

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: January 24, 2005

From : 
Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 17: Consideration of resolution confirming the Executive Directors appeal of the City of Los Angeles Deputy Advisory Agency and Planning Commission's decisions on the Canyon Hills project, Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. 61672, Verdugo Mountains.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy confirm the Executive Directors appeal of the City of Los Angeles Deputy Advisory Agency and Hearing Officer's decisions on the Canyon Hills project and Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. 61672 in the Verdugo Mountains.

Legislative Authority: Section 33211(c) of the Public Resources Code

Background: The Conservancy approved a comment letter on the Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) for this project on September 27, 2004. After a concurrent hearing held on December 9, 2004, the Deputy Advisory Agency and a Hearing Officer issued determinations on the proposed 280-unit project. Those determinations approved the project for the construction of 175 single-family dwelling units to be spread across the entire 887-acre project site.

Staff has determined that the decision fails to provide for adequate protection of biological resources of the Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor. The Final EIR does not address, let alone adequately describe, a non-clustered 175-unit project. Therefore, the potential biological, drainage, and viewshed impacts of a project not adequately described in the Final EIR were in no way available for consideration to the decision makers. The approved project would result in regionally significant biological and viewshed impacts that are not adequately analyzed or mitigated for in the Final EIR. Implementation of the approved project would significantly, permanently, and unavoidably diminish the ecological function of over 6,000 acres of public open space in the Verdugo Mountains ecosystem.

The Conservancy submitted an appeal of the project to the Hearing Officer. Several groups including the Shadow Hills Property Owners Association have submitted appeals both to the Hearing Officer and the Deputy Advisory Agency. This proposed action confirms the Executive Director's submittal of an appeal to the Hearing Officer. The appeals go directly to the Citywide Planning Commission.