

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH of LOS ANGELES

"A Place of Hope for the People"

DarEil T. Weist
Executive Pastor

Francisco Cañas
Pastor

February 23, 2001

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. Sholebo,

The First United Methodist Church of Los Angeles is a church of people and action. Ministries include: The Downtown Service Center, Children's Learning Center, 1010 Development Corporation, Hope Village Housing, Inc., ISOLA, the Los Angeles United Methodist Urban Foundation and the South Park Neighborhood Center. The 1010 Building is a non-profit center, leasing offices only to social justice organizations.

On February 16, 2001, I wrote a letter to Emily Gable, Deputy Advisory Agency, requesting an additional 30 day comment period extension be granted for EIR 2000-3577. I asked for this extension because I felt that the 45 day comment period was too short to review the volumes of material that had been presented in this EIR. The scale of the project was overwhelming and will have an irreversible impact on our neighborhoods. Our request was denied.

I am writing to provide our comments to the draft EIR for the proposed Sports and Entertainment District. I am most concerned about how the proposed project will affect community residents in the area, who are predominantly low income, people of color. I believe the people living in the neighborhoods surrounding the existing Staples Center already suffer negative impacts for current operations, including the ongoing elimination of affordable housing, increased traffic and associated air and noise pollution, a 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.

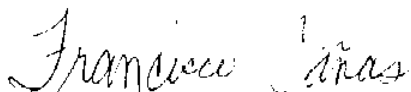
However, with the proposed 3.75 million square foot project expansion, we believe these residents will be even more negatively impacted by both the proposed 7 year construction plan and ongoing operations of the project. I am most concerned about the failure of the draft EIR to adequately address the 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.

I now 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.
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 FCCEJ's comments to the DEIR.

Thank you for your attention to these important matters.

Sincerely,



Francisco Cañas
Pastor

cc: Figueroa Corridor Coalition for Economic Justice