



PACIFIC PALISADES COMMUNITY COUNCIL

October 10, 2020

Via email

Hon. Mike Bonin, Councilmember, CD11

Hon. Paul Koretz, Councilmember, CD5

Hon. Monica Rodriguez, Chair, Council Public Safety Committee

Hon. Mitch O'Farrell, Joe Buscaino, David Ryu and John Lee, Members, Council Public Safety Committee

Re: Council File 20-1213 (Bonin-Koretz); motion regarding evacuation routes in the VHFHZ; set for hearing 10/13/20; SUPPORT.

Dear Councilmembers:

Pacific Palisades Community Council (PPCC) is the most broad-based community organization and has served as the voice of the Palisades since 1973. Acting pursuant to PPCC's Bylaws (Art. V.3(B)), the PPCC Executive Committee expresses support for the above-referenced motion by Councilmembers Bonin and Koretz, subject to key considerations.

Greater density is the enemy of safety in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) because it means more people trying to evacuate during emergencies on already crowded and obstructed streets. PPCC feels that density in our residential zones should be frozen at current levels and not increased, for the following reasons:

- Pacific Palisades is entirely located in the VHFHSZ; all of our streets, whether in hillside, coastal bluff or "flat" areas, are within the VHFHSZ.
- Pacific Palisades has only two main routes of evacuation: Sunset Blvd. and Temescal Canyon Rd. (to Pacific Coast Highway).
- Pacific Palisades has numerous substandard streets, not only in our hillside and bluff areas but in our "flat" areas as well; these streets present severe evacuation challenges during wildfire events.
- Even standard-sized "feeder" streets in Pacific Palisades (hillside or not) are challenged during evacuations, when hundreds if not thousands of residents are forced while fleeing fires into severely limited, already-crowded main evacuation routes.
- In wildfire events such as the 2019 Palisades and Getty Fires, Pacific Palisades has experienced substantial risks to public safety due to crowded conditions causing back-ups on both substandard and standard streets during required evacuations.
- LAFD warns: "Catastrophic brush fires are occurring at an increasing rate not only in California but

across the country. Hillside communities within Los Angeles are under continuous threat of a devastating wildfire.” See: <https://www.lafd.org/wildfire>.

We urge the City Council and all relevant agencies to keep these considerations top-of-mind in taking actions directed by this motion, including conducting reviews, issuing reports and proposing updates or amendments to the Public Safety and/or Housing Elements of the General Plan.

Thank you for addressing these serious public safety issues on behalf of your constituents.

Sincerely,

Executive Committee, PPCC:

David Card, Chair

David Kaplan, Vice Chair

Richard Cohen, Treasurer

Christina Spitz, Secretary

Maryam Zar, Chair Emeritus

John Padden, Organization Representative (PRIDE)

Joanna Spak, Area Representative (Area 1, Castellammare,

Paseo Miramar)

cc (via email):

Vincent P. Bertoni, Director, Los Angeles Dept. of City Planning

Aram Sahakian, General Manager, Los Angeles Emergency Management Dept.

Ralph M. Terrazas, Chief, Los Angeles Fire Dept.

Armando Hogan, Deputy Chief, Operations West Bureau, Los Angeles Fire Dept.