



Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



Amy J. Bodek, AICP
Director

March 6, 2018

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**PROJECT NO. 98123-(3)
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 98123-(3)
OAK TREE PERMIT NO. 98123-(3)
VESTING TENTATIVE TRACT MAP NO. 52652
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NO. 200600024
APPLICANT: SHINNECOCK ENTERPRISES INC.
CHATSWORTH ZONED DISTRICT
THIRD SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT (3-VOTES)**

SUBJECT

This letter is to recommend a remand to the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) of an appeal of a previously approved Vesting Tentative Tract Map (VTTM), Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and Oak Tree Permit (OTP) for a proposed residential development consisting of 25 lots, one recreation lot, one public facilities lot, one water tank lot, and one open space lot on 58.03 acres located west of Randiwood Lane, between Kittridge Street and Welby Way, in the Westhills community.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BOARD:

Remand the project to the RPC with instructions to update the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review and mitigation measures, given the project was last considered in 2008, and address the issues raised by local constituents, including residents that make up the neighboring Westhills Homeowners Association, at the March 20, 2008, community meeting (Westhills community meeting) (attached summary).

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

The proposed project was approved by the RPC on January 16, 2008. That approval was appealed to the Board of Supervisors (Board) by members of the neighboring Westhills Homeowners Association. At its July 1, 2008, hearing, the Board took the matter off calendar until further notice and instructed staff to re-notice the hearing when it had completed the informational requests promised at the March 20, 2008 Westhills community meeting, including, but not limited to, impacts to fire safety; emergency evacuation; and traffic (attached).

The economic downturn in 2008 resulted in foreclosure of the property and a subsequent change in property ownership. Now that the economy has improved, the current property owner wishes to revisit the appeal and continue the entitlement process. However, the current owner did not provide the requisite application materials to certify new ownership and authorize the continued processing of the public hearing application until January 24, 2018. The initial study that was prepared for the project was completed in 2007 and did not include review of greenhouse gas impacts as well as other environmental factors that are now required to be analyzed under CEQA. Additionally, environmental factors that were reviewed may require updated analysis to confirm or revise CEQA findings. Pursuant to Section 22.60.250 of the Los Angeles County Code (County Code), the Board may refer the matter back to RPC for further proceedings with or without instructions.

Due to the aforementioned events, the project was placed on hold, thus the Regional Planning Department (Department) recommends that you refer this matter back to RPC to enable the Department's staff to update the CEQA analysis and gather factual information in response to the issues raised by constituents at the March 20, 2008, Westhills community meeting.

Implementation of Strategic Goals

The recommendation meets the following Strategic Plan Goal - Community Support and Responsiveness: "Enrich lives of Los Angeles County residents by providing enhanced services, and effectively planning and responding to economic, social, and environmental challenges." The recommendation would require the applicant to provide information to address the community's concerns about the project and to update a previous environmental analysis that was reviewed by RPC in 2007.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

Remanding the VTTM, CUP, and OTP along with the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) to RPC will promote the goal of fiscal responsibility by assuring that the project has been reviewed according to the latest environmental standards pertaining to infrastructure and public service investments located on or beyond the urban fringe.

All associated fees for the review of appeal and entitlement will be paid by the applicant. The Board action would have no fiscal effect on the Department's operating budget.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

On November 7, 2007, RPC conducted a public hearing on CUP No. 98123-(3), OTP Case No. 98123-(3), and VTTM No. 52652. These entitlements and related VTTM would allow development within a Residential Planned Development (RPD) Zone and Hillside Management Area including grading exceeding 100,000 cubic yards; the removal of 14 oak trees, including one heritage oak tree, and encroachment into the protected zone of one oak tree; and create 25 single-family lots, one recreation lot, one water tank lot, one public facilities lot, and one open space lot on 58.03 acres.

RPC voted 4-0 (1 absent) at its October 3, 2007, meeting to close the public hearing and adopt the MND; indicated its intent to approve the VTTM, CUP, and OTP; and directed the Department's staff to return with final findings and conditions for approval at a future consent date. The consent hearing was continued three times from December 19, 2007, to allow time for the developer to prepare a traffic analysis of alternate emergency evacuation scenarios in response to community concerns regarding emergency egress. The results of the traffic study did not affect the RPC's intent to approve the project, and the applicant had offered at the October 3, 2007, public hearing to undertake additional traffic analysis beyond the required threshold for requiring a traffic study. Furthermore, the traffic study was not subject to a required public comment period. However, as a courtesy, staff requested that the community receive additional time to review the traffic analysis and the matter was ultimately continued to January 16, 2008. At that hearing, RPC approved the VTTM, CUP, and OTP.

The RPC's decision was appealed by Robert Lancet.

At its July 1, 2008, Board hearing, the Board took the matter off calendar to allow the Department's staff time to gather additional information responsive to community concerns about the project. Since the appeal was filed, the property was foreclosed upon and a change in property ownership followed. The present property owner now wishes to revisit the appeal and continue the entitlement process.

County Code section 22.60.230.A.3 states that an appeal vacates the decision from which the appeal is taken. The Department's staff is recommending that the Board remand this matter to RPC to consider an updated CEQA analysis as well as the factual information gathered in response to the issues raised by constituents at the March 20, 2008, Westhills community meeting. Notice of this matter has been provided pursuant to Section 22.60.240 of the County Code and Section 66452.5 of the Government Code.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

An Initial Study was prepared for this project in compliance with CEQA requirements (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.), the State CEQA Guidelines, and the environmental document reporting procedures and guidelines of the County of Los Angeles. In accordance with State and CEQA Guidelines, an MND was prepared for the project in 2007.

The MND that was considered by RPC in 2008 determined that potential impacts found to be less than significant with project mitigation included: 1) Air Quality, 2) Visual Qualities, 3) Fire/Sheriff Services, and 4) Biota.

Nine years have passed since RPC considered the environmental document. Therefore, the Department's staff has determined that additional environmental analysis is necessary at this time.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

Action on the remanding of the project, consisting of a CUP, OTP, VTTM, and associated MND to RPC is not anticipated to have a negative impact on current services.

For further information, please contact Marie Pavlovic at (213) 974-6433 or mpavlovic@planning.lacounty.gov.

Respectfully submitted,



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Director

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Attachment: March 20, 2008, Westhills Community Meeting Action Items

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
Chief Executive Office
County Counsel
Fire
Public Works

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Westhills Community Meeting
March 20, 2008

Action Items

Overarching goal:

Provide a transparent, quantifiable, and comprehensive analysis of the fire safety impacts of TR 52652 on the Westhills community. This analysis should take into account existing conditions that may improve or detract from the community's current level of safety from wildfire, the effects of various wildfire scenarios (e.g. taking into account fires that come from the north, south and west; fires that occur on high wind events, etc.) on the safety of Westhills residents, and a detailed enumeration of the characteristics of the proposed development that will likely improve upon or detract from the community's level of protection from wildfires. Based on these elements, the analysis should reach a conclusion as to whether the proposed development will have an adverse affect on the community's safety.

Specific Issues to be addressed:**

Fire Department:

- 1) Enumerate the effects of each of the required mitigation measures on the wildfire safety of the existing community;
- 2) Develop an evacuation and emergency preparedness plan for the Westhills community to aid in planning for wildfire safety;
- 3) Evaluate the suggestion to restrict parking on Kittridge on Red Flag Alerts and, as appropriate, take steps to implement these restrictions; (with Public Works)
- 4) Evaluate the suggestion to work with the City of Los Angeles to close Knapp Ranch Park on Red Flag Days;
- 5) Identify potential obstacles or fire hazards (e.g. Eucalyptus and pine trees, visibility issues, etc.) along Kittridge Rd. and develop a plan to mitigate those obstacles, as feasible.
- 6) Report back on the State Fire guidelines regarding the 800' maximum street length and determine whether the development should be approved in light of the fact that a car would have to travel approximately 3,300' from the intersection of Randiwood and Julie Ln. in order to reach Valley Circle.; (with County Counsel)
- 7) Work with the Westhills homeowners association to develop a Fire Safe Council to improve brush clearance in the existing neighborhood;
- 8) Work with the City Fire Department to determine whether they have any concerns about the proposed development;
- 9) Work with the Department of Public Works to ensure that landscaping on the subject property north of the fuel modification zone will be limited to fire-safe plants that will improve the fire buffer for the homes on Randiwood; (with Public Works and Regional Planning)
- 10) Determine whether adding an additional Las Virgenes Municipal Water District tank would actually improve fire safety in the existing community in light of the DWP water tanks already in existence.

evacuation

Public Works

- 1) Reevaluate the traffic study's validity in light of the concerns raised by the Westhills community (see attachment A), as well as the study's essential methodology, which did not include the use of a microsimulation program such as CORSIM; (with Fire Department)

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- 2) Develop a set of mitigation measures to ensure that construction activities will not create dust or air quality problems for the existing community;
- 3) After the meeting, a community member requested an example of a project that would illustrate the effectiveness of the air quality and grading mitigation measures imposed on TR52652. Please provide this information if it is available.

Regional Planning (with County Counsel)

- 1) Develop permanent and binding measures that will ensure that all roads in TR 52652 remain public and ungated;
- 2) Develop standards to ensure that the slope west of Randiwood and other portions of the Tract will be maintained in a fire safe condition;
- 3) Respond to the concerns raised about the "Yes" and "Maybe" answers in the Department's Initial Study;

Board of Supervisors

- 1) Continue investigating the potential of adding a secondary access road for emergency purposes through from Westhills, through Ranch Park, and connecting to Wooded Vista Dr.
- 2) Copies of existing conditions and Regional Planning Commission Resolutions (requested after the meeting) (with Regional Planning).

** Some of the action items stemming from this information may be more appropriately and effectively dealt with outside of the Subdivision review process. Supervisor Yaroslavsky's Office

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will help coordinate this effort with the involved County Departments and other jurisdictions, as appropriate.