

San Luis Obispo County LAFCO,

1042 Pacific St. #A  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

I am writing to express my concern regarding the Proposed Dana Reserve Project, a housing development project that will build over 1,289 houses on 288 acres of natural habitat and contribute to significant urban sprawl on the westside of Nipomo.

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), determined there are 6 Significant Class 1 Impacts that cannot be mitigated by the developer along with many other additional impacts. The impacts that concerns me most are checked below:

- Population and Housing
- Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas
- Biological
- Small commercial component
- Noise

- Traffic
- Water
- Public Facilities
- Aesthetics
- Other Tearing out almost 4,000 mature oak trees.

My comments on the project are detailed below:

There is no way you can "mitigate"  
the impact of these trees being  
removed. We saw what happened  
when the Willow Road went through +  
what happened with those replanting.  
100 years of growth - "mitigated" ? Find  
a place w/ no trees. Build houses under \$400,000.

The limited social and economic benefits of the Dana Reserve Project will not outweigh the many significant impacts of the project. As a citizen of Nipomo, I ask that this project be denied until revised to such an extent that the impacts of the development are greatly decreased. We owe it to Nipomo to present a project that does not significantly decrease the quality of life for existing residents and retains the natural beauty of the land given to Captain Dana in 1837.

DATE: 11-29-22 SIGNED: [Signature]

Email: chazen@webtv.net Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: 1347 Black Sage Cral, Nipomo, CA

## **DANA RESERVE HOUSING**

To: SLO planning commission

148 S Wilson

Nipomo, Ca 93444

We have many concerns about the proposed housing project that is planned in Nipomo. The increase in population alone by 25% is devastating to current living conditions. In addition, this will increase traffic on already impacted roads. Besides traffic, our schools that have taxed classrooms will be adversely affected.

To start the project, almost 4,000 trees must be removed. This will disrupt the area greatly. That means more traffic on our roads. We are asking you to turn down this invasive venture.

Thank you for your consideration,



**NIPOMO ACTION COMMITTEE**

LAFCO  
1042 Pacific St.#A  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed Dana Reserve Project, a development proposal for 1,289 new residential units on 288 acres in the unincorporated community of Nipomo.

My husband and I are retired Foreign Service Officers, and we chose this area for our home after more than 25 years of service overseas because of its unique natural beauty and reasonable housing prices compared with most of coastal California. We're honored to join with life-long Nipomo residents to preserve and protect the open spaces and oak trees that define Nipomo.

The Unmitigatable Significant Class 1 issues which concern me most from the Draft Environmental Impact Report are:

- Plans for densely packed housing, incompatible with neighboring residential areas and the community at large. Increasing the population of Nipomo by 25% based on a single developer's agenda when local schools and services are already under pressure from the current population makes no sense.
- The projected explosion of traffic, especially on Willow Road (already a high-speed truck route), Pomeroy Road, and Highway 101.
- Air quality and increased greenhouse gas emissions from the influx of new residents and their cars.
- Ecological impacts - 3,948 protected coast live oak trees are slated for removal, some of the last contiguous oak woodlands on the Nipomo Mesa. The proposal to 'replace' these trees, some of them more than 100 years old, by oak saplings, in no way lessens the loss of mature oak trees and the habitats they foster. For a detailed analysis of the environmental impacts of this proposed development, I expect you are familiar with the July 2021 letter from the California Native Plant Society. Unfortunately, after almost a year and a half not a single one of their concerns has been addressed.
- And most importantly for an arid region in the midst of an extreme drought - Water. It defies belief that this project was not immediately denied for that reason alone. The theoretical possibility of purchasing more water from Santa Maria, for which only new residents will pay a premium, is an expensive and improbable 'solution.'

The limited social and economic benefits of the Dana Reserve Project touted by the developer do not outweigh the many significant negative impacts of unchecked growth and environmental destruction. The effects of climate change that are already apparent in this area make it clear that eliminating trees, adding thousands of new residents, and putting further pressure on our limited water supplies are not sustainable options for this community.

There has been little consideration to date of a more appropriately scaled development, or any effort to work with the community and modify the project based on the many concerns raised by local residents. If the proposed Dana Reserve development is the only option, I ask that this project be denied. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,



Gail Roberts

[gatroberts@gmail.com](mailto:gatroberts@gmail.com)

Dec. 5, 2022

Local Agency formation commission,

I am writing to you about the Dana Reserve housing project. I wish to express my disappointment in the plans that will allow such a high density of housing. While I recognize that we need to build places for people to live, I also believe that it can be done without destroying the quality of life in the Nipomo area. My wife and I moved here from Costa Mesa in Orange County this year to get away from the city life with its traffic, pavement and wall-to-wall people. There is already rush hour traffic from A.G. to the Santa Maria River. We would like to see a scaled down version of this project that would leave more natural space to be enjoyed by all. How about eliminating the housing in the area designated NBD8 and leave it natural?

Two other improvements come to mind:

Move the school away from the freeway. There are studies that show an increase in child asthma when spending hours a day near a freeway.

Move the southbound freeway offramp at Tefft to empty onto north frontage road at or near Juniper St. or go behind Vons to connect to Mary Ave.

I realize that with an increased population, Nipomo would have a better chance to become its own city because of an increased tax base, and a better chance at self-government. But to dump this many people at once into a small area without employment possibilities does not fit into the rural surroundings that attract people to Nipomo in the first place.

Thank you for your consideration,

John & Ann Stephens  
202 N. Las Flores Dr  
Nipomo, CA



LAFCO

1042 Pacific Street #A

San Luis Obispo CA 93401

Re: Dana Reserve Housing Development Project Concerns

We are writing you as concerned citizens about the Dana Reserve Housing Development.

First, the removal of mature oak trees (over 3,928 to be removed) some as old as 400 years old is an absolute disaster. The county has a tree ordinance, if a developer can remove this many oak trees that are supposedly "protected" by this ordinance, why have an oak tree ordinance? These trees cannot be mitigated as proposed by the project. Replacing a small number of the mature trees with saplings, or as street trees within the development is not mitigation. Allowing a developer to buy a mitigation parcel on a hill, inaccessible to all, over a mile away from the project, with trees not threatened with development is irresponsible. When the Willow interchange was put in and oaks removed they were to be mitigated with saplings. That was a failure. After 7 years of watering and monitoring, the mitigation project was deemed a failure as only 1 individual had survived. That means the oak trees cut down for this project are gone FOREVER, resulting in a NET LOSS of oak trees in San Luis Obispo County.

The biological destruction from this project is not limited to oak trees. Sensitive plant communities, a federally endangered flower, and wildlife will be eliminated by the project. The locally rare Burton Mesa Chaparral and the federally endangered Pismo Clarkia will be all but eliminated by the project. What's worse is that the draft EIR essentially says that prescribed mitigation of these species is not likely to be effective, meaning these species will be lost forever. Wildlife species such as badgers, Nuttall's woodpecker, pallid bat, and common species such as snakes, salamanders, birds, and coyotes that call this plot of land home will die off as these habitats are bulldozed. If not killed during the initial construction, they will die from lack of food and shelter they depend on for survival.

There is a proposed equestrian trail for this project. It is the only positive amenity this project has to offer. It is a proposed buffer around the perimeter of the project but will not be enough of a buffer to prevent possible land use conflicts from one side of the "trail" to the other. The property in question is surrounded by rural residential which allows for livestock, horses, FFA projects and the like, all land uses not allowed in the new development. There needs to be a redesign of the development plan that will drastically reduce the housing on the perimeter as to avoid possible future conflicts.

In comparing other large developments in Nipomo, the Trilogy development has approximately 1200+ homes on 680+ acres, the Blacklake development has 1200+ homes on 580+ acres, but the Dana Reserve Housing Project has over 1200 homes on 280 acres!! Plus all of the other things the developer

proposes. This project is way too big as designed for the amount of acreage and is all urban sprawl, not infill development.

The State of California is in a drought and has been for years and it is getting worse by the year. We the residents of Nipomo are already being asked to conserve and it is only going to get worse until we see significant rain fall for years. The fact that the NCS D made a bad deal years ago by not connecting to State Water and we have to "use it or lose it" as the developer states is absurd. We understand that there is a water contract with the City of Santa Maria, but the fear is that if water deliveries from the state are cut off, water to Nipomo could be cut off, contract or not. Central Coast Water Authority has decreased the City of Santa Maria's allotment of state water from 15% to 5% (Central Coast Water Authority website (CCWA.com) dated March 18<sup>th</sup> 2022. All the studies done to show there is plenty of water are just numbers on a piece of paper. The cut in allotment per Central Coast Water Authority should be the one considered. A study done just a few months ago.....the only one that makes sense.

Additionally we should be conservation minded; water should be used to refill our aquifer first, not to be used to serve new connections like the Dana Reserve Housing Development Project. Per the mitigations in the Draft Environmental Impact Report, if this development gets approved and our water gets cut off before it is completed, all the environmental damage will have been done already. A dirt pile on the side of the freeway, having been denuded for nothing.

There have been many water studies done regarding the drought and they state that we have enough water to proceed with this project and that it would be to the benefit of all Nipomo because our sewer and water bills will go down. There are many homes in Nipomo that are not on sewer and so there are no savings for them in that regard. The savings for all of Nipomo households is approximately \$2.50 a month on the water bill. Not enough to be in favor of this project. We would rather pay 10x our water bill then to look at what will surely be a monstrosity of high density urban sprawl that clashes with the ruralness that is Nipomo. Water is the heart of this project from the beginning to infinity. Water when the grading starts, for dust control, water used for curbs, driveways, water used for tile, grout, paint, stucco landscaping and on and on. Let's not forget water for everyday living.

Having been in Northern California in September/October of this year and seeing the reservoirs empty is very scary. Twitchell Reservoir here locally is a place where the cattle graze now. No obvious puddles of water up the reservoir as far as the eye can see and down the reservoir towards Santa Maria. The City of Santa Maria has activated an app recently to report water abusers, does that sound like a city that has an abundance of water?

Affordable Housing is being thrown around as a benefit of this project. What is affordable anyway? People's self-help housing is the only credible "affordable housing" being attached to this project. However, that is only 75 proposed units, to be built on land provided by the developer, not built out with the project. What about all of the other housing? "The Middle" as the developer likes to say or Workforce Housing is being sold as affordable, but how will it actually be affordable for citizens/the workforce of Nipomo without deed restrictions? It will only be **affordable the first time sold! How is**

**that a benefit to this project? How does the presence of an HOA impact affordability?** The developer has said that the “middle” or “workforce housing” won’t be deed restricted so there goes the affordability angle, especially since the developer is shelling out lots of money for this development, looking for a return in investment. The developer claims buyers have to “qualify” for the middle/workforce housing. One of the qualifying requirements the developer states is that you must work within 5 miles of the development. How is that going to work? It won’t! When that qualification can’t be satisfied there goes the workforce angle.

Also, affordable housing doesn’t help when there are not enough good paying jobs in our Nipomo, which this project provides very little of. Nipomo has 0.66 jobs per household now, and it will only get worse if this project goes in considering the housing vs jobs imbalance the project will further skew.

The developer likes to say that “our kids” can’t buy a house where they grew up. We raised two boys in Nipomo and after junior college locally, they left to make their way in this world. They knew as young adults that there were not enough nor would there ever be enough high paying jobs to be able to live here. When our kids left home, to follow their dreams, it never involved moving back to Nipomo for what? They have made their lives elsewhere. The developer likes to say that Nipomo is a haven for elite retirees! His million dollar homes will just invite more “elite retirees.”

The increase in traffic from this development will cause more large backups on Mary and Tefft streets and both north and south bound off ramps as all of the Nipomo amenities are accessed by using Tefft Street. This **development will increase the population of Nipomo by 26%**. Our roads cannot handle that much growth. Pomeroy is a thoroughfare to get from one side of town to the other especially when there are incidents on HWY 101, and is dangerous for residents trying to turn into their streets or driveways. There has been a fatal crash on Pomeroy in the middle of the day; the addition of hundreds of cars per day will be very dangerous for those who live on the attached streets. The developer’s plan, according to his website to improve traffic circulation, is to open up Willow Road and Pomeroy Road. Last I looked Willow and Pomeroy were already connected.

An additional “improvement” of the project is to connect North Frontage Road to Willow Road, however, the traffic study indicates this will only serve to clog Willow Road the north and southbound ramps, making this area just as bad as Tefft Street. This “improvement” is supposed to help with Swap Meet traffic, but since most customers of the swap meet come from Santa Maria, this is not the benefit the developer claims, especially since the traffic study states that traffic on Sundays will still be beyond capacity. Additionally, the traffic study was completed in 2018 before the recent ramp widening and signalization at Tefft Street. The survey stated that they expected improvement in the function of Tefft Street with these improvements, but many things have happened since this study; a new shopping center, new apartments and additional apartments to be built in the next few years. It’s fair to say that the improvements at Tefft Street have been below expectations. Adding an additional 4,000 people and a commercial area with a hotel is beyond the means of Nipomo’s existing infrastructure. We expect more planning and infrastructure improvements before a large development of this size is approved.

Caltrans has deemed that the area that the Dana Reserve Housing Project will be located is too rural for improvement on this section of Highway 101 and Willow Road.

This project will take **10 years to complete! 10 years according to the developer. 10 years of noise and poor air quality and streets tore up!!** What about the peaceful enjoyment of our homes, our town? We are all tenants of Nipomo and deserve to have peaceful enjoyment of our homes.

Having lived in Nipomo in the same house for 36 years we have enjoyed some "progress" we would be lying if we said otherwise. The Dana Reserve Housing Development Project is not a change we are willing to accept as is. We see no social/economic benefits to this plan. The demise of Nipomo is all we can see. Nipomo our paradise will be lost forever. The developer of this project says it will "Enrich the future of Nipomo" it will destroy the future of Nipomo.

The limited social and economic benefits of the Dana Reserve Housing Development Project will not outweigh the many significant impacts of the project. As citizens of Nipomo, we ask that this project be denied until revised to such an extent that the impacts of the development are greatly decreased. We owe it to Nipomo to present a project that does not significantly decrease the quality of life for existing residents and retains the natural beauty of the land given to Captain Dana in 1837.

Respectfully



The Sturgeon Family

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December 28, 2022