

THE NEEDHAM RANCH AT SANTA CLARITA

September 17, 2002

Mr. Leon Worden
Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society
P.O. Box 221925
Newhall, CA 91322

Dear Leon:

You have requested that we respond to the Santa Clarita Historical Society letter of May 7, 2002 prior to the Society's consideration of an endorsement of the Needham Ranch project.

We, like the Society, appreciate the historical significance of the Needham Ranch with the old Southern Pacific Tunnel, the Pioneer Oil Refinery and the site of the H. Clay Needham residence, as well as its location adjacent to Heritage Junction, Beale's Cut, the site of Lyon's Station and Hart Park. These sites undoubtedly represent the largest concentration of significant historical locations in the Santa Clarita Valley.

As you know, our family's resources are limited and as we progressed through the six hearings before the Planning Commission we attempted to identify those areas in which we were prepared to provide land and/or financial assistance. The Commission likewise made an effort to prioritize the benefits that it thought were important to the City considering the constraints. At the conclusion of the Planning Commission process the Commission unanimously recommended the project for approval by the City Council and identified the following benefits that we would provide:

1. The dedication to the City of a Park /wildlife corridor of 237+ acres.
2. The construction and dedication to the City of 16,000 lineal feet of trails and sidewalks connecting Hart Park, Heritage Junction, the Pioneer Oil Refinery, the Southern Pacific Tunnel and the Park.
3. The dedication of 1.3 acres contiguous to the Pioneer Oil Refinery for parking and an improved entrance.
4. Providing sidewalks, curbs, paved street access and landscaping to the Pioneer Oil Refinery.
5. \$1,943,000 in cash to be divided between the Pioneer Oil Refinery, Community Center, Park 'n Ride and a Pedestrian Overpass across San Fernando Road/Beautification of San Fernando Road.
6. \$50,000 for a community entrance sign in the vicinity of San Fernando Road and Sierra Highway.
7. A vocational school site of 9.4 acres for the Hart School District.
8. A Los Angeles County fire station site.
9. A helipad site for the Los Angeles County Fire Department.
10. Improved frontages along Sierra Highway and San Fernando Road with landscaping.

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11. A four-lane road in our project connecting San Fernando Road and Sierra Highway.
12. 8,000 new jobs to help correct the job/housing imbalance.
13. \$5 million in additional retail sales to jump-start Newhall.
14. \$140,000 per year in additional revenue to the Newhall Redevelopment Agency.

PIONEER OIL REFINERY

The Needham Ranch will be providing much improved paved access to the Pioneer Oil Refinery and an additional 1.3 acres in which to develop parking, landscaping and fencing. It is our understanding that the cost of these improvements will be covered by the Pioneer Oil Refinery's share of the cash contribution mentioned above.

ARTIFACTS

In your letter you expressed concern regarding the possible location of Andrew's Station, Lyon's Station and the Needham Ranch House on the site and the possible uncovering of artifacts as part of the grading process. The Mitigation Measure/Condition of Approval CR-1(a) provides: "*Should unanticipated cultural resource remains be encountered during construction or land modification activities, the applicable procedures established by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation concerning protection and preservation of Historic and Cultural Properties should be followed. In this event, work shall cease until the nature, extent, and possible significance of any cultural remains can be assessed and, if necessary, remediated. If remediation is needed, possible techniques include removal, documentation or avoidance of the resource, depending upon the nature of the find.*" We believe that this provision accomplishes what we have previously discussed.

HUMAN REMAINS

With respect to human remains CR-1(b) provides: "*In the event that human remains are discovered during construction or land modification activities, the procedures in Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code shall be followed. These procedures require notification of the coroner and the Native American Heritage Commissions if the coroner determines the remains to be those of Native American ancestry.*"

CARETAKER'S HOME

We believe that a close examination of the caretaker's home will disclose that it is not an appropriate building for renovation, however, it would be satisfactory if the Society wishes to salvage its component materials for use by the Society in its restoration projects.

ROCK ARCHWAY

As we have mentioned before it is our intention to preserve the rock archway by moving it and incorporate it into the Sierra Highway entrance to the project.

HISTORICAL MARKERS


We anticipate working with the Society to develop appropriate historical markers on the trails to identify historical sites on the Needham Ranch with the exception of the Pioneer

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Oil Refinery, as we believe that with the money we are contributing to the City that there will be adequate funds to discuss the history of that site.

We hope that we have answered the issues posed in your letter, but if you have any questions please do not hesitate to give me a call.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark T. Gates, Jr." with a stylized, cursive script.

Mark T. Gates, Jr.