

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Patricia Winters

**Date Submitted:** 02/24/2025 08:40 AM

**Council File No:** 24-1570

**Comments for Public Posting:** I support this appeal for the reasons stated in the attached letter and also because the State Minimum Fire Safe Regulations were made applicable to the Very High Fire Severity Zones in California's incorporated cities in 2022. They are codified at Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 1270.00 et seq. See <https://www.law.cornell.edu/regulations/california/title-14/division-1.5/chapter-7/subchapter-2>. This project does NOT comply with the state's minimum standards for ingress and egress, and will necessarily have a significant effect on the environment (e.g. hazards) and public health and safety.

Dear Council Members:

The CEQA Class 3 Exemption for this project was routinely granted without investigation. In many cases, a CEQA exemption is reasonable, but this project presents an unusual situation that deserves attention.

This 3,731 square foot house project is set in a unique location, surrounded by endangered and protected trees and bordered by two substandard dangerous streets. Avenue 44 is only 17 feet wide and Frontenac (which is mostly a dirt road) is only 10 feet wide. Although Frontenac is dangerous, it is used because there is no viable alternative. When it rains, Frontenac is impassable.

This project is unique because:

1. The **cumulative impact** of this project is significant. There are at least four other separate projects in the two-block area which will be built *simultaneously* with this project. There are 18 recent and pending projects.
2. **Emergency responders cannot access the location.** Two recent fires involved this location. In both cases, fire fighters could not reach the fire hydrant located at the intersection of Frontenac and Avenue 44 in a timely manner because of the substandard roads. In the first instance, a neighbor died. Fire trucks blocked Avenue 44 so, if the fire had spread to the adjacent brush filled canyon, the residents had no viable evacuation route. In the most recent instance, the neighbors fought a brush fire for over 20 minutes while firefighters tried to reach the area. Firefighters were eventually able to respond with smaller trucks and enter Frontenac, but only along the short area which had been improved by prior homes. Firefighters were never able to reach the hydrant—they fought the fire by hooking up their hoses to a home.
3. The project is located in a:
  - a. **Very High Fire Severity Hazard Zone (VHFSHZ)**
  - b. **A Wildland Urban Interface zone (WUI)**
  - c. **On red flag streets**
4. The project is in **violation of Fire Code Sections 503.1.5, 503.1.6.1, and 503.1.6.4** regarding minimum road widths and access to secondary evacuation routes. Unless improvements are made, the project is on a deadend street with no fire safety turnaround.
5. **City and Federal services cannot adequately service the area.** As explained above, LAFD cannot use Frontenac and Avenue 44 is too narrow. Postal service vehicles have “fallen off” Frontenac at the location of this project. Sanitation and related vehicles have no turnaround on Avenue 44 and therefore use the unsafe Frontenac adjacent to this project and have difficult.

I'm asking for reconsideration of the CEQA waiver for this project based in part on the objective facts identified above, and in part on my personal experiences.

I'm currently working with families in the burn areas trying to recover insurance benefits. No matter whether I can help them get some compensation for the material things they have lost, their lives will never be the same. Those generations of memories, family and stability are gone.

I have had to evacuate Mt Washington twice due to fires—it is a terrifying, difficult experience. One fire reached my front door while I evacuated out the back. Fire is a very real danger in this community. We have lost neighbors, pets and homes to fire.

Decisions regarding building in this fragile hillside impact the community for generations. Any decision in this case will literally alter the lives in the community.

Although this area was not part of the Eaton Canyon or Palisades fires in January, there were smaller fires and attempted arson. The high winds (estimated at 100 mph) also literally tore off roofs and toppled large trees on top of homes. Similar winds and damage occurred 10 years ago and will occur again in the future.

These circumstances require more analysis to protect public health and safety.

Sincerely,

Patricia Winters

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Paul Haitkin

**Date Submitted:** 02/24/2025 08:40 AM

**Council File No:** 24-1570

**Comments for Public Posting:** Dear Council Members, I wanted to send a letter to strongly urge you to grant this appeal. I find the decision to grant street improvement waivers deeply concerning. I am asking that you enforce the code for street improvements. Both avenue 44 and Frontenac have continued to deteriorate in the 12 years I have lived here. Frontenac has become dangerous, with cars getting stuck and needing to be towed out on a regular basis. At the original hearing, the ZA noted that there was a very large turnout from the public with comments about this project. That is NOT an accident. I have been present for 3 significant fires on this street in the last decade, one of which resulted in a fatality and one of which I personally had to keep under control with a neighbor's garden hose until the fire department was able to get to the location. The fire department has the same problem every time. They have to go door to door and ask people to move their cars because avenue 44 is too narrow and Frontenac is too crumbly. If we continue to allow more building without street improvement, the problem is only going to get worse. The builder's argument is that Frontenac is a 'paper' street and therefore not real so they shouldn't have to improve it. It is incredible that someone building a luxury single family home gets to effectively decide to close a street to the entire city forever. The law is the law to help maintain our city streets, not abandon them when special interests decide they want to develop near them. People have a right to develop property and I agree that it is in the long-term interests of the city to promote development. But that development should be for the benefit of the city. It should not be at the expense of its residents' safety. I urge you to please grant the appeal and reject the waivers for the improvements. I'm urging you to enforce the law. Thank you for your consideration. Paul Haitkin 513 W Avenue 44