APPENDIX C

REASSESSMENT OF BIOLOGICAL IMPACTS and GNATCATCHER SURVEY

August 17, 2005

Blain Consulting
875 Victoria Drive
Pasadena, California 91104

Rad Developers Corp.
Attn: Daniel Singh
10385 W. Jefferson Boulevard
Culver City, California 90232

Dear Mr. Singh:

Using the updated documents which you have provided, as well as my first-hand observations during recently conducted surveys on the Vista Verde Ranch project site (Project No. 99-028, Tentative Tract No. 47449), a comparison and re-assessment of the impacts and mitigation measures within the CEQA document was conducted. Since The Vista Verde Ranch Administrative Draft Environmental Impact Report dated October 2004, (State Clearing House #1999-061068) was prepared, several changes have occurred including a Tentative Tract map re-design (dated April 2005), an updated tree survey report incorporating the re-design (Glenn Allen, April 11, 2005), and completion of a set of focused surveys for the California gnatcatcher (*In Prep.*, Marc Blain).

The currently proposed design reduces the number of single family home lots from 92 to 70 and reduces the size of the development footprint from 45.7 acres to 33.5 acres. In addition to the decrease in the number of proposed lots, a bridge at the east end of the site, providing access via San Dimas Avenue, further contributing to the reduced impact area. As a result, the loss of oak woodland and coastal sage scrub plant communities are reduced. Avoidance of these sensitive habitat types also reduces the impacts to the variety of plant and wildlife species associated with them. Further more, the number of oak trees

impacted by the proposed project is substantially reduced from the original 375 to 129. Thus preserving 1,175 oak trees on the site.

One set of new field surveys has also been conducted since the Draft Environmental Impact Report was prepared. In the spring and early summer of 2005, protocol focused surveys for the federally listed California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*) were conducted throughout all suitable sage scrub habitat on the property. Survey results were negative, corroborating the results of previous surveys stating that the species is not present on the project site. While conducting these surveys, vegetation and general conditions of the site were noted. A comparison of these notes and the information within the CEQA document indicates that the descriptions of biological resources provided within the Draft Environmental Impact Report dated October 2004, are accurate and that conditions remain essentially the same on the project site.

As a result of these changes, the number of replacement oak trees required to fulfill the mitigation measures listed in Section 5.5.3 should be reduced. Although the replacement ratios and the methods of replacement shall remain the same, the number being replaced should be based on the revised number of 129 oak trees being removed.

If you have any further questions please feel free to contact me at (626) 791-3240.

Sincerely,

Blain Consulting
Marc Blain