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March 26, 2007

Storey County Planning Commissioners  
Storey County Commissioners  
Storey County Manager  
Storey County Building and Planning Administrator

RE: Proposed Master Plan Amendment and Zoning Change by Virginia Highlands, L.L.C. for Cordevista Development

Honorable County Representatives:

We would like to express our *vehement opposition* to this proposed Master Plan Amendment and zoning change to accommodate the planned community of Cordevista in Storey County. There are several reasons for our opposition and we feel that although this development will bring considerable tax revenue into the county, there are times when other issues need to take precedence over money. We would like this letter to become part of the Public Record for the upcoming Planning Committee Meeting on April 5, 2007 at the VC Highlands Community Meeting Center. Outlined below are our objections.

1. This proposed development creates an exact replication of the situation that drove us away from our family and friends in Southern California. We moved to the VC Highlands to remove ourselves from the "urban sprawl" and "over development" that has overwhelmed most of Southern and Northern California.

When we moved into our last home in SoCal, in 1997, the area was quite similar in topography to the highlands with rolling hills and orange groves as far as the eye could see. We were 5 miles from a freeway and 1 ½ miles from a 2 lane Highway controlled by stop signs. When we made our decision to relocate to Northern Nevada in 2003, there were no more orchards or rolling hills, just housing and commercial development as far as the eye could see. The 2 lane Highway is now 3 lanes in each direction, with traffic signals every ½ mile to let people in and out of the parking lots for Walmart, Kohls, Home Depot, and every grocery chain and furniture store you can think of. What used to be a 15 minute jaunt to the corner grocer is now a minimum of a 1 hour trip (if you can find a parking place.)

If this Cordevista development is allowed to be built, in less than 10 years, this exact same situation will be happening in Storey County. Mr. Blake Smith has already indicated that there will be at least one road either to the north or west of the development to connect the homes with Reno. What would you like to bet that the new homeowners of Cordevista will push for BOTH roads? One of these roads will skirt the northern end of the 40 acre parcels of the Highlands. It is also our understanding that some of those parcels have already been sold to another developer who supports putting a road though to the Damonte Ranch / Double R area. If this road goes through, land will be purchased and developed along both sides of this corridor, simply because there has never been access to this area before. Eventually, there will be tract housing and commercial/ retail development along this corridor from Reno out to the Cordevista development.

We were successful in diverting the proposed north/south Pyramid Link away from Storey County, we may not be successful in preventing additional highways, should this new CITY of Cordevista be built.

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Housing developments for the TRI complex should be placed along the I-80 corridor to minimize the ravaging of our rural lands. Building along that corridor is a more non-invasive way to accomplish their goal without disrupting the rural lifestyle we now enjoy here in Storey County.

2. The issue of water is of great concern to all of us here in Northern Nevada, but the Highlands and Virginia City in particular, are already in a serious situation in this regard. Mr. Smith proposes bringing in water to the area to be stored in underground reservoirs. He might be able to accomplish this with few problems, and he might not. Is it in our best interest to give a "go ahead" to this project without knowing for certain that his "plans" will be successful? Do we let this development go in and find out in a few years that they need to drill wells to supplement the water needs of this industrial complex and the housing developments? If that occurs we in the Highlands will be severely affected by additional demands on our current water aquifers.
3. The previous land use in that area by TRW / AeroJet has created a lot of concern about possible contamination of the land and water table in the area. Environmental controls back 20 – 30 years ago were not as stringent as they are today and there are many horror stories now coming to light about abuses by companies in manipulating environmental reports to allow them to continue operations that produce conditions that are harmful to humans and wildlife. In light of the problems being studied out in the Fallon area which have not resulted in any conclusive determination of the causes of the "cancer cluster" do we take a chance that in a few years down the road the same thing might start happening at Cordevista? We already KNOW the area was used in a way that is not compatible with human habitation, do we just allow up to 50,000 people to move into that area and hope that nothing serious develops in years to come? If they import water into underground reservoirs, will those reservoirs absorb the contaminants? Will the contaminants spread to other areas beside the Cordevista area through the water table? If it should come to that, will Storey County accept the liability and responsibility for allowing this zoning change that was so predicated on obtaining additional tax revenue, and cavalierly placed people all over Storey County in harms way?
4. The issues surrounding the Wild Horses have been glossed over by Mr. Smith and his partners. The horses are slowly being crowded out of their natural habitat all over Northern Nevada. Mr. Smith says his development will provide "corridors" for the horses to use. This area is their winter foraging grounds, Mr. Smith's solutions will not only remove vital land area for grazing, but will attempt to confine the herds to "specific areas" where their presence will not disrupt the residents' urban lifestyle. There is an area in Dayton where they have constructed homes and tried, unsuccessfully, to redirect the horses away from the development. Now they are trying to have the herds relocated out of state to appease the homeowners. We in the Highlands welcome the estrays and do not want to see them relocated to appease "urbanites" that have no appreciation for the beauty and history of these magnificent animals and consider them to be a nuisance. Who are we to usurp the rights of the horses to be in this area, for the sake of the almighty dollar?
5. The Petroglyphs in the area need to be protected from defacement. There are already those who feel hell bent to destroy them simply because they are bored and have nothing more constructive to do. These are living testaments to the history of the local people and our great nation. To put residential development adjacent to these historical artifacts is to condemn them to certain destruction, again for the sake of the almighty dollar.
6. Mr. Smith claims that the proposed housing density will be 1 – 2 homes per acre, yet will consist of dwellings ranging from estate homes, single family homes, detached and attached single-family homes to condominiums and townhouses. Just how will putting in attached homes, condos and townhouses keep the density between 1-2 homes per acre? Does Mr. Smith think we are all ignorant? Since TRI will be mostly industrial and warehousing operations, how are these workers going to afford to purchase homes in this development when 90% of the jobs will be paying wages at \$12/ per hour or less? *Having*

*recently been actively searching for employment in the current job market, it is apparent that an estimated 80% of the available jobs in our area pay \$12/hr or less. His amendment proposal states that the homes will only accommodate 5% of the proposed workers at TRI. By Mr. Smith making this statement, one can assume other developments are in the planning stages, which supports our objections mentioned in point #1.*

7. Currently the largest segment of population is concentrated in the southern portion of the county which is either "small town" or "rural" in composition. The completion of this development and the one at Painted Rock will cause a huge shift in our population center to the north. The proposed population attributed to this area will have a substantial affect on the future of Storey County. With a larger population living in an "urban" setting, the relaxed lifestyle we now enjoy will disappear since the emphasis will be shifted to growth designed to provide more urban amenities and conveniences that we are currently content to forego to maintain our rural independence. We will be forced by a large voting block to accept unwanted changes to our environment to suit the whims of others who do not share our love of natural surroundings, clean air and open spaces.
8. The county will be forced, at some point in the future, to connect the southern county seat in Virginia City with the larger population in the north. To provide adequate public services, such as Fire, Police, school busing, utilities and road maintenance to all areas of the county, there will be a need to create easily traveled and maintained roads. Mr. Smith's assurances that no roads are planned to connect Cordevista to the Highlands or Virginia City may be accurate at this time. Any reasonably intelligent person can see "the handwriting on the wall" and KNOWS that a North/South, easily traveled, paved connector road is an inevitable fact that will anger the residents of the Highlands who will feel they have been "duped" because they were promised it wouldn't happen.

Please accept our objections voiced here and weigh our opinions in earnest. Reiterating the mention in our opening paragraph, we would like this letter to be included part of the Public Record at the Planning Committee Meeting to be held on April 5, 2007, at the VC Highlands Community Meeting Center.

Respectfully,

Harry and Donna Stanley