



El Rescate

1340 South Bonnie Brae, Los Angeles, CA 90006 Tel. (213) 387-3284 Fax (213) 387-9189

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Lateef Sholebo, Project Coordinator
 Environmental Review Section
 Los Angeles City Planning Department
 221 N. Figueroa, Room 1540
 Los Angeles, CA 90012
 Fax: (213) 580-5542

RE: Draft EIR 2000-3577, Los Angeles Sports and Entertainment District

Dear Mr. Lateef:

El Rescate is a non-profit community based organization that has been located in Pico-Union for over 20 years. We assist low-income residents with INS legalization. In addition, we are advocate on behalf of local residents and believe that they work hard and deserve a decent quality of life. We assist roughly 100 thousand people per year. Many of them live here in Pico Union. Hence, we are privy to their needs and concerns.

We are writing to provide our comments to the draft EIR for the proposed Sports and Entertainment District. We are most concerned about how the proposed project will affect community residents in the area, who are predominantly low-income. We believe the people living in the neighborhoods surrounding the existing Staples Center already suffer negative impacts from current operations, including the ongoing elimination of affordable housing; dramatically increased traffic and associated air and noise pollution; a marked rise in crime and vandalism; and decreased pedestrian and public safety. While the rest of the region benefits 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 ongoing operations of the project. We are most concerned about the failure of the draft EIR to adequately address the imminent gentrification of the surrounding community, including 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.

Specifically, we request the following:

- 1) The City properly and thoroughly address the significant environmental impacts identified in the draft EIR through mitigation measures that are community developed and community based;
- 2) The City review and implement the requests for additional analysis and mitigation measures developed by 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 of the final EIR materials translated into Spanish so that community residents can take an active part in this important decision-making process. To refuse to translate the materials would be a violation of civil rights law, and bad public policy.
- 5) The City request that the Developer incorporate into the Project proposal community benefits such as affordable housing, quality jobs and community services that will help mitigate negative Project impacts. These benefits are outlined in the FCCJ's comments to the DEIR.

It is our hope that you will take our requests and comments seriously and not allow the voiceless to be silenced. Thank you for your kind attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


 Richard Mendez, Esq.
 Executive Director, El Rescate

Cc: Figueroa Corridor Coalition for Economic Justice