

CHATSWORTH NATURE PRESERVE COALITION

Working Together to Save a Crucial Wildlife Habitat in Los Angeles-San Fernando Valley
A Meadowlark Needs a Meadow to Sing

April 17, 2016

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Re: DEIR Comments for Andora Estates, Case ENV-2014-3995-EIR

Submitting by Email to: milena.zasadzien@lacity.org

We, the Chatsworth Nature Preserve Coalition, object to the Andora Estates development for these reasons:

- The proposed Andora Estates abuts the Chatsworth Nature Preserve (CNP)-Chatsworth Oaks Park area owned by the Department of Water & Power and protected by the LA City Ordinance 169723 as a Nature Preserve. Andora Estates will sever a vital habitat link between the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park (SSPSHP) and the CNP. Los Angeles City Mayor, Eric Garcetti, supports the National Park Service Rim of the Valley Special Corridor Study, see attached, advocating for support of “key vital biodiverse lifelines”. Regional wildlife corridors are recommended to be a minimum of 500 meters (1640 feet). The project plan allows only 570 feet total. This corridor qualifies as a regional linkage in that it is the primary landscape connection between two larger habitat areas, the CNP and the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. The proposal fails the minimum standard by nearly 300%. This Simi Hills-Chatsworth Nature Preserve corridor is a vital and strategic watershed and habitat linkage.
- Andora Estates violates both Los Angeles Municipal Code Protected Tree Ordinance 177404 and County of Los Angeles, Section 22.56.2050: Oak Tree Permit for the preservation of oak trees for their historical and environmental resources, including prohibiting grading or other construction activity within the drip line of protected trees.
- The Andora Estates development will cause a change in water flow for trees located in Chatsworth Oaks Park and CNP. Oak tree survival is dependent on ground water supported by water flow from the Simi Hills and infiltration from seasonal rain. Interruption, rerouting, destruction of natural water-flow conditions, will have an irreversible damaging effect on one of the last surviving oak savannas in the San Fernando Valley-Los Angeles City.
- Run-off from Andora Estates will add to the pollutant load routed to the upper Los Angeles River Watershed via Chatsworth Creek and will contribute pollutants to the CNP Ecology Pond, a significant wildlife-sustaining water feature, which was recently renovated at great expense to DWP.

- The proposed high-density development will alter the Valley Circle Boulevard scenic corridor/Chatsworth Oak Park views, obstructing views of the unique sandstone formations of the Simi Hills in the daylight and creating light pollution in the evenings.
- Light pollution, made worse by the use of LED bulbs, from Andora Estates will interfere with the rhythms of nocturnal wildlife, such as owls, in the corridor. The result will be outright abandonment of the area or reduced wildlife productivity.
- Increased traffic on Valley Circle Boulevard will place wildlife and humans at greater risk in the Lake Manor-Chatsworth community. It already is challenging, especially for children, the elderly, or disabled, to safely cross Valley Circle Boulevard, a 2-lane winding “country road” with dips and hairpin turns.
- Taxpayers and city municipalities are burdened with the aftermath cost of housing developments in hillsides due to fires and landslides. In this historic Santa Ana high-wind region, wildfires have frequently blazed through. Los Angeles City Planners need to consider this costly unfair burden on Los Angeles citizens for this high-risk housing development – not to mention the increased hazard to human life in neighboring areas, which derive no benefit from the development and are otherwise adversely impacted.
- Although Andora Estates isn’t located in the area of the 2015 temporary ban on the size of single-family homes (that is “McMansions”) passed by Los Angeles City Council, because of the change of character of a Los Angeles neighborhood, this development violates the intent of this ban for any rural, open space, historic community.
- Bulldozing and destruction of scenic geological formations for this development is an environmental and scenic disaster. The region is part of the Chatsworth Formation-Simi Hills, which includes some of the oldest sedimentary rock outcroppings and boulders in the area. It violates the tenets of preservation of this ecologically sensitive wildlife habitat, Objective 13 of the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan.

Based on the foregoing, Chatsworth Nature Preserve Coalition urges Los Angeles City Planning to readdress the Andora Estates DEIR to ensure commitment to a biodiverse environment supporting the quality of life that provides open space, parkland-trails, protection of our watersheds, and wildlife habitats isn’t violated.

Sincerely,

Chatsworth Nature Preserve Coalition

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