



# United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK  
P.O. BOX 129  
GRAND CANYON, ARIZONA 86023-0129

IN REPLY REFER TO:

L30 (GRCA 8211)

NOV 01 2011

CERTIFIED MAIL – RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

The Honorable Greg Bryan  
Mayor of Tusayan  
P.O. Box 709, Tusayan, AZ 86023

Dear Mayor Bryan:

Please accept this letter that includes additional comments on annexation and rezoning applications submitted by the Stilo Development Group USA, LP (Stilo), to the Tusayan Town Council (Council). These comments are in addition to formal comments submitted by the National Park Service in a letter dated September 1, 2011 (copy attached), and those I made on behalf of the National Park Service at a public hearing held by the Council in Tusayan on October 26, 2011 (formal remarks attached).

As I stated at the public hearing, the National Park Service has serious concerns about this project and the potential impacts and demands that a project of this size and scope could place on park resources, visitor experience, and an aging park infrastructure.

This letter and my previous remarks outline numerous concerns, most of which we do not feel have been addressed adequately by the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Council, staff, or the developer. Of particular concern is water. Future development, especially development with intensive uses such as residential communities, spas, conference centers, restaurants, hotels and other retail/hospitality development will be dependent on an adequate water supply. Additionally, the development of a water storage distribution system will become increasingly important for non-potable uses and fire suppression as new development occurs. Resources in this area are in greatest jeopardy from depletions and contamination to ground water, seeps and springs, as well as alterations to cave and karst features.

In the Town of Tusayan's comments on the proposed uranium withdrawal environmental impact statement, dated April 15, 2011 (copy attached), the Council acknowledged concern for water use and possible contamination from mining activities. Development of the magnitude proposed would place similar demands on a fragile aquifer system. Of equal concern to us is that of maintaining a high quality visitor experience which includes an experience free from congestion, crowding, cars, preservation of night skies and soundscapes. As we have done with implementation of our General Management Plan, separating people from cars and removing noise and vehicular congestion has been of paramount concern. We have put these concerns into practice with the design of the Visitor Center area which included

TAKE PRIDE<sup>®</sup>  
IN AMERICA 

removing parking from the rim and providing for a quieter rim experience. We hope any development in the Town of Tusayan would follow this model in order to maintain the highest quality experience for our visitors, a goal we believe is shared between the National Park Service and the local community. Safety for park visitors, whether it be hiking in the backcountry or driving on roads, must be considered and incorporated into any new development.

As I requested at the public meeting, I hope that the Council will postpone a vote on this issue until further dialogue can take place.

As a newly incorporated town, the Town of Tusayan has assumed a lot of responsibilities and fiscal realities. We ask the Council take a step back before making a decision on this critical issue until ALL concerns are considered and addressed adequately and in a manner that is appropriate for one of our nation's most valuable resources – the Grand Canyon.

We would like to have further discussion with the Council, the developer and the U.S. Forest Service regarding the proposed development before a decision is made and this project moves forward.

In the event that the project moves forward without further dialogue, we believe the Council should develop a phased plan over the next 3 to 10 years addressing the core business district, the property at Camper Village, before annexing non-contiguous property surrounded by national forest lands and developing the Kotzin Ranch property within a short distance from the park boundary. With a successful track record on the Camper Village property, the Town would be in a better position to take on the next planning and zoning challenge. The Council might also consider scaling back the size and scope of development until potential impacts can be analyzed and mitigations developed to reduce or avoid those impacts. Additionally, the Council might also consider placing covenants on all property to be developed by Stilo that would run with the title to the land, would be binding on the developer and all future landowners, and provide a greater level of protection of resources in and around Grand Canyon. Furthermore, we believe that the developer's first priority should be the development of homes for sale or lease to area residents at a subsidized rate before building homes for sale or lease to non-area residents.

We will be monitoring any development closely and strongly encourage the Council to consider, at a minimum, implementing the following development stipulations:

#### General

- As stated above, developer agrees to a phasing schedule over the next 3 to 10 years that addresses the core business district before annexing non-contiguous property surrounded by national forest lands, before annexing and rezoning other properties to be developed in and around Tusayan.
- Developer would be responsible for the development of a transit system that would be compatible with the existing National Park Service system, to provide transportation for area residents and visitors to and from Grand Canyon National Park to reduce the number of vehicles entering the park.
- Developer agrees to pursue to the greatest extent possible active and passive solar systems to provide all energy needs associated with any and all development and to be a model for sustainable construction design.

### Noise/Soundscape

- The Town of Tusayan does not currently have a noise ordinance. The park would be very interested in working with the Town to assist in the development of a noise ordinance and could provide expertise in this arena.
- Developer will maintain noise levels comparable to those found within residential and commercial areas of Grand Canyon National Park's South Rim Village. Examples of these levels are as follows:

L<sub>50</sub> sound levels (dBA) for summer and winter, for three time periods, 2007 - 2008. (Ambrose 2008)

Location	0700-1900 Summer	0700-1900 Winter	1900-0700 Summer	1900-0700 Winter	0000-2400 Summer	0000-2400 Winter
Mather Campground	41.3	37.9	35.2	28.5	39.7	34.1
South Rim Residential Area	36.7	36.3	31.3	31.0	35.2	34.7

- Construction activities are restricted to the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. to minimize noise disturbances to visitors and residents.
- Developer will limit the sounds of construction and commercial operations to the confines of the developed area in Tusayan. No sounds will be so loud that they are audible from 500 feet inside the park boundary.
- Developer uses best management practices to mitigate human-generated noise as a result of expanded commercial services and residential areas.

### Vegetation

- Developer would follow state and local noxious weed best management practices per the current Tusayan Landscape Ordinance.
- Developer would work with the Town of Tusayan and Grand Canyon National Park to develop regulations that insure the preservation of native plant materials. Native plants enhance the physical and aesthetic character, contribute to the preservation of the adjacent natural environment by preventing erosion and providing wildlife habitat, increase valuation of real property, and provide scenic opportunities unique to this region. Preservation of native plant materials includes salvaging plant material disturbed as a result of development and collecting local native seed and propagules for landscaping post-development.

### Wildlife

- Developer will include wildlife habitat connectivity as a part of planning to improve human safety by reducing vehicular collisions with wildlife; maintain the ability of animals to access necessary resources for survival and reproduction; allow for wildlife movement between populations; allow for seasonal migration; enable population movements in response to climate change; and prevent genetic isolation of wildlife populations.

- Developer will mitigate negative impacts to wildlife by including mitigations for unintended wildlife subsidies; these include avoiding the use of turf (elk attractant) and general waste management (corvids, raccoons, and rodent food source).
- Developer will meet or exceed those standards described in the Tusayan Lighting Ordinance.

Viewshed

- Developer will incorporate a design approach that blends with the local landscape. Structures shall not exceed such a height as to be visible beyond the boundaries of the Town of Tusayan. The approach and departure views of visitors entering and exiting the park will maintain a rural feel.

I hope the Council will strongly consider postponing this decision and look forward to a continued dialogue with the Council, the U.S. Forest Service and Stilo. Please contact me at (928) 638-7945 to set up a meeting.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



David V. Uberuaga  
Superintendent

Enclosures (3)

Identical letter to: Manjula M. Vaz, Attorney at Law, Gammage & Burnham, Two North Central Avenue, 15<sup>th</sup> Floor, Phoenix, AZ 85004

cc: Jon Jarvis, Director, National Park Service, 1849 C Street Northwest, Room 3112, Washington, DC 20240

John Wessels, Regional Director, Intermountain Region, P.O. Box 25287, Denver, CO 80225

William Sims, Attorney at Law, Moyes Sellers & Hendricks, The Viad Corporate Center, 1850 North Central Avenue, Suite 1100, Phoenix, AZ 85004

Mark Reddie, Team Leader – Tusayan Development Project, LVA Urban Design Studio, 120 South Ash Avenue, Tempe, AZ 85281

Michael Williams, Forest Supervisor, Kaibab National Forest, 800 South 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Williams, AZ 86046

Nick Larson, District Ranger, Kaibab National Forest, P.O. Box 3088, Grand Canyon, AZ 86023