



Proposed Las Lomas Development - What People Are Saying -

Elected Officials

"I do not support the project and, contrary to what the Los Angeles Daily News wrote, I am not promoting annexation."

Richard Alarcon

Los Angeles City Council Member, 7th District
Letter to the Editor, published in the *LA Daily News*
February 10, 2008

"I have other serious questions related to this proposed project, including water and sewer capacity, public safety resource delivery, the wildlife corridor, just to name a few. The work of city staff should be focused on the daily needs of its residents, not diverted to project applications that lie outside of the City."

Felipe Fuentes

California State Assembly Member, 39th District
Letter to Council Member Bernard C. Parks
December 10, 2007

"This project is a 'wolf in smart growth clothing' and you should not let it in!"

Shelia James Kuehl

California State Senator, 23rd District
Letter to Council Member Smith
November 27, 2007

"In addition, the recent and devastating wildfires should be a lesson as to where new development is appropriate, and where it is not; in this case, not in fire-prone brushy hillside areas, blocking a major wildlife corridor, nor in areas with little or no access to public transit to encourage people to get out of their cars and off the congested highways. None of this meets any reasonable definition of 'smart growth.'"

Julia Brownley

California State Assembly Member, 41st District
Letter to Council Member Smith
November 26, 2007

"This is one we just simply say 'no' to. This is irresponsible from A to Z. I find it hard to believe that somebody wants to propose a project in that area and that they want to propose it in the manner that they are doing it."

Bob Kellar

Santa Clarita City Council Member
Santa Clarita Signal
November 15, 2007

“The proposed Las Lomas development would be massive both in size and in lasting negative impacts on surrounding communities. The Santa Clarita City Council considers the safety and quality of life of our residents paramount and we strongly oppose this project based on its unrealistic land use and over-development.”

Marsha McLean
Former Mayor, City of Santa Clarita
San Fernando Valley Business Journal
November 14, 2007

“While the County General Plan, zoning, and Significant Ecological Area ("SEA") limit development of the Las Lomas property to approximately 200 to 250 dwelling units, the developer is proposing to construct 5,800 dwelling units, nearly 3 million square feet of commercial, industrial, and retail uses, and a 300 room hotel on 555 acres. The developer is aware of my long-standing opposition to development beyond these limits, which has been conveyed publicly and in the media. His annexation request to find a more acceptable "forum" for his project sets a dangerous precedent and is bad public policy. I strongly encourage the City to consider opposing the annexation, which would effectively terminate the project as proposed.”

Michael D. Antonovich
Los Angeles County Supervisor, Fifth District
Letter to Mayor Villaraigosa
November 13, 2007

“The claims that Las Lomas would embody ‘smart growth’ are equally refutable. The project is not infill development, it does not include any redevelopment, it does not use existing infrastructure and it does not reduce traffic. By every measurable standard of the term, Las Lomas is not ‘smart-growth.’”

Howard P. “Buck” McKeon
United States Congress Member, 25th District
Letter to Mayor Villaraigosa
October 19, 2007

“As you already know, I opposed the Las Lomas project as a Council Member and Mayor from the City of Santa Clarita because I felt there were various elements about the project that were cause for concern. Now, as a State Assemblyman, I remain opposed to the proposed Las Lomas development.”

Cameron Smyth
California State Assembly Member, 38th District
Letter to Santa Clarita Mayor Marsha McLean
October 3, 2007

“I do not support the proposed project and my reasons include the project's impact on the environment, including the ‘Rim of the Valley’ corridor. I will do everything within my power to protect the natural wildlife.”

Richard Alarcon
Los Angeles City Council Member, 7th District
Letter to Congress Member Brad Sherman
September 25, 2007

“In order to protect our region's diminishing natural resources and to construct the Rim of the Valley Trail, Congressman Adam Schiff and I introduced H.R. 1835 - Rim of the Valley Corridor Study Act. This act provides for a study of the area by the U.S. Department of the Interior to evaluate alternatives for protecting Rim of the Valley Corridor resources. The proposed Las Lomas project would jeopardize some of the same areas that we are seeking to protect with federal legislation.”

Representative Brad Sherman
United States Congress Member, 27th District
Letter to Mayor Villaraigosa
September 18, 2007

“We have a serious problem statewide and before we get to mandatory [water] rationing here, we need to know where we stand... We need to look at all new developments, conversions and additions to make sure we have enough water.”

Dennis Zine
Los Angeles City Council Member, 3rd District
Los Angeles Daily News
September 18, 2007

“This development would have a profoundly negative impact on the entire San Fernando Valley... Simply put, this development is a tsunami of sprawl. It is too big, too dense and in the wrong location. The impacts of the proposed Las Lomas development are simply impossible to mitigate.”

Greig Smith
Los Angeles City Council Member, 12th District
Los Angeles Times
September 14, 2007

Los Angeles Area Newspapers

Editorials

“But like many self-styled smart-growth projects, this one is essentially idiotic. Open space near Santa Clarita, where I-5 traffic moves into and out of the basin, is no place for a dense new development that would create as many as 66,000 new daily vehicle trips -- not when the city has so many opportunities within its present borders to encourage construction of market-rate and affordable infill housing. And the notion that Los Angeles should extend its borders and commit its bureaucracy to paperwork for the privilege of adding a new minicity is, well, just plain dumb.

Palmer's team may (or may not) be on solid legal ground in its claim that the City Council already committed itself to a study. But if the city doesn't want Las Lomas -- and it shouldn't -- continuing the process is anything but smart.”

Los Angeles Times- Editorial
February 21, 2008

“The impacts of this project are enormous - it's much larger than the Ahmanson Ranch project that was scuttled on the west side of the San Fernando Valley.

The least the Los Angeles City Council can do is to stand up for the quality of life in the Valley region - for a change.”

Los Angeles Daily News- Editorial
February 6, 2008

“Zine proposes that the Department of Water and Power, along with city planning and building agencies, review all new developments and additions to determine the impact on the water supply. That's a decent start, but he should go further.

What L.A. really needs is a moratorium on future projects until it comes up with a sound plan for preparing for them.”

Los Angeles Daily News- Editorial
September 18, 2007

“New Urbanist planners have long hoped that building high-density, mixed-use, multiple-unit developments on or near public transit lines would encourage Angelenos to leave their cars and start taking buses and trains. Instead, the properties that Times reporters studied have substantially increased vehicular traffic.”

Los Angeles Times- Editorial
July 11, 2007

“The Los Lomas development in the Newhall Pass adjacent to Sylmar is a classic example of what's going on. The Los Angeles City Council wants to annex this proposed mini-city even though it's not clear who will pay, and how, for mitigating traffic problems and for providing water.

The result of this approach to growth is sprawl, traffic congestion, air pollution and an eroding quality of life that threatens the very things that people are flocking here to enjoy. Those are exactly the reasons city and county officials went to war against the Ahmanson Ranch project in Ventura County.”

Los Angeles Daily News- Editorial
October 15, 2004

"Its size is certainly a factor - at 5,800 proposed units, it's one of the larger development proposals we've seen. But size alone isn't what makes Las Lomas such a fearsome beast of a development that needs to be slain... Cram 5,800 high-density housing units into the Newhall Pass, and mow down the hills that overlook the junction of Interstate 5 and state Route 14, and you will profoundly alter the nature of the transition from one valley to the next. You might just obliterate it. Then there are the other, more typical effects of a major development in that location: Increased traffic at an already congested junction, with nowhere to go, really, in terms of road improvements. Add that to the effects those new neighbors will have on the Santa Clarita Valley's own infrastructure - and a developer who we're sure will only pay lip service to making the project a "win win" for all parties - and the recipe can only add up to one thing: A bad project."

Santa Clarita Signal – Editorial
April 25, 2004

Articles

“Although Palmer's group garnered support from unions and business groups, many neighborhood organizations on both sides of the ridgeline, as well as the city of Santa Clarita and county, state and federal representatives, have taken a stand against Las Lomas, citing traffic congestion, environmental protection and public safety concerns.

‘It is so grossly incompatible with its surroundings, it violates every principle of urban planning,’ said Lisa Hardy, Santa Clarita's planning manager.

About 60% of the project site is steep, with slopes at a 50% grade or more. This would require the developer to move about 20 million cubic yards of dirt -- the equivalent of piling earth 10 feet high across Pasadena's business district -- to build a mesa where the housing and businesses would sit.”

Los Angeles Times
March 16, 2008

“Escalating their fight against the proposed 5,553-home development known as Las Lomas, Los Angeles City Councilman Greig Smith and state Assemblyman Cameron Smyth (R-Santa Clarita) called today for two law-enforcement agencies to determine whether a real estate developer perjured himself in public documents submitted on behalf of the project.

Smith and Smyth, who represent portions of the San Fernando Valley, said in a news release that Santa Monica-based developer Dan Palmer submitted ‘falsified statements’ in paperwork identifying his company, Las Lomas Land Co., as the sole owner of the property.”

Los Angeles Times
February 15, 2008

“Building on Lies?”

The Las Lomas Land Co. LLC, which is planning a 5,000-plus housing development in the Newhall Pass, owns less than half of the property, although the firm has told county officials it's the sole owner, an investigation by The Signal has revealed.”

Santa Clarita Signal
February 8, 2008

“The project, which is already subject of numerous lawsuits, is also a cause for serious concern for the county Board of Supervisors.

Supervisor Michael Antonovich voiced his opposition due to transportation concerns through the Newhall Pass. In a letter to Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Antonovich stated the Las Lomas property has slopes in excess of 50 percent covering more than half of the property, contains several prominent ridgelines, and has thousands of oak trees.”

Santa Clarita Signal
December 29, 2007

“In a report compiled by city staff, the city determined that the project incorporates only one of the nine characteristics the city considers a ‘smart growth’ project.

Kai Luoma, the city's senior planner, said the project would eliminate open space, is adjacent to three fault zones, relies on The Old Road as its only access road, and said that 60 percent of the site is comprised of slopes that exceed 50 percent.”

Santa Clarita Signal
November 15, 2007

(more)

Updated March 17, 2008

“The plan has been admonished by both the City of Santa Clarita and Los Angeles County because of impracticalities in the construction. They say that the underground Metrolink station would pose a safety hazard for passengers, and the traffic impacts would overwhelm traffic through the Newhall Pass. They also point out that roughly half of the terrain in the building area has slopes at a 50% grade, which can be extremely difficult to build on. That area has been determined by the City and the County to not be feasible for development of any commercial space and only 200-250 dwelling units.”

KHTS 1220 AM
November 14, 2007

“Southern California's new homes lining up in fires' path.

Among the other L.A. County developments in high-risk areas are Newhall Ranch, Las Lomas, Centennial and Ritter Ranch, according to fire experts, county planners, developers and state and local fire maps.”

Los Angeles Times
November 11, 2007

“The Texas report says motorists in Los Angeles and Orange counties spent an average of 72 extra hours in rush-hour traffic in 2005, the subject of the current study. That's one day shy of two full workweeks a year and is 20 hours more than in 1985. The delay represents the difference between how long it takes to travel during peak periods compared with hours when traffic flows freely.”

Los Angeles Times
September 19, 2007

“Several years ago, Santa Monica-based developer Dan Palmer promised the City of Santa Clarita that he would cancel the Las Lomas project, after Santa Clarita rejected the proposal due to a lack of water supply. However, Palmer then turned towards the City of Los Angeles. Palmer has pushed for the land where the project would be built be annexed to Los Angeles in order to have access to its water, electricity and infrastructure.”

North Valley Reporter
July 2007

“Environmentalists weren't quite so welcoming, describing Las Lomas as sprawl 'dressed up with faux smart-growth features.' Bart Reed, an activist from nearby Sylmar who specializes in transportation issues, calls Las Lomas an environmental disaster.

'It's taking virgin land that's always been virgin land, and trying to connect two urban areas that are disconnected by three to five miles of mountain range,' Reed says.”

LA Weekly
May 30, 2007

“The project has been met with staunch opposition from local environmentalists who say the project would do nothing but crowd the freeways with traffic, interrupt a natural wildlife corridor and destroy ridgelines and open space.”

Santa Clarita Signal
January 22, 2006

“But Los Angeles officials say [developer Dan Palmer]’s project is going nowhere. He needs to annex into the city of Los Angeles in order to have water for his minicity, but the two local councilmen, Greig Smith and Alex Padilla, have said they refuse to support the project because it would stretch city services too far north and would add to existing freeway congestion.

Las Lomas would generate an estimated 44,000 new vehicle trips per day.

‘...I’m a little curious myself why he’s continuing to press for approval and considerations,’ [Los Angeles City Councilmember Alex] Padilla said. ‘As long as I’m here, the project is not getting my approval.’”

Los Angeles Daily News

March 16, 2005

Blogs

"We don't understand why no one wants the Las Lomas project, a proposed 5,500 unit/555-acre development, to be built between the 5 and 14 freeways just north of Los Angeles' border. Come on, how cool would it be to live between two freeways so close together! Not to mention two other freeways are near by, the 405 and 210. Access to so many freeways = good quality of life. *Cough, cough.*

Who needs thousands of oak trees when you could build new homes adding 72,000 daily round vehicle trips to the area? Hillsides? They're alright. But only 20 million cubic yards of grading needs to be done to make this awesomely cool project a reality."

LAist

February 7, 2008

"...it seems that the project couldn't exist if it weren't brought into LA. For one thing, county zoning laws would allow only 250 homes on this site. For another, as an extra square mile or two tacked onto this city, Lomas would be entitled to DWP water--water it's going to have a hard time finding elsewhere. Antonovich, normally as pro-development a supervisor as you'll find, opposes the project as ecologically devastating. So does Santa Clarita, whose overused roads would bear new traffic."

City Watch LA

November 16, 2007

"In a flurry of announcements this week, Santa Clarita Valley officials found lots of ways to hate Las Lomas, the massive, proposed development that would put 5,500 units on 555 acres atop hills between Interstate 5 and Highway 14.

Says LA County Supervisor Michael Antonovich:

The Las Lomas property has slopes covering more than half of the property in excess of 50% slope, contains several prominent ridgelines, and has thousands of oak trees. Development would require 20 million cubic yards of grading. The property is already constrained in terms of ingress and egress, and this development would add approximately 72,000 daily vehicle trips, completely over-loading the Newhall Pass and the I-5/SR-14 interchange. The developer's proposed Metrolink station 300 feet underground, accessed by two elevator shafts, poses obvious health and safety risks to Metrolink users.

Santa Monica-based Palmer Investments would also add 2.7 million sq ft of office, retail and community space and a 300-room hotel next to the interchange where only weeks ago a big-rig accident caused massive delays and fires."

Curbed LA

November 15, 2007

(more)

Updated March 17, 2008

Environmental Organizations

“The Las Lomas project would eliminate the only quality wildlife corridor between the Santa Susana Mountains and the San Gabriel Mountains. It is not only the ecological health of the mountain ranges that are at stake here, but the health of the whole region.”

Ronald P. Schafer

Chairperson, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
Press Release
March 17, 2008

“This massive development would have a profoundly negative impact on our region’s environment. Proposed for a location that might equally be described as ‘gridlock central’ and ‘catastrophe central,’ the property would be inappropriate for development at even a small fraction of the proposed density. The recent inferno in the I-5 tunnel should serve as a reminder of just how inappropriate dense development at that location would be.”

Muriel S. Kotin

President, San Fernando Valley Audubon Society
Letter to Councilmember Smith
November 9, 2007

“There is a great need for additional housing in Southern California, but extending sprawl into a major wildlife corridor, dressed up with faux smart-growth features that are impractical and unfunded by the developer, seems to be more of the problem rather than part of the solution...Las Lomas sits astride a major wildlife corridor that bisects the Rim of the Valley greenbelt that is currently being assembled. While half the project land is dedicated as open space, the proposal significantly alters the landscape that wildlife relies upon. This mountainous property with slopes of 50 percent or greater means that the developer would have to grade off mountaintops.”

Sierra Club – Angeles Chapter

September 26, 2004

“Most conservation biologists would concur that the proposed project would result in significant, unavoidable, adverse impacts to this regional wildlife corridor.

Because of the site’s ecological sensitivity, any commercially viable project would result in unavoidable significant adverse ecological impacts.

The value of open space in the Santa Clarita River watershed, in the greenbelt between Santa Clarita and Los Angeles, and in the connection between the Angeles National Forest and the Santa Clarita Woodlands is of State-wide significance. The most sound enduring public policy direction on the subject property is to maximize the permanent protection of these resources.”

Michael Berger

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
Letter to the City of Los Angeles Planning Department
August 26, 2002

“That’s the area where the freeway collapsed. I would think everyone would have to look very closely at the seismological issues there.”

Lynne Plambeck

President, Santa Clarita Organization for Planning and the Environment
Los Angeles Times
June 1, 2002

(more)

Updated March 17, 2008

City and County Staff, Officials and Community Leaders

“Valley VOTE opposes the Las Lomas Development Project. This project, which will be about twice the size of the Ahmanson Ranch on about one quarter of the land, is planned for an unincorporated portion of Los Angeles County located north of the San Fernando Valley, east of the 5 and north of the 14 freeways.

The impact of this massive development will have a detrimental impact on business and the quality of life for the residents of the Valley, particularly the communities of Granada Hills and Sylmar. The traffic congestion; the proposed unsafe Metrolink station; the lack of water and sewer capacity; and the overwhelming negative environmental impact in this seismically active region are some of the key issues contributing to the opposition of this development.”

Valley VOTE
Press Release
November 17, 2007

“In our view, the project will create significant public safety related impacts and will be a detriment to law enforcement. It will further strain already limited LAPD resources... For public safety reasons and because the project will overwhelm our streets and highways, the [Los Angeles Police Protective League] opposes this project.”

Board of Directors
Los Angeles Police Protective League
Letter to Councilmember Smith
November 5, 2007

“If it went into either city or was split between two of them, whatever is built should not exceed the existing county general plan and zoning designation... Supervisor Antonovich does not support any development of the property in excess of what is currently permitted by county's general plan and zoning.”

Paul Novak
Planning Deputy for Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich
Los Angeles Daily News
August 7, 2007

“The proposed project is estimated to generate approximately 95,090 vehicle trips daily with 7,924 and 9,917 vehicle trips during the a.m. and p.m. peak hour, respectively. A project of this magnitude will significantly impact the intersections and roadways in the area.”

Rod H. Kubomoto
Assistant Deputy Director, Watershed Management Division
Los Angeles County Department of Public Works
Letter to Maya Saitzevsky, Project Coordinator, Las Lomas Annexation Project
August 27, 2002

“We, the Board of Directors of the Knollwood Property Owners Association, representing over 500 homes, wish to register our strong opposition to the proposed Los Lomas Annexation Project.”

We are concerned for our property values, our quality of live, and the safety and health of our children resulting from the carcinogens emitted by all these vehicles.”

There is now clear evidence from three separate large-scale epidemiological studies that the number of still-born babies and the number of babies born with birth defects and developmental delays is much greater in homes within a three mile radius of a landfill such as Las Lomas would be to the existing County side of the Sunshine Canyon Landfill. It is unconscionable to allow a project such as Las Lomas to be built that close to Sunshine Canyon Landfill. The city will be a party to murder and will be sued!”

Wayne K. Aller, Ph.D.

President, Knollwood Property Owners Association
Letter to Maya Saitzevsky, Project Coordinator, Las Lomas Annexation Project
August 9, 2002

“Not only is the location highly unstable, the land is also easily erodible as evidenced by the many areas of near vertical slopes which are nearly devoid of all vegetation. A large-scale project perched on top of hillsides easily capable of soil erosion could cause disastrous flood hazard down slope in both the Los Angeles River and Santa Clarita River watersheds.”

A residential development precariously placed in a hillside region with insufficient emergency egress would place its residents in serious jeopardy of falling victim to a fast moving wildfire spread by the annually predictable Santa Ana winds.”

The proposed project would generate between 8,000 and 9,000 peak hour trips and significantly create gridlock on the primary travel routes of the region. All of the traffic impacts will be realized on the Los Angeles County roadways and the environmental impact must be adequately mitigated to the benefit of the County of Los Angeles first followed by the City....the proposed project would effectively be the ‘straw to break the mountain lion’s back’ by the elimination of the final wildlife corridor to link the San Gabriel Mountains to the Santa Susana Mountains and ultimately to the coastal Santa Monica Mountains.”

Darly Koutnik

Senior Biologist, Impact Analysis
Los Angeles County Regional Planning
Letter to Maya Saitzevsky, Project Coordinator, Las Lomas Annexation Project
August 7, 2002

“[The capacity of the existing transportation system] is deficient, and undoubtedly this project will further exacerbate the current conditions particularly on freeways.”

James Chon

Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, Traffic and Lighting Division
Comments before the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning Scoping Meeting
July 11, 2002

“We find the statutory fees totally inadequate to build schools and must assume that this project will once again overtax our capacity. Given the minimal information we had, and I want to point out again: no contact let alone interaction with the developer, we find that really irresponsible even at this early stage. We have to come to the conclusion that the school issue has been totally ignored. And the developers made a lot of incorrect assumptions about the need and design of the schools.”

Marc Winger

Superintendent, Newhall School District

Comments before the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning Scoping Meeting

July 11, 2002

For more information on the project, please visit <http://www.santa-clarita.com/laslomas/>.