

Simple Solution

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Sunroad and Blackwater are symptoms of a Land Development Code that does not work. As the Grand Jury noted recently, we have volumes of regulations that put inordinate burden on the little guy at the counter. And major and controversial development projects get a free pass.

In the Blackwater case, the dispute is over nuances of terms. The city claims this is a “security training facility” with a “shooting range”, and Blackwater claims this is a “vocational facility” with a “target range”. Regardless of what you call it, the community was neither informed nor consulted about the impacts of this project.

There is a simple solution to prevent Sunroads and Blackwaters of the future. All permits above a certain threshold should be subject to discretionary review, so that the community is informed about them. The city of Los Angeles has a Site Plan Review process that takes the discretion out of the hands of bureaucrats and gives it to the community.

As long as there are democratic checks in place, the city can streamline as much as it wants. Development permits need to flow smoothly through the voluminous pipes of city’s bureaucracy, but what good is the plumbing if you can’t turn off the tap somewhere?