps that show decision-makers the range and depth of support for your projects".

There is one thing in which I am confident about our community – when people know the truth and ALL the facts about Canyon Hills, they tend to oppose it as offered. Try not to be manipulated by marketing tactics, but learn the true facts on your own. It's your responsibility as a citizen.

Contact Councilmember Wendy Greuel (greuel@council.lacity.org or 213-485-3391). Request that any radical changes to the Community Plan be submitted to the voters for approval. Tell her that granting variances for the benefit of one company will set a bad precedent for the entire area.

Pressure on Open Space

Cont'd from Pg. 1

Canyon Hills development. It's also why the area has not been built out before now.

All of this is to point out that our community is the way it is BY DESIGN. The City is required to establish community plans for every part of Los Angeles. They are guided by extensive land use studies and focus groups with residents and stakeholders. Community Plans are designed to be flexible, and to be revised every once in a while to reflect new realities. **Our Community Plan is scheduled for review again in 2010.**

Unfortunately for the residents of Council District 2, it looks like our Community Plan will be altered a lot earlier and without our conscious participation. It will be changed by the Planning Department to accommodate developers and land speculators seeking Plan amendments and zone changes to build more houses.

Why will these Community Plan amendments be decided by the Planning Department? Because the City of LA has been told to accommodate its share of the 6 million new residents expected to

move to California during the next decade. The Planning Department is taking the lead because land use decisions are always contentious, and our City leaders do not want to face the voting public to tell them their communities will be changed forever with higher housing density and using up every available bit of open space. It's also easier to grant amendments at sparsely attended Planning Commission meetings than to go through the public - and time consuming - process.

Dale Thrush, CD2 Chief Planning Deputy, has recently been talking at meetings around town about how the City is staffed by "pragmatists", and we should all expect to see compromises. The zoning and land use laws are not set in stone, and the Hillside Density Ordinance can be interpreted in many ways.

One can and should argue with the idea that growth is inevitable and should be accommodated, but if things are to change wouldn't it be better to have local policies decided by our public officials in an open public process, not by the motivations of developers and land speculators who won't have to live with the consequences?

If the Community Plan is to be amended beyond recognition by developers, we should all worry.

Call For Donations

Several groups and many individuals in our community are concerned about the impact of the Canyon Hills project - to our environment, to local wildlife, to traffic, to public services, and to land use issues. They are actively involved in getting out the facts about Canyon Hills, attending all the meetings and responding to Whitebird's legal maneuvers.

The fact is, it takes money to take on this role for our community. Mailing costs, printing costs, legal representation - it all takes a lot of money. Whitebird is paying lawyers, lobbyists, and public rela-

tions companies to promote their message. At every meeting, their people are paid to be there - and it costs us money and work time!

You can help by being an active volunteer, or by donating cash. Here's a few examples of local residents taking responsibility in their own community for raising money.

- Chuck and Lari Kunze, founders of Canyon Area Preservation, will be hosting a musical celebration/fundraiser at their house at the end of July.
- Charlie Marko is organizing a night of comedy to raise money in Glendale in August.
- We'll be holding a garage sale in June, with all proceeds going to GC- V.O.I.C.E.
- Our new bumper sticker is being distributed around town and we're asking a \$5 donation.
- Candace Young will donate profits from her e-commerce web site to V.O.I.C.E.

Please make a tax-deductible donation to help us with the costs of responding to this project. The future of our community is at stake, and your donation could make the difference:

Glendale-Crescenta V.O.I.C.E.

PO Box 273

Montrose, CA 91021

818-249-0900

www.gcvoice.org



C.A.P.
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Tujunga, CA 91043



Save postage. See the newsletter in color! Register your e-mail address with us today. Many e-mail notices have been sent this past year that have not been mailed. Keep informed. Register your e-mail address with us today!

About Canvon Area Preservation...

Canyon Area Preservation was formed in 1997 by a group of homeowners and citizens to fight a development near La Tuna Canyon Road and the 210 Freeway (Duke Development).

Since then, we have been actively involved with informing citizens, government agencies, and community organizations about threats to the environment and rural quality of life in the Crescenta Valley, San Gabriel Mountains, and Sunland/Tujunga area.

Please join us. We are all volunteers concerned about our environment.

Feel free to make copies of this newsletter to give to neighbors, send in more e-mail addresses of people who want to help or know more, and contact agencies that can provide assistance. Thank you.

.....Important Contact Information.....

Please contribute the names and addresses of people/organizations you think can be important to our cause. Contact the CAP Views editor at CAPViews@attbi.com

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