

Communication from Public

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Council File No: 03-1443-S1

Comments for Public Posting: Dear Councilmembers, Please Do NOT include Sub Area "B" in the Specific Plan Amendment. This area of 65 equestrian lots has not been developed yet. There is no good reason to reduce the yard setbacks for these equestrian lots. Doing so makes these lots less viable for horsekeeping. The community had it right 34 years ago with the Porter Ranch Specific Plan provisions that equestrian lots have yard setbacks per the RA zone, which requires a 25 foot front yard setback and TWO 10-foot side yard setbacks. Please support the equestrian communities wishes that have been memorialized in the Specific Plan. Please see attached comment letter for more detail. Thank You, Marianne King

RE: Porter Ranch Specific Plan amendment to reduce the front and side yards setbacks of 105 equestrian lots. Agenda Item#49 for March 15, 2024 City Council Meeting.

Dear Councilmembers,

Please do not approve the proposed specific plan amendment as presented. Please **remove the 65 equestrian lots in Sub Area “B” from the amendment.**

Public concerns were raised at the CPC and PLUM and were completely ignored with no discussion whatsoever! As a matter of fact, PLUM approved this item on consent, ignoring the comment letters that were submitted to the council file, which they received beforehand. What is the point of a public hearing or public input if we are completely ignored every step of the way? It does not feel like a democratic process. It is hoped that at least some of you, especially those who have equine keeping areas in your district, will consider the following concerns as this is not just about the Porter Ranch Specific Plan, it is about the bad precedent this amendment will have on future equinekeeping lots anywhere in the City of Los Angeles and the fact that a specific plan can be amended, well beyond what is justified, to accommodate a developer's disregard for the specific plan requirements.

1. The Staff Report is misleading and did not include important information for objective decision making.

“Currently the specified 105 lots in Subareas A and B of the Port Ranch Specific Plan are developed with one 10-foot side yard, one five-foot side yard, and 20 foot front yards and thus do not comply with the current yard requirements of the Specific Plan.” (Pg. A-6)

FACT – Sub Area “B” with 65 equestrian lots has not been developed yet.

“The project seeks to amend the Specific Plan’s front and side yard design standards to match the built environment that currently exists on-site or is currently under construction.” (Pg. A-1)

FACT – The “built environment” is the one that the developer illegally built on the 40 equestrian lots in Sub Area “A.”

“Adoption of the proposed amendment would bring all homes (existing and under-construction) on the subject 105 lots into compliance with the Porter Ranch Specific Plan.” (Pg. F-1)

POINT- This is a bad precedent being made for any Specific Plan. If a developer can incorrectly or illegally build homes in disregard of the specific plan provisions, and the City ends up approving an amendment so that they can

be *in compliance with the DEVELOPER's RULES*, and not the specific plan, then these plans and the decision makers that we depend on to enforce the plans, are worthless.

“The amendment proposes to utilize the standard front yard dimensions as used on most other single family lots in Porter Ranch and would allow the standard five-foot side yard for one side yard but would continue to require at least one 10-foot side yard on all horsekeeping lots. The one 10-foot side yard allows for adequate equine access to the rear yard.” (Pg. A-3)

FACT – These are the ONLY 105 equestrian lots in the Porter Ranch Specific Plan (out of 2,400 single family lots). They were NOT INTENDED to be like all of the other single family lots in the Porter Ranch Specific Plan. That is why there are specific yard setback requirements as equestrian lots require more yard space for numerous reasons, not just for adequate equine access. The statement above minimizes the importance of having more yard space on equestrian lots and overlooks the following:

- Having the required (2) 10-foot side yard setbacks and a 25-foot front yard setback allows for greater ease in load/unloading horses in accommodation of trucks with horse hauling trailers, for vet and farrier (hoofcare professionals) vehicle access as their vehicles are larger than average due to the equipment they must have at hand.
- The larger setbacks also allow for more storage of horse keeping related materials, such as tack, feed, supplements, training equipment, medicines, and larger paddocks so the horses may have more space.
- Allowing smaller setbacks makes it more difficult to keep horses on the property, discouraging such use.
- A truck and trailer is often as long as 25 feet - reducing it to 15 feet would mean that trucks would have to be parked 10 feet out onto the street in order to load them from the property. This would cause a dangerous situation in times of emergency.
- Noise from adjacent properties to the horse owning lots is also a concern - horses are easily startled, and a 5-foot distance would allow adjacent residents to contact, feed, and even harass horses on adjacent properties (e.g., if there was a party).

It is also important to know that the many of these lots have steep slopes in the rear yards, rendering most of the extra rear yard space as unusable for horses to move around and for storage. The horses would be confined to a small level area in the rear yard thus losing more yard space reduces the likelihood that these will be viable horsekeeping lots.

2. There is no mention in the Staff Report of what the current zoning is for these 105 equestrian lots. How can you make a finding of Good Zoning Practice and not discuss the current zoning?

FACT –

- Sub Area “A” 40 equestrian lots are zoned “RE1”
- Sub Area “B” 65 equestrian lots are zoned “RE20”

It is unclear what “RE1” zoning is. There is no such thing. It is likely that this is an error, and that these lots in Sub Area “A” are zoned “RE11”- however no apparent research has been provided to explain this, or much less to correct this.

Since Sub Area “A” has already been developed and has more restrictive zoning with respect to require yard setbacks, it would be a less offensive move to support the Specific Plan amendment for Sub Area “A” only.

However, Sub Area “B” RE20 zoning requires a 25 foot front yard setback and (2) 10-foot side yard setbacks, essentially the same requirement as intended under the RA zoning provisions per the specific plan.

All the equestrian lots that have been approved over the last 20 years or more have these minimum yard setbacks. It is not Good Zoning Practice to reduce the yard space of equestrian lots for the reasons noted above.

The equestrian community worked hard 34 YEARS ago to make sure these equestrian lots would be VIABLE equestrian lots and not like all the other single family lots in the Porter Ranch Specific Plan. We have had to wait all this time for these equestrian lots (and equine trails) to get developed only to have a developer come in and try to change the rules to their benefit.

Please DO NOT AMEND Sub Area “B” – Please require the RA zone (or RE20 zone) yard setbacks for these 65 equestrian lots. These lots have only been graded at this point, no foundation has been laid on these lots. There is no justifiable reason to include Sub Area “B.” It is not good zoning practice to do so and it will adversely impact the future of equinekeeping in Los Angeles as we know it.