

Announcement by: JT105 Alliance

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For ten years, hundreds of Morongo Basin residents have been fighting the Altamira gated development, proposed for the Joshua Tree community of Friendly Hills. The project would surround the elementary school, blade 105 acres of native Joshua tree woodland, shoehorn 248 expensive homes into 10,000 sq.ft. lots, and enclose its maze of cul-de-sacs with a wall. This design is completely out of character with the existing rural neighborhood of 18,000 to 2.5 acre lots.

The County did not require an Environmental Impact Report, and did not properly review the project for consistency with either the County General Plan, or the Joshua Tree Community Plan, which is a required "finding" for approval by both State and County Law.

After the Planning Commission passed the project (4 to 1), an association of 163+ concerned community members formed the JT105 Alliance, and appealed the decision to the Board of Supervisors. After a very questionable continuance, the Board of Supervisors passed the project 3 to 2, on September 27, 2016. A month later, the JT105 Alliance filed a CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) lawsuit. Since then, 89 people have donated \$8,683, to pay for the legal expenses:

<https://www.gofundme.com/stop-altamira>.

CEQA lawsuit process requires a mandatory settlement discussion to see if the case can avoid trial. The JT105 Alliance offered the developers two options. 1) See if the Mojave Desert Land Trust would accept the land as a donation. 2) Redesign so that the western third, which is crossed by streambeds, would remain natural as a conservation easement. The eastern section would be divided into 1 to 2.5 acre lots, with grading only occurring as needed for the few roads, driveways, and approximately 40 house pads.

A six-month stay was agreed upon, on March 17, so that the developers could explore these options, during which they are not to pursue any permits for construction. Shortly after the agreement, a community member notified the Alliance that the developers had listed the project for sale, with the tract map approval as a key marketing point. If they were to sell the land, the lawsuit, and the wrath of hundreds, would be inherited by the new owner.

See [http://www.mbconservation.org/alta\\_mira\\_housing\\_project](http://www.mbconservation.org/alta_mira_housing_project) for more information.