



CF 05-0671 RVM submitted on 5-4-05

CHATSWORTH NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

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May 4, 2005

Planning and Land Use Committee
City Of Los Angeles

Los Angeles LAFCO

Re: Sphere of Influence

Gentlemen,

The Land Use Committee of the Chatsworth Neighborhood Council wants to advise you that the Chatsworth Neighborhood Council is not for the above-referenced proposal.

The County has done extensive public outreach and has advised the public of its intentions for this area, as part of its general plan update, which is to generally preserve the area, with housing not to exceed one home per 10 acres.

The City has not advised us of its intentions. The City has not followed rules in its Municipal Code on certain land use matters in our Community, such as where it recently approved a 65,000 square foot storage building in a dedicated residential neighborhood. The City has not proven helpful in providing input on a recent County project near our neighborhood, but the County hosted many meetings with the developer, County Officials, and the community.

We are concerned with continued urban sprawl. We need to preserve the majority of the proposed Sphere Areas as open space, not bring them under City control to facilitate development.

We are very concerned that the City has not provided any of us with an authoritative or binding commitment on how these lands are to be used. We have been told that our Councilman has told a nearby community that the lands are to be preserved as open space; we need to see that commitment in writing through either a proposed rezoning or other clear, written, indication of the City's proposed use for this area, and public comments should be sought.

Sincerely,

Teena Takata

enclosure

At its February 2, 2005 meeting, the Board of the Chatsworth Neighborhood Council (CNC) voted unanimously to adopt the following position concerning the City's proposed Sphere-of-Influence filing with the Local Area Formation Commission (LAFCO).

The CNC is concerned that the Sphere-of-Influence Proposal to be submitted to LAFCO would, in the long run, facilitate development of unincorporated areas that should remain as open space for wildlife corridors, natural landscape and passive recreational uses.

We understand that the technical effect of a sphere of influence is merely to designate the jurisdiction which will serve as the primary source for supplying future infrastructure to an area. However, such infrastructure development tends to enable and promote more intense uses of the land in the subject area. For example, a currently proposed project along Browns Canyon Road depends in part on access to the L.A. City water supply, sewer, utility systems and roads. Annexation of the area, a reasonable consequence of a sphere-of-influence finding, would facilitate such access and hasten development.

A stated purpose for the proposal is to give the City greater standing in matters involving proposed developments in the adjacent unincorporated areas. However, in the recent Deerlake Ranch subdivision case before the County Regional Planning Commission, the City squandered ample opportunities to insist on stricter traffic mitigation and environmental protection, leaving it up to local residents to do the research and fight the battles. The City failed to provide any testimony about project impacts at various meetings of the County's Regional Planning Commission, even when its representatives were directly asked for their comments at a public hearing. If the City can't make good use of the influence it already has, it does not appear that further granting of official standing will serve any beneficial purpose.

The CNC concludes that a Sphere of Influence is not needed. Rather, the City should discourage urban sprawl and focus on redevelopment of underutilized and/or abandoned areas. In addition, we suggest that the City adopt the County's proposed Significant Ecological Area (SEA) standards in the hillside areas surrounding Chatsworth. Those proposed standards have undergone an extensive public review and comment process.