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Storey County Planning Commission
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STOREY COUNTY
PLANNING

Dear Planning Commission,

I attended the April 13th meeting and appreciate your efforts to hold additional meetings so that Storey County residents have the opportunity to attend and learn about the CordeVista project, as this project would ultimately affect everyone in the county. I support responsible growth, but believe that this massive proposed project in Storey County would be a detriment to the residents and cause a huge change in our quality of life in addition to increased financial burdens.

If development will support itself to provide for services (fire, law enforcement, schools, county business, etc.), then **WHY** do Washoe and Lyon counties want Storey County to provide housing for TRI employees? It must be because the increased revenue flow from property taxes is not sufficient. There are certainly *many* homes currently available for sale in both these counties for TRI workers.

I also argue that adding 20,000 to 40,000 people to Storey County would increase our population five to ten fold. This would **HUGELY** affect the demand for county services. Storey County has neither the personnel nor the county facilities to accommodate this growth. In comparison, this amount of growth in Washoe County (pop. 409,085 in July 2006, computes to a 5% to 10% growth) would be a much smaller percentage of its existing population. Lyon County (pop. 48,865 in July 2005) would be a higher percentage, but still nothing of the magnitude of the affect on Storey County. It is unlikely that a majority of the workers at TRI would actually live at CordeVista, so the neighboring counties would still be affected.

Many communities are historically "bedroom" communities. Others are more industrial. It is not legally required for each area to be fully self-sustaining. Each area provides benefits to other areas. Storey County provides higher than average paying jobs. We provide power generation. We provide a landfill. These are services that Washoe and Lyon counties did not want. Most disposable income of Storey County residents is spent in other counties. And because the Highlands have a Reno zip code, substantial sales taxes incurred for purchases of building materials and other items delivered to the Highlands goes to Washoe County. *Will this injustice be repeated with CordeVista, if they also get a Washoe County zip code?*

Storey County has and is providing ongoing benefits to other counties. I perceive the offered choice of planned growth vs. potential annexation of our tax base as a veiled threat. Yes, planned growth **SHOULD** be supported, but it should be manageable growth. If other counties are threatening to annex TRI for the tax base, we should stand our ground. We could "threaten" to stop producing power for other counties, to stop taking their waste, to sue for lost sales tax revenues, etc.

Some of Mr. Smiths arguments at the meeting disturbed me. To argue that CordeVista is needed so that the TRI workers can have a place to go for lunch is hard to believe. I have been told by individuals that have worked at TRI that facilities for employees to eat are provided for by the companies themselves. Is this incorrect? Why not approve the building of a restaurant at TRI if the demand for it is so high? Is a whole subdivision needed for lunch services?

The handout at the meeting indicated that "*CordeVista has pledged not to build roads to connect to the south or VCH, which is over four miles from the CordeVista southern boundary line.*" This statement is incorrect! It is true that it is over four miles to the *VC Fire Statton*, but it is about three miles from my home and several other 10-acre lots. It directly abuts the 40-acre lots. Mr. Smith stated that this four miles is the same distance from the Highlands entrance to the Sierra Summit mall, as the bird flies. According to my map and ruler, this distance appears to actually be just over five miles. Not a huge difference, but it makes one wonder what other "facts" he might also be distorting.

The pictures depicting the night skies of Somersett do not show **ANY** commercial areas, Mr. Smith indicated that is because they are currently being developed. So we really have **NO** way to ascertain what the commercial lighting affect might be. Certainly there would be numerous streetlights for parking lots in addition to the retail location lights. And *most troubling* were the two brightest spots on one picture, which he indicated were model homes. But **WHY** were these model homes so bright? Is this what most homes would look like when most of their interior (and perhaps exterior) lights were on? Why such a marked difference between the model homes and the others in the pictures? Was it because only a few of those houses shown in the pictures actually had residents? What time and what date were these pictures taken?

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The Petroglyph's are a national treasure. To even consider putting 20,000 to 40,000 people adjacent to this area without some definite plan will inevitably result in damage to this historic site. Mr. Blake should have met month's ago with native people and conservation groups if he was serious about preserving this site.

Recently, there have been many fires in Washoe County in residential areas; most were caused by youth. CordeVista would develop in an area that youth would be enticed to explore in, and perhaps cause fires that could destroy lives and property. Without good access to the north, the fire stations in VC and the Highlands might be unable to reach these areas from the south in their vehicles to protect us and to provide backup to the northern fire station. Would the north district be able to subdue these fires unassisted? In the interest of public safety, there *must* be some kind of improved road (either Lousetown or Long Valley) for the fire departments to be able to access wild fires and provide backup. These roads could be gated and locked, with only fire and sheriff's departments possessing keys or codes to open them. However, the master plan states:

"Construction of a road to link Virginia City with Lockwood is also recognized as necessary though no group has put forth sufficient energy to see its fulfillment. The existing Largomarsino Road is only passable part of the year. It follows a tortuous route over rough Topography and would thus require major reconstruction. In view of the complete absence of any suitable road link within Storey County between the Truckee River area and Virginia City, reconstruction and paving of Largomarsino Road should be considered by county officials as being the **number one** priority. However, the V.R.W.P.A. is concerned about the impact on Storey County's wild horse population if an improved road is completed. These concerns need to be addressed before a decision is reached.

The steep grades and unpaved roads are a problem throughout the county, especially for emergency vehicles and school busses. Residents and county officials traveling between the River District and Virginia City must first travel to Sparks and Reno. A connecting road through Largomarsino Canyon would cut some 15 miles from this route. Without these two connecting roads, Virginia City itself will become more irrelevant to the majority of Storey County residents."

What disturbed me the most at the meeting were the comments by Oliva Fiamengo, regarding the wild horses. I have no reason to doubt the truth of what Oliva said; she has passionately devoted a huge portion of her life to protect these horses, at no financial gain to herself. If it is true that someone connected with Mr. Smith contacted the Attorney General regarding having the horses removed, it is clear what his ultimate plan is. This should be investigated immediately! Also, if Mr. Smith is so concerned about the horses, why would a well that supplies them water be shut down after he purchased the property? Especially since the previous owners had allowed it to exist to provide this necessary water for the horses and other wildlife. More information needs to be obtained to get to the truth here. The project application indicates "*if it becomes necessary to relocate the horses from all or part of the area*" certainly indicates that he realized in the beginning that this is going to be a future problem. If Mr. Blake has a caretaker living on this property, how was this allowed in the county if there is no water or any power to operate a well? Isn't this a code violation?

Also, more research needs to be done regarding the Somersett development regarding what areas were initially set aside for wildlife protected areas, and the exact language used to define these areas and future uses. Perhaps it was *implied* that more areas would be retained, and the intent all along was to use some for a golf course. There appears to be some dispute regarding this, and more information is definitely needed to ascertain the truth. However, Mr. Blake's statement that the deer use the golf course for a wildlife area I find insulting. The high use of chemicals in golf courses would not be beneficial for any wildlife or for the water. Additionally, alluding that the wild horses could use this area is humorous. Can't you just see your golf ball landing in a big "stud pile" on the fairway! Wild horses leave significantly more excrement behind than deer do. And finally, the 40% of the area Mr. Smith will "protect" for the wildlife is the rockiest, least life-sustaining areas...the areas he doesn't want to develop anyway due to the increased costs of development on steeper hillsides. It appears based on the site studies that he is giving away something he wasn't going to use!

Mr. Blake has a great sales pitch; he should, as he wants to make millions of dollars from this project. But it will be to the detriment of the existing population of Storey County, and certainly not necessary to our general good. It is the inherent responsibility of any county to look after the best interests of its own residents first and foremost. No other county is going to make Storey County its #1 priority – except Storey County.

Please deny this proposed change to the master plan or any zoning change requests. However, if you do decide to approve this, attached is a list of requirements that I believe you should mandate.

Respectfully,


Kay Dean