



Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



Richard J. Bruckner
Director

February 17, 2011

TO: Pat Modugno, Chair
Esther L. Valadez, Vice Chair
Leslie G. Bellamy, Commissioner
Harold V. Helsley, Commissioner
Curt Pedersen, Commissioner

FROM:  Jodie Sackett, AICP, Senior Regional Planning Assistant
Land Divisions Section

**SUBJECT: PROJECT NO. TR066952-(5)
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 200700038
VESTING TENTATIVE TRACT MAP NO. 066952
AGENDA ITEM NO. 7: MARCH 2, 2011**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION & BACKGROUND

The applicant, Valley Vineyards LLC, proposes a subdivision of land to create 117 single-family lots, two private street lots, and one water tank lot on 292.5 gross acres. Associated with the subdivision is a Conditional Use Permit ("CUP") for non-urban hillside management, density-controlled development and project grading exceeding 100,000 cubic yards of combined cut/fill. The project site is located at Bouquet Canyon Road and 87th Street West, in the unincorporated community of Antelope Valley and the Leona Valley Community Standards District, Fifth Supervisorial District of Los Angeles County.

PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Between January 30 and February 17, 2011, staff has received three items of correspondence (attached). One letter was received from the Leona Valley Town Council regarding a recent town council meeting held on February 14, 2011, and two letters were received from local residents opposed to the development.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION & MOTION

Currently, the project environmental document is pending review and completion. In addition, on February 3, 2011, the applicant submitted a tentative map revision to staff for review. In order to complete its processing and review of these items, staff requests a continuance to April 20, 2011 and notes that the project will be re-noticed as necessary prior to the continued hearing date.

Suggested Motion: "I move that the Regional Planning Commission continue the public hearing to April 20, 2011."

ACB:jds
2/16/11

Attachment: Public correspondence received between January 30 and February 17, 2011

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7
PROJECT NO. TR066952-(5)

PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

JANUARY 30 – FEBRUARY 17, 2011

One (1) letter from the Leona Valley Town Council

Two (2) letters of opposition from local residents

January 26, 2011



LEONA VALLEY TOWN COUNCIL

P.O. Box 795 • LEONA VALLEY • CA 93551

Jodie Sackett
Department of Regional Planning
320 West Temple Street, 13th Floor
Los Angeles, California 90012

Subject: Land Division TR066952

Jodie

Bill Ford of Valley Vineyards indicated at the last Town Council meeting that they had a tentative hearing date of March 2, 2011 to be heard by the RPC. Because of this upcoming hearing date, the Leona Valley Town Council requested Valley Vineyards to provide a presentation to the town council and the community. Bill Ford has accepted the offer and is planning to provide a presentation. The Leona Valley Town Council would like to invite you to attend the Town Council's meeting and if possible to present the County's status of the project. We look forward to your attendance and being able to share the communities' views. The next Town Council meeting will be held at the Leona Valley Community Center, 8367 Elizabeth Lake Road, Leona Valley on February 14, 2011 beginning at 7:00 pm.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Elliott".

Bill Elliott
President
Leona Valley Town Council
661-270-9017 home
661-400-0658 cell

JAN 31 2011

February 15, 2011

Department of Regional Planning
c/o Jodie Sackett
320 West Temple Street, 13th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Project No. TR066952 and CUP for Grading
April 20, 2011 Hearing on Valley Vineyards

Dear Planning Commission:

I am writing to urge you to require Valley Vineyards to modify its proposed development to conform to our Leona Valley Community Standards adopted in 2008, and to the long-standing County zoning guidelines which these Standards ramify. For starters, this means no gated, cluster housing. Valley Vineyards proposes gated, cluster housing inside a community, on a terrain, and in a County regional plan and zoning that discourages, even prohibits this type of development.

As a practicing real estate broker I am required to provide a copy of the Leona Valley Community Standards to all clients who purchase land and/or improvements within the boundaries of the Leona Valley Community Standards District. These people rely on that document to mean what it says. If you approve the Valley Vineyards project as currently proposed, my clients and hundreds of other Leona Valley purchasers will have been led astray.

Valley Vineyards' conditional use permit on cut and fill involves moving forty-four times the amount of dirt deemed the maximum allowable in a hillside management area, a 4400% increase. Even at half that much grading this variance is not even remotely reasonable.

As a Leona Valley resident for twenty-two years, whose home was nearly destroyed by a brush fire in 2001, and in 2002, and since, I am keenly interested in preventing the conditions suffered in the recent 2010 Crown Fire, where thousands of residents and their clustered homes adjacent to our mountains were rendered vulnerable to nature's force. Valley Vineyards proposes cluster housing on the mountains themselves, in the middle of nature's tinderbox.

County taxpayers in our region have long been plagued by developers who abandon their too-ambitious projects. The decades-old Ritter Ranch project, repeatedly bankrupt and now an endless nightmare of unsafe infrastructure for residents and fiscal failure for our municipalities, has not generated one property-tax penny for the Los Angeles County that approved it a quarter of a century ago. And it will be at least another quarter century (a tax lifetime!) before it does.

Why is the County of Los Angeles even considering the Valley Vineyards project? In every aspect: traffic, infrastructure, grading, drainage, density, and more, it is antithetical to the County's vision for the future of our rural land, and to our community's vision of its own future.

Developing 117 homes on this 292-acre piece of land is not feasible, and the people who live in this community know it, therefore the Community Standards. The topography is too rugged, the water table too high, the fire hazard too close, the proposed grading too severe, and the public roads leading to this land parcel were not engineered for the traffic. Please demand a safe, ecologically sound project from Valley Vineyards, one that is in reasonable compliance with County zoning and its regional plan, and in keeping with the character of our community.

Julie Marshall
8769 Vientos Drive
Leona Valley, CA 93551

A REMINDER

(from your County Regional Planning mission statement)

Chapter 4: Strategic Orientation of the Department

Why are we here?

To encourage the managed growth, maintenance and sustainability of neighborhoods and healthy communities.

A significant part of our efforts include working with communities and empowering residents so that they have a voice in the planning decisions that affect their neighborhoods. Residents have a keen understanding of what is unique and special about their neighborhoods. We support them in preserving and enhancing that character by ensuring efficient and orderly development, and by fostering the provision of sufficient housing to address the needs of the County.

A central role we have in this is to lead the development of participative community plans and CSD's, codifying neighborhood values and aspirations into land-use documents. Our code enforcement reflects the need to preserve healthy and safe communities. Field offices and plan review staff keep community character issues in the forefront as they implement goals, policies and ordinances.

ANOTHER REMINDER

The Valley Vineyards project proposes a 20% increase in the population of our town.

Our Community Standards have been ignored, County planning and zoning ignored.

Although the developer has tried hard, they have garnered ZERO support for the project.

Angry residents gathered on February 14th to ask questions. The County did not attend.

Conclusion: L.A. County is in the business of issuing entitlements for their own sake.



Elaine and Karlo Johnson
9149 Elizabeth Lake Rd.
Leona Valley, CA 93551
T (786)201-3257

February 15, 2011

Jodi Sackett
Department of Regional Planning
Project# TR 066952
320 West Temple St., 1st floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Jodie,

My husband and I recently purchased our new home on June 2010 in Leona Valley. When we were searching for a new home our dream was to find a property with some acreage in a rural community. Specifically, not near a tract home area, because one, it lowers the property value of your home, and two the community gets to crowded, also it obstructs the beautiful Leona Valley view. Since we already have a beautiful winery, we do not need to add another one in a small rural community like Leona Valley. One winery and vineyard is enough, especially adding these tract homes in a new vineyard, I do not agree with that. The beauty of the vineyard is not the homes, it is the vineyard itself. We love having privacy, that was our dream to have, that is why we wanted to choose a rural community to live in. We looked and looked and put offers in Acton, Green Valley and Leona Valley. Finally, after a year of searching our offer was accepted on our new dream home here in Leona Valley. Leona Valley is a great place to start our new family, a great rural community and not in an area near tract homes. It is everything we ever wanted. It has a country home feeling, it feels like you are away from the commotion from Lancaster/Palmdale and the city. It is an amazing place to live and start a family. The community always seems to come together for different events including holiday parties or wine stomping at the vineyard. The community is very welcoming and helpful. Leona Valley is special the way it is, and everyone in the community loves their rural area and privacy as well. That is why we all chose to buy or build our home here. Tract homes would ruin this wonderful community in many ways and we do not want them to build in our community which is our home. It would invade our privacy and take away from the beauty and uniqueness of Leona Valley. For example, it is like someone building dozens of sheds in your front and back yard without your permission.

In addition, we also disagree with the new red light construction on Lake Elizabeth Rd. This would cause traffic and there is no need for it. It is literally a waste of tax payers money which California cannot afford anyways with the deficit situation. This money should go towards improving the Los Angeles county school system or to our firefighters who are getting their hours cut when we need them the most. It makes us very upset that we move in to this great rural community and outsiders try to change something that is not broken. Besides, the real estate market is going to take years to recover, building more for no reason is only going to cause more trouble when people cannot even afford to buy homes that are available now. For example, just a couple minutes away in the Quartz Hill area there are dozens of new tract homes that cannot even sell still since people are currently losing their jobs. This whole situation of building more and more without the demand is really ridiculous.

In conclusion, we disagree with the building of tract homes in our beautiful community that is under attack. Also, we disagree with the red light installation on the corner of Bouquet Canyon Rd. and Elizabeth Lake Rd. Our vote is NO for both of these developments. Please, don't take away our dream that we have started. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Elaine and Karlo Johnson