

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

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SMMC

Item 9(a) Attachment

4-23-2012

December 1, 2011

Mulholland Design Review Board
City of Los Angeles
6262 Van Nuys Boulevard, Suite 351
Los Angeles, California 91401

DIR-2008-2620-DRB-SSP-MSP, 2775 North Cahuenga Boulevard

Dear Design Review Board Members:

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) offers the following comments and recommendations for the above-referenced proposed project. The subject property is located between two wildlife crossings over the 101 Freeway. The Mulholland Drive wildlife crossing is situated approximately 1000 feet north of the property, and the Odin Street wildlife crossing is approximately 3,000 feet to the south. These wildlife crossing allow for east-west wildlife movement between the Eastern Santa Monica Mountains and Griffith Park. As currently proposed, the undeveloped portion of the subject property should retain its scenic and ecological habitat values, however, the only adequate means of preserving these value for the long term is through dedication to a public agency.

In order to guarantee that the long-term scenic and ecological habitat values of the undeveloped portion be preserved, the Conservancy recommends that the City require as a condition of this project that the applicant dedicate as a conservation to a public agency over the undeveloped portion of the property depicted on the accompanying diagram. Such an easement dedication will ensure that this portion of the property remain unfenced, unlit, and without non-native landscaping.

Fortunately, no changes to the overall project design are necessary to implement this conservation easement. Said easement would not interfere with the property's proposed purpose as a community of 42 single-family residences.

The Conservancy's concerns would be partially addressed if the owner, or their authorized representative, verbally or in writing states to the Mulholland Design Review Board that they will voluntarily accept the following permit condition language.

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MDRB Condition Language: Applicant shall show proof of recordation and agency acceptance of a conservation easement in favor of the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) covering no less area than that shown on the figure accompanying the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's letter dated December 1, 2011. (Said area is depicted on a project site plan map.) No City permits shall be granted without proof of such an easement recordation and a Certificate of Acceptance from the MRCA. Said acceptance shall not be unreasonably withheld or delayed by the MRCA.

Applicant shall provide the MRCA with a recordable easement metes and bounds legal description, a plotted map, and a current preliminary title report. Said title report shall demonstrate that the conservation easement is not subordinate to any construction liens and that no new easements or encumbrances after the date of this letter will affect the conservation easement. The entirety of the easement area shall prohibit any fencing, lighting, grading, planting of non-native vegetation, facilities, or hardscape. The easement shall expressly allow for fuel modification and the cultivation and irrigation of plants native to the Santa Monica Mountains.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 310-589-3200, ext. 128. The applicant should also feel encouraged to contact our agency. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



PAUL EDELMAN
Deputy Director
Natural Resources and Planning

Attachments: A – Diagram of Proposed Conservation Easement