

Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN SUNLAND TUJUNGA

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April 9, 2015

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RE: ZA 2014-4369 (ZV, ZAA, ZBA); VTT 73062; 2014-4368 EAF
(Villa Nova Development in the 6101-6301 blocks of Day Street, in Tujunga, 91042)

The Board of the Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council on April 8, 2015, approved the following comment letter be submitted to your office for review and consideration. Please keep us informed of any updates and information regarding this significant proposal for our community.

Due to potentially significant impacts on the environment, the Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council and its Land Use Committee requests that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) be required for the above referenced proposed project between 6101 and 6301 Day Street. This request is based on concerns brought forward by the community and by the immediate neighbors.

The STNC and LUC understand that this proposed development to subdivide an approximate 10.5 acre hillside property into 14 lots (13 single-family residential lots and one open space lot) is a "discretionary" project. The project applicant is also proposing to adjust the zone boundary, to reduce the front yard setback of the proposed residences, and to allow construction of the residences before the recordation of the final tract map. The Assessor Parcel Numbers of the property are: 2569-011-010, 2571-001-026, and 2571-001-027.

The STNC and LUC believe that an environmental impact report (EIR) should be prepared to fully address the potentially significant impacts of the project on the environment including:

- **Hazards:** The site is in a mapped earthquake fault zone, a very high fire hazard area and a high wind velocity area. Parts of the property may be subject to flood hazard.
- **Hydrology and Water Quality:** Two natural drainage areas would be damaged by proposed stormwater facilities which would also prevent on-site water infiltration and aquifer recharge.
- **Geology and Soils:** The property is in an active seismic zone and has areas identified as having landslide potential. Much of the site has steep hillsides which could cause runoff onto the proposed residential lots.
- **Public Services:** Construction of 13 homes in a wildland fire area would put people at risk and adversely impact the Fire Department's ability to protect life and property.
- **Biological Resources and Wildlife Habitat:** Grading of 29,000 cubic yards over 3.8 acres would destroy oak trees and chaparral which provide habitat to many wildlife species.
- **Aesthetics and Visual Quality:** Extensive grading would create numerous cut and fill slopes which would alter natural landforms and destroy existing hillside views.
- **Land Use and Planning:** The project conflicts with policies of the General and Community Plans by ignoring neighborhood character and scale, not limiting residential density in hillsides and not minimizing grading in sensitive habitat areas.
- **Transportation and Circulation:** Fire Department access to the interior of the site would be limited. The additional traffic generated by this development would adversely affect nearby narrow residential streets;

- **Utilities:** The construction of two new stormwater drainage facilities would cause significant environmental effects. Water supplies are limited by the drought.

The STNC and LUC believe that a redesign of the project is necessary for the development to be consistent with the General Plan, including the Community Plan. As currently designed, the project would adversely affect the hillsides and environmentally sensitive areas consisting of numerous oak trees, chaparral, and native wildlife. A redesign of the project could substantially reduce or eliminate the adverse impacts by including the following features:

- **Stormwater:** Move the two houses (Lots 1 and 7) away from the mouth of the two drainage courses and substitute "level spreaders" and/or "dry wells" for the two proposed stormwater drainage facilities.
- **Graded Slopes:** Reduce the height and steepness of the proposed cut and fill slopes; consider using terraces and/or limiting the size of proposed house pads.
- **Lot Design:** Reconfigure the long narrow lots to eliminate areas that are unusable because of proposed easements and steep hillsides. The proposed large lots artificially inflate the allowable size of the houses that can be constructed on them. This would allow the developer to subdivide the property in a manner that would allow out-of-scale houses to be built on them, which action is in direct opposition to the spirit of all the anti-mansionization ordinances that the City has worked so hard to create. This manner of subdivision would seriously damage the neighborhood character.
- **House Size:** Construct houses that are more in keeping with the scale and character of the existing houses in the neighborhood. The existing houses in the neighborhood are mostly single-story and less than 1,400 square feet in size. The proposed houses are all two-story and about 3,000 square foot in size.
- **Open Space Lot:** Expand the open space lot (Lot 14) so that it has access to Day Street and is not encumbered by stormwater drainage facilities, access road and easements.
- **Retaining Walls:** Reduce the number and height of the retaining walls. Several lots (Lots 2, 11, 12 and 13) exceed the maximum number (1) of retaining walls allowed per lot. Many of the proposed retaining walls exceed six feet in height with the tallest being 12 feet; these walls would be visually obtrusive and out of character with the neighborhood. The height of the retaining walls could be reduced by grading several stepped pads rather than one large pad on each lot.

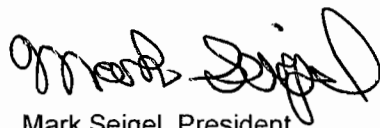
Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council



Bill Skiles, Vice Chair
Land Use Committee



Mark Seigel, President
Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council

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