

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: September 26, 2016

From :  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 13: Consideration of resolution opposing Measure F, City of Calabasas.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution opposing Measure F on the November 8, 2016 ballot in the City of Calabasas.

Background: Measure F was put on the November 8, 2016 ballot in the City of Calabasas as result of a grassroots signature referendum opposing the City's approval of a project (Canyon Oaks) on a 77-acre ownership in the Las Virgenes Scenic Corridor. A "no" on Measure F would overturn the City's approval of the project.

The text of the Measure reads as follows:

CALABASAS CITY F - Shall the Ordinance No. 2016-333 approving changing the existing Zoning from Planned Development - Residential Multifamily (20) - Open Space Development Restricted - Scenic Corridor to Commercial Retail - Residential Multifamily (20) - Open Space Development Restricted - Scenic Corridor - Development Plan to accommodate: 67 Single-Family Detached Homes and two Affordable Duplexes; a 72,872 square-foot, three-story hotel; and preservation of approximately 61.0 acres as Permanent Open Space on a 77-acre property at 4790 Las Virgenes Road, Calabasas be approved?

Staff recommends a Conservancy opposition position on Measure F which would overturn a project that far exceeds the geological and biological constraints of the land. The background to support this opposition is as follows.

The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) owns almost 700 acres that abut the Canyon Oaks project recently approved by the City of Calabasas. The approved project includes 71 homes and a hotel. The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy has commented extensively on the project since the Notice of Environmental Impact Report Preparation to the final City Council hearings. Copies of the Conservancy's comment letters are attached. Also attached are before and after figures of the proposed development. The City Council approved the project on a 3-2 vote with substantial local opposition. The two

opposing Councilmembers have signed the ballot argument in opposition to the measure. The MRCA adopted a resolution in opposition to the measure.

The subject property is a major viewshed gateway to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and it abuts core habitat. The proposed 2.2 million cubic yards of grading to repair an ancient landslide with a large manufactured slope and a raised plateau comprised of the excavated material would result in unmitigable significant adverse biological and visual impacts. The Final EIR concluded differently. However, the draft EIR concluded that an approximately seven-acre project was possible without repairing the landslide. It was dismissed by the developer as being economically infeasible. The City's General Plan requires a commercial village on the site. The City's approval required both a General Plan Amendment and a Zone Map change. Prior to the 2016 approval, the City's planning documents did not allow any residential or hotel uses on the property. An unrelated three story 120 room hotel located 1000 feet north of the proposed hotel was approved by the City Council this summer also. That project has passed beyond any appeal or judicial action deadlines.

The City's ballot argument and powerpoint materials from the City Council hearings are attached. The landowner can reapply for a project but a successful "no" vote on the Measure restricts some parameters of that re-application. A lawsuit was also successfully filed by citizens against the City's approval.