



John Hildebrand
Planning Director


RIVERSIDE COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Memorandum

Type text here

DATE: August 26, 2024

TO: Riverside County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Jose Merlan, Principal Planner 

RE: All Comment Letters Received on Highgrove 72 Unit Residential Project

The project, 72-unit residential development in Highgrove, in District 1 (Tentative Tract Map 37743, Plot Plan 200017 and General Plan Amendment 190009) was noticed to the public with a date for public comment on the Mitigated Negative Declaration (Environmental Document) and to notify the public of the public hearing date (August 27, 2024). This memo is to provide all comment letters including letters that came in after the project was routed to appear on the agenda for August 27, 2024.

Name	Date of Letter	In favor or opposed
Rick Darter	August 12, 2024	Opposed (change of character)
Mathew Becket	August 16, 2024	Opposed (change of character)
Gayle Tranquillo	August 17, 2024	Opposed (traffic, change in neighborhood character)
Rosalva Middleton	August 17 th , 2024	Opposed (change in character, privacy)
Charles Middleton	August 17 th , 2024	Opposed (change in character, traffic)
James Wright	August 19, 2024	Opposed (litter, traffic)

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From: [Ketcham, Thomas](#)
To: [Merlan, Jose](#)
Subject: FW: More Highgrove development shenanigans
Date: Thursday, August 15, 2024 1:18:30 PM

Jose,
Fyi for the record.

Thomas C. Ketcham

Deputy Chief of Staff – District#1
Director of Land Development – District#2
Email | tketcham@rivco.org

Supervisor Kevin Jeffries – District #1

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Supervisor Karen Spiegel – District #2

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From: Rick Darter <rd1965@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 12, 2024 12:16 PM
To: Supervisor Jeffries - 1st District <district1@RIVCO.ORG>
Subject: More Highgrove development shenanigans

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Good afternoon Sir.

The NE corner of Mt Vernon and Center is once again in the cross hairs of "More bang for the buck" developers.

This time they are intending to stuff 72 McMansions on to 9 acres. That works out to 1/8th of an acre pre home. PPT2000017

Absolutely ridiculous!

They managed to sneak in a similar project already on the South side of Center just before you enter Spring Mountain Ranch.

Highgrove does not need any further High Density Housing! Particularly in my front yard!

Thank you for your time.

Rick Darter

192 Carlin Ln, Riverside, CA 92507

August 16, 2024

Board of Supervisors of Riverside County

County Administrative Center

4080 Lemons Street

Riverside, CA 92501

Honorable Supervisors:

As a homeowner who would be affected by the construction proposed by Steven Walker Communities for the 9.17 acre lot at the corner of Center Street and Mt. Vernon Avenue **Residential Plot Plan—PPT200017**, I would like to state that 72 family units, eight houses per acre, would radically change the character of the neighborhood for the worse. We live at 55 Carlin Lane, where we have excellent relationships with our neighbors in a supportive community, each of the families on Carlin Lane living on a half acre lot. When looking to buy, we looked in the greater Riverside area for almost a year. When we first walked into the property at 55 Carlin Lane, our real estate agent—noting the well kept expansive yard with birches and a eucalyptus tree—said, “This is the best home we’ve seen.” We became acquainted with helpful, civic minded neighbors up and down the street almost immediately. Putting a medium-high density development virtually next door would be an administrative insult to a fine community and has no other rationale than to maximize the speculative developer’s profits. Let Steven Walker Communities in fact honor the existing community, take a slightly smaller profit, and be the good neighbor that their friendly name suggests.

Thank you,

Matthew Becker

55 Carlin Lane

Riverside, CA 92507

mbecker@csudh.edu

August 17, 2024

First District
Supervisor Kevin Jeffries
Riverside County Board of Supervisors
4080 Lemon St. 5th Floor
Riverside, Ca. 92501

RE: **Strongly opposed** Amending from CD:MDR to CD:MHDR
72 Two-story Homes on 9.17 Acres with entrance and exit on Center Street
General Plan Amendment No. 190009
Tentative Tract Map No. 37743 and Plot Plot No. 200017
Amend from CD:MDR to CD:MHDR

Dear Supervisor Jeffries:

I am, as the rest of Highgrove, thankful that the commercial part of this development has been defeated. Now we are facing Steven Walker Communities wanting to change the zoning from Medium Density Residential to Medium High Density Residential. Once again our community of Highgrove is facing a change that doesn't fit in with how our community is set up with the other homes in this area. **This is about where we dwell and how we dwell.**

Originally, when the homes on Carlin Lane, Oriel, Osborne Court, Cindy Circle, Murphy Ave., Goldfinch Lane, Owetzal Lane, Pelican Dr. Whipporwill Dr., Bob White Lane, Chickadee Circle and Mandarin Way, just to name a few, it was **mandatory by both the Riverside Planning Department and Riverside County Supervisors that all lots be half acre lots.** You need to stick by your own findings, rulings and judgements. That is the community that we purchased our homes in. If we wanted to live in a crowded community, with dense housing, close to stores we would not have invested our money, time or raised our families in the community of Highgrove. **It all comes down to, how much tax money we can make from these projects. If we bring in businesses then we can also collect more...**

Currently, this is what Highgrove as well as other communities are dealing with:

State of California, Planning Depts., County Supervisors and developers are people sitting behind their desks making decisions about other people's lives without being a part of those lives on a daily basis.

Don't be offended by this but **STOP AND THINK ABOUT IT. Highgrove is not about property taxes for the County of Riverside and profits for developers. It's about families that want to live in peace when they come home from work and school. A peaceful environment to return to and dwell.**

But here we are again, talking about a project that is not fitting into the rest of our community. I can't wrap my head around 72 homes built on 9.17 acres with them all being two (2) story single family homes. I wonder how many buyers would purchase these homes if they could see the finished product where **THEIR HOUSE IS CRAMMED RIGHT NEXT TO SOMEONE ELSE'S WITH NO SPACE IN BETWEEN. WHERE THEY CAN NEVER**

OPEN THEIR WINDOWS WITHOUT HEARING WHAT IS GOING ON NEXTDOOR NOR CAN THEIR NEIGHBORS.

Some of the lots on Carlin Lane will have three (3) homes on the other side of their fence with this project. Is that what you would want in your backyard? I can guarantee you that Steven Berzansky and David Peery's homes aren't by this "Medium High-Density Housing" projects. **THREE (3) FAMILIES ON CARLIN LANE HAVE TOLD ME THAT IF THIS GOES THROUGH, THEY WILL BE PUTTING THEIR HOUSE UP FOR SALE. THEY ARE FEELING FORCED OUT OF THEIR HOMES.**

RIVERSIDE PLANNING DEPT., COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE SUPERVISOR'S, IS THIS REPRESENTING THE NEEDS OF OUR HOMEOWNERS? OUR COMMUNITY?

I am not against building homes on this property, as long as it fits into the existing homes and lifestyle that we have and love. This project won't be a benefit to the neighborhood. Whom it will benefit is both the **County of Riverside, with more homes equal more property taxes** and **Steven Walker Communities with more homes to sell and profit from.**

How can we make this project better for everyone? These are some of the drawbacks on this project with some suggestions on how to make this project better for our community.

1. 72 Single homes crammed on 9.17 acres and all of them are two (2) story homes?

Highgrove is not a high-density community. Most of the homes on this end of our community are half-acre lots. **You all need to be respectful of our community.** The number of houses need to be cut back and on the perimeter of the development put one story houses behind Carlin Lane and also down Theresa. Not all people want a two-story home and this will give a choice to buyers. My daughter (45 yrs. old and her husband (47 yrs. Old), are selling their two-story home and purchasing a new one-story home which is currently being built with move-in around November. Many people middle-aged are not interested in a two-story home but prefer a single story knowing that in the future this will be a problem. **As people age, problems with balance, breathing, knee, hip and other physical problems, limits what is safe for them to do. Stairs become a problem of safety.**

If you, Steven Berzansky and David Peery, would do this it would be better for the existing homes that border this project as well give your home buyers a choice of a one-story or a two-story home. I know of very few people who want a two-story home.

I know that it costs more to build a single-story home but how much do you need to profit at the cost of our community and homeowners privacy? I am all for you making a profit but do you have to make a "killing" at our expense. Once this project is done, you will be gone and will have no concerns or thoughts regarding our community.

2. The entrance and exit of these 72 homes is on Center Street and if each home has two (2) cars that's an additional One Hundred and Forty-Four (144) cars. If mom and dad each have a car, then the kids, their friends, visitor's, etc. Center Street has become a freeway since Spring Mountain Ranch homes have gone in. People are actually scared to walk down Center Street anymore. Remember too, that Highgrove Elementary, is just a couple of blocks down Center Street.

Also, the traffic report that was done and presented to us was MADE during the covid shut down. This doesn't reflect the TRUE flow of traffic. Has that traffic report been updated???

Solutions:

Traffic Report needs to be updated. Why can't the entrance and exit be on Mt. Vernon?

Carlin Lane is only one block long. Carlin at both ends of Center Street and Main St. comes to a "T" intersection. Carlin is already dealing with the Spring Mountain Ranch traffic which cuts down our street to avoid the signal at Center St. and Mt. Vernon. When they leave Spring Mountain Ranch, they drive down Center St., make a right on Carlin Lane, go to Main St. and make a left. Coming home its Main St., right onto Carlin Lane, left on Center St and up into the homes in Spring Mountain Ranch. **THIS NEW PROJECT WILL COMPOUND OUR TRAFFIC DOWN CARLIN WITH CARS TRYING TO AVOID NOT ONLY THE SIGNAL BUT ALSO THE ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC MERGING ONTO CENTER ST.**

Solution is twofold to the traffic problem:

1. Move the exit and entrance onto Barton Rd and keep this additional traffic off of Center Street. Then maybe more of the Spring Mountain Ranch traffic won't cut down our street.
2. At the intersection of Center Street and Carlin Lane **create a cement barrier with only being able to make a right-hand turn from Carlin Lane onto Center Street.** No traffic from Center Street could turn onto Carlin Lane. This would solve our problem of traffic cutting through our one block long street.

The same type of barrier that the City of Riverside has put on Third Street at Lime and Lemon. Protect our homes....as the City of Riverside has protected the residents on Lemon and Lime.

I hope that you have read this letter and have thought about what I have said. I would not purchase many of the homes in Spring Mountain Ranch nor in the other KB development off of Mt. Vernon and Spring Street because they are crammed together. Now Steven Walker Communities has one in the works with the same thing being done. I would never look or consider buying in such a crammed-up neighborhood. I don't want to hear my neighbor's conversations when I open my windows. Nor hear their children crying and fussing in my house. I could just move into an apartment and get the same thing thrown at me. Our homes are our safe, peaceful and restful sanctuary. Let's continue to build homes where this is possible.

Sincerely,

Gayle Tranquillo
103 Carlin Lane
Riverside, Ca. 92507
Home 951-788-0736
Cell 951-347-3344

From: [Ketcham, Thomas](#)
To: [Merlan, Jose](#)
Subject: FW: Opposition to General Plan Amendment No. 190009
Date: Monday, August 19, 2024 9:39:46 AM

Not sure if I sent this one to you yet or not.

Thomas C. Ketcham

Deputy Chief of Staff – District#1
Director of Land Development – District#2
Email | tketcham@rivco.org

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Supervisor Karen Spiegel – District #2

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From: Rosie Middleton <crmiddleton98@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, August 17, 2024 6:59 PM
To: Supervisor Jeffries - 1st District <district1@RIVCO.ORG>; Office of 2nd District Supervisor <District2@rivco.org>; District3 <District3@Rivco.org>; District 4 Supervisor V. Manuel Perez <District4@RIVCO.ORG>; District 5 <District5@rivco.org>; ketcham@rivco.org
Subject: Opposition to General Plan Amendment No. 190009

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed re-zoning of the property situated on the corner of Center St and Mt Vernon Ave in Highgrove CA.

As a homeowner of the adjacent lot, I am deeply concerned about the potential impact of this amendment on my property. The proposed re-zoning directly encroaches upon my privacy and obstructs the natural landscape views that contribute to the charm and appeal of my home.

While I support the idea of new construction and neighbors in the area, it is

crucial that any development aligns with the established character of the surrounding homes, including their height and lot sizing. Unfortunately, the proposed amendment fails to meet these important criteria. The lot sizing is substantially smaller than that of the surrounding homes, and all adjacent properties are single-level residences. The proposed construction of exclusively 2-story homes deviates significantly from the existing landscape and does not align with the established density of the community.

The decision to purchase and invest in my home was largely influenced by its location and unobstructed views of the hills. I am deeply troubled and mourning the potential loss of these sight lines. The current setback proposed by the developer poses a significant threat to my privacy, the scenic views, and the natural airflow from the hillside.

I have engaged with the developer to find mutually acceptable solutions to preserve my privacy and views. While some options have been discussed, we have not been able to reach a satisfactory resolution regarding the views.

Should this development proceed, and be forced to accept the new development, I urge the city to hold the developer accountable for implementing measures to mitigate the impact on my property. This includes relocating windows to prevent overlooking, increasing the setback of surrounding homes by five feet, constructing an eight-foot block wall along the adjoining lots and connecting to the existing block wall, granting an exclusive five-foot easement that runs with the land, and adding mature palm trees for privacy and aesthetics. Additionally, architectural design improvements to the rear of the homes and the potential connection of our home to city sewers have also been discussed. These were items offered by the developer in an effort to gain my support.

The Board of Supervisors requires all new development projects to be generally compatible with their surroundings, zoning, or both. The only equitable solution to this issue is to modify the development plan to feature single-story homes along the property lines of existing residences and significantly increase lot sizing to minimize the loss of current views. While I understand the developer's concerns regarding the cost, I firmly believe that the long-term interests of the community and homeowners should take precedence over short-term gains.

I trust that you will consider my concerns and advocate for a fair and

reasonable resolution to this matter.

Sincerely,

Rosalva Middleton

From: [Ketcham, Thomas](#)
To: [Merlan, Jose](#)
Subject: FW: General plan amendment NO. 190009 - Opposed neighbor
Date: Monday, August 19, 2024 9:36:22 AM

fyi

Thomas C. Ketcham

Deputy Chief of Staff – District#1
Director of Land Development – District#2
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From: Charles Middleton <middletoncharles75@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, August 18, 2024 1:45 PM
To: Supervisor Jeffries - 1st District <district1@RIVCO.ORG>; Office of 2nd District Supervisor <District2@rivco.org>; District3 <District3@Rivco.org>; District 4 Supervisor V. Manuel Perez <District4@RIVCO.ORG>; District 5 <District5@rivco.org>; ketcham@rivco.org
Subject: General plan amendment NO. 190009 - Opposed neighbor

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To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the potential rezoning of the property located on the corner of Mt. Vernon and Center. I am the owner of the property on Elena Ave, which sits adjacent to the aforementioned property. While I appreciate the residential nature of the area, I am apprehensive about the potential impact of converting the property to high-density housing. It is my belief that such a deviation from the current residential setup could have a significant and potentially detrimental effect on the surrounding community. Therefore, I respectfully oppose the developer's request to rezone the property.

The developer's proposed plan does not match the current neighborhood aesthetics. Steven Walker does not seem to have the best interests of our neighborhood in mind. His vision as a developer appears to be focused on squeezing in as many homes as possible, without considering the impact on those who already live here. He will not have to experience the effects of his project. Many of us will lose our privacy, hillside views, and the natural evening breeze, which we currently enjoy. Property owners have the right to build and sell for profit, but it should not come at the expense of their neighbors. I am not opposed to development and reasonable growth, but excessive population density takes away from the reasons why many of us chose to live in this unincorporated district. Any new development should take into account the existing aesthetics, privacy, and natural scenic views of the area.

We are also concerned about the additional traffic that will result from this high-density development. The traffic report on file is dated June 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a mandatory stay-at-home order was issued on 3/19/22020, significantly reducing traffic. Considering the timeline of events and the date of the traffic report, the numbers seem inaccurate, and I request a new traffic report.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Charles Middleton

From: [Ketcham, Thomas](#)
To: [Merlan, Jose](#)
Subject: FW: Supervisor Kevin Jeffries -Riverside County District 1
Date: Monday, August 19, 2024 10:46:43 AM

fyi

Thomas C. Ketcham

Deputy Chief of Staff – District#1
Director of Land Development – District#2
Email | tketcham@rivco.org

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From: Aquia Mail <acquia-mail@rivco.org>
Sent: Monday, August 19, 2024 10:43 AM
To: Supervisor Jeffries - 1st District <district1@RIVCO.ORG>
Subject: Supervisor Kevin Jeffries -Riverside County District 1

Submitted on August 19, 2024

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

Your Name

James Wright

Email Address

pepcjim@roadrunner.com

Phone Number

[9515330154](tel:9515330154)

Subject

Highgrove zone change

Message

We live at corner of Mt Vernon and Center St Highgrove.

We are against the proposed zone change from 1/2 acre lots to high density.

Too much traffic. When freeway is jammed, our intersection is also jammed. Especially at commute times.

If this passes the property adjacent to this would probably be changed too in the future and this would really be a disaster.

Littering has also been a problem and would only get worse.

Thank you, James Wright