

Thomas Thornsley
29177 Stevens Avenue, Moreno Valley, CA 92555

April 8, 2013

Mr. Mark Gross
City of Moreno Valley
14177 Frederick Street/P.O. Box 88005
Moreno Valley, California 92552

Via e-mail: MarkG@moval.org

Dear Mr. Gross:

Re: Comments to the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the World Logistics Center Specific Plan, SCH#: 2012021045

As a concerned resident, a land use planner, and a member of Residents for a Livable Moreno Valley, who lives on the east end I have great interest and concerns about development in our area. Therefore, I have taken an extensive amount of time to review the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the proposed World Logistics Center Specific Plan (WLCSP). I cannot agree with some of the conclusions because this project goes so far beyond good planning as placement of land uses that it should never have been encouraged by the City or the developer.

With a rewrite of the General Plan the City and the developer begin the process of justifying the project. And to date I have not heard any member of the City's upper management, the planning department or the City Council say they question the logic of this proposal. It appears that most impacts are being written off because the City simply will not take a strong stand on potential development impacts or adopt stricter mitigation measures to assure that development impacts are brought down to the lowest feasible point. It appears that this project has some significant impacts that could be mitigated to some extent but are being completely written off because even with some mitigation the impacts cannot be mitigated to below a level of significance. However, several impacts could be lessened with further mitigation than what is proposed; most notable with regard to Aesthetics, Agricultural, Air Quality, Land Use, and Traffic Impacts. In these instances it would be prudent to impose mitigation(s) to further lessen those impacts, thereby diminishing the intensity of impacts that will be overridden by the City Council.

I believe that the City will approve this project therefore additional tougher mitigation should be added to offset local and regional impacts to the fullest extent possible before overriding what cannot be achieved. If these mean reducing the size of the project to reduce environmental impacts, as suggested in the alternatives, then it should be seriously considered.

The following should serve to explain any shorthand in this document:

Section page numbers or topic numbers are used as best possible for referenced comments.

WLCSP – World Logistics Center Specific Plan

SP – World Logistics Center Specific Plan

MHSP – Moreno Highlands Specific Plan

GP – General Plan

Section 3.0 Project Description

The Project Description is obligated to mention everything carried out with this one proposal. However, the portion of the Project dealing with the General Plan Amendment includes the GP land use change to properties not under the control of the Project developer nor is that property a part of the WLCSP. Throughout the document it repeatedly states the project will convert 1,000 plus acres to Open Space which is misleading to the true project which is the World Logistics Center. Additionally, those 1,000 plus acres are used in calculations and analysis through the document and the supporting studies which could/does change the data provided for analysis. The project description should make it very clear that these 1,000 acres are in no way related to the WLCSP and should not be referred to in any project analysis.

Pg. 3-19: Why is a debris basin proposed easterly of Gilman Springs Road and impacting property not associated with this project? Why is the basin not within the project boundary? There is no explanation here or in the section on hydrology.

Pg. 3-25: The GPA will not "establish logistic land uses on the 3,814-acre property," because there are two other categories of land uses for over 1,104 acres this figure will include.

Pg. 3-26: Identify that the project site for high-cube warehouse facilities does not have multiple forms of transport available.

Pg. 3-72: Explain the appropriateness of adding a new land use category to the General Plan verses just modifying the uses under Business Park. What is written here is project an site specific and not proposed to be utilized anywhere else in the city.

Section 4.01 Aesthetics

Pg. 4.1-3: How is the rural northeast portion of the City issue discussed in the MHSP? Wasn't this area also considered the rural area of the City when the City incorporated and before this development came forward?

Fig 4.1.2: Photo locations are off, 2 and 3 need to be switched to be consistent with the photos in Fig. 4.1.3a. Several other markers and photos are incorrectly located and identified.

Objective 2.5 and Policy 2.5.1 should only be applied to locations where these designations currently exist.

Pg. 4.1-17: What will be done to lessen the significant of the aesthetic impacts?

Pg. 4.1-33: Based on Fig. 4.1.4G explain why there isn't a freeway landscape buffer (strip) as required in GP Policy 2.10.5, which states that "development projects adjacent to freeways shall provide landscaped buffer strips along the ultimate freeway right-of-way."

Fig 4.1.4H: Why is there not a level landscape strip between the maintenance road and the bank of the detention basin? Plantings on the banks and the basin bottom are more likely to be damaged or stressed.

Fig. 4.1.4I - Explain why the uppermost cross section does not have a screen wall nor landscaping on the downward slope.

Fig. 4.1.4J - Please explain the distance between the R-O-W and the marked 20' min. landscape buffer. Also explain why such a small 20' landscape buffer is being proposed. This is not a significant buffer in those areas where screening for aesthetics reasons will be needed to screen the development.

Pg. 4.1-61: As stated white building will be more visible at longer distances thereby adding to the impact. Consideration should be made to utilize more earth-tone colors throughout the project area. If the change in color will so greatly affect the energy consumption or greatly increase the "heat island" effect then provide data to substantiate this claim to justify the color choice.

Pg. 4.1-62: The 250-foot setback as defined by the distance from residential property lines fails to address the true lack of adequate screening. Along Redlands Blvd. and Merwin Ave. where the roadway width alone could be greater than half the setback distance. Nothing precludes the remaining area from including parking lots, drive aisles, internal roads or storm drains. Residential property along Merwin loses the 250-foot to 66' of Merwin roadway, 125' flood control channel, 112' Street "D". Where does the buffer come in to the equation? You already have 303 feet of setback before a project site property line but very little of that area can create a visual barrier from the residential properties.

Explain what minimum level of buffering would be required with all these open area elements between a residential property line and the building. Explain what can go between the building and the project site property line when it is beyond the 250-foot setback.

Pg. 4.1-62: As described in paragraph 2 the landscape setback will be far less than where it is adjacent to streets with narrower right-of-ways. Provide reasoning as to why the buffer is not measured from the right-of-way adjacent to the development. This would assure consistent perimeter landscape buffer setbacks.

Pg. 4.1-62: Indicate what building and/or screen wall characteristics will aid the aesthetics of the buffer zone.

Pg. 4.1-62: The lost views along SR-60 can be mitigated to a reasonable extent by limiting the height of those building nearest the highway to somewhere below the view line of the distant mountains.

Pg. 4.1-66 MM 4.1.6.1A - The 250-foot setback as defined by the distance from residential property lines fails to address the true lack of adequate screening. Along Redlands Blvd. and Merwin Ave. where the roadway width alone could be greater than half the setback distance. Nothing precludes the remaining area from including parking lots, drive aisles, internal roads or storm drains. Residential property along Merwin lose the 250-foot to 66' of Merwin roadway, 125' flood control channel, 112' Street "D". Where does the buffer come in to the equation? You already have 303 feet of setback before a project site property line.

Explain what minimum level of buffering would be required with all these elements between a residential property line and the building. Explain what can go between the building and the project site property line.

Pg. 4.1-66: With 4.1.6.1A better define the setback from residential property. Are you talking about any on-site improvements, parking areas, drive aisles, or pure landscaping until the buildings?

Provide additional options/mitigations that could be used to lessen this loss of these scenic vistas. Create a new foreground scenic vista along these thoroughfares. A proposed **Mitigation Measure should include the option for either extensive landscaping along all these roadways and a lower building height for the buildings along SR-60 to preserve the views of Mt. Russell and San Jacinto.** This is possible because the building pad elevation is likely to be 30 feet or more below the surface grade of SR-60, as it was with Sketchers. Full considerations should be given to this option.

Pg. 4.1-69: Identify the mitigation measure. Should it be MM 4.1.6.2?

Pg. 4.1-70: The facade accents described in the SP appear to provide minimal accent treatments that will not break-up the huge mass of the buildings in such a way as to provide substantial vertical and horizontal relief. Considering the size and length of these buildings, corner treatments will only be found at the extreme ends of what could be buildings hundreds of feet and beyond a 1,000 feet long building. **Include MM to provide more substantial relief.**

Pg. 4.1-70: The landscape standards do not define a minimum landscape buffering area between the right-of-way and the on-site development. Incorporating the street width and citing a 250-foot separation fails to define a consistent landscape buffer.

The landscape design standards provide no information that would guaranty that a sizable planting area will be provided at road grade to support sufficient landscaping to achieve screening.

Table 4.1.C:

Objective 2.5: It would not appear that this project's proposal for one type of use on such a large scale in the City could be conclude as being "consistent" given the City's current lack of other types of industrial uses. Since so much of the available Industrial land within the City is utilized for warehousing the City does not and has not created a diversified economic base or ample employment opportunities for its citizens outside of this on particular use.

Policy 2.5.1: Should read, "Somewhat consistent" considering the scale of the project and the limited land use areas within the City that would remain to be available for the other Business Park/Industrial uses envisioned in the General Plan.

Policy 2.5.2: Cannot consider a landscape buffer to be enough separation between residential and industrial uses to avoid adverse impacts. All well trained planner know that less impacting uses such as neighborhood commercial, commercial, office, parks and open space constitute a buffer between residential and industrial. This EIR consistently references the unavoidable impact this project will bring to the surrounding land uses yet a 250-foot setback that includes roadways, drainage channels and a few feet of landscaping seems to be consider an acceptable buffer to offset the impact. **A proposed Mitigation Measure would require that a least a 1,000-foot alternative land use buffer permitting offices, commercial, parks, open space and public uses be placed between all proposed warehouses uses and residential property.** With this type of buffer and mitigation you could say compliance with Policy 2.5.2 is consistent.

Policy 2.5.3: Concluding the consistency of this policy is an assumption prior to seeing how the setback and screening methods will be implemented in a Plot Plan.

Policy 2.10.3: The SP's design guidelines fall short of effectively achieving several of the listed criteria because of the minimal relief offering comparative to the size and mass of the proposed high-cube warehousing. **Mitigation should be included that defines the parameters for greater relief and facade treatments.**

Policy 2.10.5: Nothing in the SP indicates that a landscape buffer strip will be provided along the freeway that can effectively provide for a landscape buffer. If parcels adjacent to SR-60 are graded similar to Sketchers to the east all of the landscaping will be planted on slopes below the grade of the highway. Additionally, the master developer had this condition waved on the neighboring project. Therefore you cannot conclude that this project is consistent with policy.

Policy 2.10.7: An analysis of consistence can only be made after plot plans are actually reviewed. Defined standards and mitigation measures should be in place before making determination of consistency with this policy.

Policy 2.10.9: Not entirely consistent because the WLCSP Section 5.2.12 states that "only minor changes of material and finishes are appropriate." The wall standard should address wall plane off-sets to break up the long continuous expanse of walls near the street. Additionally, a greater land scape buffer area should be required between the sidewalk and the wall. In some areas the landscape buffer is proposed to be drainage swales or filtration basins limiting the landscapeable area and the density of the landscape plantings that can affectively screen and compliment the walls and on-site development.

Policy 2.10.10: Again the evaluation of this policy states the freeway frontage will be fully landscaped but development of the site will dictate a downward slope from the freeway with no guarantee that screening landscape material will be placed at roadway grade. **A Mitigation Measure needs to be included that requires a sizeable level area at or near grade with SR-60 in which sufficient landscaping can be planted to effectively screen the building and loading areas.**

Policy 2.10.11: See comment regarding more defined methods of assuring that this buffer area is effective.

Provide a Mitigation Measure that assures sufficient grade level landscaping adjacent to the roadways and SR-60 to accommodate landscape plantings that can effectively aid in the screening of the on-site improvements.

Provide a Mitigation Measure that guarantees a minimum 200-foot buffer area from right-of-way to on-site improvements.

Provide a Mitigation Measure that requires variations in the gradient of publicly visible slopes to avoid having continuous 2:1 slopes that would contribute to the monotony of the long expanse of the slope. Require this of slopes greater than 200 lineal feet.

Provide a Mitigation Measure that requires the landscape buffer facing the residential areas be designed in similar fashion to other streetscape landscaping in residential subdivisions. Installing this area with landscaping designed for the WLS will simply accentuate the fact that an industrial use is across the street and thus further degrading the residence's sense of well-being. Making this change will create a distinct variation between the industrial uses and the residential areas and aid in the appearance that these uses are separate.

Pg.4.1-73, MM 4.1.6.3A: **Provide additional mitigation measures that assure proper screening of the on-site improvements** as previously noted in the preceding comments.

Define the need to use light sources that produce "white" light for color rendition. This project area does not appear to need this source of light for viewing purposes like with outdoor auto sales or public activity area. Additionally, the use of "white" light when not necessary violates the Dark Skies requirements for Mt. Palomar Zone B.

Propose to amend the parking lot light standard for the WLCSP so lower light levels are considered acceptable to help mitigate the excess night glow.

Provide a Mitigation Measure that requires parking lot lights to go off after working hours or that they be activated by motion sensors where and when needed.

Pg. 4.1-74: **Include a mitigation measure that limits the height of all pole and wall mounted lights where located along residential areas. In no case shall wall-pack type security lighting be installed on buildings elevations facing towards residential neighborhoods.**

Pg. 4.1-75: Reference to the SP guidelines regarding lighting. – **Provide a mitigation measure limiting the height, number, and placement of street lights within the WLCSP area. Utilize lighting standard similar to rural lighting standard that only require street lights at roadway intersections and site access points.** Spillover lighting from on-site will likely cast enough ambient light onto the roadways. The streets within the WLC will not be utilized by the general public nor may they be heavily used at night.

Pg. 4.1-76: MM4.1.6.4A should also indicate the ambient night light levels at the project side of the right-of-ways.

MM 4.1.6.4B should permit solar panel use as shade covers in parking and storage areas following these same worst case conditions.

MM 4.1.6.4C: Since LPS is acceptable on the south side of buildings then it should be the norm for all outdoor, uncovered lighting.

Section 4.02 Agricultural and Forestry Resources

Pg. 4.2-2: 4.2.1 Existing Setting – The 2,710 acres of the WLCSP are the only lands with that should be evaluated in the Agricultural Resources Assessment report Appendix C-2. The remaining area is not proposed for development nor is it a part of the WLCSP. It is only a part of the "project" because it requires change of land use on the General Plan Land Use Map.

Pg. 4.2-7: The 2,685 acres is the area that should have been assessed in the LESA Modeling.

Fig. 4.2.2: Why is this area in the middle of the project site eliminated from the calculations?

Pg. 4.2-14: Should only be assessing the WLCSP acreage. See Methodology.

Pg. 4.2-15: Agriculture is no longer a permitted use in any area of the proposed Specific Plan. The SP now only allows ag if it is established before project approval.

Pg. 4.2-16: The mitigation measure outlined in Section 4.1 cannot mitigate the loss of the most prominent existing natural resources; therefore this statement should reflect that it is inconsistent.

Pg. 4.2-16: The land discussed in the section is not a part of the specific plan and is only listed in the project because it is an administrative matter, therefore it cannot be used to credit Objective 4.1 for consistency.

Pg. 4.2-16: The right to farm only applies to those lands with legally established agricultural operations at the effective date of the WLCSP.

Pg. 4.2-17: Not acceptable to leave this to the City to implement. They will site lack of staff and resources to implement and monitor and therefore the mitigation will be lost.

Pg. 4.2-17: Are there State run agricultural land banks that can accept the mitigation funds? Can other entities involve with land preservation be used to mitigate this lost resource?

Pg. 4.2-18, last paragraph: The 1,000 acres being given the Open Space designation and part of the Wildlife area are currently being farm and cited previously in this document. The statement "little, if any, of the adjacent land" is incorrect and should reflect that use.

Pg. 4.2-19: The SA sub-score would likely be higher because of errors made in configuring the Zone of Influence area. See comment under the Ag Resources Assessment.

Pg. 4.2-20: This is MM that places a burden on the City and will likely never be implemented.

Under 4.2.7 Cumulative Impacts it states that it will remove 3,389 acres of designated farmland when the project will only remove the 2,710 acres within the WLCSP.

Why is there no analysis to assess localized farming options as means to limit greenhouse gas emissions due to the increasing need to ship food stuffs greater distances? **Consideration should be made to implement mitigation measures offset the negative affect of longer shipping distances.**

“Agricultural Resources Assessment for WLCSP DEIR” by Parsons-Brinckerhoff

Page numbering in this document did not covert correctly in the PDF file so the page numbers listed correspond to the actual page count in the file.

Pg. 4: Explain why the evaluated project area includes the entire 3,814 acres when the project area includes over 1,000 acres that are not a part of the development plan. This acreage was lumped into the "project" only for the purpose of changing the land use designation as part of the GPA.

Pg. 9: Limits of the SP are incorrect because they include the open space area which in only part of the GPA.

Pg. 10: Not the correct crop info for the Moreno Valley area. Citrus was not the primary crop in this area.

Pg. 11: Water cost associated with on-site wells has not been assessed. There is no mention of the availability of water from wells or the option to install wells within the project acreage of the WLCSP. Some properties in project area have wells and or water rights.

Pg. 12: Need to make mention of the egg production ranch that was on the project site and demolished in the past decade.

Pg. 13: Verify rainfall for our region.

Pg. 14: Describe them as man-made ponds and lakes.

Pg. 15: Elevation range is incorrect unless it is incorrect in the bulk of the other sections of the WLCSP DEIR. As noted elsewhere it should be 1,760 to 1,480 feet above sea level.

Pg. 26: The Lake Perris Recreation area comprises far less than 50% (see map) of the Zone of Influence Area. The boundary of the projects area's Zone of Influence is overstated because it includes land that is not part of the specific plan and therefore should not be counted because it falsely expands the influence area. Additionally, the geometric shape used to encompass the project area should be drawn on a diagonal to more tightly configure the area. You could also use a six-sided configuration to incorporate the project area to give you the zone of influence.

Pg. 28: The conclusion made in Section 3.4 is incorrect and needs to be reassessed. The area south of the WLCSP is owned by CDFG and is being used for agricultural purposes at this time.

Section 4.9 Hydrology

Pg. 4.9-21: Explain if any of the surrounding areas fall within the 100-year flood zone. The homes in the area west of Merwin Ave were flooded twice in the past six years, the most recent being in August of 2012. Verify impacts with the City's Public Works Department. This has a bearing on the drainage to the southwest of the project site. Should project flows exceed historic levels there would be need for further mitigation.

Pg. 4.9-25: The last paragraph identifies Line "F" but it should be Line "A".

4.13 Population, Housing and Employment

Pg. 4.13-2 & 3: In tables on these two pages are three different housing unit figures from various sources and the range is more than 4,000 units in a one year period. This is a 9% difference which will skew all calculations for housing to jobs ratios. These unit variations cannot be related to recent housing growth because the City has issued few home construction permits in the past three year. An accurate total should be used and the statistics in these sections revised to reflect a more accurate standing of the community characteristics.

Opening Comment: The job figures and revenue projections are not consistent within throughout or within Sections 4.13 Population and Housing, Section 5.0 Other CEQA Topics, and Appendix O-1 Fiscal and Economic Impact Study. The number of inconsistencies are too numerous to note but they tend to taint the validity of the information or the results. It is likely these figures are also inconsistent throughout the other sections of the EIR. Please correct.

PG. 4.13-9: Why are 24,642 employees considered a "worst-case" estimate for environmental impacts when the GP goals and objectives encourage job creation thus besting the jobs to housing ratio. Using the larger figure appears to skew the reality of what may really happen - fewer jobs for the impacts incurred. Please explain how this benefits the community and aids the decision maker in assessing the value of the project against its impacts.

Pg. 4.13-10: Please explain how this calculates out based on the available workforce in the City and the number of residents that would desire these jobs.

Provide calculations based on the available workforce in the City, 2010 Census data on employment categories for the residents, and then figure how many residents would like have the talent or desire to work in the logistic industry. If this figure is less that the job produced then you can expect people to be drawn to the City thus inducing growth.

Pg. 4.13-11: Recurring costs should be calculated over the life of the project and projected for 20-years after predicted build-out. Over time service cost typically out pace tax increment increase thus eliminating the surplus. Property taxes will only rise at the rate set by Proposition 13 while the police and fire services alone will be going up at a greater rate. In each of the next two fiscal years the City is obligated through public safety contracts to 5% annual pay raises. Additionally, other services and cost will rise at the rate of inflation or higher. Either way these rates will outpace the property tax increment rise. Discuss why this is not been addressed. See attached example of a fiscal impact analysis required by Riverside County for business park development.

Pg. 4.13-12, Table 4.13.J: Please make note whether this annual salary is for permanent staff or all staff including temps needed for the operation. Most researched information on warehouse operations indicates that a large percentage of those working on-site are temporary hires not on the operating payroll thus not factored it the average salary shown.

Pg. 4.13-13: Table and text for number of construction job is not consistent with the fiscal report Apdx. O-1.

Paragraph two states 16,395 full-time equivalent jobs but nowhere in the text does it say that this is the total job count over a 10 period. Explain why this is not addressed or have it incorporated into the analysis. How do you defend the assumption that a lot of these jobs are likely to be in the vicinity and therefore within the City?

Based on the Fiscal and Economic Impact Study the potential jobs has a low range near 13,000 that should also be included in this discussion. Why is it not?

Pg. 4.13-14: Summary of Impacts use figures for surplus that are not consistent with the fiscal report Apex. O-1.

Under 4.13.5.2 there should be a discussion about the job housing balance that it offered and the total jobs it would have created. The abandonment of MHSP not only changed the housing count it displaced the jobs it would have created.

Section 5.0 Other CEQA Topics

Pg. 5.5, Paragraph 3: The new job figures are not consistent with those found in Section 4.13 or Appendix O-1 Fiscal and Economic Impact Study.

Thomas Thornsley
April 8, 2013

Comments to the DEIR for the
World Logistics Center Specific Plan

The next paragraph again has job and revenue figures that cannot be found in either of the documents listed. In review of all three documents the figures used are not consistent throughout the EIR.

5.4 Urban Decay: Planning studies throughout America have analyzed the inherent condition of urban decay in neighborhood near industrial development. The typical finding are that the home value decline in neighborhoods next to industrial operations and over time decay and become blighted areas of those communities. The Fiscal and Economic Impact Study does not take into the secondary effect the WLC will have on the neighboring communities and how it will likely depress property values and thus lessen the anticipated property tax revenue the City receives. Why was this not addressed?

6.0 Alternatives to the Proposed Project

Did the Existing GP Alternative reduce the total dwelling unit count based on the land area lost to CDFW?

No Project, General Plan – Moreno Highland SP: Please explain the rational for the stated housing units expressed in this analysis. It appears to be very close to the number of dwelling units in the SP yet about half of the residential area was sold off to the CDFG in the year prior to MHSP's approval. This alternative could never have been built and therefore is not a valid alternative to assess. What should have been assessed was a modified version of the MHSP less the residential area removed from development. Based on the purchase date of over one quarter of the MHSP project area it would appear that the developer had no intention of ever developing this land when they entered into a development agreement with the City designating the land uses be in place for 20 years. See your project site history in the project summary.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft EIR for this project. I request to be informed of all meetings and public hearings related to this project or other consideration in east end of Moreno Valley. Please let me know if it is possible to receive a copy of all comment to the DEIR as soon as they are available. I would also like to request copies of any follow-up documents related to this project (the Development Agreement, 2nd DEIR and/or Final EIR). Feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding my comments.

Sincerely,

Thomas Thornsley
909-797-1397
e-mail: tomthornsley@msn.com

Attachment: Thomas Thornsley's Resume