

## Coalition LA

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Lateef Sholebo  
Project Coordinator  
City of Los Angeles Planning Department  
221 N. Figueroa, Room 1540  
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2601

February 19, 2001

Re: EIR 2000-3577, Los Angeles Sports & Entertainment District

Dear Mr. Sholebo,

I am writing to provide comments to the draft EIR for the proposed Sports & Entertainment District on behalf of Coalition LA, a 17 year-old community organization with chapters in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Council districts. Each of these chapters are made up of precinct leaders, with a history of informing and mobilizing thousands of residents and voters, both for Council elections as well as to move a neighborhood-based agenda. Our members care deeply about community involvement and they fight hard to ensure that local government is responsive to community needs.

More specifically, we have been involved in a number of efforts to ensure good planning, particularly when city subsidies may be involved. And our members in the adjacent 1<sup>st</sup> Council District, particularly the low-income mostly immigrant community of Pico-Union are very concerned about the impact of the proposed Sports and Entertainment District.

Our members, and other residents of the surrounding area, already suffer from the negative impact of the current operation of the Staples Center; including the elimination of affordable housing, dramatically increased traffic and associated noise and air pollution; a marked rise in crime and vandalism (my fiancée was personally witness to a shooting, less than three feet away from her at a recent event at Staples); and decreased pedestrian and public safety. While the rest of the region may benefit from the Staples Center operations, the residents who live and work closest to Staples bear the heaviest environmental and economic burdens.

However, with the proposed 3.75 million square foot project expansion, we believe these residents will be even more negatively impacted by both the proposed 7-year construction plan and the on-going operations of the new facilities. Coalition LA is most concerned about the failure of the draft EIR to adequately address the imminent gentrification of the surround community, including the physical deterioration of buildings due to neglect and the loss of affordable housing in the area; the complete lack of an environmental energy analysis in the draft EIR; the identified negative air and noise quality impacts of the construction and operations; and the possible violation of water quality regulations.

In addition, we are very concerned about the failure to address open space concerns. The 1-mile radius surrounding Staples has less than ½ an acre of park space per 1000 people, when the city's standard is 2 acres per 1000. And while the project proposes to add people, the developers ask for a credit to avoid paying "Quimby" fees. This is unacceptable. Should this project be approved, the developers would owe some \$5-7 million. They should be required to pay this, not given a credit for "terraces, paseos and plazas," which are neither parks nor open to the general public.

Therefore, we request the following:

1. The City properly and thoroughly address the significant environmental impacts identified in the draft EIR through mitigation measures developed by members of the community;
2. The City review and implement the requests for additional analysis and mitigation measures developed by the Figueroa Corridor Coalition for Economic Justice in their comments to the draft EIR;
3. The City request that a full energy analysis be completed in the final EIR, including appropriate mitigation and conservation measures as required by CEQA; and
4. The City provide all the final EIR materials in Spanish so that community residents can play an active role in this important decision-making process. To refuse to translate the materials would be a violation of civil rights law, and bad public policy.

Thank you for attention to these important matters, and for taking seriously the concerns of the community members we represent.

Sincerely,



James Elmendorf  
Co-Director of Organizing

cc: Sandra McNeil, Figueroa Corridor Coalition for Economic Justice