

To: Los Angeles City Planning Commission

200 N. Spring Street

Los Angeles, Ca. 90012

Attn: Henry Chu, Major Projects, Room 750C, Henry.Chu@lacity.org

Re: Ponte Vista E.I.R.- ENV-2005-4516, VTT-71886-MU

Honorable Chairman and Members of the Commission,

After years of reviewing various iterations and downsizings we remain very frustrated over the lack of meaningful, focused information for this project.

Accordingly, we remain unconvinced that the latest iteration of 700 units is appropriate within the current infrastructure and that this E.I.R. should be found inadequate and rejected for lack of focus and reliance on information to be discovered later "after more study". The developer is simply asking for too much flexibility which causes everything to stay out of focus.

If there is any clarity in this project it has been brought to light by the downsizing addendums to the E.I.R. which seem to make the project even more wonderful yet falls further out of line with the local residents perceptions. Specifically:

Traffic:

The latest traffic analysis uses universally accepted methods to describe the current and future performance of Western Avenue. Certainly those methods work well on highways in Portland or Charlotte but this is a dense urban environment where other factors play in such as:

1. The large number of cross streets and signals and the short distance between them.
2. The large number of Commercial driveways on Western.
3. The successful nature of the Enterprises on Western causing heavy use of the driveways.
4. The lack of good design of the parking lots fed by these driveways, which causes backups onto Western (i.e., throating, separate in/out, etc.).
5. The age of Western Avenue and all of its infrastructure within. It is a rare day when you can drive Western Avenue and not find a portion of a lane blocked off for repairs of something. New regulations seem to require the workers to put the cones out when they stop and blow their nose.
6. The timing of the signals which is controlled by Caltrans and their unusual methods which may not work with the big driveway 100' away from their signal. Caltrans is not famous for its local sensitivities.

When all of the above factors are used in a real analysis of Western the results will start to match the seat of the pants perceptions experienced by those of us who drive Western everyday. The author of

the E.I.R. dismisses the possibility of any of the above factors affecting traffic on Western, but instead fixates on the intersection analysis whose mitigations will work miracles(see page III.B-187).The wonderful A, B, and C level ratings on the addendums for Western are pure illusion. The only effective mitigation technique that will work on Western is to add a third lane in each direction, but that is not going to happen so we need to downsize this project. It is imperative that no matter which project gets built this project must dedicate an additional northbound lane and a parking lane on Western. This is not shown on any of their plans.

Storm Drainage:

There are two large neighborhood drainage problems that Ponte Vista has danced around for years. Neither problem is addressed in the E.I.R. making it inadequate.

It can be said that only a small portion of one of the problems is truly P.V.'s obligation, but a small effort on their part will go a long way toward mitigating both of these problems and this needs to be discussed upfront.

There is a large drainage area to the west of Western that drains thru to the P.V. property through an 8' diameter corrugated metal pipe under Western at Redondela. Although the pipe is huge it is too small for the watershed and the water cannot get into the full pipe and instead cascades over Western into the P.V. property. Oddly, Redondela is not at the low point in Western so the water collects in the low point and provides motorboat opportunities for cars on Western. Longtime residents can describe these events which may occur during a storm of as little as a ten year frequency. This can only be guessed at until a proper hydrology study is made a part of the E.I.R. P.V. is obligated to handle the cascading water in a non-erosive device and to provide a large onsite storm drain to accept water when the agencies upgrade the 8' diameter pipe.

The second problem is neighborhood flooding in and around Cooper school to the south east of P.V. The neighborhood is flat and there is simply too much water arriving there. If some of the water can be delayed in arriving the flooding can be reduced. The latest P.V. plan has a 2.4 acre park right in the drainage path which could be deepened and used to detain a number of acre-feet of water for long enough to make a difference. Using this park as a drainage facility means it should be owned and operated by the City. Can you see the Homeowners Association maintaining the weir gates? All of this should be in the E.I.R. but it is not.

Sewer:

The sewer plan submitted on the Tentative Tract Map is based on access to a sewer with no easement available to Ponte Vista. They've had 5 years to obtain said easement but it is not in hand yet. Along with this sewer easement there are several other impact items to negotiate with Mary Star School and none of those are resolved either. These should be presented as alternatives in the E.I.R. but are not here in this document at all. In all likelihood, this project will need a private sewer pump station with a different system configuration and outlet. This will increase the homeowners association fees which are already high with a private park and another 20 acres of landscaping, two rec areas, etc. (the impact of

these fees on the success of the project is not in the E.I.R.). Can the several downstream sewer outlets handle the flow? Fancy calculations say yes, but where are the maintenance logs on spills and backups that Cities must have on file since 2009? These should be in this document, but they are not.

There are two massive sewers running right thru the middle of this project on a north-south alignment, but no one can connect to these because they contain sewage that has been treated (hopefully) and is headed for the ocean. These sewers move 500 million gallons per day or 757 cubic feet per second at a speed of 4 feet per second. They must be pumped and pressurized to achieve this speed. Will the construction of this project stress out these 80 and 60 years old sewers? If the sewers fail will there be a spill? a sinkhole? What would the failure mode be? This is important because the Palos Verdes Fault Line also bisects this project in a east-west alignment. What if the fault line moves and shears the two sewers? What will happen to this project, who will be liable? The less dense this project is, the less damage will occur. Again, not in the E.I.R.

Energy:

Will this project connect to ugly power poles or will it all be undergrounded? Solar power systems can be installed on these units at no cost to the developer, but still this project is silent on solar. Does the LA DWP hate solar reduction of their income? Any reduction in energy usage will be appreciated when energy rationing starts in the future. None of this is in the E.I.R.

Summary:

This E.I.R. in its current form gives us no confidence that this 700 unit up-zoning can be sustained by the facilities in this neighborhood. Perhaps if the other supporting documents in this case could give us some confidence, but no. The Tentative Tract Map actually has a note on it that says all lot sizes are illustrative only and will be finalized later. The whole purpose of a Tentative Map is to tie down the exact design of the project to allow others to evaluate it. And the preliminary grading sheet of the Tentative Map, wow, is it preliminary. For this project there is also a "Specific Plan"--this is the vaguest document imaginable. At most critical junctures it says that any given item will be determined by the Planning Director and the Developer "later".

Any rational person can see why the neighbors have no faith in these project documents and find them to be fuzzy and out of focus. This E.I.R. is an over 600 page instrument of obfuscation that just confuses and bewilders any sincere person trying to grasp the project and relate it to the reality of our neighborhood. This E.I.R. jumps from 2200 units to 1135, to 835 units, but doesn't cover the 700 units now presented.

I strongly recommend that this E.I.R. be delayed and completely revised to cover 3 projects(all with 5 acre park and Mary Star roadway):

1. A 360 Unit, R-1 public street project(i.e., 6 units/acre);
2. A 700 unit as submitted project;

3. A compromise 480 unit project with some R-2 density projects along Western and Mary Star Road which buffer the main internal R-1 project.

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