



Los Angeles County  
Department of Regional Planning



*Planning for the Challenges Ahead*

February 22, 2007

Bruce W. McClendon FAICP  
Director of Planning

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

FROM: Susan Tae, AICP, Section Head *ST*  
Land Divisions Section

SUBJECT: "LANDMARK VILLAGE"  
GENERAL/LOCAL/SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT CASE NOS. 00-196-(5)  
VESTING TENTATIVE TRACT MAP NO. 53108-(5)  
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT CASE NOS. 00-196-(5) AND 2005-01121-(5)  
OAK TREE PERMIT CASE NO. 00-196-(5)  
AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 a, b, c, d, e, f, g; FEBRUARY 28, 2007

**PROJECT BACKGROUND**

As you may recall, Landmark Village is the first subdivision proposal within the adopted Newhall Ranch Specific Plan ("Specific Plan"), and proposes to create a maximum of 1,444 dwelling units and 1,033,000 square feet of nonresidential uses as well as 45 acres of open space, including a 16-acre community park, trail system, and elementary school on 292.6 gross acres. The project is within the "Riverwood" Village of the Specific Plan, and located north of the Santa Clara River, south of State Route 126 ("SR-126"), east of the Ventura County boundary, and west of Interstate 5 Freeway. A Draft Environmental Impact Report ("EIR") was prepared for the project as a tiered document from the certified Specific Plan EIR, and concluded that impacts could not be mitigated to less than significant, include Biota, Visual Qualities, Noise, Air Quality, Solid Waste Disposal and Cumulative Agricultural Resources; Noise is the only impact factor for this project that was considered significant different than the certified Specific Plan EIR.

On January 31, 2007, after opening the public hearing and taking public testimony with concerns or in opposition to the project, the public hearing was continued to allow for additional time as requested by various agencies and individual citizens, to comment on the project and EIR. The public hearing was continued to February 28, 2007, and the public comment period for the EIR was continued to February 20, 2007 (total 90-day public comment period). An initial list of comments on the project was also provided by the Regional Planning Commission ("Commission") for the applicant to respond at the February public hearing.

**PROJECT COMMENTS**

The applicant has submitted a letter dated February 15, 2007, which provides responses to the comments provided at the January 31, 2007 public hearing (please see attached).

The following is the list of comments as well as a summary of the applicant's responses:

- **Potential incorporation of wireless technology within the project**

The applicant was requested to evaluate the potential for providing wireless technology within this project and the overall Newhall Ranch project. The applicant has responded that Newhall Land has an affiliation with SBC (AT&T) and that given the nature of constantly evolving technology, the project would be best able to incorporate highspeed wireless technology (e.g. WiFi or its future equivalent) in commercial and mixed use areas, and public spaces (e.g. parks, libraries, private community centers). Individual single-family homes would have various means for internet service.

- **Interim elementary school plan**

The Commission requested additional information for an interim school plan until enough students are generated from the project to open the elementary school. The applicant has responded that they have been working with the Castaic School District ("School District"), and anticipate that the first occupancies would arrive in mid to late 2009. The elementary school is anticipated to be open in fall of 2010, therefore leaving a nine to 12 month period where children from the project will be bussed to an existing school.

- **Community sustainability/smart growth**

The Commission also requested additional information regarding sustainability and smart growth elements within the Landmark Village project. The applicant has responded with various elements of the project that meet community sustainability and smart growth elements, including provision of jobs; provision of transit; open space, recreation and preservation of sensitive resource areas; reduction of impermeable surfaces; and water conservation and reuse.

The project is proposed in a Traditional Neighborhood Design, and proposes a mix of uses, including housing types, commercial, office and public facility uses within the project. The project is also designed to place residential near commercial services and/or public spaces, to promote walkability and more 'vibrant' neighborhoods.

Other components of sustainable development, including energy conservation, alternative energy sources, and 'green building.' The applicant has indicated that they are in the process of preparing a formal Sustainability Plan that will incorporate and in more detail, define energy conservation techniques, potential alternative energy sources and incorporation of green building designs within the entire Specific Plan area. This Sustainability Plan is currently being prepared, and will be completed before final approval of the project. The applicant indicated that they will be providing additional information during the February 28, 2007 continued hearing.

- **Ownership and maintenance of passive park**

The Commission requested clarification of ownership and maintenance of the passive park, which is located in the center of the project across "A" Street from the public park and elementary school. The applicant has stated that the passive park, which includes the interpretive trail and river lookout, will be maintained by the project's homeowners association but open to the public.

▪ **Potential revisions to elementary school and public community park design**

The Commission provided comments and direction regarding the design of the elementary school and public park site, specifically with respect to uses adjacent to SR-126 and the circulation and parking design for the school. At the Commission's direction, the applicant has worked with the School District and Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation ("Parks and Recreation"), and has prepared a revised conceptual plan (attached) that depicts a nine-acre school site more centrally located, and the public park 'wrapped' around the school with roadway provided in between. By revising the original design of park and school side-by-side, this creates an additional buffer from SR-126-related impacts to the school and provides additional stacking space for the school.

A pedestrian bridge is also depicted crossing "A" Street, which may or may not be incorporated into the final project design. At this time, it is still being determined whether traffic signals will be required at the two intersections of the roads with "A" Street as they wrap around the school site. If traffic signals are to be installed at those locations, a separate pedestrian bridge will be not be necessary.

▪ **Waste-to-energy facility**

The Commission had requested additional information regarding a waste-to-energy incinerator facility and the feasibility of incorporating one within the project or vicinity. Newhall Land has met with the Los Angeles County Sanitation District ("Sanitation District"), and was informed that while an existing facility is being operated by the Sanitation District in the City of Commerce, a new waste-to-energy facility has not been proposed in California since 1990, and are no longer feasible considering policy changes and environmental regulations, including those from the Air Quality Management District.

▪ **Concerns regarding the Native American Tataviam tribe**

Testimony was taken on January 31, 2007 regarding the Cultural Resources Report prepared for the Draft EIR. The testifier objected to language within the report that described the Tataviam tribe as culturally extinct. The Tataviam tribe is not extinct, and the consultants have already personally apologized to the Tataviam tribe. Newhall Land has also worked with the Fernandeño Tataviam tribe on other projects in the Santa Clarita Valley, and will continue to work with them through the development of Newhall Ranch.

▪ **Trailhead and trail connections**

The Commission requested additional information regarding trails and in particular, the potential inclusion of a trailhead within the project. The applicant has agreed to work with Parks and Recreation for the siting of a trailhead location, and will likely be within the commercial area directly west of Long Canyon Road with direct access to the Santa Clara River Regional Trail.

Additional information was also requested regarding the trail connection across the river, and across SR-126. The main equestrian trail connection across SR-126 is located west of this project, within the adjacent pending subdivision known as Homestead (Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. 060678). The trail connection is proposed under a box culvert that is approximately 14 feet high, and at minimum height to travel through without dismounting a horse.

- **Cul-de-sacs along the western side of the project site**

The Commission requested clarification regarding the cul-de-sacs that were proposed on the west side of the project. The cul-de-sacs that were identified are in fact trail connections, and provide access from the development to the trails that run parallel to the Santa Clara River.

- **Setbacks from riparian area**

Setbacks or minimum distances between development and the Santa Clara River, are described in the Specific Plan. The Commission requested that the applicant clarify what was required, and what is being provided by the project. A letter has been provided by Impact Sciences, dated February 15, 2007 (attached) that discusses the riparian buffer and the various iterations through the public hearing process for the original Specific Plan. The Specific Plan was adopted with a minimum 100-foot buffer from top of river-side of the bank stabilization and project development, with provisions for a lesser buffer if riparian resources are still adequately protected. The tentative map and Draft EIR include a minimum 100-foot buffer, within which trails and open space/detention basins may be permitted, along the Santa Clara River Special Management Area. In one portion of the project, the riparian buffer is reduced from 100 feet to 70 feet, which is along Chiquito Canyon Road/Long Canyon Road, adjacent to SR-126 and heavily disturbed. A more detailed, written response will be provided in the Final EIR as part of response to comments.

- **Comments regarding studies from The Nature Conservancy and Santa Clarita Valley Preservation funds**

Testimony was given during the January 31, 2007 public hearing that studies from the Nature Conservancy and Santa Clarita Valley Preservation regarding funds to purchase property, should be evaluated. There are no additional comments regarding this comment at this time.

- **Perchlorate contamination and status of clean-up**

Ammonium perchlorate has been detected in groundwater basins underlying the Santa Clarita Valley, and testimony was received during the January 31, 2007 public hearing regarding this concern. The EIR consultant, Impact Sciences, has submitted a letter dated February 15, 2007 (attached) that states the Draft EIR includes discussion for remediation planning already underway for perchlorate contamination and restoration of the impacted well capacity. The Castaic Lake Water Agency together with local water purveyors, is proceeding with a two-prong perchlorate contamination remediation program (Interim Remedial Action Plan) with action program. Substantial progress has been made towards full implementation of the program. A more detailed, written response will be provided in the Final EIR as part of response to comments.

- **United Water Conservation District comments**

The Commission requested that additional information be provided from the United Water Conservation District ("United Water") regarding the project. A letter from United Water dated February 7, 2007, was received by staff, and included in this package. The letter states that United Water has reviewed the Draft EIR, and finds that it complies with the terms established in the settlement agreement.

▪ **Comments from the Audobon Society**

Detailed comments were received for the January 31, 2007 public hearing from the Audobon Society regarding the Draft EIR, and specifically the analysis and studies related to birds. The applicant was asked to respond, and Impact Sciences, the EIR consultant, has provided a letter dated February 15, 2007 (attached). In this letter, Impact Sciences responded with a discussion of the methodology used in the Draft EIR, and from the methodology focused on special-status species that have been observed, known to occur, or that have the potential based on habitat or known range. The birds cited by the Audobon Society as been omitted from the studies, for example the California condor and two owl species, are not considered special-status birds and therefore were not included. Prior to disturbance on the property, surveys would be required for native birds nesting. A more detailed, written response will be provided in the Final EIR as part of response to comments.

**STAFF EVALUATION**

Additional minor changes or corrections are required to the tentative map, which include those discussed during the public hearing process. These include:

- Minor grading elevation adjustments to match approved drainage concept;
- Inclusion of 11,000-square foot fire station within commercial area east of Long Canyon Road, south of "Y" Street, already analyzed in the Draft EIR, and location confirmed with Los Angeles County Fire Department, to be located outside river corridor buffer;
- If given direction by your Commission, change of school and park configuration
- Correct depiction of offsite improvements, including proposed water tank locations;
- Inclusion of five bus stops, including two pull-in areas, as confirmed with Santa Clarita Transit;
- More clear delineation of Metrolink right-of-way to be reserved by project; and
- Inclusion of trailhead location, based on further discussions with Parks and Recreation.

The updated tentative map will be circulated for Los Angeles County Subdivision Committee, with updated conditions and map presented to your Commission before final action on the project.

California Department of Fish and Game fees have also increased, effective January 1, 2007. Therefore, at this time the fees required for this project are \$2,500 plus a \$50 recording fee. As fees are in effect at time of paying, this number may also increase subject to changes by the State. No project is considered approved and/or vested without payment of these fees.

Additional correspondence received to time of writing, have been included for your Commission's consideration. The public comment period for the Draft EIR was continued from January 31, 2007 to February 20, 2007 (total 90 days) and no other public comments received after February 20, 2007 will be included in the response to comments portion of the Final EIR. However, the one EIR comment letter received after close of the public comment period, has been provided as part of comments on the project.

Staff feels that the project, including the changes to the tentative map discussed above, is consistent with adopted Specific Plan (see Staff Evaluation section of the January 31, 2007 staff analysis). While the EIR concluded that not all impacts from Landmark Village can be mitigated to less than significant, all but one factor was already identified as part of the Specific Plan, and the project was approved with the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

The following recommendation is subject to change based on oral testimony or documentary evidence submitted during the public hearing process.

If the Regional Planning Commission agrees with staff's evaluation, staff recommends that the Commission close the public hearing; indicate its intent to approve Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. 53108, Conditional Use Permits 00-196 and 2005-01121, and Oak Tree Permit No. 00-196; indicate its intent to recommend approval of General, Local and Specific Plan Amendments 00-196 to the Board of Supervisors; and direct staff to prepare the final conditions, findings for approval and resolutions as well as Final EIR including response to comments and statement of overriding considerations.

The project will return at a future date for Commission final action on the Final EIR and the project findings and conditions.

**Suggested Motion: "I move that the Regional Planning Commission close the public hearing; indicate its intent to approve Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. 53108, Conditional Use Permits 00-196 and 2005-01121, and Oak Tree Permit No. 00-196; indicate its intent to recommend approval of General, Local and Specific Plan Amendments 00-196 to the Board of Supervisors; and direct staff to prepare the final conditions, findings for approval and resolutions as well as Final EIR including response to comments and statement of overriding considerations."**

SMT:st  
02/22/07

# NEWHALL LAND

A LENNAR/LNR COMPANY

February 15, 2007

Ms. Susan Tae, AICP  
Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning  
320 West Temple Street  
13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Newhall Land Responses to Commission Comments from the January 31, 2007  
Landmark Village Public Hearing

Dear Ms. Tae:

This letter serves to address the comments directed to Newhall Land from the Regional Planning Commission at the January 31, 2007 public hearing on Landmark Village. The comments have been underlined with Newhall Land's responses directly below.

## Potential Incorporation of Wireless Technology into Newhall Ranch

Newhall Land currently has an alliance with SBC for introduction of new technology into our communities. This could include the potential incorporation of wireless technology in portions of Newhall Ranch. The portions of Newhall Ranch that are being explored for this coverage would include commercial areas and public spaces (parks, library, and private community centers). It should be noted that each of the homes and commercial businesses within Newhall Ranch will incorporate the best available technology into their design.

## Interim Elementary School Plan

Newhall Land is currently working with the Castaic School District on a plan that could include the initial bussing of Landmark generated elementary school students to an existing school within the District until such time that Landmark generates enough students to open the Landmark Village Elementary School. As indicated at the last Commission hearing, the first occupancies in Landmark are anticipated in mid to late 2009. The anticipated opening of the Landmark Village elementary school is fall 2010. In summary, there will likely be a 9-12 month period where elementary students generated in Landmark would be bussed to an existing school within the Castaic District.

THE NEWHALL LAND AND FARMING COMPANY

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## Community Sustainability/Smart Growth

There are many different components that make a community sustainable or qualify it as a smart growth project. These include a proper mix of land use, provision of jobs, design for future transit uses in the plan, provision of open space and recreation, connectivity (trails), preservation of natural areas, the reduction of impermeable surfaces, water conservation and re-use, energy conservation - potentially including the use of alternative energies (solar, wind, cogeneration, etc.), and the incorporation of green building techniques.

As is evidenced below, Landmark Village, as with all of Newhall Ranch, incorporates the components of a sustainable or smart growth community. Furthermore, the Landmark Village Planning Booklet clearly identifies additional Traditional Neighborhood Design features that have been incorporated into Landmark. Components of a sustainable or smart growth community include:

- Mix of Land Uses - Landmark Village, along with the other villages in Newhall Ranch will include a broad range of housing types, including affordable housing, along with commercial, office and public facilities.
- Provision of Jobs - Landmark Village combined with the other villages of Newhall Ranch will create approximately 20,000 permanent jobs in the Santa Clarita Valley. Newhall Ranch is adjacent to Valencia Gateway, which presently provides 50,000 jobs. Additional development within Valencia Gateway will create an additional 30,000 jobs. When completed, the job centers in Newhall Ranch and Valencia will have resulted in the creation of approximately 100,000 jobs in the Santa Clarita Valley.
- Locating of Residential Uses in Close Proximity to Commercial Services/Public Spaces - Nearly 60% of the residential units in Newhall Ranch will be located within walking distance of village or commercial centers. This is clearly documented by the Landmark Village land plan. Residents within Landmark Village will be able to utilize paseos and/or the Santa Clara River Regional Trail to walk to commercial centers, private recreational facilities, the elementary school and a community park.
- Provision of Transit - Newhall Ranch, including Landmark Village, will be part of the Santa Clarita Transit system and will pay its fair share for transit service to the community. Transit improvements within the Ranch will include a park-and-ride lot, future transit station, transfer station, bus stops and preservation of light rail right-of-way. Landmark Village will include a total of five bus stops, a park-and-ride lot and the preservation of light rail right-of-way along SR 126.
- Open Space, Recreation and Preservation of Sensitive Resource Areas - Newhall Ranch, of which Landmark Village is a part, includes the preservation of the High Country, Salt Creek Corridor and the Santa Clara River - a total of nearly 6,700 acres. A total of three community parks (Landmark includes the first) and

up to ten neighborhood parks will be provided as part of Newhall Ranch. Finally, private recreation facilities will be provided throughout the entire Ranch providing additional recreational opportunities to residents.

- Hierarchy of Trails – Newhall Ranch will include over 50 miles of trails to encourage pedestrian mobility. Landmark Village includes a two-mile extension of the Santa Clara River trail, with direct connections to residential, commercial and park uses, and various paseos including the paseo running along “A” Street or the Landmark Village Spine Road.
- Reducing Impermeable Surfaces - Newhall Ranch, including Landmark Village, will utilize smaller street sections where possible, increased native landscape areas, and non-structural water quality treatment improvements.
- Water Conservation and Re-Use – Newhall Ranch, including Landmark Village, will utilize native, drought tolerant species, evapotranspiration controllers, and reclaimed water.

Other components associated with smart growth and sustainability include the use of energy conservation techniques or alternative energy sources and green building design. Newhall Land is working on a formal “Sustainability Plan” that will incorporate and define in more detail the use of energy conservation techniques, potential alternative energy sources and the incorporation of green building designs into the entire Newhall Ranch community. Newhall Land will provide additional detail on this subject at the Commission hearing on February 28.

#### Ownership and Maintenance of the Passive Park

Landmark Village includes a community park that would be utilized for both active and passive recreation. The passive area of the park is located south of the active portion of the park and directly south of the Spine Road (“A” Street). This passive portion of the park will be owned and maintained by the Homeowners Association and will be open to the public.

#### Potential Revisions to the Elementary School/Community Park Design

Per the Commission’s direction, Newhall Land has worked with the Castaic School District and County Parks to prepare a conceptual revised school/park plan. If supported by the Commission, we would work with both agencies to finalize this conceptual plan and incorporate it into the tract map. This plan is attached to this letter.

The Landmark Village tract map presently places the school and park side-by-side with the school being the easterly parcel and the park being the westerly parcel. The revised conceptual plan would move the school away from SR 126, utilizing the park as a buffer along SR 126 and the adjacent residential areas. This design also provides additional stacking space for dropping off and picking up students at the school.

### Waste-To-Energy Facility

Pursuant to the Commission's direction, Newhall Land had several discussions with the Los Angeles County Sanitation District in an effort to gather more information on a waste-to-energy incinerator. The Sanitation District presently operates this type of facility in the City of Commerce. The facility was built in 1986 and provides power for up to 20,000 homes. The facility includes a large incinerator with a smoke stack approximately 150 feet tall. According to the Sanitation District, there has not been a waste-to-energy facility proposed in California since 1990. There are presently a total of three in the State.

Policy changes and environmental regulations have made it extremely difficult to build new waste-to-energy facilities within the State. State and Federal regulations no longer consider these facilities as a safe and environmentally sound alternative to landfills. Federal incentives, investment tax credits, favorable tax treatment and reasonable permitting no longer exist for these facilities. An example is that these facilities are no longer eligible for emission offset credits by the AQMD. Finally, several environmental organizations argue that these facilities not be considered as a renewable energy source.

As indicated earlier in the letter, we are exploring other potential alternative energy sources and believe those sources are more desirable than a waste-to-energy facility. These other sources could include cogeneration, wind and solar opportunities.

### Landmark Village Cultural Resources Report

A speaker at the January 31 hearing cited a concern with language contained within the Landmark Village Cultural Resources Report prepared by W & S Consultants. This language indicates that the Tataviam Tribal community was culturally extinct. This statement is not accurate and W & S Consultants has personally apologized to the Tataviam Tribe, via a letter dated February 15, 2007, for this inaccurate statement. Additionally, W & S will amend the Landmark Village Cultural Resources Report to remove this language and replace it with language that reflects the existence of the Tataviam Tribe as documented by the Ethnographic Overview of the Angeles National Forest, Tataviam and San Gabriel Mountain Serrano Ethnohistory (2004).

Newhall Land has worked with the Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians on projects within the City of Santa Clarita and in the Valencia Commerce Center. We value our relationship with them and will continue to consult and work with the Fernandeano Tataviam during the buildout of Newhall Ranch.

### Trailhead

Newhall Land will work with the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation on the locating of a trailhead within the Landmark Village project. This trailhead will likely be located within the commercial/mixed use area directly west of

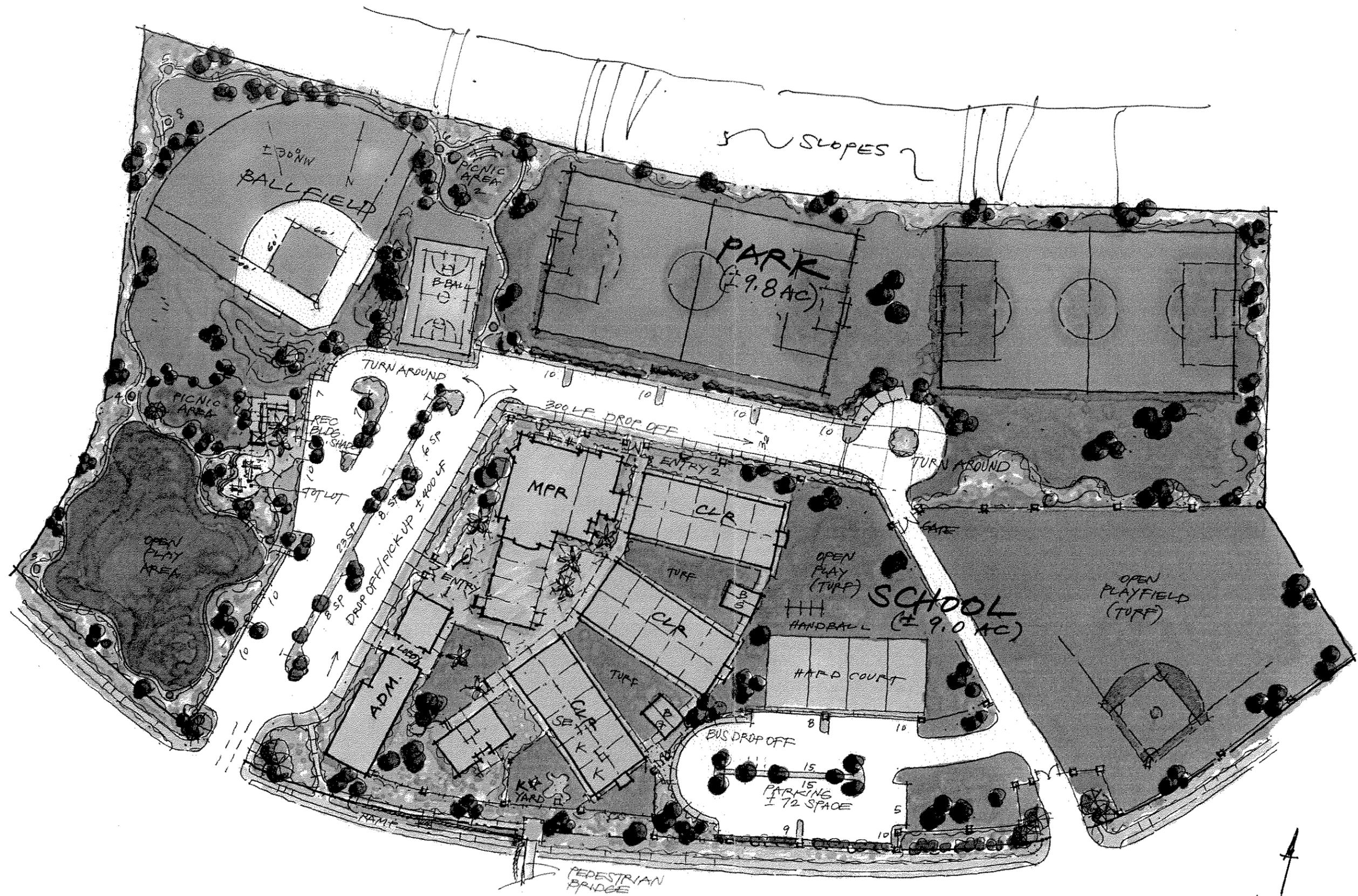
Long Canyon Road and would be placed in a location with direct access to the Santa Clara River Regional Trail.

I want to thank you for your consideration of these responses. If you have any questions regarding this letter please feel free to contact me at (661) 255-4003. We look forward to the hearing on February 28, 2007.

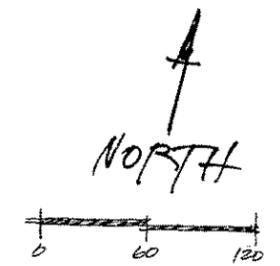
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G. Adamick', written in a cursive style.

Glenn Adamick  
Vice President, Planning and Entitlements



ACT. 3C  
 CONCEPT PLAN  
 K-5 SCHOOL SITE



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RECEIVED

FEB 12 2007

NEWHALL RANCH

## UNITED WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

"Conserving Water Since 1927"

February 7, 2007

Susie Tae  
Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning  
320 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Ms. Tae,

The United Water Conservation District has reviewed the Landmark Village Draft EIR and finds that it complies with the terms established in our settlement agreement with Newhall Land.

Through the MOU process that was established pursuant to our settlement agreement with Newhall Land and the County of L.A., we have established an avenue of communication that gives United Water Conservation District a high level of trust in Newhall Land's desire to protect water resources as they develop the Newhall Ranch Project.

We don't have any additional comments at this time and look forward to working with Newhall Land as well as the water purveyors in the Upper Santa Clara River Watershed.

Sincerely,

Dana L. Wisheart  
General Manager

cc: Glenn Adamick, Newhall Land  
Robert DiPrimio, Valencia Water Co.

File: Newhall Land  
Cross Reference: Upper River MOU  
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