

**EMAILS AND LETTERS OF OPPOSITION  
APPEAL HEARING  
APRIL 8, 2025**

Date: Fri, Aug 30, 2024 at 10:24 AM  
Subject: LETTER TO SUPERVISOR DAWN ROWE

Here is a copy of the letter I wrote to our Supervisor.

LoveMore Ranch I have lived in JT for 26 years. We need your support to defeat this absurd proposal. Meeting Aug 29 at JT Community Center. You need to be there. This project will destroy JT. Article in Hi-Desert Star 8/21. The proposal is filled with lies and mistruths. There is not enough water in Morongo Basin aquifers, we already have issues with the ground water. And you cannot just "BUY WATER" from CAP. It needs to be allocated. 64 septic tanks will leach into the water table. This parcel is a major route for all the wildlife in the area. The lighting generated by 64 homes on 19 acres will destroy the night sky. Lighting codes have never been enforced in JT. From my deck I can see 20 homes with illegal lighting. The ABNB at 60875 has 50 outdoor lights. I own the parcel next to it and it gets blasted with illegal lighting. Code enforcement refuses to help. If this project is approved, it will just be the beginning of massive development. JT is turning into a transient community. Many of the 64 homes will be ABNB's and no one in JT will afford to live there. Will be more LA people who do not respect the desert we have fought for 30 years to preserve. Quail Mt Preserve is at Sunny Vista and Mt View Trail. Now that it is part of JTNP, and on their map, we get 30 cars parked everywhere, there are only 3 designated spaces. This has destroyed our quiet neighborhood. Please support Joshua Tree as you have promised to do.

Mar 8, 2024

Hello Ms. Rowe,  
I wrote to you in August regarding the development called Love More Ranch. I spoke with your representatives at the meeting at Joshua Tree Community Center. Now I received an email containing the following:

The LoveMore Ranch developer, Axel Cramer, has methodically sidestepped due process, community involvement, and environmental policy to obtain approval from the planning commission in order to proceed with his project. With the assistance of Morongo Basin Conservation Association (MBCA), we have appealed the San Bernardino County planning commission decision.

Is this correct??? Has the Planning Commission given its approval to Cramer to proceed??? I thought you were going to stop this on our behalf??? Please advise exactly what you are doing on our behalf that we now need to form a group called

JOSHUA TREE VILLAGE NEIGHBORS to continue fighting?? I thought you were also opposed to this destruction of Joshua Tree.

Laird Davis

Mar 25, 2025

Hello Again Supervisor Rowe,

I have already written to you to express my strong opposition to the Lovemore Ranch project. I have forwarded a copy of that letter to the organizations listed above to be included in the appeal packages. I attended the August 2024 meeting at the JT Community Center. There were over 100 people who were all opposed to this project. Mr Cramer refused to answer many of our questions. His proposal was filled with lies and mistruths. I spoke to both of your representatives at the meeting, which you told me you could not attend due to a prior engagement.

Now I understand that the Planning Commission held a public hearing. None of the people who were supposed to be kept informed received notice of this hearing. How many of the 100+ people from the August meeting attended the Planning Meeting??? I provided information so I would be informed of any meetings regarding this project. Most of the 100+ attendees also requested to be kept informed. I personally asked you to notify me of any meetings, like the one held in secret by the Planning Commission.

I fail to understand how this project, with the significant negative impact it will have on Joshua Tree, could ever get approved at all. And here again, the residents of JT will be required to fight another desecration of our desert paradise. There are already over 20 new homes within 3 miles of my home, most of them tiny homes, which all will be STRS, as they are too small for permanent residence.

I could write pages upon pages to outline all the issues this development will create. Here is a partial listing:

1. Lighting Pollution---the amount of lighting pollution created by 64 homes on just 19 acres will destroy the night sky of JT. This alone should be grounds to reject this development. From my deck I can see 20 homes with illegal lighting. Code Enforcement is already severely understaffed. There is no way they can police 64 houses. Many of the newcomers to Joshua Tree come from places where they use significant outdoor lighting. Already the JT Night Sky has been greatly impacted.
2. Water---There is not enough water in the Morongo Basin aquifers. The Joshua Basin Water District is already having to purchase water, which has increased all residents' water bills. You cannot just "BUY WATER" from CAP as Mr Cramer has indicated. It needs to be allocated through a very difficult political process.
3. Wildlife---this parcel is a major wildlife corridor from JTNP and Covington Flats. This will be destroyed by putting 64 houses on only 19 acres.

4. Grading Issues and Destruction of a Pristine Desert Area. The sewerage plant proposed will be right next to the mountains. The amount of damage to joshua trees, yuccas, creosote, cacti, etc. to realize this project is beyond belief. How can you approve such widespread destruction?

5. There are fewer than 64 houses in a 3 mile radius of this area. Many homes are on 3 acre parcels. This project basically dumps a major city into a rural environment. If this is allowed to go forward, it will open Joshua Tree to more projects like this. There is no infrastructure for a development of this magnitude. The traffic on Alta Loma is already out of control. This will add a minimum of 150 more vehicles onto our streets.

6. This development is being financed by private equity money. The least expensive home will cost \$650,000---many will be priced at over \$1 million. None of these homes will be for Joshua Tree residents. They will be for wealthy individuals who will create STR'S, in addition to foreign investment. JT is already being transformed into a transient community. The only people to benefit from this project are the billionaires who are putting up the money.

YOU ARE ALLOWING THE DESTRUCTION OF JOSHUA TREE SOLELY FOR THE PROPERTY TAXES YOU EXPECT TO COLLECT. YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO PROTECT THE RESIDENTS OF JOSHUA TREE. HOW MANY OF YOU SUPERVISORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION HAVE ACTUALLY VISITED THE AREA THAT YOU HAVE VOTED TO DESTROY!!! YOU ALL SHOULD BE ASHAMED!!!

LAIRD DAVIS  
MOUNTAIN VIEW TRAIL  
JOSHUA TREE

August 7, 2024, Jeff McClellan <mcclellanjeff@rocketmail.com> wrote:

Dear Mr. Ron Cruz,

RE:  
PROJ-2021-00169  
TRACT MAP 20443  
ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER: 0602-361-04

My name is Jeffrey L. McClellan and I reside at 61772 Alta Mura Dr. Joshua Tree, CA, and I wanted to write you today with some specific concerns I have regarding the project mentioned above.

Primary concerns:

1.  
This project would require the removal of existing native plants that would destroy the

delicate eco system of this functioning wildlife corridor. Not to mention any protected species  
such as our native Joshua Trees.

2.  
Flooding in this area is a very real thing! This area lies in a wash that could imperil homes  
if they were to be built in that space. The removal of native plants would also exacerbate this  
threat.

3.  
Alta Loma, where this project is proposed, is already a very busy thoroughfare with several  
intersections on this street becoming increasingly dangerous as it is! I feel that we just don't have  
the infrastructure to handle this at all.

4.  
The waste water is a definite concern in our area. The OWTS is not in compliance with the proposed  
lot sizes for these homes. The mandate is one 1/2 acre lot per home due to the saturation of nitrates found in  
the ground water.

In closing, I feel that this entire project is not respectful with regard to our community plans and goals.

If the plan were to move forward, please consider larger lot sizes and fewer homes.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Jeff L. McClellan  
61772 Alta Mura Drive  
Joshua Tree, CA  
92252

From: Jerry and Sue <[thehogie@yahoo.com](mailto:thehogie@yahoo.com)>  
To: [Ron.Cruz@lus.sbcounty.gov](mailto:Ron.Cruz@lus.sbcounty.gov) <[ron.cruz@lus.sbcounty.gov](mailto:ron.cruz@lus.sbcounty.gov)>  
Sent: Wednesday, August 7, 2024 at 10:55:15 AM PDT  
Subject: Proj-2021-00169

I have concerns about this project and the impact on traffic at Alta Loma and Sunset  
also Alta Loma and Hillview. Sunset is a major street and basically the only way out of

our neighborhood going south. This will put a lot more cars trying to get out onto Alta Loma. The traffic on Alta Loma has increased immensely since the AirBnB boom in Joshua Tree. If fencing or landscaping is put up will it block the view as you are trying to pull out onto Alta Loma. It would be safer if Hillview was paved and maybe a couple of streets connect to Sunset and Hillview and exit onto Alta Loma so people could drive thru the neighborhood to get on to Alta Loma. Are they planning on putting stop lights in?

I also have concerns about the lot 0602-361-04. This lot has a large pit in the middle. If this pit is filled and the lot leveled will the water flow be changed? Will it cause flooding downhill? Does the developer have plans for proper compaction of the lot so the homes won't sink after years of water flowing thru their lot?

Thanks for checking into my concerns  
Susan Hogervorst  
6820 Conejo Ave  
Joshua Tree, Ca 92252  
[Thehogie@yahoo.com](mailto:Thehogie@yahoo.com)

Mar 20, 2025  
Hello there, fellow neighbours

My name is Jennifer Good and I live in the Friendly Hills area of JT. I had not realized until your email that this project had been before a planning committee at SBC and was approved, without due notification and consultation. We have not received any letters from the county about this proposed 'ranch', but I am assuming we are not near enough for such letters.

I am very concerned about the density of this project, and the idea of a sewage 'farm' being constructed in a residential area. I have been in touch with Joshua Basin Water District who have had no contact with or by San Bernardino County about this building proposal.

I will be glad to send a letter detailing my concerns . What address do I use and is it hard copy needed or Will an email suffice?

I will not be able to attend the meeting on the 8th April due to a prior appointment. I did attend the initial meeting that Lovemore Ranch put on at the community center in JT. That was last year some time.

Please let me know where to send my letter, in order to be counted or read out at this rushed county meeting.

Thanks for all you are doing

Jenny Good  
[bobandjen@gmail.com](mailto:bobandjen@gmail.com)

SBC Planning Commision Board  
San Bernardino  
CA 92415

March 26th 2025

Dear Sirs

Re: Planning Application: Lovemore Ranch PROJ- 201-00169

Through the diligence of local residents to this proposed grossly over developed parcel of land in Joshua Tree, CA 92252 , I have become aware that planning permission was granted to this development without due notice of that 'Public' meeting that apparently was held on January 23rd 2025. Fortunately , these local residents and local community Group, have successfully appealed this lack of notification for the Public hearing, and a further date has been scheduled for the 8.th April 2025, which gives little time for presentation of documentation and organization of this Group to inform local residents. I have to ask myself if this was specifically designed to impede such a presentation in opposition to this project. I have a number of questions and concerns about the proposed Lovemore Ranch development, as follows:

Why 64 dwellings? Way too packed in and urban for the very rural area of Joshua Tree. it does not comply with the notion of responsible growth as stated on the fancy Lovemore Ranch website. Of course, this over development is purely because LR will not make substantial profits if there are less homes built. It's all about making money! Forget the impact on the local area.

The sewage and water treatment plant will be set close to an existing residential area. Has this been closely reviewed by the planning board? Are there similar schemes in existence in suchan area as this? For city projects and large civic areas, it is probably acceptable, but here with that many houses on this amount of land, it is not. During a phone call to Joshua Basin Water Department, I learned that they had not been contacted by the Planning Board , with questions about adequate water supply or been given information about the water treatment plant. Surely, such a body should be able put forward their findings on this project too?

The adverse impact of traffic on the junction of Alta Loma and Park Boulevard/ Quail Springs Road, needs to be addressed fully. I notice that the LR website suggests that there will be little traffic impact, as Alta Loma Drive is already a 'Collector Street', whatever that is supposed to mean. The fact of the matter is, the junction will be even more difficult for folks to turn left from

Alta Loma on to Park Boulevard and, therefore, to get to HWY 62, the main commuter artery for traffic in this area. It also suggests that most people will use Sunset Drive in order to get to HWY 62. Sunset drive is a relatively narrow residential road that meets HWY 62 in the middle of our little town of Joshua Tree. It is also the entrance to local stores and the Farmers Market that occurs every Saturday. It is busy with pedestrians and accessing traffic Accidents waiting to happen!

Finally, the Joshua Trees. Yes, those iconic ancient wonderful trees that we have now caused to be severely endangered by allowing just this type of over-development. The National Park is having a hard time trying to minimize the damage caused by traffic pollution and climate change. Joshua Trees do not do well when transplanted. Many will decline slowly and eventually die. It may take several years, maybe 5 or 6, but then they give up their struggle. With so much building going on everywhere is it not even more important to preserve the wild places within our community?

Lovemore Ranch with its huge proposed amount of houses is not complimentary of beneficial to the unique desert landscape of Joshua Tree, California. Joshua Tree is a jewel in the County of San Bernardino. We want the Commission to recognise that fact and stop this development.

Jennifer and Robert Good  
Sandalwood Trl  
Joshua Tree CA 92252

From: Laura Ambrosius <[chipper115@gmail.com](mailto:chipper115@gmail.com)>  
Date: Wed, Aug 7, 2024 at 8:12 AM  
Subject: Re: Project#: PROJ-2021-00169  
To: <[ron.cruz@lus.sbcounty.gov](mailto:ron.cruz@lus.sbcounty.gov)>

This email is in response to the application filed with county planning to develop the 18.49 gross acres into 64 parcels with the intent to establish 64 homes.

I am adamantly opposed to the building of these small houses in Joshua Tree for the following reasons.

1. It will negatively impact the traffic on Alta Loma and Sunset/Hillview.
2. The homes are too densely packed and the neighborhood will be negatively impacted.
3. I anticipate that the homes being built are going to be 2 bedroom 2 bath because an outside developer is in it for the money grab - not to better our community and provide housing for families that is affordable.
4. The serenity of the area will be negatively impacted.
5. On such small parcels the septic and sewage will be in question.

6. The local fauna will be displaced, as well as the natural beauty of the desert.

I would like to be notified of the decision rendered for this project and the projected timelines for the building. I anticipate that this comment is useless because big companies can do whatever they want to do without public opinion mattering.

My contact information is:

Laura Ambrosius  
[chipper115@gmail.com](mailto:chipper115@gmail.com)  
61526 Alta Mura Drive Joshua Tree, Ca 92252

Mar 24, 2025

Hello Joshua Tree fellow Village Neighbors,

I don't have any documentation to share but I have attached my protest letter to the Lovemore Ranch project to be included in your documentation of my husband's and my protest of this insane housing project! We will be going to the April 8th meeting and I'm in contact with other JT village residents who are in opposition. Hopefully will have a group of people going on 4/8.

Thanks,  
Licia Perea & Jose Garcia Davis

March 2025

To Dawn Rowe and the San Bernardino Board of Supervisors,

My husband and I are residents of Joshua Tree Village off of Hillview on Desert Air Rd. We are both TOTALLY AGAINST the Lovemore Ranch, PROJ-201-00169 for many reasons. First we would like to state that we do NOT appreciate the LACK of communication of Ms Rowe and her assistant to the residents of our village in relaying IMPORTANT information on hearings, appeals and other critical information that we have demanded be shared by the San Bernardino Board of Supervisors with the residents of Joshua Tree in reference of this project!

Our concerns are:

1. Number one the developer Axel Kramer/Lovemore Ranch has not been honest with our community and has withheld important details of the project, while lying about important environmental impacts this dense housing development would cause.
2. The 18 acres that is proposed for this project would basically be clear cut of the creosote, cholla and the western yucca and other native plants! Hopefully the Joshua Tree's would be protected.



3. The water usage for SIXTY-FOUR more tract houses is SUBSTANTIAL and would be an environmental drain to our precarious desert water situation. I was abhorred when Kramer answered my question about water usage by saying "that we would get more water from the Colorado River for this project" !!! Either he is ignorant/stupid about the water situation concerning the Colorado River controversy and huge problems on the declining water situation in the west (especially here in the Mojave desert) OR he just blatantly lied to us. This is NOT SUSTAINABLE!!
4. The traffic that will primarily be funnelled out their only access is onto Hillview. This street is already a major road for the village. Adding 64 more house with most likely 2 cars each, recreational vehicles, motor cycles ETC would add a huge amount of vehicles/traffic to this village road - making why I came here to be out of a heavy urban traffic situation!
5. The sewage treatment for SIXTY-FOUR tract houses would be located on site, which would be the largest of it's kind in the village - what kind of environmental impact would this have on our water table and ground water? Not to mention the SMELL of this large treatment system for all the surrounding area!
6. There is a new ordinance about light pollution in our village and I doubt that Kramer is aware of it or cares if he causes 64 or more houses' worth of light - destroying our beautiful night skies.
7. Kramer never answered if these 64 homes could be rented out as STR's, which would be not good for the STR's that are already here - adding to the glut of these in our community!
8. Lastly the years of construction, trucks, pollution, noise and the degradation of our quality of life here in our quiet village would be ruined!

WE BOTH WHOLEHEARTEDLY OPPOSE THE LOVEMORE RANCH! This young developer, Kramer, only has dollar signs in his eyes and intentions EVEN though he proclaims visions of an eco development and affordable housing. This is more of a project for Yucca Valley that has the infrastructure for a large 64 home development.

Thank you for your consideration,  
 Licia Perea and Jose Garcia Davis  
 61509 Desert Air Rd.  
 Joshua Tree, CA 92252

Mar 24, 2025, 6:38 PM

Not sure if this is what you need - see email below showing I sent a letter in opposition on 8/07/2024 and this acknowledgment email from Ron Cruz was received 8/16/2024. Attaching that letter, also.

- I did not receive one of the 63 Public Hearing Notices sent on January 8, 2025.

- I was not notified regarding the open comments period (for the CEQA review) from October 23, 2024 to November 25, 2024

Attaching new letter dated today.

Thanks for your efforts.  
Stephen Mark Johnston

August 7, 2024  
Ron Cruz  
County of San Bernardino  
Via email to: ron.cruz@lus.sbcounty.gov  
Re: PROJ-2021-00169 Tentative Tract Map 20443,  
Assessor parcel no: 0602-361-04

Dear Mr. Cruz:

Please see my comments below on the proposed project to develop this 18.49 acres into (64)

parcels with 64 homes.

As a resident, homeowner and business owner in this neighborhood since 2011, I strongly

oppose this project for the follow reasons:

- WASTE WATER ISSUES - we are already over stressing the water supply from the aquifer.

Adding an additional 64 homes on parcels less than 1/3 acre each will add to the existing problems exponentially.

- TRAFFIC - Has a traffic study been done on the impact to the neighborhood and adjacent

roads to access the National Park? We are already facing visitor growth annually with numbers in the hundreds of thousands more cars on these local roads.

- FLORA - This extreme approach to developing the land will most likely "scrape" the existing

native vegetation for economy in construction. I do not believe the developer will replace the

native flora, likely impossible as many of these plants are up to a hundred years old or more.

- INTEGRITY OF COMMUNITY - The area has already been transitioning to short term rentals a

rate that is beyond sustainable for the local economy or the investors who have taken a deep dive into properties that are now back on the market, as they cannot support the costs

of an oversaturated business model.

- AFFORDABLE HOUSING - I doubt the homes being proposed would be considered affordable

housing. This is not what Joshua Tree needs. I am opposed to developing this land in the manner proposed.

Please take these comments to heart when moving forward with your review process. I, as

well as many of my neighbors, feel this development is an inappropriate concept for Joshua

Tree Village.

Sincerely,

Stephen Mark Johnston

March 24, 2025

Planning Department of LUS

County of San Bernardino

Re: PROJ-2021-00169 Tentative Tract Map 20443,

Assessor parcel no: 0602-361-04

To whom it may concern:

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Adding an additional 64 homes on parcels less than 1/3 acre each will add to the existing

problems exponentially.

- TRAFFIC - Has a traffic study been done on the impact to the neighborhood and adjacent

roads to access the National Park? We are already facing visitor growth annually with numbers in the hundreds of thousands more cars on these local roads. Hillview cannot sustain additional traffic — another serious car accident occurred 3/22/2025 at the intersection of Hillview and CA-62 — CalTrans will not install a traffic signal there.

- FLORA - This extreme approach to developing the land will most likely “scrape” the existing

native vegetation for economy in construction. I do not believe the developer will replace the

native flora, likely impossible as many of these plants are up to a hundred years old or more.

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Please take these comments to heart when moving forward with your review process. I, as

well as many of my neighbors, feel this development is an inappropriate concept for Joshua

Tree Village.

Sincerely,

Stephen Mark Johnston

Emily Felt  
61104 Navajo Trail  
Joshua Tree, CA 92252

March 27, 2025

Dear Joshua Tree Village Neighbors,

I am writing in strong opposition to the Lovemore Ranch development as proposed. Let me be clear - I am not opposed to development in Joshua Tree in general. There is a new house being built on every other block in our town and I will happily welcome those new neighbors as I was welcomed when I was a new resident.

I am opposed to reckless development that does not benefit Joshua Tree as a whole and has not taken in the needs, limitations and interests of the community that already exists here. First of all, we do not have the infrastructure to accommodate this type of development. It would not only adversely affect the immediate neighbors and community overall, but the future residents of said development.

Secondly, we live in a fragile ecosystem which is facing increasing threat from climate change. The land we build houses on is an extension of Joshua Tree National Park and we, as it's denizens, are proud stewards of that land, foliage, animals, and our beloved endangered Joshua Tree. This development does not honor this commitment. For example, we are a dark sky community. There is no way a development of this size and

density can honor that. How will this development affect our bats, our owls and our other nocturnal sky neighbors?

I leave with this question - if this development is such a benefit to our community, why is it being jammed through with little to no community involvement?

I stand with the trees and the bats.

No to Lovemore Ranch.

Sincerely,  
Emily Felt

Mar 29, 2025

RE: Lovemore Ranch  
PROJ-2021-00169  
Assessor Parcel NO: 0602-361-04

To the County supervisors:

I am a neighbor of the proposed High density development of 64 tract houses in my neighborhood, the so-called Lovemore Ranch project in the town of Joshua Tree. It makes no sense in a town like this which is underserved in so many ways, challenged by water, light pollution, visitor traffic and on the edge of the national park. I also truly believe that people do not come to the desert to live on top of each other but to have some space around them.

The development and its high density are deeply out of touch with the reality of the rural life here and would degrade this small town and specifically this area in many ways.

Here are my main concerns:

#### Traffic

The proposal is to funnel all traffic in and out of Hillview Rd. which directly faces my property and would send lights across my house and hundreds of new traffic by my property. Vehicles are typically already going 60-70 miles down this road and are legion now with google maps sending park visitors along Alta Loma. Getting in and out of my driveway takes minutes now and there is now turning lane on this road. Adding this increased activity from Hillview will multiple this hassle, confusion, and danger by many times.

#### Water and sewage

The water demands of such a development will further tax an already stressed aquifer. If sewage is to be processed on site, the neighboring residents will be subject to the smell. There is just no infrastructure for this kind of density here.

Proposed project would:

- Stress a very limited water supply in the high desert.
- Create sewage demands that will further impact air quality and soil quality.

#### Noise

Building this many houses so close to each other will create a massive noise issue day and night. With dogs, cars, AC units, yells and general people noises, not to mention the years that it will take to construct all the streets, remove the vegetation and construct so many houses.

Proposed project would:

- Destroy the peacefulness and quiet that is special to this place and the reason I moved here.
- Disrupt and put at risk the quiet desert community that is already imperiled by massive airbnb exploitation.

#### Light Pollution

Conservatively speaking, each house in such a development would have 8 - 10 lights. This adds up, including cars and RVs, to close to a thousand or more new lights not including the street lamps, in an area that prizes its dark skies. I can see the Milky Way from my driveway on clear nights. This project would make that impossible.

Proposed project would:

- Increase the glare in the immediate area by multiple factors of 10 reducing the dark skies that people come here for.
- Add a concentrated cluster of light pollution that will reduce the quality of life for current residents who enjoy the darkness.

#### Removal of the Animal habitat and plants

The land on which the project is proposed is literally one of the most lush in Joshua Tree. Other areas lower in the valley are just creosote but here is a dense primeval stand of Joshua tree, Yucca, cholla, pencil cholla, wildflowers and many other indigenous plants. Little of it will survive the proposed development, despite promises made. Just the square footage of houses, roads and access to build will raze nearly the entire area for a density of homes that is not likely to be

Proposed project would:

- Destroy centuries old plant and animal ecosystems further imperiling the Mojave.
- Diminish wildlife such as quail, lizards, rabbits and tortoises that live in the area and are already beset by unbridled growth in the area.
- Impact the wildlife pathways that connect other open spaces.

Destruction of the town's character

Adding 64 houses in such a small area by a single developer will inevitably create a sea of uniform sameness that would make this area indistinguishable from generic housing constructions anywhere in the Inland empire. This is certainly not in line with the rest of the town which is delightfully eclectic in terms of architecture, house color style and yard design.

In summary

I am strongly against such a dense project in my neighborhood for the reasons above and for the blatant disregard by the developer of the community's ethos, the specialness of the desert environment and the noise, light and traffic pollution that would ensue.

Respectfully,

David Dodge  
61579 Alta Loma Drive  
Joshua Tree, Ca 92252

This letter was not included in the Staff Report for the January 23, 2025 Planning Commission Hearing.

From: [janetjohnstn@earthlink.net](mailto:janetjohnstn@earthlink.net) <[janetjohnstn@earthlink.net](mailto:janetjohnstn@earthlink.net)>  
Sent: Friday, May 27, 2022 5:04 PM  
To: 'irene.romero@lus.sbcounty.gov' <[irene.romero@lus.sbcounty.gov](mailto:irene.romero@lus.sbcounty.gov)>  
Subject: PROJ-2021-00169 0602-361-04 61650 Alta Loma Joshua Tree

Dear Ms Romero and Planning:

We realize the County did not instigate this project and it is a private individual who does not live in the community. We were assured when you repealed the Community Plan against our wishes, that you would inform any developer of the Community Plan and Community Action Guide, so that yet another developer would not come in and attempt something way out of scale like this. Joshua Tree has been very clear about maintaining our rural character for our residents' and tourists' benefit.

Projects in the desert need to stay in-scale and preserve the desert flora, fauna, and spirit. This is a very good location for some homes, but the density is about three to four times what it should be to preserve the desert. The properties immediately to the east are .41 acres +/-, to the south much larger 1 to 2 acre plus, to the west 2 to 2.5 acres.

The properties below to the North are much tighter but there is no natural vegetation left, and thus no sense of desert. These properties are also too dense with septic leaching nitrates into our groundwater. I hear nightmare stories of folks calling the cops

on their neighbor because of the noise the neighbor's door makes in these tight blocks – they are too close. Fire would just plow on through that density, jumping from one house to the next.

There are no details about the waste treatment facility, but the fact that they placed it on the edge of their own subdivision right above existing home owners (let them deal with it), says a lot about this planning. The fact that they just super-imposed so many lots with no clear indication of grading to make the roads, or deal with the water course that parallels Sunset, or the pit in the middle indicates they have not given this much thought, or done studies of the flooding.

This lot is full of yuccas and joshua trees and both are protected under your own ordinance, and of course the joshua trees are being considered for candidacy as we speak. This appears to be another clear-cutting project – to blade 18 complete acres into a dust pit that will sit until the project slowly gets built. What is the plan? We don't know, because we don't know any details...but that is the line in the sand: NO clear-cutting, NO blading. If you haven't figured out that this community will fight to the death (figuratively) to protect this desert and this community, then you do not know us. It would be wise to inform Axel Cramer of this.

There is already a fairly dangerous pull out at Sunset and Alta Loma, a split intersection. It is almost a blind left turn onto Sunset, and blind right turn onto Alta Loma. Alta Loma is very crowded – way past the level of service described in your Countywide Plan EIR done back in 2016. Since there have been no developer impact fees paid by any of the multiple STR-developers, will this property owner bear all the brunt and have to pay for all road improvements? The turn at Alta Loma and Park Boulevard, just a few hundred feet down the road, is now treacherous, too. Hillview is a dirt road that has a wash running through it that is hard for most cars to navigate. Will this owner have to pave Hillview to take care of 75 homes' worth of vehicle travel? The intersections all the way to Yucca are all exceedingly dangerous: at FHES, at Olympic, at La Contenta.

We need affordable family homes to replace all the homes converted into short-term rentals. We do not need more short-term rentals. What is the county going to do to assure that affordable family homes get built here instead of more STRs? Every building, unless very carefully planned, contributes to the carbon in the atmosphere. We are at a crisis point. Every acre scraped removes the natural carbon sink that it was. People need homes, but extraneous building (another STR when we already have over 1000) is just another contributing factor in the wrong direction.

We assume after the years of controversy over Altamira, this will not be a walled, gated, or HOA exclusionary community? Not in the character of Joshua Tree – another deal breaker.

We were told and essentially assured during the Countywide planning that due to the state law about no more than one septic tank per 1/2 acre, a project of this density was highly unlikely to fly. Maybe that is news to tell Axel Cramer, too.

½ acre lots are the smallest lots that hold some hope, with proper planning, for keeping some of the joshua trees and native plants in situ and leaves room for wildlife to roam



per lot – keeping the feel of the desert, as opposed to a clearcut. People visit here, and come to live here for space and for the joshua trees, yuccas, cactus, creosote and the critters. How is the county going to ensure that this development will maintain the rural character and preserve our native desert plants as much as possible?

No clearcutting, no mass grading – deal breaker. It would be nice if they left a “green belt” along Alta Loma and not have driveways pulling out onto it. Pre-construction inspections for each individual lot, when it is ready to build on. Grading only for the building pad, garage, and immediate yard. Consider green strips between parcels and along roads to preserve as much as possible. (Really should be somewhere around  $\frac{3}{4}$  an acre to ensure native plants.  $\frac{1}{2}$  is tight.)

It is much better if our local builders can access these sites for their projects, not another outside corporation. Meaning, if they just subdivide the land to match to the east, and take trees and drainage into consideration as to how they do that, then local builders can buy the parcels, and keep local workers busy over time. As opposed, to a large corporation shipping in all their own contractors, clearcutting, and building using little local labor.

Why not just do the easy and feasible thing, so you get it done versus another years long battle? Draw the subdivision with  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre to 1 acre lots, maybe 17 to 30 lots. The ideal lot size might be  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an acre, as that gives water room to move, plants can stay, no waste treatment plant, minimal roads needed, and gives the owners flexibility for their property and provides a nice desert tract, versus a suburban-intensive tract.

Just some quick thoughts.

The county needs to come on out and do a proper survey of what we have and need for housing. We need affordable desert-scale multi-family housing in walking distance of downtown. We need a safe place for RVs to park, and folks living in cars, and transitional housing too.

Thanks, Janet Johnston

March 31, 2025

ATTN: Elena Barragan, Senior Planner, Dawn Rowe, Supervisor  
PROJECT: PROJ- 2021-00169

Dear Ms Barragan and Ms. Rowe.

As a home owner in Joshua Tree since 2021 and who lives 30 feet from the proposed waste treatment plant, I am appalled and disappointed that we, your property taxpayers and constituency, continue to be required to mount opposition to one man and an mega destructive development, one of many this town cannot support.

I have stated, in granular detail, in my prior letters, of failures to notify, inform or hold accountable the applicant and Project's gross inconsistencies.

Since 2022, I have received NOT ONE notification by mail. I did not receive any of the following notices for critical matters that required me to respond in a timely manner: Jan 8, 2025, Request for Comment/Jan 23, 2025, Public Hearing/ Oct 23, 2024- Nov 25, 2024 Open Comments for CEQA / August 29, 2024, Community Center Hearing / July 24, 2024 64 Lots/ Request for Comments / May 27, 2022 75 Lots, Request for Comments. I am outraged by this neglect and oversight.

The waste treatment plant proposed will destroy my quality of life and property value. The appalling hubris of this proposed mega toilet to service 64 homes (or is it more that you haven't disclosed) and a swimming pool, on a slope, with no leech field except our vulnerable homes, made of concrete subject to cracking due to building on sand that moves when the marine base conducts bombing exercises and is subject to mass flooding events, IS INSANE! Please with all respect, no manufactured tax revenue is worth it when people suffer. Have you no heart?

I've reached my limit of understanding for the workings of San Bernadino County Representation and Land Use Services. I have endured the lack of communication and representation by multiple Planners: Irene Romero, Chris Warwick, Lisette Sanchez Mendoza and Ron Cruz before you.

Please withdraw the approval of Jan 23 and direct the applicant to resubmit a proposal that meets or exceeds or list of entirely reasonable demands.

E. Pfau  
PO Box 1046  
61657 Alta Vista  
Joshua Tree Village Neighbors  
ruralradd@gmail.com

## **SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

15900 Smoke Tree St., Suite 131  
Hesperia CA 92345

385 N Arrowhead Ave  
San Bernadine, CA 92415

Aug 6, 2024  
ATTN: Ron Cruz, Planner

PROJECT: PROJ- 2021-00169

This is a 2024 Addendum to the first letter I sent regarding this 2021 proposal, then under Irene Romero.

My new concerns are as follows:

1. The neighbors and surrounding community were not given fair time to respond. None of the neighbors I know were mailed a notice. I did not receive a notice. Once we found a notice, we are forced to scramble a response in 48 hours.
2. The mega density of this development is not appropriate or in proportion to this neighborhood or small town scale. We do need LTR, but this is not the correct location for this level of density.
3. The land owner/ developer has been unwilling to work with neighbors to find solutions. He is an outsider with zero stake in the community.
4. Why is the development cloaked in such secrecy, why is no information available regarding project safety and land protection. Why do planners keep leaving the department and causing a lag in responses to requests for more information? The assigned Planner has changes multiple times. Irene Romero, Chris Warrick, Lisette Sanchez Mendoza and now Ron Cruz. How can we trust continuity of care on this critical matter?
5. Scraping 18 acres to the bone will create a giant dust bowl that will cover the radius of homes around the area, exposing all residents to the extremes of valley fever, released when desert soil is airborne. This dust will recirculate at every wind event.
6. The water use, light and noise pollution issues have not been addressed in this proposal
7. This development would directly put a waste treatment plant in two backyards, compromising long term owners who have established STR business and homes they love.
8. Construction would cause terrible noise, untold ecological destruction and a traffic nightmare beyond anything worth destroying this land over. I implore you to stand on the corner of sunset and Alta Loma on this next weekend the 10th and 11th of August when the park will be receiving the highest number of people coming to see

the meteor showers and ask yourself if having 65 people exiting and entering their driveways while 55 miles an hour speeds fly by would be a good idea?

9. Scaling the development size to 65 units down from 75 is laughable. 65 homes on a block when the standard is 10 is akin to inserting a massive city onto a fragile hillside! How many revisions of this development proposal will there be? Another 3 year period of quiet followed by version three at 55 houses, followed by version four and 45 houses? How many years will this seething nightmare be revisited?
10. I will continue to fight this project. Now I know many more people who are allies in making sure this project never happens. Since yesterday I have personally reached out to 55 people to notify them to oppose this project.

Sent May 25, 2021

Merrell-Johnson Companies' application for a tract subdivision at 61650 Alta Vista Dr, is aggressive and ought not proceed. The Z shape/dog leg intersection at Sunset and Alta Loma is a low visibility, high traffic congestion area with a blistering 55MPH designation. Development and construction congestion will impact and impede National Park and residential access for decades.

The north side of the block is already developed, which means the proposed 75 lots will translate into 25 lots per each side on Sunset, Alta Loma and Hillside. There are no similar blocks in the friendly hills area with this density. This proposal will create a tremendous amount of residential congestion. Covering a pristine 18 acre parcel will destroy 5 protected Joshua trees, unobstructed views and ecological habitat. There will be 75 concrete trucks pouring 75 foundations, 75 septic tanks, 75 water users, 75 more cars, 75 driveways, 75 building sites, 75 daily noise infractions, 75 more light pollution sites, and 75 potential flooding and fire hazards, on a hillside, above a fragile small town, to name a few. Even at 18 parcels, the impact of this 'development' is profound. Why is this even a possibility?

As a new resident of this block, I have major concerns. I bought this property because the open space provided a beautiful and peaceful quiet. Most troubling, and suspect, is that I did not receive any official notice for this project, as my address is 61657 Alta Vista. How many residents were not notified? Why is the window to respond/comment only 10 days? What is the big rush?

Please address the following concerns.

**Development.** Are these 75 lots going to be available to long term residents? For example, is this development solving for the housing crisis? Are these allowed to be vacation rentals? What are the long term development goals for land use in Zone 3 and their impact on residential access and quality of life? Zone 3, zoning designation is low density (LDR) and Single Residences (RS). How is 75 parcels considered low density? Will these parcels and the subsequent homes be subject to height, density and square footage restrictions? Will these be single family homes only, or luxury monstrosities? Joshua Tree is suffering from a long term rental crisis. 33% of all inventory is sequestered into short term vacation rentals that compromise local employment, housing, natural resources and economic access. Are local plumbing, electrical and service companies to be given access to these jobs and economic opportunities? Where is the tax benefit for this town and how will it translate for the local residents? If a non local company pays taxes outside of the area, who benefits?

**Environment.** What does the CEQA California Environmental Quality Act report show about the systemic impacts related to this 18 acre tract? According to their website, <https://opr.ca.gov/ceqa/> :

*“ CEQA requires public agencies to look before they leap” and consider the environmental consequences of their discretionary actions. CEQA is intended to inform government decision makers and the public about the potential environmental effects of proposed activities and to prevent significant, avoidable environmental damage.”*

**Applicant.** Merrell-Johnson Companies is a large developer who's website portfolio includes detention centers, waste treatment, college training centers and airports, why are they applying to subdivide? Who are they as people and what is their interest specifically? Who will supervise Merrell-Johnson and hold them accountable for best practices? Who will assure the residents that our local interests are their priority? What if Merrell-Johnson is yet another developer that builds for profit on high risk land?

Please deny this development proposal. This project must not continue without a thorough CEQA assessment and report. I will continue to be outspoken regarding this project.

Mx. E. Pfau, RESIDENT  
PO Box 1046  
Joshua Tree, CA 92252

atlasatlasphere@gmail.com

March 30, 2025

## CEQA LETTER EXCHANGE WITH RON CRUZ

SEPT 8, 2024 TO JAN 5, 2025

**Atlasphere Pfau** <atlasatlasphere@gmail.com>  
to Ron ▾

Sep 8, 2024, 4:20 PM ☆ 😊 ↩ ⋮

hello Mr. Cruz

I missed my Friday check-in, and also didn't hear back from you about my last email attached below.

I'm deeply concerned about LMR project for many reasons. I believe the developer is being evasive about filing /completing a CEQA report.

According to my hour long conversation with a member of the Joshua basin water district, Mr. Kramer has not met with the water department to discuss the facts of our aquifer crisis. o

As well as the proposed sewer treatment plant, which is completely incompatible with any future plans for a town approved sewer project.

According to my research, a sewer treatment plant should be within a mile from where somebody lives. This proposed plant is 20 feet from my house, this will destroy my quality of life and my property value. I don't understand why someone who has never built a sewer plant, believes that they will do it successfully the first time.

our research reveals true concerns about what the arbitrary zoning numbers and parameters are. we are not convinced about his numbers that were 75 now 64 and he revealed that he was able to change the road with by working with you and that also opens the window to being able to change the zoning in cooperation with San Bernardino county.

Mr. Kramer has also made clear that he is unwilling to prohibit STR conversions on any of these properties. In a high risk fire area when many people are being dropped from their insurance, I don't understand how he would be able to ensure these properties when they are in STR status, which is an even higher risk from some dingdong, starting a fire pit outside in the wind and burning down the whole desert

This is a reckless project and it is confirmed over and over that he's not answering questions. He just repeats his cult like belief system, which is not based in fact. for example he says that he made nice with local residents however he has been threatening to most of us, rudely dismissive and intimidating, to me in particular.

please outline the next steps for the Land used department & this project moving forward or halting completely.

We would like to arrange a group of people to attend the next planning meeting in order to represent our interest as residents of this very small and fragile town

I appreciate your attention to this matter  
mx pfau

**Atlasphere Pfau** <atlasatlasphere@gmail.com>  
to Ron ▾

Sep 13, 2024, 2:46 PM ☆ 😊 ↩

hello me cruz

its friday and im checking in. as I did not hear back from you on my previous email, please simply reply to last weeks email below

appreciated  
mx pfau

**Atlasphere Pfau** <atlasatlasphere@gmail.com>  
to Ron ▾

Sep 16, 2024, 9:43 AM ☆ 😊 ↩ ⋮

hello Mr Cruz

I've written to you for 2 weeks and not heard back. I'm concerned of what's happening whether you are off this project and somebody else is on it which has happened before or if we're now in the silent treatment phase of this where San Bernardino doesn't respond to concerns of residence in Joshua Tree.

please please let me know what the current status is.

thank you

**Cruz, Ron** <Ron.Cruz@lus.sbcounty.gov>  
to me ▾

Sep 16, 2024, 10:01 AM ☆ 😊 ↩ ⋮

The project is still in 3<sup>rd</sup> Party CEQA review. Once the CEQA review is complete, the document will be publicly routed for comments, then a Planning Commission hearing will be scheduled. At that hearing, anyone who wants to comment will have the ability to do so. The Planning Commission is an independent body and they will make a determination on the project, after considering County Department comments and public comments.

The Zoning for this parcel has not been changed. The existing RS zone allows for up to 4 units per acre, so the original proposal on the 18.49 acre parcel was for 74 units, but was reduced to the current proposal for 64 units.

The applicant will have to have to get confirmation from the Joshua Basin Water District that the project can be serviced.

I hope this makes the process clear. Please let me know if you have any more questions.

...

**Atlasphere Pfau** <atlasatlasphere@gmail.com>  
to Ron ▾

Oct 1, 2024, 9:54 AM ☆ 😊 ↩ ⋮

Hello Mr Cruz.

Another check in from me. Thank you for the information in your last email. How do I find out more about the planning commission, their standards and procedures and who is their point of contact?

A few more questions:

1. Is there a way to track the CEQA for this project ?
2. IF the JDWB does not agree to service this project does that mean it is effectively DOA?
3. Will this set a precedent for all proposals to meet with JBWD first in order to determine service viability and to ultimately save everyone the administrative headaches and expenses?
4. How was the zoning allowed to be decreased from 75 to 64 units? if that IS allowed why not an even lower number? Mr Cramer reveled on his "Ask ME Anything" live Q&A that he was able to negotiate the width of the interior roads, which leads one to believe these rules are arbitrary and negotiable.

Thanks again for your continued communications  
Mx Pfau



**Atlasphere Pfau** <atlasatlasphere@gmail.com>  
to Ron ▾

Oct 17, 2024, 11:50 PM ☆ 😊

hello mr Cruz

apologies for not keeping up my weekly checks. i have a pet in hospice and it's been full time energy.

will you please update me on my last set of questions?

appreciated  
tysm

**Atlasphere Pfau** <atlasatlasphere@gmail.com>  
to Ron ▾

Oct 28, 2024, 6:51 PM ☆

Hello Mr Cruz

Are you still there? Is it possible to get some answers?

Please advise

Mx Pfau

## CEQA OPEN COMMENT PERIOD

OCTOBER 23, 2024 to NOVEMBER 25, 2024

**Atlasphere Pfau** <atlasatlasphere@gmail.com>  
to Ron ▾

Jan 5, 2025, 10:06 AM ☆ 😊 ↩ ⋮

hello Mr Cruz

what is the update on this project. i recently learned the CEQA had an open comment period we were not informed of.

what can you tell me about the status of this development? Are you still on this, or has the ever absent project manager game begun again?

Sadly now, San Bernardino turns over five PMs and still no progress or priority to protect the tax paying residents of our fragile town from massively destructive development by corporate interests.

please advise  
mx pfau