January 11, 2017
Proposal for Settlement of the…..
JT105 Alliance

**Introduction:**
We have in good faith, spent time and considerable thought in preparing this proposal. We have included an example of a design that would sit harmoniously on this beautiful piece of land, and join in as a harmonious neighbor with the Friendly Hills neighborhood of Joshua Tree. We have tried to show that by certain design choices, you can potentially reduce the engineering and construction of infrastructure on the land, and save yourselves considerable money. We also thought about what sells and what people want in their land in this area, so that you can have a successful and profitable development that the neighbors will embrace rather than abhor. We are not anti-development; we respect smart and ecologically-sensitive development.

We feel that since this project has caused years of time and money for the developer, as well as for our community, that a good faith expression from the County would be for the County to finance a traffic light at the dangerous, split four-way stop at Alta Loma/Sunny Vista, before a child, parent, or tourist is killed. We feel that the County should waive the developer’s fees for processing this redesign. Also, as promised at the Planning Commissioners meeting on 11/3/16, the community looks forward to another meeting (or more) for review of the draft community plan update and proposed zoning maps.

Since the new design would need to go through the public review of the CEQA process, at some point early on, you should bring the new design to the entire community for review, as we do not speak for everyone. The goal is that if you follow the below guidelines, that you will not need to do an EIR on this new design. This proposal is a good faith attempt to set you on a path for success with this project, as we hope you can see.

**Proposal**

**Option A:** Donation of the land to the Mojave Desert Land Trust for tax write-off, with the knowledge that the potential donation is pending approval by their board of directors, and that they very likely would not hold the land in perpetuity.

**Option B:** Redesign the project to meet the spirit and word of the Joshua Tree Community Plan, and the County General Plan. Please see the sketch examples included of design ideas that fit the surrounding neighborhoods, give space to the school and protect views from Alta Loma, and allow for wildlife, neighbor, and water movement through the project. Of course, roads would curve around joshua trees where required/possible.

The larger lot design is inspired by the fact that people move to the area for space, and for connection to the environment, and to spread out on their land. You can see the pattern that many folks who live here often buy the adjacent acreage around them, to increase their lot size. This marketability perk of a larger lot also allows space to best site the driveway and house in order to keep the native plants in situ, and for safe water movement.
The illustrated designs lend themselves to two distinct phases, and possibly two distinct tract maps. Since there would be no mass grading, there is no major water usage for dust control, and the health of the surrounding school children and neighbors is protected.

Whether or not the new design precludes the need for the waste treatment plant would be pending review by JBWD, but the rule of thumb is if there is 2 or less dwelling units per acre, you can use a septic system. This would remove a huge potential smell problem, remove a huge construction cost, and decades of maintenance cost (and potential conflicts), and keep the ugly thing from ruining your design and opens a lot up for a house.

We do not see any advantage in an HOA, if the need for the waste-treatment plant is avoided by building on larger parcels. The folks that move out here, move out here for independence. Folks want the freedom to have RV’s in their yard, or to rent out a space as a vacation rental. They also do not need the extra financial burden of HOA fee’s.

This lack of HOA could remove the cost of a community center being constructed. Mind, a community meeting space along with a park (open to all) would be a fine encouragement for sales, so we welcome construction of one as an option.

Requirements for Option B:

1. Native plant mapping of entire site, before redesign. The mapping should help in road, driveway, and house pad location. Locate to avoid moving joshua trees, yuccas, and other cacti and creosote.

2. New wildlife survey at appropriate time in season.

3. New traffic study, for the new size of redesigned development. Focus on Alta Loma, and on the following intersections: AltaLoma/Sunny Vista, Sunny Vista/Hwy 62, Park Boulevard/Alta Loma, Alta Loma/La Contenta. Review of the considerable traffic during elementary school and middle school morning/ afternoon drop-off /pick-up, and review of the increased National Park traffic.

4. The western third of the property is basically a flood plain between the two blue-line streams. Converting/dedicating this area as either a conservation easement or floodway will dedicate open space within the project parcel. The streams traversing the site are to be left in their natural state, and left unfenced to allow natural flow of water and wildlife.

5. The parcel to the south of “Alta Vista” plots should be Rural Living (2.5 acre min) to allow easement from the school and Alta Loma, a road that is becoming the default scenic highway to the National Park.

6. The parcels to the north of “Alta Vista” can be RS-1, but would be more popular as Rural Living 2.5. Note that many folks on the east side of Sunny Vista have 1 acre parcels, but ended up increasing their land acreage by buying surrounding parcels.

7. Design the roads that run north/south so that they will not drain into existing neighbors’ back yards. Roads, driveways, and building pads should be sited for solar advantage, as well as to keep native plants in-situ, as much as possible.[disclaimer:the sketch shows the roads, without
the knowledge of plant/tree location. Building pads should avoid large cut/fills, and basically be on grade; a raised pad by just a foot or two could help avoid flooding.

8. No mass grading, and no wall/gate/fencing of the project in its entirety. Each parcel will be graded only after plan approval for each home, and only for the house/garage/ driveway, and immediate yard. Fencing only around the house/garage/immediate yard.

9. Lot A (shown on the first sketch) may be a good location for the wastewater treatment plant, IF one is required. This location would give some room between any odors and the downhill neighbors.

10. The lot just north of the school, would be a perfect location for an optional small community building and small public park for the neighborhood in its entirety.

11. Maintain your CCR’s to include the roof-top solar on each house, and encourage grey water for irrigation.

To reiterate the benefits to you:

1) Less roads to construct, and thus less storm drains.
2) Since not changing the streambeds, you may avoid the streambed alteration agreement.
3) Potentially no waste water treatment plant to finance, construct, maintain.
4) Potentially no flood channels, nor retention basins to construct and maintain (and avoiding their very real safety hazards).
5) No HOA necessary, which simplifies things tremendously, and will appeal to more buyers.
6) Rural character and larger lot size will appeal to potential buyers, and you can probably charge more per house.
7) With such minimal infrastructure you can more immediately sell the lots off to individual (local) builders which would provide local work.
8) With the more neighborhood appropriate density, and in-nature approach, you have 2 to 5 distinct phases, which means a much shorter construction time for the project, which extremely less disturbance to the community and school.
9) Much happier neighbors, who will welcome the new residents.

If the above requirements are followed in the redesign, the JT105 Alliance will drop the case, and will not pursue an EIR for the revised subdivision/tract map approval, pending approval by the greater community of Joshua Tree.

Thank you for your consideration.
Sketch Design One: 2 acre+ parcels will be more popular and allow more room to site the buildings properly, but here show 1 acre parcels to north, and 2 to 3 acres to south.

Sketch Design Two: There may be room for more one acre parcels, IF native plants and topography allow. (Alta Vista road, to west of N/S road, could be dirt.)