

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

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OLD SMMC
LETTER

June 24, 1999

Mark Persico
Planning Director
City of Calabasas
26315 Mureau Road
Calabasas, California 91302-3172

**Park South Subdivision, Stokes Canyon
Parcel Map No. 23594**

Dear Mr. Persico:

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy offers the following comments on the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Park South Subdivision Project located at the headwaters of Stokes Canyon.

The Conservancy commends the innovative approach taken by the city planning staff concerning this subdivision. The guaranteed net permanent open space benefit of the proposed project outweighs the uncertain outcome of leaving a 15 acre lot with an existing 100,000 square foot graded pad open to an inappropriate single family project with no defined development envelope. The proposed action sets the maximum net loss of open space at less than 2.5 acres and ensures the permanent protection of at least 37 acres by placing conservation easements on adjoining lots. In addition, limitations placed on both the height and overall square footage of the two single family residences will prevent the construction of an inappropriately large single family residence on the existing 100,000 square foot building pad. The agreement should also specify where the structures can be built on the one-acre pads. One of the criteria for that determination should be to minimize the area required to be brushed.

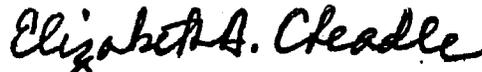
According to the Mitigated Negative Declaration, adjacent property owners have agreed to conservation easements on their land totaling 37 acres as mitigation for this project. The conditions in the Mitigated Negative Declaration for restoration of this habitat should remain, along with adequate provisions to guarantee the success of the plantings. It is our understanding that there is an effort underway to secure acreage from one or two other lots that would increase the total acreage of the conservation easements to a contiguous block greater than 37 acres. Making the easement areas contiguous is important to the quality and viability of the habitat.

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The proposed action is a creative way to meet the applicant's request while concurrently increasing both the protection and quality of the adjacent habitat. This letter represents an official request from the Conservancy to receive the subject conservation easements. To maximize open space protection, we urge that both the Conservancy's designee, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, and the City of Calabasas receive reciprocal conservation easements on all the subject properties. Additionally, as discussed with your planning staff, we would like to be involved in the habitat restoration monitoring should this project be approved.

Please contact Jennifer Schlotterbeck of our staff at (310) 589-3200 extension 137 if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,



ELIZABETH A. CHEADLE
Chairperson