



PACIFIC PALISADES COMMUNITY COUNCIL

February 29, 2016

Deputy Advisory Agency/
Hearing Officer for the City Planning Commission
Department of City Planning
c/o Michelle Levy, City Planner
c/o Lakisha Hull, City Planning Associate
City Hall, 200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

via email: michelle.levy@lacity.org
via email: lakisha.hull@lacity.org

Re: LETTER IN SUPPORT OF THE ADOPTION OF ENV-2015-2715 MND (related case: CPC-2015-2714-VZC-SP-DRB-SPP; 1029-1049 N. Swarthmore Ave.; 1012-1032 N. Swarthmore Ave.; 1023-1055 N. Monument St.; and 15229-15281 W. Sunset Blvd., collectively, the “Palisades Village Project”).

To: Deputy Advisory Agency/Hearing Officer for the City Planning Commission:

Pacific Palisades Community Council (PPCC) is the most broad-based community organization and the voice of the Palisades since 1973. During October and November 2015, PPCC held well-attended public meetings focusing on the Palisades Village Project. On February 25, 2016, the PPCC held a third noticed public forum to discuss the Palisades Village Project, which incorporated the ENV-2015-2715 MND, committee reports and related motions. A full discussion ensued, including input from Mr. Rick Caruso and public comment that reflected community support, questions, input and concerns.

PPCC, acting by its Executive Committee,¹ recognizes that the City has determined, based on substantial traffic and other environmental studies, that the Palisades Village Project will have no unmitigated significant impacts. PPCC also acknowledges community concerns that, as with any project of similar size built within an existing neighborhood village, issues warranting attention may arise on an ongoing basis. ***PPCC therefore supports adoption of the Mitigated Negative Declaration, provided that*** a new Village Project Committee is established under the auspices of Council District 11, to assess and address issues that may arise during construction and eventual Project operations. Such a committee should consist of one representative each from the applicant, Council District 11, the Pacific Palisades Chamber of Commerce and PPCC, and an area resident (to be appointed by Council District 11).

PPCC’s Village Project Land Use Committee (VPLUC) prepared and distributed the attached report (including summary biographies) in support of adoption of the MND. Support for the Palisades Village Project and for adoption of the MND was expressed in meetings and to PPCC’s Executive Committee by:

1. Elected PPCC Area Representatives and Alternates eligible to vote representing thousands of residents from Area 2 (Palisades Highlands), Area 3 (Marquez Knolls, Bel Air Bay Club), Area 4 (El Medio

¹ Acting pursuant to PPCC’s Bylaws, Art. V, Sec. 3(B). The public comment period on the MND expires 03/09/16. PPCC’s next board meeting date is 03/10/16. For procedural reasons a board vote could not be taken on 02/25/16 on motions then agendized for the Palisades Village Project and MND.

Bluffs), Area 5 (Alphabet Streets), Area 6 (Via Mesa/Bluffs, Huntington), Area 7 (Santa Monica and Rustic Canyons), Area 8 (Riviera, Polo Fields), and PPCC's "At-Large" Representative.

2. A supermajority of PPCC primary organizational representatives (Pacific Palisades Chamber of Commerce, Temescal Canyon Association, Recreation/AYSO, Education/Village School, Civic Organizations/PRIDE, Service Clubs/Pacific Palisades Woman's Club and Cultural, Ethics and Aesthetics/Pacific Palisades Garden Club).
3. PPCC's Transportation Advisor, Patti Post.
4. All of PPCC's Officers.

Finally, Councilmember Mike Bonin reported that the Council Office has received overwhelming expressions of community support for the Palisades Village Project, as has PPCC's Executive Committee.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christina Spitz
President
Pacific Palisades Community Council

Encl.: Exhibits 1 (VPLUC Supplemental Report) and 2 (Summary Biographies)

cc (via email):

Hon. Mike Bonin, Councilmember, CD11

via email: mike.bonin@lacity.org

EXHIBIT 1 – VPLUC SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT 2/25/16

The Committee has previously reported its analysis of the applicant's submission. The Committee had indicated it was waiting for the applicant's traffic study to become available for review before it would be in position to recommend any action that the Board should take with respect to the Caruso Village Project.

Several weeks ago the Committee reported that the applicant, subsequent to its initial DRB hearing, had submitted revised plans reflecting changes in design or style and a withdrawal of its previous requests to deviate from Specific Plan setback requirements and Specific Plan height restrictions, in addition to removal of certain uses such as a Pilates studio, a reduction in the total amount of restaurant space and a removal of a request for shared parking plan.

On February 18 the City released its MND (mitigated negative declaration) that included the City's sign-off and approval of the applicant's traffic study. This traffic study concluded that there were no unmitigatable traffic impacts occasioned by the development. The Committee engaged the services of Patti Post, PPCC Transportation Advisor. She reviewed the MND as well as the underlying documents reviewed by LADOT and City Planning and found that the conclusions of the MND were substantiated.

It should be understood that the MND is not suggesting that there will be no increase in traffic but that the increase in traffic does not create, based on the standards that the City requires developers to comply with, any increase which cannot be mitigated.

As further due diligence, Ms. Post spoke with two separate community leaders who were initially opposed or skeptical of the impact of Caruso projects in their areas (Glendale and Thousand Oaks). She learned that although there were similar concerns to those which our community has voiced, the Caruso assertions proved to be correct. These community leaders were extremely satisfied with the Caruso team during construction and after opening. They were unanimous in their belief that since Caruso does not sell his properties that these properties are managed well for the long term.

Consequently, it is the Village Project Land Use Committee's opinion that the proposed project will on balance offer residents a thoughtfully and responsibly managed shopping, restaurant and theater district that will be approved and enjoyed by the vast majority of residents. In that regard we offer the three motions which are set forth in the 2/25/16 PPCC Board meeting agenda.

EXHIBIT 2 – SUMMARY BIOGRAPHIES OF VPLUC MEMBERS AND TRANSPORTATION ADVISOR

VPLUC Members

David Kaplan (Chair): Area 6 Alternate Representative. Retired attorney and former Town Counsel to numerous Massachusetts municipalities/colleges and universities; extensive land use experience in that capacity.

Sue Kohl: Area 5 Representative. Long-time residential real estate agent and assistant manager of the Berkshire Hathaway office in Pacific Palisades.

Rick Mills: Area 4 Representative. Former Planner for the City of Santa Monica, handling planning and land use matters. Masters degree in City Planning, U.C. Berkeley. Long-serving past Chair of the Pacific Palisades

Design Review Board. Real estate agent and condominium specialist with HomesUSA, Ltd. and the Law Offices of Paul DeSantis in Santa Monica.

Howard Robinson: Area 3 Alternate Representative. Professional land use consultant with more than 30 years of experience in real estate development, local government and the entitlement process. MBA degree (emphasis in Real Estate and Urban Land Economics), U.C. Berkeley. www.howardrobinson.net.

Cathy Russell: Area 7 Representative. Long-time residential real estate agent with Coldwell Banker in Pacific Palisades.

George Wolfberg: At-Large Representative. Retired City of Los Angeles official with extensive experience in local government process. Past PPCC President and Citizen of the Year. Chair of the Potrero Canyon Community Advisory Committee (PCCAC). Past member of PPCC's former Land Use Committee. Long-serving and current PPCC representative to the Westside Regional Alliance of Councils Land Use & Planning Committee (WRAC-LUPC).

Chris Spitz (ex officio/non-voting): PPCC President. Attorney specializing in business litigation. Past Chair of PPCC's former Land Use Committee. Member of the PCCAC. Past steering committee member, PlanCheckNCLA (educational organization that provides information about City Planning matters to interested community members Citywide). Member of WRAC leadership committee and PPCC Alternate representative to WRAC-LUPC.

PPCC Transportation Advisor Patti Post

PPCC Experience

- Voting member of the Board for 10 years as Area Alternate, Area Representative, Organizational Representative and Officer (Treasurer, 6 years)
- Transportation Advisor for about 10 years, alerting the Chair to transportation issues that could affect Palisadians and advising the Chair on transportation issues as requested

Professional Experience

- 30+ years as transportation planning consultant, specializing in public transportation planning and operations
- Transportation planning for the LA Olympics
- Planning and operations positions with the regional transit operator in Los Angeles County

Education

- B. A. from UCLA
- Master of City Planning (MCP) from Harvard University