

# WILDLIFE CORRIDOR CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

570 WEST AVENUE 26, SUITE 100, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90065

TELEPHONE: (310) 589-3230

FAX: (310) 589-2408

Agenda Item IX(a)  
WCCA  
7/15/15

**GLENN PARKER**  
CHAIR  
CITY OF BREA

February 2, 2015

**MICHAEL HUGHES**  
VICE-CHAIR  
PUBLIC MEMBER  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Lynda Hikichi  
Los Angeles County  
Department of Regional Planning  
320 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, California 90012

**KELLY ELLIOTT**  
CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

**BOB HENDERSON**  
CITY OF WHITTIER

## **Tentative Tract Map No. 060973 2342 Via Cielo, Hacienda Heights**

PUBLIC MEMBER

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS  
CONSERVANCY

Dear Ms. Hikichi:

**DICKIE SIMMONS**  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

The Wildlife Corridor Conservation Authority (WCCA) greatly appreciates the County facilitating a dialogue with the project applicant. As stated in WCCA's December 5, 2011 comment letter, a build out of ten single family homes with its appurtenant driveway system would result in significant biological impacts unless the vast majority of the undisturbed open space was permanently protected in a conservation easement(s) with an adequate monitoring/enforcement funding source. Effective conservation easements must prohibit all uses and disturbances except minimum fire department required brush clearance and cultivation of plants native to the Whittier-Puente Hills.

**JACK TANAKA**  
CITY OF DIAMOND BAR

**JANE L. WILLIAMS**  
CITY OF LA HABRA HEIGHTS

WCCA staff prepared the attached figure that shows in yellow highlight the absolute minimum area and locations that must be protected by such highly restrictive conservation easements to guarantee no further erosion of the remaining areas' ecological values. None of applicant's proposed maximum grading footprint areas are located within the proposed protected area. The WCCA Governing Board concurred on September 5, 2014 that this minimum protected area and a guaranteed \$100,000 monitoring fund was the minimal acceptable level of mitigation.

The Governing Board also emphasized that even the removal of one or two of the ten house sites would substantially avoid and reduce significant biological impacts. Each eliminated house site would create a less complicated easement monitoring effort. Each eliminated house should result in a commensurate \$10,000 drop in required the easement monitoring fund. However, the eliminated proposed development footprint area would also have to be melded into the conservation easements.

Lynda Hikichi, County of Los Angeles  
Tentative Tract Map No. 060973, 2342 Via Cielo, Hacienda Heights  
February 2, 2015  
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The agency most equipped to hold and monitor the proposed conservation easements is the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA). The MRCA currently maintains several thousand open space acres in the area under contract with the Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority. MRCA field staff including peace officers live in the area. The MRCA also has a dedicated legal staff.

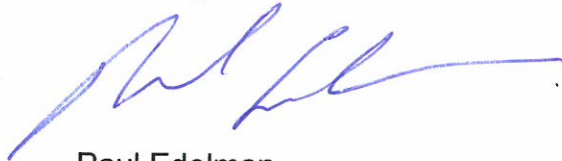
Our staff is open to a creative method of establishing a \$100,000 monitoring and enforcement fund over the course of a few years. Options include purchasing an insurance policy that guarantees that the fund will be established in full by a date certain. Nonetheless, reviewing and implementing such a staggered funding mechanism takes staff time and energy away from other efforts. If a lump sum \$100,000 payment is not made as a prerequisite of map recordation, then hourly compensation to WCCA or MRCA staff for shepherding a staggered funding method must be included. That amount could not be less than 25 hours of work at \$85 hour which equals \$2,125. In the alternative, map recordation could be temporarily delayed until a \$100,000 fund is accumulated by the applicant.

In short, an 8 house project with Lot numbers 1 and 2 removed from the project, and an \$80,000 monitoring fund for the MRCA, would be the best project balanced in the public interest. A ten house project really pushes the ecological value of the remaining habitat block (even with the highly restrictive conservation easements) near the threshold of a level that would benefit fewer species.

Whichever direction the County and the applicant go, it is imperative that all of the mechanisms for applicant-volunteered conservation easements and a monitoring fund be steadfastly integrated into the conditions of approval such that their full implementation is guaranteed as a prerequisite of map recordation.

Please direct any questions and future correspondence to my attention at the above letterhead address, by email at [edelman@smmc.ca.gov](mailto:edelman@smmc.ca.gov), and by phone at 310-589-3200 ext. 128.

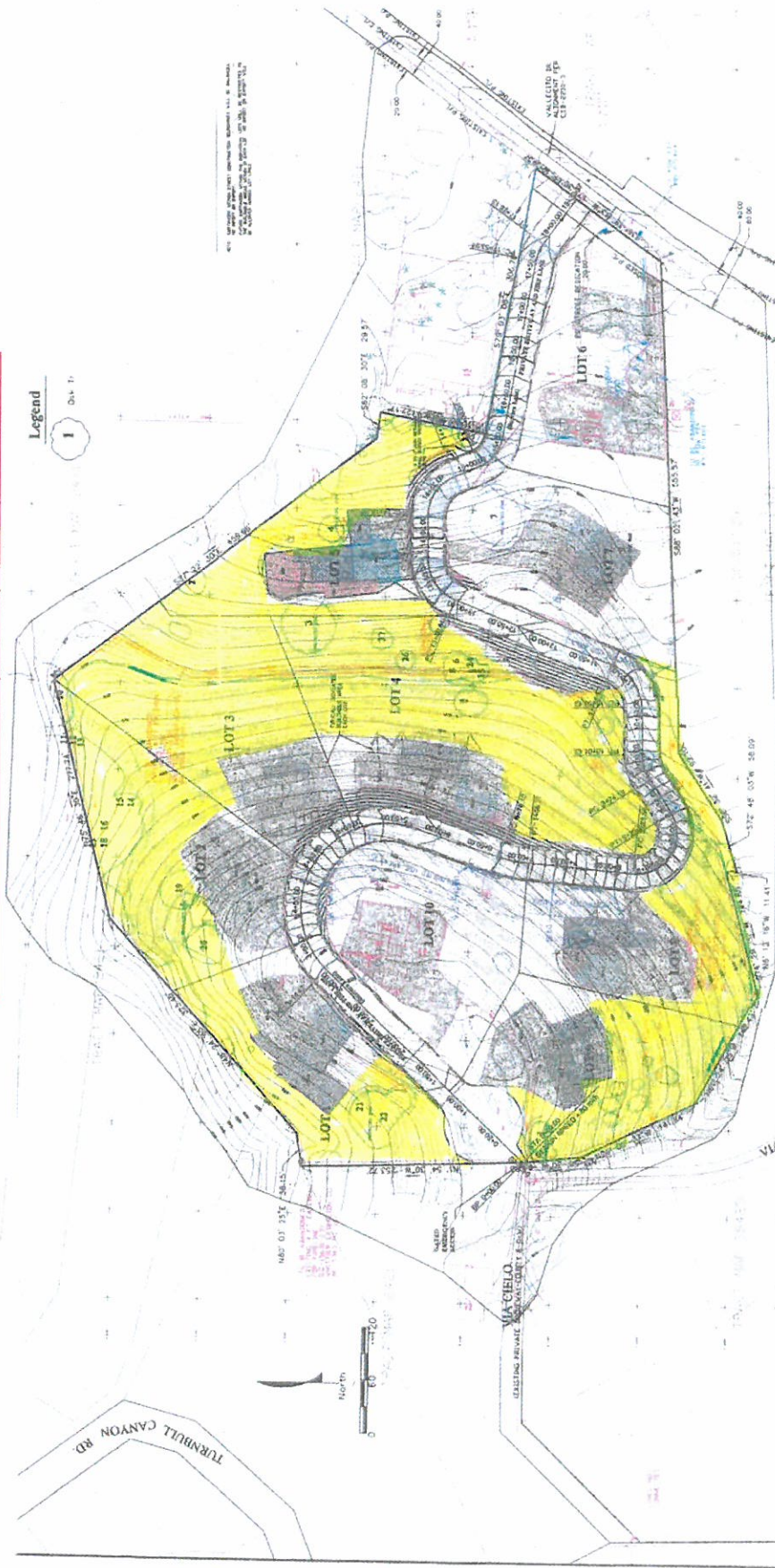
Sincerely,



Paul Edelman  
Chief of Natural Resources and Planning



2342 Via Cielo-Tract Map Showing Maximum Grading  
Footprints for Each Proposed Lot



Yellow=Required conservation  
easement mitigation area