

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

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August 16, 2011

Mr. Michael O'Brien
Office of Zoning Administration
Department of City Planning
200 North Spring Street, Room 763
Los Angeles, California 90012

ZA-2011-1332-ZAD-ZAA, 2144 Nichols Canyon Road

Dear Mr. O'Brien:

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) wishes to express its concerns regarding the above-referenced proposed project. The subject property is located adjacent to Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) fee-simple public open space. A dirt road, shown on maps as Castair Drive, connects the termini of Castair Drive and Wattles Drive run through this public open space. This dirt portion of Castair Drive is located entirely on fee-simple public parkland and abuts the eastern boundary of the subject property. The MRCA intends to open the Castair Drive to Wattles Drive Trail to the public in the near future. (Please see attached diagram for proposed trail alignment.)

The Conservancy respectfully requests that the City only approve projects that will not negatively impact the public's ability to access or use the planned Castair Drive to Wattles Drive Trail. The requested Zoning Administrator Adjustments should only be approved if they are compatible, and hopefully complimentary, with this public resource.

It appears from studying aerial photographs that the applicant has created an improved parking area on the previously mentioned MRCA fee-simple open space. There may also be other improvements as part of this parking area. Opening of the public trail would require the removal of gates adjacent to the applicant's property and on Castair Drive. This is all critical baseline information for both the Department of City Planning and the applicant to consider in respect to the subject application. At this point, the proposed application does not appear to recognize that the applicant's front yard and parking area are on fee-simple public parkland that must be available for public use.

The Conservancy will likely submit additional comments prior to the September 1 hearing.

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If you have any questions for our agency or wish to further discuss this planned trail, please feel free contact me at 310-589-3200, ext. 128, or by e-mail at edelman@smmc.ca.gov. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



PAUL EDELMAN
Deputy Director
Natural Resources and Planning

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Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy staff
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↔ Approximate alignment of the planned Castair Drive to Wattles Drive Trail

