

June 2, 2009

City of San Marcos

Re: Proposed Annexation of Windemere 2

Dear Mayor and City Council Members:

I write you on behalf of the Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance (GEAA), for which I am employed as the Science Director. GEAA consists of 45 member organizations representing communities throughout the eastern Texas Hill Country. Our members in the San Marcos area include the San Marcos River Foundation, the San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance, the Hays Community Action Network, and the Wimberley Valley Watershed Association.

GEAA urges you not to approve the annexation of Windemere 2, in order to prevent future development on the critical recharge zone immediately above Spring Lake. Below, I summarize a few of the many reasons not to annex and provide subsequent city services to this inappropriate project, which would cause long-term damage to the environment and community values of the San Marcos area.

- The tract is immediately adjacent to the main channel of Sink Creek. Sink Creek and its many tributaries comprise the watershed, which drains directly to the two natural cornerstones of the San Marcos community: Spring Lake and the San Marcos River.
- Do not negate the hard work of many local citizens through the Horizons Master Plan process, which delineated maximum land-use for this tract as "very low residential density."
- The developer's proposed higher density includes commercial and mixed-use construction. These adverse impacts would comprise the critical first step in

the destruction of existing open space protecting the recharge zone adjacent to and above Spring Lake.

- The developer says existing flood control dam on Sink Creek is sufficient to handle water quality and sediment control requirements, for that portion of the project discharging into Sink Creek. In this extremely important environment, the opposite is true. Adverse impacts to the recharge for San Marcos Springs must be prevented upslope of Sink Creek. The creek bed itself is a major recharge feature, from which pollution and sediment should be excluded. The TCEQ rules are inadequate to meet the special stewardship needs of the second largest freshwater spring complex in Texas.
- The public trust must not be compromised. The taxpayers of San Marcos should not be used to increase recharge-zone infrastructure, such as wastewater-line and road extensions, which serve to expand harmful development over essential water-protection areas.
- The proposed 22-acre annexation will facilitate development of the 235-acre Windemere 1 project. In such an environmentally significant area, the lack of adequate protections for the 63 recharge features on the overall project is unjustified. The identified cave feature should be excavated and thoroughly explored, along the other significant recharge features. The local watersheds for these important recharge features should be delineated and protected. In addition, the six faults which cross the larger property should be protected by buffer zones consisting of undisturbed native vegetation. In particular, the half-mile long major fault which traverses the center of the larger project should be protected by increased buffer width.

We look forward to your rejection of the proposed annexation of Windemere 2 and increased scrutiny of the overall Windemere development.

Sincerely,

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Science Director
Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance
www.aquiferalliance.org