



# STOP Harvest Hills Sprawl Development

## Issue Guide

<u>Overview</u>	<p>Harvest Hills (formerly Safari Highlands Ranch) is Exhibit A for poor planning in the County. A classic sprawl land use development footprint, Harvest Hills proposes to annex 1,100 acres to the City of Escondido resulting in an <b>upzone from the current 27 units (County zoning) to 550 high-end</b> houses. It would destroy environmentally sensitive and remote areas of the County important to wildlife. Harvest Hills would have many devastating impacts and is inconsistent with regional plans. The fire danger of this location is <b>extreme</b>. The rebranding of the project as Harvest Hills did not fix the fatal flaws that render it unsupportable. Harvest Hills will increase fire danger, worsen evacuation in the region, increase traffic, add thousands of cars on already congested roads, and undermine transportation planning and habitat planning. It should be rejected by the Escondido City Council.</p>
<b>What is the problem</b>	<p>The proposal is biologically devastating, traffic and climate impact inducing, and poses extreme fire danger to new residents and those living along the San Pasqual road corridor. Expert <a href="#">reports on fire</a> and <a href="#">evacuation</a> underscore this fact making this project a danger to current and future residents. We should learn the lessons of other areas. Read <a href="#">We came, we planned, we were wrong</a>, an analysis about the No. California fires by the ACIP.</p> <p>This project will exacerbate climate changing emissions and make climate action harder. The majority of the site has very steep slopes which, normally, would severely and appropriately limit opportunities for development. The impact to many important species like golden eagle, mountain lions, gnatcatchers, Englemann oaks are devastating and will further encroach on and destroy important habitat and corridor areas. Much of the land is included in the PAMA for the MSCP, violates nearly all of the MSCP requirements, and has the potential to undermine <a href="#">MSCP planning in the County</a>. Wildlife agencies have raised <a href="#">significant objections</a> to the project as have <a href="#">scientists from the Zoological Society</a>.</p> <p>Annexation of such a far-off, isolated property means that Escondido must provide services to this area, thus draining funds away from the urban core areas needing investment. The development will not pay its way over time and will require constant support from taxpayers <a href="#">for services such as emergency and fire</a>.</p> <p>Harvest Hills are high-end homes and do nothing to help address our housing crisis. Our region needs affordable-moderate housing stock located on or near transportation corridors, not more luxury homes in a sprawl land-use pattern.</p> <p><b>Harvest Hills is inconsistent with the County General plan, does not comply with the MSCP, does not provide adequate fire evacuation routes, and does not address serious traffic concerns (tripling traffic in some areas) and will worsen already overcrowded routes along San Pasqual Road. The project and cumulative impacts of this project have not been adequately addressed or mitigated in the environmental documentation to date.</b></p> <p>IFor more information about this project is here <a href="https://spvpa.org/safari-highlands-ranch/">https://spvpa.org/safari-highlands-ranch/</a>.</p>
<b>Relevant agencies</b>	<p><b>City of Escondido:</b> The city would have to vote to annex and approve this project, the BOS has no direct vote on it. It will take 3 votes on the City Council to stop, or approve, the project. The city is <a href="#">processing the project</a>.</p> <p><b>LAFCO:</b> <a href="#">Local Agency Formation Committee</a>, a charter agency that is required for any change of boundary for a city or other government. Includes <a href="#">2 BOS, 3 city elected, and others</a></p>
<b>Position</b>	<p><b>The defeat of this project is a high priority for the Sierra Club and many other community and environmental organizations.</b></p>

<b>Terms to know</b>	<p><b>Annexation:</b> A process by which a govt (like Escondido) expands its boundaries into adjacent areas not already incorporated into the municipality. In this case, the land is currently in the County and would transfer to the city if annexed.</p> <p><b>MSCP:</b> <a href="#">Multiple Species Conservation Plan</a>, the planning effort for three regions of the County under the auspices of the County of San Diego.</p> <p><b>PAMA:</b> Pre-approved mitigation area: Areas determined in advance where mitigation for habitat loss should occur so that the most important habitat should be preserved. Much of the Harvest Hills area is PAMA.</p>
<b>Status</b>	The FEIR is due out by the end of 2019. Hearings will be held in Feb or March, 2020
<b>Actions</b>	<p>1. Please write the Escondido Mayor and City Council and urge them to oppose this development. <a href="https://www.escondido.org/city-council.aspx">https://www.escondido.org/city-council.aspx</a> or individually at <a href="mailto:pmcnamara@escondido.org">pmcnamara@escondido.org</a> <a href="mailto:Odiaz@escondido.org">Odiaz@escondido.org</a> <a href="mailto:jmasson@escondido.org">jmasson@escondido.org</a> <a href="mailto:cmartinez@escondido.org">cmartinez@escondido.org</a> <a href="mailto:mmorasco@escondido.org">mmorasco@escondido.org</a></p> <p><b>Key Points:</b> We urge the city to oppose this project because it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Significantly increases wildfire risks:</b> Location in high wildfire risk area will exacerbate the risks and difficulties for evacuating residents in the entire area, as well as residents of this development.</li> <li>● <b>Worsens Traffic:</b> It will significantly increase traffic by adding over 67,000 vehicle miles <u>a day</u> (VMT) to an already congested area.</li> <li>● <b>Undermines transit:</b> Its far-flung development footprint will further frustrate efforts for effective transportation planning.</li> <li>● <b>Fails to provide moderate or affordable housing:</b> By only providing high-end housing, it does nothing to help us meet housing goals.</li> <li>● <b>Violates County General Plan:</b> It violates the County General Plan by increasing density 2,000%.</li> <li>● <b>Worsens climate impacts:</b> It will undermine efforts to address and reverse climate change and make reductions more difficult.</li> <li>● <b>Destroys sensitive habitat:</b> It will undermine an adopted Multiple-Species Conservation Plan and the one proposed for North County and obstruct wildlife corridors necessary for many species to survive in the region.</li> </ul> <p>2. Get active with the <b>Sierra Club Conservation Committee</b> <a href="mailto:conservation@sierraclubncg.org">conservation@sierraclubncg.org</a></p>