

May 15, 2010

Mr. Jerry Gladbach, Board Chairman
LAFCO
700 N. Central Avenue Suite 445
Glendale, CA 91203

Re: Annexation No. 2008-05 (Hasley Hills/Valencia Commerce Center by the City of Santa Clarita

Dear Mr. Gladbach,

The West Ranch Town Council, representing the communities of Sunset Pointe, Southern Oaks, Stevenson Ranch, and Westridge, would like to register its very significant concerns and opposition with the City of Santa Clarita's efforts to annex the Hasley Hills / Valencia Commerce Center of the community of Castaic.

The concerns and core elements of our opposition are based on the following points:

1. This annexation targets only selected neighborhoods within the Castaic-Val Verde community and represents what we believe is an effort to pick these selected neighborhoods while avoiding other parts of the Castaic-Val Verde community for financial benefit to the City of Santa Clarita. We cannot support efforts that divide established communities.
2. We oppose the concept where 1500 people, out of a community of nearly 25,000 can effectively determine the fate of the larger community. If these neighborhoods do successfully annex into the City of the Santa Clarita, any decision for the rest of the Castaic-Val Verde community to incorporate in the future would be rendered virtually impossible because of the economic value being transferred into the City.
3. The City of Santa Clarita has consistently refused to negotiate with the West Ranch Town Council and the Castaic Area Town Council in good faith for the annexation of the entire community into the City of Santa Clarita. They have worked to bypass the Councils and encouraged / recruited those in these selected neighborhoods to promote annexation and meet the goal of the City to prevent any possible incorporation on the Westside of the Santa Clarita Valley.
4. In addition to our opposition, Supervisor Michael Antonovich, Los Angeles County Fifth District, the Castaic Area Town Council, the Castaic Chamber of Commerce, Newhall Land, and the Valencia Commerce Center Association – representing elected officials of Castaic-Val Verde, the main business representation of both Castaic and the Commerce Center, the Los Angeles County Supervisor representing the Fifth District, and Newhall Land which owns land in the annexation parcel, all oppose the efforts of the City of Santa Clarita. Despite this unified position of opposition, the City continues to try to press for the annexation.

The City of Santa Clarita has made repeated efforts over the last decade to target very specific neighborhoods to obtain additional tax revenues and strategically prevent any possibility by the residents of the Westside to consider incorporation as a future for their governance. They do not

engage or negotiate with the elected representatives of these communities; they seek to divide established communities, and seek to pick only selected communities in order to maximize their financial gain and to ensure the entire community cannot decide its future.

The City has refused to engage the residents of the Westside with respect, with serious negotiations, and instead tried to cherry pick communities in order to prevent the residents from having an option to determine their own future governance. We have asked the City to negotiate in good faith, to present a plan to annex the entire community as opposed to selected neighborhoods, to partner with our communities, and the City has refused each of these multiple times.

LAFCO has denied past efforts of the City of Santa Clarita to extend its sphere of influence or annex west of the Golden State Freeway. Because of these reasons, the past and present actions of the City which show disrespect and contempt to the residents of the Westside communities, we ask LAFCO to again deny the City's efforts to annex and divide established communities.

Sincerely,

Ronald Mechsner

President, West Ranch Town Council