

Board

*President Dena Weiss, Area 4 CB Org.
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*Julian Tu, Area 2 Res.
Paul Lawler, Area 2 Bus.
Peter Haber, Area 2 CB Org.
Masha Dowell, Area 2 Alt.*

*Dean Matthew, Area 3 Bus.
Harout Aristkessian, Area 3 CB Org.
Jayce Baron, Area 3 Alt.*

*Martin Lipkin, Area 4 Bus.
Open, Area 4 Alt.*

*Christopher Waddy, Area 5 Res.
Julie Waltrip, Area 5 Bus.
Steve Sommers, Area 5 CB Org.
Allan Biggins, Area 5 Alt.*

*Bill Barnett, Area 6 Res..
Bobbie Wasserman, Area 6 CB Org.
Janice Mendell, Area 6 Alt.*

*Kate Kennedy, Area 7 Res.
Schylar Katz, Area 7 Bus.
Joyce Fletcher, Area 7 CB Org.
Rosaleen O'Sullivan, Area 7 Alt.*

*August Steurer, At-Large
Open, At-Large Alt.*

Open, Youth (At-Large)

*Board Authorized Submittal
by Heath Kline
for*

*Dena Weiss, President
d.weiss@whcouncil.org*

Action Passed on 02/15/2024

**Members Present: 25
Members Absent: 3
Quorum: 12**

**Members voting Aye: 20
Members voting Nay: 0
Members Abstaining: 0**

**Members Ineligible: 4
Members Recused: 1**

Contact Person:
*Heath Kline
818-312-5610
h.kline@whcouncil.org*

February 18, 2024

VIA EMAIL

Dear City Officials and Staff:

RE: CF 17-1071-S1 Composition of the Ventura-Cahuenga Boulevards Corridor Specific Plan's Plan Review Board

The Board of the Woodland-Hills - Warner Center Neighborhood Council unanimously passed the attached CIS that details why, **unless it's amended, we do not support the Planning Department's current recommendation to shrink the size of the Ventura-Cahuenga Boulevards Corridor Specific Plan [VCBCSP]'s Plan Review Board [PRB] and instead support amending the proposal to use the PRB members own plan to expand their board** with knowledgeable, effected community participants.

The VCBCSP and its PRB were created 33 years ago because the City wisely recognized that these boulevards represent the 17-mile economic and cultural spine of the San Fernando Valley that requires diligent oversight and planning.

This can best be accomplished with active community awareness and involvement of the six communities' NCs that are transected by the Ventura-Cahuenga Boulevards Corridor. An exemplary implementation of these lofty ambitions can be found in the PRB member's alternate plan (initially proposed by Council President Krekorian) to expand, not shrink, the PRB, with the added seats coming from the six Neighborhood Councils with their hyper-local keen awareness of conditions and needs along the corridor.

We therefore ask you to reject City Planning's shrink proposal for the PRB and instead support, adopt, and implement the PRB member's plan to expand the PRB. The PRB expanded plan enjoys strong support from the NCs and homeowner organizations most affected by the corridor, all explained in our attached CIS.

Sincerely,


Dena Weiss,
President


Heath Kline,
WHIP Committee Chair

Resolution/Community Impact Statement

Board

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Open, At-Large Alt.*

Open, Youth (At-Large)

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by Heath Kline
for*

*Dena Weiss, President
d.weiss@whcouncil.org*

Action Passed on 02/15/2024

**Members Present: 25
Members Absent: 3
Quorum:12**

**Members voting Aye: 20
Members voting Nay: 0
Members Abstaining: 0**

**Members Ineligible: 4
Members Recused: 1**

*Contact Person:
Heath Kline
818-312-5610
h.kline@whcouncil.org*

Regarding

CF 17-1071-S1

The City Council is reviewing proposed amendments to the Ventura-Cahuenga Boulevards Corridor Specific Plan (VCBCSP), found in Council File 17-1071-S1. Some of the changes negatively affect the structure of its Plan Review Board (PRB) for community representation by reducing the affected community's direct influence regarding the administration of the Specific Plan. ***There's a much better alternative plan update proposal that strengthens the PRB that we support and will explain why below.***

What does the PRB do?

- The PRB oversees the city's spending of fees collected from properties and projects within the Specific Plan. Currently, most fees are devoted to safety and traffic improvements.
- The PRB advises City Planning on cases requiring discretionary actions for zone changes, variances, and exceptions.
- After Neighborhood Councils were created, the PRB delegated its project review responsibilities to the relevant affected Neighborhood Councils within the Plan.
- The PRB notifies the local City Council Members when it discovers amendments are needed to the Specific Plan. The PRB recognized the need to revise the Board Membership rules over 5 years ago. The City Council initiated the amendment process from City Planning based on recommendations made by the PRB.

Why does the PRB structure need to be revised?

Before the City's 2022 redistricting of City Council Districts, the PRB had nine members, with some of the Specific Plan's communities having only one representative and some having two. Because the Specific Plan is now within just two Council Districts, the PRB, under the current rules, has been reduced to only five members, with two Specific Plan communities having no representation.

Against the recommendation of the PRB, the amendment submitted by the City Planning Department (and subsequently approved by the City Planning Commission) alters the structure of the PRB to have only seven members. The City Council Member(s) for the six communities defined in the amended plan (Woodland Hills, Tarzana, Encino, Sherman Oaks, Studio City, and Cahuenga) will appoint one member for each community, and the City Mayor will appoint one member.

The PRB and Neighborhood Councils in the Plan are concerned the proposed structure does not best serve the interests of their communities. Currently, there are only two council districts along the Boulevard. Council District 4 contains four communities along the eastern roughly 10.5 miles of the Plan, and Council District 3 has two communities along the western 6.5 miles. Under the proposed structure, one council district would control most of the Board. Notably, near the end of the 2022 redistricting process, a map was briefly considered with only one Council District encompassing

the Specific Plan, giving just one Council Member supermajority control of the Board and a lack of diverse opinions.

As proposed by City Planning, the future Board Memberships should satisfy various demographic categories for “diversity.” However, the changes lack any emphasis or requirement for selecting appointees familiar with the Specific Plan and/or knowing the community’s experience and issues with the Specific Plan. There was some concern by the PRB that appointments could be made for political purposes, which does not serve the affected communities well.

When City Planning Department staff first provided the PRB with proposed changes, the PRB members recognized the potential issues arising from their proposed restructuring. They voiced those issues to the staff. Later, after a City Planning Commission approval of a 7-member PRB, the current PRB members unanimously passed a motion to send a Letter from the PRB (see attachment) to support their preferred 13-member structure for the PRB. Council President Paul Krekorian initially proposed it when he represented a portion of the Specific Plan. Community organizations and Neighborhood Councils along the Boulevard(s) currently support the PRB letter.

What is the WHWCNC & PRB members preferred PRB structure?

The favored, alternative PRB structure expands upon the 7-member Board structure to have a 13-member Board. Under the expanded structure, the relevant Neighborhood Councils would each appoint a Board Member to improve their representation on the PRB. Because Neighborhood Councils perform case reviews of projects along the Specific Plan, they can best appoint members with appropriate experience related to the Boulevard(s). This alternative prevents any City Council Member from controlling a majority of the PRB whenever redistricting reduces the number of Council Members within the borders of the Plan to one or two.

Any limitations put on the terms of PRB members can be detrimental since the City’s slow processes often take many years to accomplish projects. Some past PRB projects took over a decade for Members to champion successfully to completion.

A 7-member board offers less diversity of experience. A smaller board presents a larger burden on each PRB member to address and review the needs and issues within the Specific Plan. Also, when only one member represents a community, any absence of that member leaves the community without representation during PRB discussion.

We note from discussions with PRB members that the Planning Department provides minimal support for reviewing the plan, as exemplified by the fact that the annual report from staff, as required by the Plan, has not been presented to the PRB for many years.

The WHWCNC believes that a 13-member board would require minimal additional support in this digital era compared to supporting a 7-member board. The larger board could function better. A 13-member Board will give greater attention to the needs of the Specific Plan.

THEREFORE, as Council President Paul Krekorian originally proposed:

The Woodland Hills – Warner Center Neighborhood Council unanimously join in supporting the position of the Ventura/Cahuenga Boulevards Corridor Specific Plan PRB Members, other Neighborhood Councils in the Specific Plan, the Woodland Hills Homeowners Organization, to have a 13-member Plan Review Board whereby:

- **The City Mayor appoints one member.**
- **One member is appointed for each of the six communities by the City Council Member for the Community.**
- **One member is appointed for each of the six communities by the relevant Neighborhood Council for the Community. Appointed members must qualify as stakeholders of the community.**
- **There are no limits to the number of 3-year, staggered Board Member terms.**
- **The Officers for PRB are to be the President, 1st Vice President, and 2nd Vice President**