

November 11, 2021

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To: Mayor Garcetti, and City Council Members,

Re: Council File 21-1286, and our letter of June 15, 2021

Nearly 8 months have passed since the City Planning Director published his “Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan Implementation Guidance” Memo of 3-30-2021, eviscerating the Mulholland Design Review Board’s jurisdiction over the outer corridor of the Mulholland Scenic Parkway, threatening hundreds of acres of important and biodiverse native habitat, and selling out our city’s cultural and natural resources.

On June 15, 2021 CFAC called upon you all to demand the withdrawal of that memo and restore appropriate public engagement and environmental review, per the council’s original vote. We are resubmitting our June 15, 2021 letter to the council file, in support of your new motion and request that you hold Planning accountable for the reports requested. We thank you for taking action on this matter.

Thank you,



Shelley Billik
Chair, Community Forest Advisory Committee



June 15, 2021

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To: Mayor Garcetti, and City Council Members,

Re: Withdrawal of the City Planning Director’s “Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan Implementation Guidance” Memo of 3-30-2021, and restoration of the Mulholland Design Review Board’s jurisdiction over both the inner and outer corridor of the Mulholland Scenic Parkway.

The City’s Community Forest Advisory Committee (CFAC) was formed in 1993 to improve the state of our City’s urban forest by convening community representatives from the 15 council districts and a Mayor’s representative. Committee members are chosen by their councilmember and appointed by the Mayor to advise the City on practices and policies that affect our city’s environmental health, and advocate on behalf of our urban forest.

It is in this capacity that we are seeing the alarming destruction of our urban forest and oak/walnut woodlands throughout the hillsides and beyond. As volunteers, we are working tirelessly to raise awareness and advocate for equitable access to nature and protection of our urban forest – a critical and undervalued natural defense to the climate crisis, loss of biodiversity, urban heat, and diminishing public health.



We therefore offer our support for the Writ of Mandate by the Hillside Federation as petitioner, to Planning Director Vince Bertoni, that he rescind and vacate his 3-30-2021 memorandum titled “Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan Implementation Guidance,” and restore the Mulholland Design Review Board’s jurisdiction over both the inner and outer corridor of the Mulholland Scenic Parkway. This carefully crafted memo is a wolf in sheep’s clothing as it eviscerates the Mulholland Design Review Board oversight.

The Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan (MSPSP) was adopted by YOUR BODY: the Los Angeles City Council in 1992. The Specific Plan protects approximately 20 square miles of the Santa Monica Mountains, a significant part of both the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Zone and Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. The Specific Plan was adopted in order to ensure the preservation of valuable scenic, recreational, educational, environmental, and cultural resources.

Many years after its adoption, we clearly know that the region is a VITAL natural habitat for many species, some of which are near threatened like the California Black Walnut, and provide critical wildlife corridors for megafauna including the threatened mountain lion. And we now recognize that oversight by the Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan Design Review Board (MDRB) has been the only mechanism for protecting these precious and unrecoverable resources, especially with the rampant misuse of CEQA exemptions.

Although we acknowledge the important and ongoing work of the Wildlife Pilot Study over the last several years, it has been hampered by delays and lack of proper funding, and will still likely take years until it is fully implemented as an ordinance in the entire Santa Monica Mountains region. So the Wildlife Pilot Study cannot and should not be an excuse for this premature and harmful action.

It is reckless to believe that publishing a Biodiversity Study, setting Green New Deal goals, and creating a Climate Emergency Department will steer us toward a habitable and healthy environment if you allow unilateral actions such as this memo to take effect. The re-invention of the MSPSP by Planning Director Vince Bertoni, not only demonstrates a clear disregard for our city’s and region’s natural resources, but also violates the Specific Plan, the Planning Department’s own Public Participation Policy, as well as the City Charter.

We respectfully and adamantly request that you exercise your authority as council members and Mayor, to recognize the severity of this action and demand its immediate withdrawal.

Thank you,



Shelley Billik
Chair, Community Forest Advisory Committee