



# SOUTH COUNTY ADVISORY COUNCIL

PO Box 2355 Nipomo, CA 93444-2355

April 3, 2024

Re: The South County's Response to the Proposed Dana Reserve Plan

Dear San Luis Obispo County Supervisors:

To meet our mission of providing a forum for citizen involvement and education on pertinent issues, the South County Advisory Council (SCAC) initiated several community meetings to educate and accept feedback from residents on the proposed Dana Reserve Plan. This letter is intended to provide you with the results of that effort and with our recommendations for future action.

The South County Advisory Council (SCAC) understands and appreciates the County's stated objectives for the Dana Reserve Specific Plan. However, the Plan's publication caused quite a bit of conversation in the South County. The Dana Reserve housing project is the most significant development proposal in the South County since 1996 when the Woodlands/Trilogy project was initiated. As such, immediate concerns were raised when comparisons between the two developments were considered. The Woodlands, with a similar number of housing units, was developed on three times the amount of acreage (970 acres) as the Dana Reserve project (288 acres) and was not placed adjacent to existing neighborhoods. In addition, environmental issues were raised due to the Dana Reserve's plan to destroy old oak woodlands and native habitat.

To answer questions from the community and provide South County residents with a full understanding of the Dana Reserve Plan, the SCAC held a special meeting at Nipomo High School on July 24, 2023. An audience of approximately 250 individuals attended the meeting. Supervisor Paulding provided the introduction and encouraged those in attendance to register their opinions of the project with the Board of Supervisors.

Developer Nick Tomkins presented the Dana Reserve Plan with a video presentation. Cuesta College Superintendent Jill Stearns discussed the college's role in the project and CEO Ken Trigueiro of the People's Self-Help Housing described his organization's involvement. Following the presentations, a public comment session allowed audience members to speak regarding the project. Fifty-five members chose to voice an opinion. The vast majority expressed concerns with the project. Ten of the speakers expressed support, primarily regarding the need for affordable housing.

On August 4, 2023, the final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Dana Reserve Specific Plan became available to the public. The EIR identified nineteen (19) unmitigated significant impacts in six (6) categories. The categories were Air Quality, Biological Resources, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Land Use and Planning, Population and Housing and Transportation.

The SCAC subsequently scheduled a special meeting on August 21, 2023, to provide residents an opportunity to comment on the Dana Reserve Plan's EIR. Developer Nick Tomkins was again present to respond to questions. Thirty-eight members of the crowd submitted requests to speak and voiced their concerns. No one spoke in favor of the project. The speakers spoke on a range of concerns that included: air quality, population density, traffic, infrastructure, public safety, environment, pollution, emergency exits, removal of the oak trees and conformity with surrounding neighborhoods. Generally, the

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speakers were critical of the lack of input by local residents to the project and the perceived rush through the planning process.

As a result of these concerns and recognizing the County's objectives, a collection of three groups; the SCAC, the Nipomo Action Committee and the Nipomo Oak Alliance, joined forces to develop an improved plan, subsequently labelled, "The Alternate Plan". This coalition was assisted in the effort to develop the Alternate Plan by subject specialists. The list of contributors and a digital map of the Alternate Plan are attached.

The Alternate Plan had the following objectives:

- a. Mitigate some of the significant adverse impacts identified in the Dana Reserve Plan EIR.
- b. Preserve habitat.
- c. Provide affordable housing.
- d. Facilitate county traffic flow objectives.
- e. Listen and implement community concerns with the project as proposed.
- f. Consideration for keeping the project feasible for the developer.

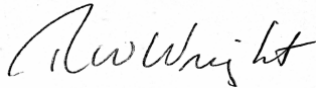
On October 24, 2023, the San Luis Obispo Planning Commission held a hearing on the Dana Reserve Plan. Members of the coalition were in attendance and spoke in support of the Alternate Plan. However, the Planning Commission voted to recommend the Dana Reserve Plan to the Board of Supervisors.

The SCAC held another special meeting on February 12, 2024, at Nipomo High School to present the Alternate Plan to the community. An audience of approximately 150 members attended the presentation. After the presentation, and a question-and-answer session, a straw vote of the audience indicated overwhelming support for the Alternate Plan. The Council subsequently voted eight in favor, with one abstention, to recommend approval for the community-generated Alternate Plan to replace the proposed Dana Reserve Specific Plan.

Therefore, due to the strong community support for the Alternate Plan, the SCAC respectfully requests the Board of Supervisors to:

1. Return the Dana Reserve Specific Plan to the Planning Commission for further consideration regarding adopting and incorporating the concepts of the community-generated Alternate Plan into the Dana Reserve development.
2. Require that representatives from the Nipomo Action Committee, The Nipomo Oak Alliance and The SCAC remain in consultation with County staff and the developer in the process leading up to the Board of Supervisors' final consideration of the development.

On behalf of the South County Advisory Council,



Richard Wright  
Correspondence Secretary

Attachments:

- List of Contributors to the Alternate Plan
- Digital Map of The Alternate Plan