



Shadow Hills Property Owners Association

Dedicated To Preserving Rural Community

February 9, 2012

Dear Los Angeles City Council Redistricting Commission:

Introduction

This letter is from the Board of Directors of the Shadow Hills Property Owners Association (SHPOA), a non-profit organization created in the mid-1960s shortly before planned construction of the 210 freeway threatened to bi-sect our rural and equestrian community. Residents joined together at that time with the result being that the planned 210 freeway moved further north and east, thus, preserving Shadow Hills as the residential community we know today.

SHPOA now represents more than 2,200 Shadow Hills households and is a vital link for our community to local government. Today, our residents are concerned that the proposed CD6 and CD7 council districts, as drawn, again threaten to bi-sect and “crack” our community from Sunland, itself, as well as several neighboring communities of long-term, shared interests. After considerable review of the matter, attendance at public hearings, input from the Shadow Hills community, and discussion with neighboring communities of interest, our primary concerns with the presently proposed council districts are:

- Shadow Hills (along with all of La Tuna Canyon and rural Sun Valley) is split from equestrian communities of interest in Lake View Terrace and Sunland/Tujunga, and
- Shadow Hills is split from its economic/social community of interest in Sunland/Tujunga.

We respectfully request the Commission redraw its proposed council district maps so that *Shadow Hills*, La Tuna Canyon, Sun Valley, Sunland/Tujunga and Lake View Terrace are recognized, treated and re-united as long-time communities of shared interests. In all due respect to the council representatives that have and that might represent Shadow Hills and our neighboring communities of interest, Council numbers and Council representatives are not as critical to us as re-uniting our long-term communities of interest.

Background on Shadow Hills

Shadow Hills is one of the last affordable equestrian communities within the boundaries of the City of Los Angeles. It is an increasingly ethnically diverse community with

growing Latino and Armenian populations. It is linked via a trail system and open space (San Gabriel Mountains, Hansen Dam, Big Tujunga River and Wash, Verdugo Mountains) to the neighboring equestrian and residential communities of La Tuna Canyon, Lake View Terrace, Sunland/Tujunga and rural Sun Valley.

Shadow Hills has a K overlay district. This is a zoning rule enacted in the mid 1970's which allows horse-keeping in residential communities of the City of Los Angeles under rules that are less stringent than the general zoning rules for horse-keeping in the City of Los Angeles. The enactment of the K overlay meant that most of Shadow Hills was automatically and retroactively deemed legal for horse-keeping while establishing minimum lot sizes on new subdivisions. Lot sizes needed to remain large enough to accommodate horses, but not so large as to price the houses out of the reach of most equestrians. Thus, not only is the zoning conducive to horse ownership, but there are publicly available areas in which to ride your horse without having to trailer them to other locations.

Shadow Hills is a relatively isolated area whose residents are willing to volunteer their time and effort to preserve the rural lifestyle for all Angelenos. Over many years, Shadow Hills has established complex and long-lasting geographical, cultural, sociological, political, economic and social interconnections with our neighbors in Sunland/Tujunga, La Tuna Canyon, Lake View Terrace and rural Sun Valley, where we have lived for decades as a true community of shared interests possessing a united voice for preservation of open space, environmental sensitivity and rural lifestyle.

History of Inadequate and Inconsistent City Council Representation

In the 1960s, the 210 freeway was constructed and in some ways split the overall region and Sunland community in half, with the Shadow Hills portion of Sunland, La Tuna Canyon and Sun Valley predominantly south of the 210 freeway and Sunland/Tujunga and Lake View Terrace north of the 210 freeway. As time has shown, the mountains and rivers define our natural geographic boundaries...not the freeway as the proposed maps seem to indicate.

We've faced a dizzying succession of political change in Shadow Hills – perhaps more than any other residential community in the City of Los Angeles. As a result, we've had both spotty and non-existent city council representation in both CD2 and neighboring CD6.

Howard Finn was CD 2's councilman from 1981-1986. Joel Wachs was our councilman from 1986 after redistricting until 2001 when he resigned. **We lacked representation** until Wendy Greuel was victorious in a special election that placed her in CD2 from

2002-2009 until she became City Controller on July 1, 2009. **We lacked council representation again** from July 1, 2009 until January 5, 2010 until we elected Paul Krekorian to be our councilman from January 5, 2010 to the present. With the clear movement of CD2 away from our area and the two most likely replacement council representatives seeking state and federal office in elections later this year, **we will effectively lack representation until special elections are held well into 2013, the third time we have lacked representation in the past 10 years.** Though dubious, that must be some kind of record!

We urge the Commission to remember that the current CD6 also has a tenuous history of representation, being newly redistricted with Ruth Galanter taking over the District in 2001-2002 (from her Westside roots), and Tony Cardenas elected to represent the District from 2002-present.

It is disappointing that since 2001, Shadow Hills and our surrounding communities have experienced such a dearth of consistent representation and have had only a "taste" of the type of representation we are entitled to as long-time residents, taxpayers and stakeholders. It is disappointing that input offered by Shadow Hills and neighboring communities about our shared interests during earlier public hearings has been disregarded in the initial drawing of council lines.

Flaws of the Proposed Redistricting Plan for CD6 and CD7

Most of Shadow Hills is **wholly within Sunland** and shares the same post office and zip code as Sunland/Tujunga. The remainder of Shadow Hills is in rural Sun Valley with Glenoaks as the dividing line. The proposed redistricting plan for CD6 and CD7 splits Shadow Hills from the Sunland community of which it is a de facto part and upon which it relies for its economic well-being. It also separates Shadow Hills from Lake View Terrace, an essential linkage in the northeast San Fernando Valley equestrian community.

The proposed lines for CD6 and CD7 represent a classic case of "**cracking**," do not keep neighborhoods intact, do not observe natural boundaries and do not respect communities of shared interests. This redistricting plan doesn't remotely reflect these communities that it should be designed to protect, serve and preserve, and is therefore out of touch with local reality, needs and values. It is certainly true that dividing this area will weaken its political voice and expose it to greater likelihood of rezoning and chip away at the very heart of what attracted residents to this area: horses, wildlife, open space and country living. The Commission should re-review the existing Community Plan created for this area – this is a defined, existing, recognized community that deserves consistent, cohesive and unified representation.

Community of Shared Interest - Economic

Together with east and west La Tuna Canyon, Sunland/Tujunga, Lake View Terrace and rural Sun Valley, we attend the same schools, churches and parks. We share the same police and fire public safety services. We shop at the same Ralphs, Starbucks, pharmacies, and family and fast food restaurants. We share the same post office, freeway entrance/exit, Chamber of Commerce, gas stations, banks and ATMs. We even have the same Council office field representative.

Sadly, we share in such negative factors as increasingly exorbitant DWP rates, the lack of a general merchandise retail store since the closure of K-Mart in Sunland several years ago, poor road surfaces, declining quality of schools, and other services for which our residents pay significant taxes. We've been working together to improve those shortcomings for many years.

Community of Interest - Social, Cultural, Environmental and Historic

We share representation in three Neighborhood Councils (Sunland/Tujunga, Foothill Trails District and Sun Valley), and have numerous community organizations such as Shadow Hills Property Owners Association, La Tuna Canyon Community Association, Lake View Terrace Improvement Association, Sun Valley Beautiful and Sunland/Tujunga Alliance, along with dozens of churches, schools and youth organizations. These volunteer organizations provide a voice and forum for a rural community distant and separated from downtown Los Angeles' City Hall by definable geographic and political boundaries including the San Gabriel Mountains to the north and east, the Verdugo Mountains to the south and east, the Tujunga Wash to the north, and multiple freeway systems.

What have we worked together to achieve? What have we rallied together to protect in the name of our shared interests and quality of life in this area and for all Angelenos? Here is a brief summary:

- Preservation of the rural, equestrian lifestyle throughout the region
- Creation and adoption of the Scenic Corridor Plan and Rim of the Valley Trail
- Landfill closures at Lopez Canyon and Bradley Landfill
- Reduction of trash truck traffic along Sunland Boulevard
- Properly designed recycling and transfer facilities in Sun Valley (Waste Management, Athens and Community Recycling)
- Angeles National Golf Course code compliance and horse trail construction
- Elimination of homeless encampments along Big Tujunga Wash
- Sound management of the Hansen Dam Recreation Area

- Defeat of the proposed Home Depot in Sunland
- Historic resources such as Stonehurst HPOZ, McGroarty Arts Center, Bolton Hall Museum/Little Landers Historical Society, Pasko Park and the Cross, Verdugo Hill of Peace Cemetery

Conclusion

The redistricting process is proposing change yet again for this disenfranchised, historically underrepresented, but united community. As with the 210 freeway 50 years ago, the plan again is to split us in half. If we've learned anything from history, it is that this is one community of interest and that you can't divide us. We share too much in common and our lives and lifestyles are interwoven in too many ways to agree that the current redistricting proposal is anything but "cracking," misguided and ill advised.

It was less than two years ago that we elected our admired Councilman Paul Krekorian to represent Shadow Hills and our foothill communities. We call upon the Commission and Councilmen Krekorian, Cardenas and Alarcon to work together to ensure little further disruption to our communities and way of life.

We believe the Commission and the City Council have received voluminous input from our communities during the outreach and public hearing process. The proposed redistricting is flawed and wrong. We will continue to advocate fervently to preserve our rights as residents, property and business owners and voters.

We believe the best viable option is to include Shadow Hills within one council district along with ALL of the communities of shared interests including Sunland/Tujunga, La Tuna Canyon, Lake View Terrace and rural Sun Valley. We are the stewards of a community of shared interests that has been built over many decades of voluntarism, sacrifice, sweat, blood and tears. We will not accept the proposed plans to divide our community.

Sincerely,

Shadow Hills Property Owners Association Board of Directors

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