



Lake County Citizens Coalition

P.O. BOX 1409
Lower Lake CA 95457

Tel. (707) 277-9203

Fax. (707) 277-9220

September 19, 2005

VIA FAX AND U. S. MAIL

Karen Mantele
Community Development Director
City of Clearlake
14050 Olympic Dr.
Clearlake, CA 95422

Re: "Provinsalia Golf Community"

Dear Ms. Mantele:

The Lake County Citizens Coalition is dedicated to promoting responsible growth in Lake County. The City of Clearlake is, of course, within Lake County. Many of our members are residents of the City of Clearlake.

We have reviewed the publicly available information concerning the "Provinsalia Golf Community" and submit the following comments for consideration by the City of Clearlake in connection with the proposed project.

1. The Project Needs a Better Defined Commitment to Building the Infrastructure Needed to Address Its Impacts Both On and Off Site

The current situation of the City of Clearlake is an object lesson in the harms which result from a lack of proper attention to planning. Over the past sixty years, many areas of the City have been developed in a haphazard fashion with minimal, if any, adherence to planning standards. As a result, miles of streets are unpaved, with no realistic financial prospect or plan for improving them in the near future. Other normal municipal services are severely underserved as well – as an example, sidewalks are lacking virtually everywhere. Blighted areas abound and there is a manifest need for focus on redevelopment and managed growth within the City limits.

The recent upturn in the real estate market has hit Clearlake and provides, in our view, the seeds for much needed responsible growth in the City. However, the opportunity at hand **MUST NOT BE WASTED**. As a result of the current

situation, there is a critical need to make certain that "Provinsalia" is thoroughly and appropriately incorporated into a long term development plan, and pays its fair share of impact fees.

The Cache Creek littoral in which the Provinsalia project is to be situated is one of the more scenic and desirable areas in Lake County. As a result, it is understandable that it should become the object of development. The value of the site makes it even more essential to devote sound planning to the project, rather than just giving "knee jerk" approval of the developer's proposal. In sum, "cost considerations" should not be the dominant motivating force for the City in evaluating the rezoning and other legislative approvals that are necessary for this Project to proceed.

We are also extremely concerned that this project as presently proposed in "phases" lacks adequate assurance that the promised infrastructure such as sewer, water, roads, trails, sidewalks and the like will actually be constructed. The City should require a development agreement that assures "Provinsalia" will not become yet another "paper subdivision" for which no infrastructure – roads, sewer, water, etc. -- actually exists. The City has a major problem with blight of this kind which is a direct function of failure to plan before the incorporation of the City. Now incorporated, the City has a duty to proceed in this matter using the best available planning and technology. This is something that the developer should expect and appreciate.

Thus, while we are encouraged at the prospect of a proposed "high end" development in Clearlake, we are at the same time concerned about numerous issues that have yet to be adequately addressed in the publicly available planning documents.

Some of these concerns are as follows:

2. Traffic Access to the Project Should Occur from 18th Street, Not Via Dam Road

We are concerned that, apparently due to cost considerations, only a single public access road is proposed for the Project. We are even more concerned that the sole direct access is proposed to occur along Dam Road. Dam Road is not the logical route to serve this major development.

A much sounder plan, in our view, would be to require the primary access to occur to the north, from State Highway 53 via 18th Avenue [see Provinsalia Specific Plan, Map IV.1], with Dam Road improved, in the manner proposed by the

applicant, as a secondary public access route. This more thorough and better reasoned alternative will provide direct traffic access to the project from a major thoroughfare (Highway 53), rather than Lake Street. The City as a whole would also benefit greatly from a required upgrade of the entire portion of 18th Avenue east of Redbud Hospital as part of the Provinsalia Development Agreement. This would be a minimal start in addressing the impacts of the project on City infrastructure.

In our view this is a minimal requirement for a major subdivision such as Provinsalia. Cost considerations should not be an excuse for failure to plan for proper ingress and egress to the Project. Proper egress of citizens and ingress to emergency services is of utmost importance in our fire prone area.

3. The Domestic Water Supply for the Project Should Be Coordinated with the Konocti County Water District

We agree with the comments of others [see Bridges letter of 5/17/05; Benoit letter of 5/26/05] which have pointed out that proper planning for the project would integrate the domestic water supply of Provinsalia with that of the existing Konocti County Water District, rather than creating a new and separate domestic water supply system. This integration would not only aid the existing District in servicing all of its customers, it would also create a more sustainable and rational infrastructure for the Project by drawing the water from the main part of Clear Lake rather than waters of Cache Creek down stream from the "Grigsby Riffle."

4. The Applicant's Plan to Create a "Golf Course Community" Deserves Closer Planning Scrutiny

We are not convinced that the rezoning of the Provinsalia property to allow for a "golf course community" is the best long term site plan. Lake County already has numerous "golf course communities" – e.g., Hidden Valley Lake, Buckingham, Adams Springs, and the Clearlake Riviera. In view of the scarce water resources needed to sustain this use, we question whether the plan is sound long term. We urge the City to require a specific water consumption study, comparing the water needs of a golf course with other open space alternatives including park land and "green space." A park land dedication may benefit the project developer as well as the community by enabling the developer to take advantage of legislative incentives that currently apply to this form of dedication.

Economically feasible alternatives to "golf course community" development should be explicitly considered in the course of planning attention to this project.

5. The City Should Consider Integrating Provinsalia With the City's Existing Sewer Infrastructure, as Well

We concur in the comments of others [e.g., Benoit, 5/26/05] that proper planning for this project should include consideration of requiring integration of the Provinsalia wastewater treatment system with that of the balance of the City. As there are substantial areas within City limits near the project site [i.e., east of Highway 53] that are not presently served by sewer, consideration should be given to integrating these areas with the Provinsalia development, in order to manage and encourage healthy long term growth.

6. The City Should Consider any Rezoning Only in the Context of Planning Involving Adjacent Areas, Especially Adjacent Areas Owned by the Same Applicant

As noted by others [e.g., Robey, 5/26/05], the current plan is deficient in that it represents a "piecemeal" approach to rezoning. Nearby parcels [example: 8220 Bonham Rd., APN # 010-008-32] are under the same ownership as the applicant, according to County records. Appropriate planning for this project should, at a minimum, govern the manner and intensity of development on these nearby parcels, as well as the designated "project site."

7. Light Pollution and Air Quality Are Important Values that Need to be Preserved in Connection with this Project

The Coalition strongly concurs in the comments of others [e.g. Griswold, 5/18/05, Robey 5/26/05, Gearhart 5/13/05] relative to detrimental impacts that this project may have on ambient light levels [i.e., the "dark night sky"] and air quality. These issues have yet to be sufficiently fleshed out in publicly available planning documents. The City must be thorough in its attention to these issues.

8. Off Site Impacts of the Project Must Be Thoroughly Studied and Adequate Financial Provision Must Be Made Before any Subdivision Is Approved

The applicant is forthright in stating that off site impacts of the Provinsalia project are to be "negotiated" with the City for incorporation in the final development agreement. We urge the City, in the strongest possible terms, to study impacts to services such as schools, police, and fire extremely carefully, and to require a **generous** level of funding, before approving any part of the proposed subdivision. The Konocti Unified School District, to give just one example, is already dealing with a severe budget crisis. This development should ameliorate, not exacerbate, the situation.

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CONCLUSION

By this letter, we request notification of all hearings and proposed approvals by the City of Clearlake in connection with the "Provinsalia" project.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert R. Riggs". The signature is stylized with large, sweeping loops and a long, trailing flourish at the end.

Robert R. Riggs
Board Chair

RRR:krl

cc to: City Council Members,
City of Clearlake

cc via E-Mail to: Coalition Participants

cc via E-Mail to:

Rose Marie Moore
RMM Environmental Planning
3010 Beacon Blvd.
West Sacramento, CA 95691
roserrmm@sbcglobal.net