



May 20, 2005

Michael Abbate  
Home Depot USA Inc.  
3800 West Chapman Avenue  
Orange, CA 92868

Re: Proposed Home Depot in Sunland-Tujunga

Dear Mr. Abbate:

Mayor James Hahn recently wrote to you in support of Sunland-Tujunga's opposition to a proposed Home Depot site in our community. He also stated "The Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council is a shining example of the power of these councils." The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the context of what makes the Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council (STNC) a positive example in relation to community planning and development. The STNC acts from a basis of well-researched strategies to benefit the actual long-term needs of our community.

In other words, there are specific, factual reasons for our opposition to Home Depot. It is based on what we do want to see come to life here in Sunland-Tujunga – not simply based on what we don't want. As you know, effective community planning is extremely challenging and requires coordination across complex factors.

We hope this letter serves as:

- A means for you to gain a broader perspective on the strategic community planning we're implementing in Sunland-Tujunga.
- Food for thought in preparation for future meetings with our community.
- A document to help you convey to others within your corporation why it makes good business sense for Home Depot to listen to our community.

There is a logical basis for the strong support we've received from Mayor Hahn and Councilmember Wendy Greuel, which includes the following:

- 1) We've conducted community-wide surveys of how our stakeholders want the community to improve. The data includes the types of businesses our stakeholders most want and need, as well as what is not wanted or needed. We continue to update and validate the data regularly.
- 2) We've developed a strategic plan and priorities for ensuring our Board's actions are in sync with the community's top concerns and needs regarding community planning, and that long-term community benefits are achieved.
- 3) We've launched a long-term community planning initiative – Sunland-Tujunga VISION 2020 – a 15-year community development blueprint. Councilmember Greuel is 100% in support of VISION 2020.
- 4) We've hired an urban design consulting team and assessed economic, demographic, geographic, legal and other factors impacting business and residential conditions – and are implementing constructive solutions to long-term challenges in community planning.
- 5) We've worked with community-minded developers proactively to ensure a win-win solution for all stakeholders. In fact, when a win-win solution has been worked out, our Board and other community members have proactively supported such community-minded developers by testifying at the hearings for approval of the projects. On the other hand, when developers are not willing to collaborate with our community, we show up at the hearings in large numbers in opposition.
- 6) We collaborate with our community groups, such as the “No Home Depot” campaign, to oppose developers who show themselves to not be community-minded.

It would have been beneficial to consult with our community before proceeding for several reasons. You would have learned about the strategic way we approach community planning as well as the following:

- Our geography is unique because we are isolated by the Verdugo Mountains and have only two entrances into our area. This is not a place one drives through to get to somewhere else. The proposed site sits right in the center of the only main street we have, and therefore has the potential to either make a significant positive impact or a significant negative impact on the entire community. We are committed to a positive impact and outcome.

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- We do not need another hardware store. As you know, there is already a Home Depot just seven minutes away in San Fernando which meets our needs. There are over a dozen local businesses on which Home Depot's presence would have immediate negative impacts, generating empty storefronts that the STNC and our entire community are working together to reverse.
- We need and want a general merchandise store, as well as other businesses and services which will bring valuable benefits to the community. Community members have to drive 20-30 minutes to locate the items which a general merchandise store provides. This is the community's primary business need – and we will work with those developers who are respectful of our needs, and oppose those who are not.
- We are committed to improving the quality of life in Sunland-Tujunga in every way, and want businesses which emphasize quality in design and add to the aesthetics and appearance of the community.

Recently we held a Town Hall meeting jointly sponsored by the "No Home Depot" campaign and the STNC. We collected questionnaires seeking community viewpoints on the subject, including the reasons why people would or would not want a Home Depot in the area. We also asked respondents what they would like to see in the community on the site. We have specific data from this survey, as well as prior surveys, to discuss with you in future meetings.

We hope you and your colleagues recognize the parallel between Sunland-Tujunga's commitment to improving the quality of our community, and the message of Home Depot's founders - Bernie Marcus and Arthur Blank - to "Do the Right Thing".

Sincerely,



Ken McAlpine, Chairman  
Sunland Tujunga Neighborhood Council

cc: Mayor James Hahn  
Councilmember Wendy Greuel