

Communication from Public

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Council File No: 21-1284

Comments for Public Posting: On behalf of the California Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), thank you for the opportunity to comment on the City Council Resolution to add the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy as a trustee agency and recognize their maps for habitat protection and conservation. TNC supports the City Council Resolution 21-1284. This portion of the Santa Monica Mountains is critical to maintaining the biodiversity not just of the Eastern Santa Monica Mountains, but of the entire Greater Los Angeles area. In addition to serving as a habitat linkage that allows wildlife to move between Griffith Park and the Western Santa Monica Mountains, it also likely serves as the source location for many species that disperse into the surrounding more developed lands. The Eastern Santa Monica Mountains contain the last vestiges, on the western side of Greater Los Angeles, of natural habitats within the sea of development which spans from the Valleys through the Coastal Plain. TNC looks forward to working with the City of Los Angeles and SMMC to protect and conserve our natural resources and sensitive habitat areas.

December 1, 2021

Los Angeles City Council
200 N Spring St
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Council File: 21-1284 - Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) / Trustee Agency / California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) / Project Review Process / Consultation / Natural Resources / Big Wild-Topanga State Park / Eastern Santa Monica Mountains / Griffith Park Area

Dear Los Angeles City Councilmembers,

On behalf of the California Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the City Council Resolution to add the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy as a trustee agency and recognize their maps for habitat protection and conservation.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is an international non-profit organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Our work on the ground is carried out in all 50 states and 79 countries and territories around the world and is supported by more than one million members. To date, we have helped conserve approximately 120 million acres (including nearly 1.5 million acres in California) and 5,000 river miles around the world. We have been engaged in the protection and management of natural resources across the U.S. since 1951.

TNC supports the City Council Resolution that recognizes “the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy as a trustee agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, which would require the City of Los Angeles to notify and consult with SMMC at various points in the CEQA review process on projects that may affect natural resources within the Santa Monica Mountains Zone, as defined in the Conservancy Act.”

In addition, TNC supports the maps included in the section of the Resolution that states, “The City of Los Angeles hereby recognizes the Big Wild-Topanga State Park, Eastern Santa Monica Mountains, and Griffith Park Area Habitat Linkage Habitat Linkage¹ Planning Maps as well as future spatial habitat protection maps prepared by SMMC to ensure the protection and conservation of sensitive habitat areas.”

TNC offers the following detailed comments on the Resolution.

- The Eastern Santa Monica Mountains Habitat Linkage Planning Map is an estimate of what is serving as habitat for many species in this area. There are trees, shrubs, and other vegetation present in areas that are not mapped as “habitat blocks”, but do provide some habitat for insects, birds, and other

¹ Note that “Habitat Linkage” is written twice in the original resolution and needs to be corrected.

small vertebrate species. While additional vegetation in the area serves as habitat and could be included in future maps of the area, it is critical to protect remnant stands of native, naturally-occurring chaparral and oak woodland shown in this map, as these provide the highest habitat value, and are very important to protect from disturbance.

- This portion of the Santa Monica Mountains is critical to maintaining the biodiversity not just of the Eastern Santa Monica Mountains, but of the entire Greater Los Angeles area. In addition to serving as a habitat linkage that allows wildlife to move between Griffith Park and the Western Santa Monica Mountains, it also likely serves as the source location for many species that disperse into the surrounding more developed lands. The Eastern Santa Monica Mountains contain the last vestiges, on the western side of Greater Los Angeles, of natural habitats within the sea of development which spans from the Valleys through the Coastal Plain.
- Many of the habitats and wildlife linkages shown in the Eastern Santa Monica Mountains and Griffith Park Area maps were identified and published through a scientific process in the Green Visions report in 2006. The maps depicting these habitats and linkages are included below.
- The Nature Conservancy, using the information from the Green Visions Plan, identified the areas of potential biodiversity in the Greater Los Angeles area, with the Eastern Santa Monica Mountains and Griffith Park area clearly showing up as important areas of potential biodiversity.
- Voting patterns in the Eastern Santa Monica Mountains depict a populace that is supportive of natural lands for both their recreational use and their role in climate change mitigation.

TNC looks forward to working with City of Los Angeles and SMMC to protect and conserve our natural resources and sensitive habitat areas.

Sincerely,



Shona Ganguly
External Affairs Advisor
The Nature Conservancy



The Green Visions Plan for 21st Century Southern California. Chapter 8: Conservation of Native Biodiversity in the City: An Assessment of MRCA Projects in the Upper Los Angeles River Watershed (page 16)



The Green Visions Plan for 21st Century Southern California. Chapter 8: Conservation of Native Biodiversity in the City: An Assessment of MRCA Projects in the Upper Los Angeles River Watershed (page 18)

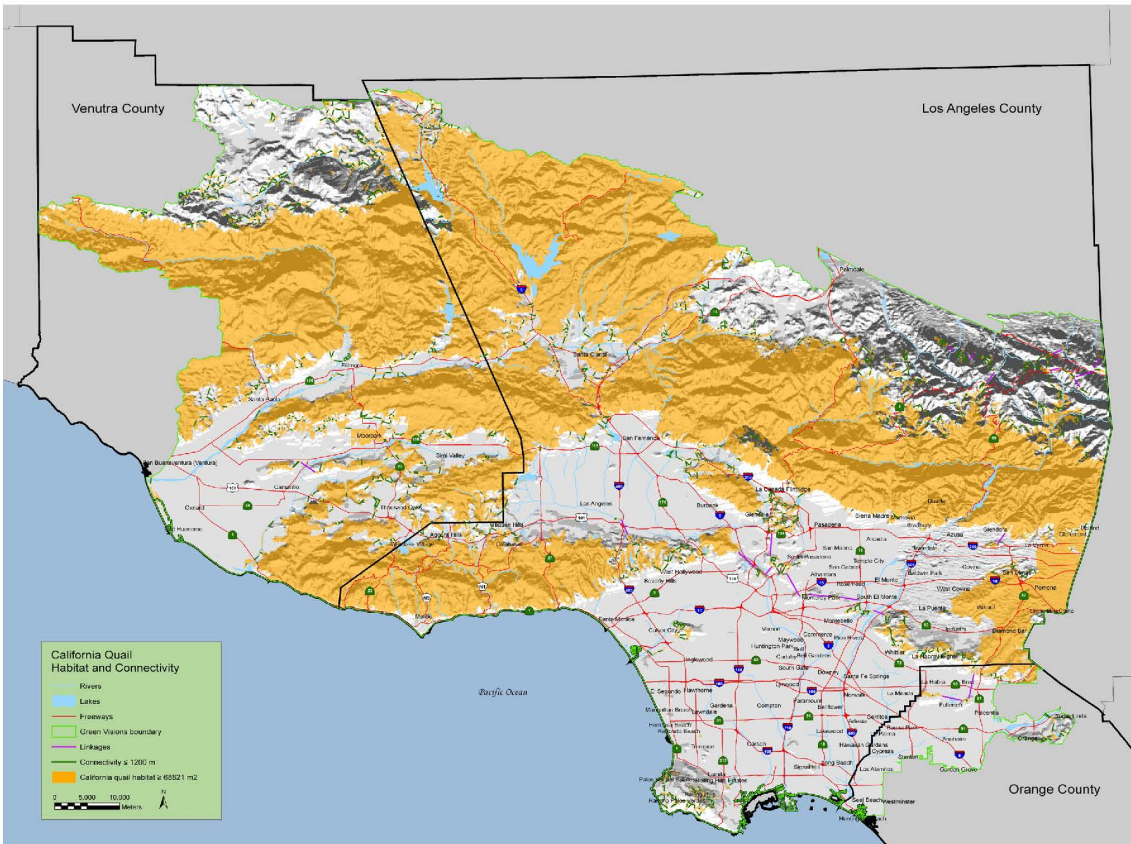
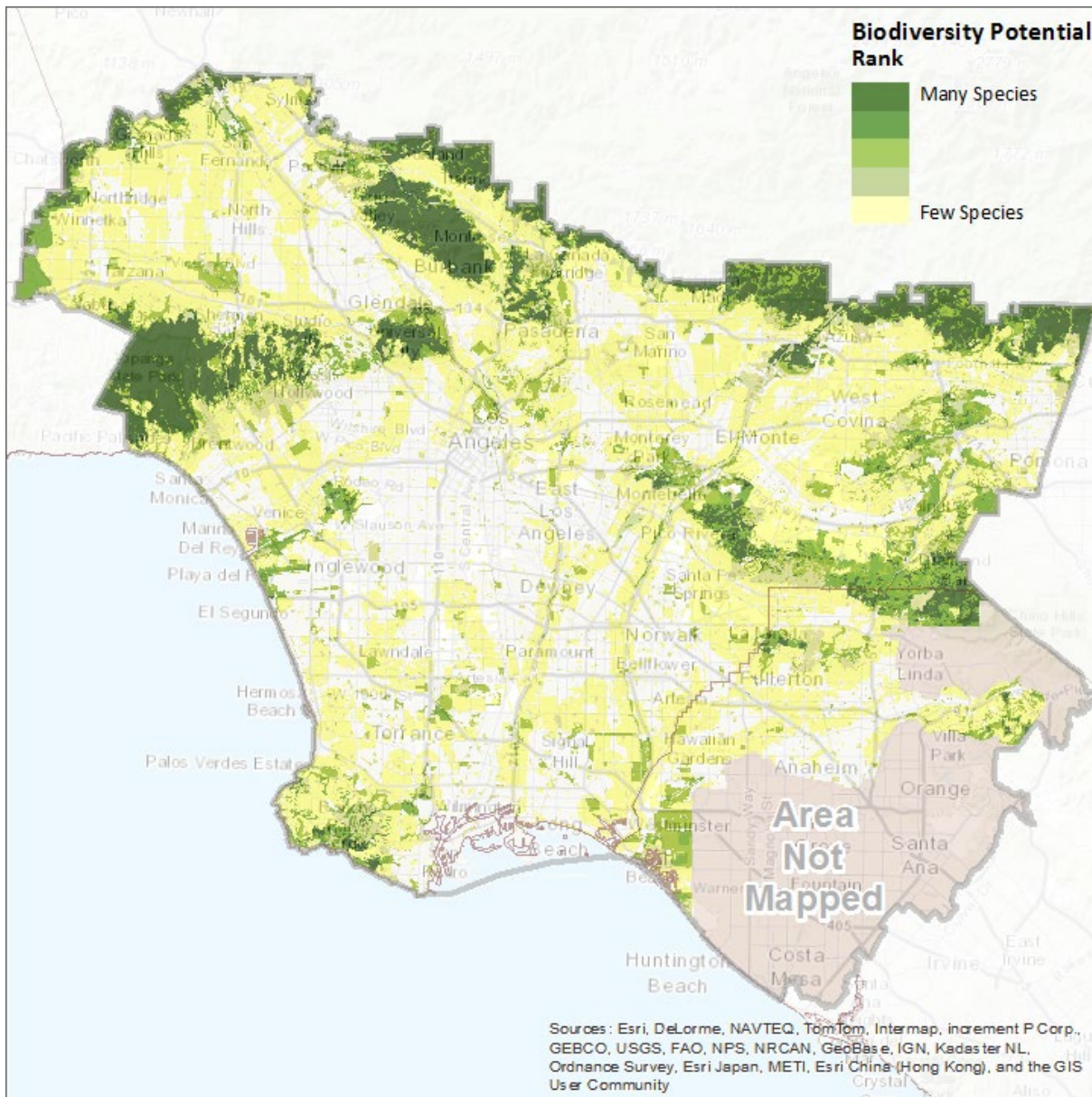
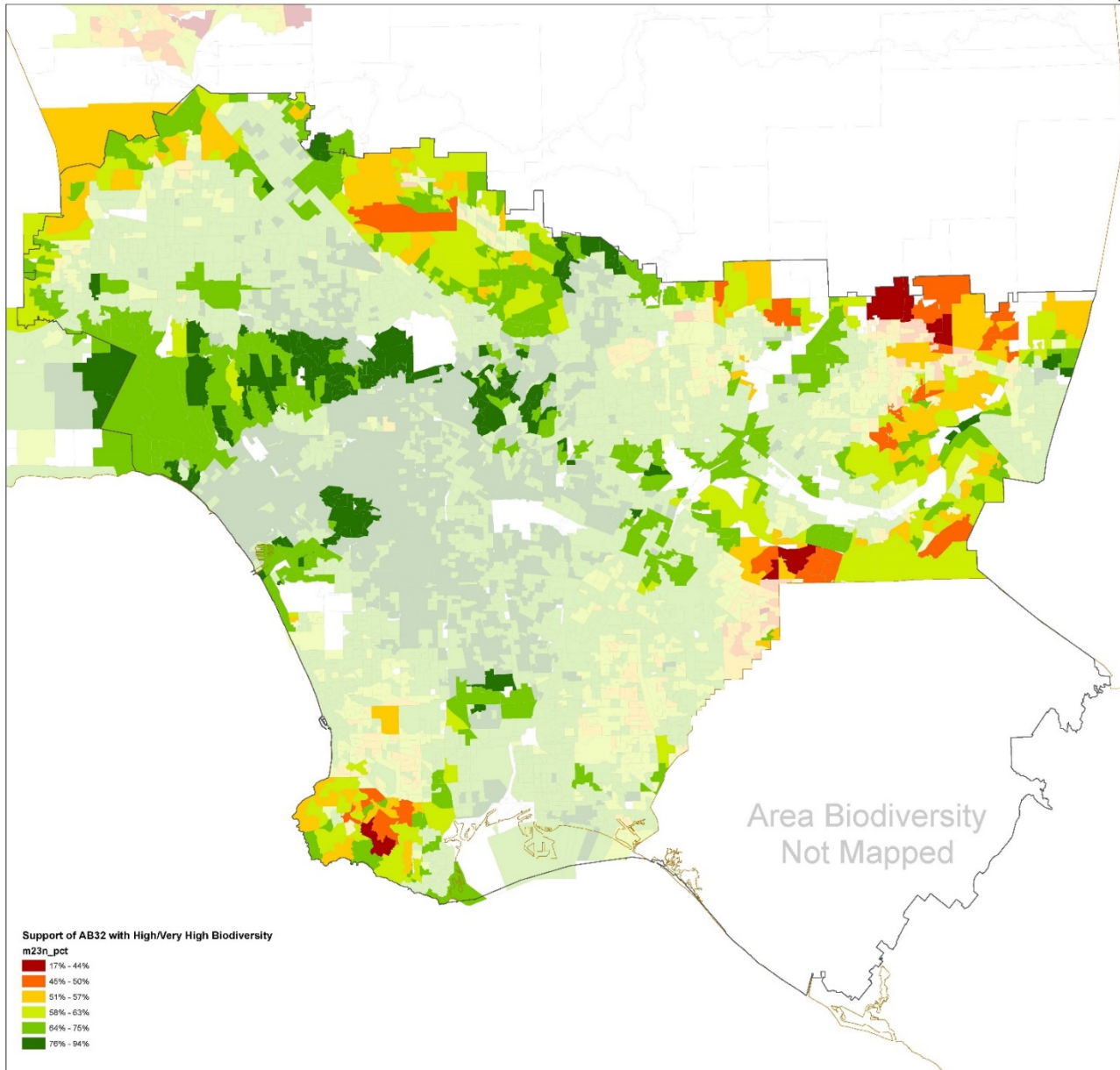


Figure 4. Potential habitat for California quail with existing (green) and potential (purple) connections.

The Green Visions Plan for 21st Century Southern California. Chapter 8: Conservation of Native Biodiversity in the City: An Assessment of MRCA Projects in the Upper Los Angeles River Watershed (page 19)

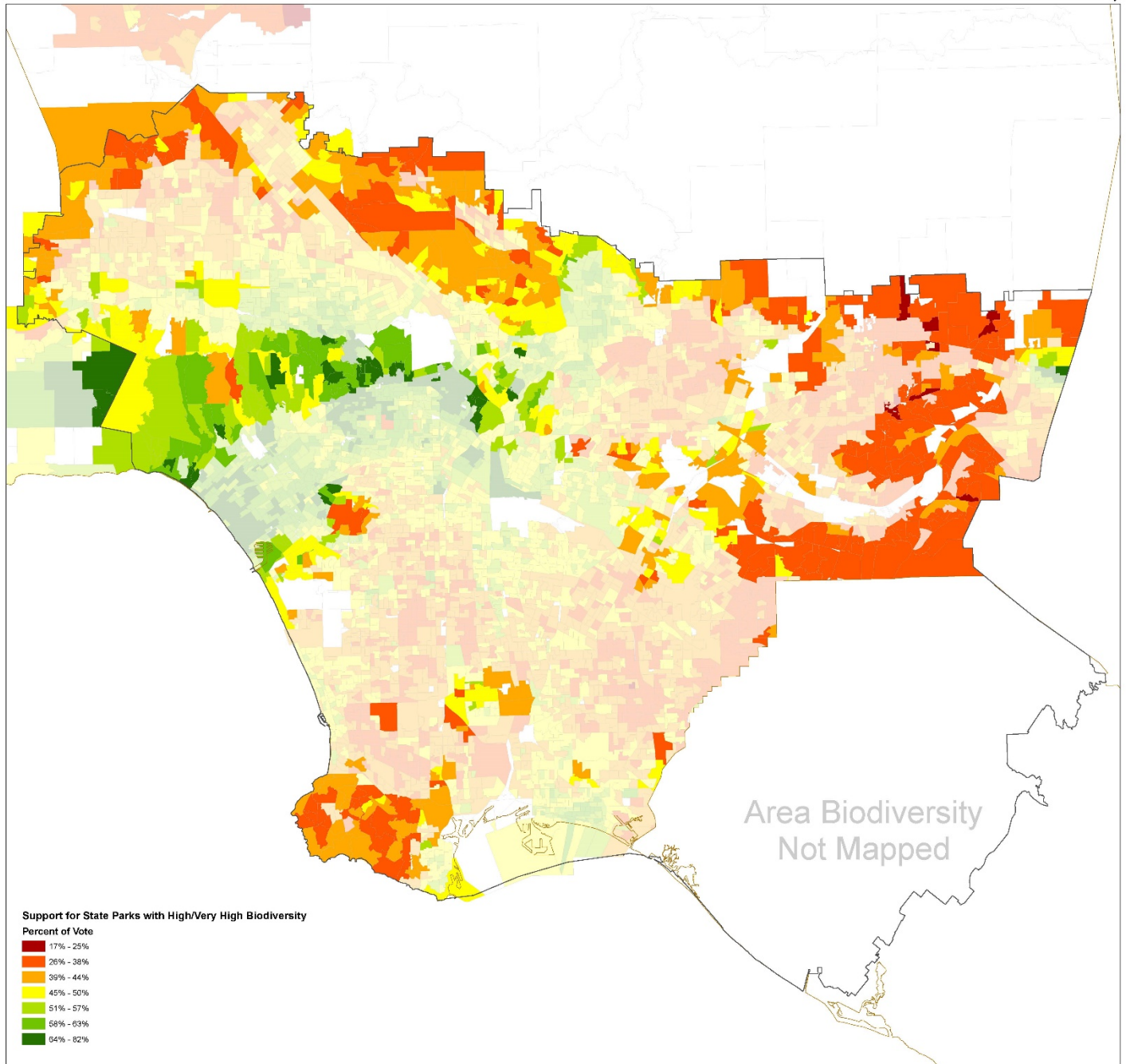


The Nature Conservancy's Biodiversity Potential map created using data from The Green Visions Plan for 21st Century Southern California: Rank is determined by the number of species that have potential habitat and space requirements for a given area, using the data developed by CBI/USC in their Terrestrial Species Mapping project for Green Visions (excluding fish). The Eastern Santa Monica Mountains and Griffith Park area clearly show up as important areas of potential biodiversity.



The map above shows the support (yes or no vote) for AB32, indicating that the residents of the area are very much in favor of mitigating climate change, which the natural lands in the Resolution are helping to do.

Metropolitan Los Angeles
Landuse and Biodiversity



The map above shows that the residents there are also mostly in favor of saving our State Parks, and thus by extension preserving natural lands.