



Michael D. DeLapa, Executive Director, LandWatch Monterey County

Comments on Campus Town Final Environmental Impact Report ("FEIR")

Good evening. Michael DeLapa, Executive Director, LandWatch Monterey County.

The Campus Town project has a lot to recommend it. It removes 123 acres of urban blight that has stood for decades and replaces it with a mixed use, walkable urban village with hundreds of affordable housing units and jobs.

Indeed, LandWatch worked hard to find a way to support the project. LandWatch and its counsel met with the City Manager, supported the City's attorney when he sought approval of a water transfer from the Seaside Basin Watermaster, drafted a mitigation measure that would commit the project to a sustainable water supply, and agreed to support the project if the City committed to providing its 442 acre-foot water supply without increasing groundwater pumping.

Regrettably, the final EIR does not make that commitment. Instead, it lets the City pump groundwater from the Seaside Subbasin for the project and therefore continue to overdraft the aquifer. The City's mitigation measure only requires a water offset or replacement supply for a portion of the water supply, not the entire amount the project will use. And to LandWatch's great disappointment, the final EIR assumes that the first 181 AFY can be pumped from the groundwater basin without impact because, it is part of the unused Seaside share of the 6600 AFY "paper water" supply.

LandWatch isn't singling Seaside out. For many years now, LandWatch has been consistent in opposing developments on the former Fort Ord because there is no safe, sustainable source of drinking and agricultural water. We opposed Monterey Downs on this basis. The decision is consistent with our current complaint against Del Rey Oaks, our legal settlement with Marina Coast Water District, and every comment letter we've submitted to FORA, Marina, Seaside, Monterey, Del Rey Oaks and Monterey County.

Housing and jobs are essential to Seaside's future. But so is a safe, reliable drinking water supply for current and future residents. Campus Town doesn't have a reliable water supply. LandWatch offered a feasible solution: use recycled water from the Seaside Basin golf course rather than groundwater. The final EIR won't commit to that solution. Until it does, LandWatch cannot support this project because it puts current and future residents' needs for drinking water at risk.

I'm sorry, I'm very sorry, that LandWatch cannot support the Campus Town project.