



Pacific Palisades Community Council

June 27, 2024

Honorable Traci Park
Councilwoman, Los Angeles City Council District 11

Via email

Re: Hillside Construction Problems and Public Safety in Pacific Palisades

Dear Councilwoman Park:

As you know, recently Pacific Palisades experienced the impact of a landslide that deposited debris onto the Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) causing the closure of an entire lane and creating gridlock and traffic safety concerns for thousands of Angelenos who use this coastal artery as a means of getting in and out of LA City.

In the weeks that followed we were informed by Caltrans that they would not remedy the lane closure by clearing the debris. Rather they would repaint the lanes that direct the flow of traffic on PCH in order to restore two lanes travelling in each direction (encroaching on the shoulder where necessary), but they would not repair the road and clear the slide unless and until the underlying "Tramonto Slide" was stabilized by the City. This set PPCC, which represents many hillside residential areas with active landslides in their environs, on a task to learn how we can most urgently spur the stabilization of the hillside, and look again at the safety of largescale construction and development on historic landslide areas. See our [letter](#) asking City, County and State agencies to come together and ensure stabilization is done. We thank you for since introducing a [motion](#) to move this along.

Our LUC has now considered a set of guidelines that might be helpful in assessing the suitability of construction on landslides/landslide prone areas. We've learned that almost the entirety of the Palisades lies within the "landslide susceptibility zone" ([as defined by CA](#)) and that there's a rich history of landslides in the area (<https://pubs.usgs.gov/mf/0471/plate-1.pdf>). We are also mindful of the rights of property owners to develop their land. To strike a proper balance between protecting our landslide susceptible zones and preserving the private right to develop, we find that it would be inappropriate to require an additional layer of geological review by imposing a blanket rule for Environmental Impact Reports (EIR) in all cases where an application to build on a landslide area is requested. We believe, rather, that a case-by-case review can be merited. As a rule, the consensus was that large-scale development representing multiple projects on only a portion of a landslide area may give rise to review. *

We note that the following situations are often present in hillside development and pose special hazards. We ask the Council Office to ensure steps are taken to mitigate these hazards, with each project that:

- Fails to provide appropriate traffic control when hauling or receiving deliveries;
- Fails to sustain "passability" of streets prior to attempting deliveries of oversized construction equipment;

** We have reviewed the elements of discretionary review triggered by the HCR Ordinance, and we believe ¹ that if some of our hillside areas request that designation, they can be further assured of case-by-case project review, when appropriate. We note that one of our Areas may be requesting that designation in the near term, with a process expected to unfold which will include hearings and notice to all impacted.*

- Fails to offer worker parking, material storage and construction bins and trailers that narrow roads to a single lane of traffic;
- Habitually use cul-de-sacs for parking and storage of materials.

We ask that these problems are addressed by:

- 1) Implementing restrictions on issuance of haul route permits in hillside areas, such as
 - requiring phased hauling of multiple projects along a proposed haul route, so that hauling for projects within 1000 feet of existing projects along the same haul route would be delayed until hauling is completed on the existing project;
 - verifying actual width of continuously paved roadway before permit issuance;
 - requiring photographs to be taken of the condition of paved roadway before permit issuance;
 - limiting the number of haul route permits issued within a certain period of time for projects on streets using a single ingress and egress point;
 - requiring large equipment and vehicles (debris bins, trailers, cement mixers, etc.) to be placed on site whenever possible, and/or requiring permits issued by the Department of Public Works/Bureau of Street Services (BSS) for any such temporary placement in the public right of way;
 - requiring worker and construction vehicle parking on-site or on one side of the street only, whenever possible; and/or requiring worker shuttles;
 - requiring compliance with permitted construction/demolition hours;
 - requiring developer to assign flag persons to assist with pedestrian and vehicle traffic if temporary roadway blockage is unavoidable,
- 2) Requiring developer compliance, as a condition of building permit issuance, with all haul route permit conditions and with the “General Construction Requirements,” as set forth in the “Good Neighbor Construction Practices” chart issued by LADBS, LADOT & BSS: and further requiring developer to distribute copies of the “Good Neighbor Construction Practices” chart to all addresses along the haul route (see #1 above). See the chart at: https://www.ladbs.org/docs/default-source/publications/misc-publications/good-neighbor-construction-practices.pdf?sfvrsn=aa56eb53_5;
- 3) Implementing stronger penalties to ensure compliance with current regulations and deter future infractions (including possibly increasing penalties under the Administrative Citation Enforcement program, LAMC Section 11.2.01, *et seq.*)
- 4) Considering possible designation of certain Pacific Palisades hillside areas as “Hillside Construction Districts,” under the Hillside Construction Regulation (HCR) ordinance.

For convenience, we have included a list (non-comprehensive) of known landslides in Pacific Palisades which need city engineering attention before any largescale development can be allowed. We look forward to working with you and your staff to implement effective solutions as soon as possible.

Thank you as always for your consideration and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Maryam Zar
 PPCC President
 Christina Spitz and the PPCC LUC

cc (via email):

CD 11 staff: Jeff Khau, Planning Deputy; Juan Fregoso, District Director; Michael Amster, Palisades Deputy

Landslide Areas in 90272 - identified by PPCC
(Recent & historic slope failures/slippage – as of June 2024)

- Tramonto Slide (impacting Castellammare area residents, multiple streets including Revello where construction is currently proposed, and PCH – rerouting of lanes required)
- Paseo Miramar near Resolano Drive (prior unpermitted clearing and grading near landslide area with impacts on residents)
- El Oro Lane (street slope failure)
- Enchanted Way (at least three major slope failures)
- Vacant lot on Sunset, former site of Bernheimer Gardens (collapsed due to slope slippage)
- Las Lomas Avenue (recent slide damaging property below)
- Marquette St., near Las Casas/Grenola intersection (slippage on road which is not maintained by the City)
- Lower Las Pulgas Canyon, between Muskingum and Grenola (creeping slide)
- Asilomar Bluff Park (curb has visible fissures currently remedied by sandbags)
- Tahitian Terrace overhang (where rainwater runoff has posed problems for the bowl below, and needs a long-term, reliable remedy)
- Mt. Holyoke Avenue (hillside slippage)
- Via de Las Olas (fissured and historic slippage along the bluff, including massive 1958 slide that buried a Caltrans worker alive and caused rerouting of PCH; recent large slides in two areas; deteriorating bulkhead requires repair)
- Potrero Canyon (prior to regrading and fill: decades-old slides buried Sunspot Motel at mouth of the Canyon and caused collapse of homes on west rim)
- Will Rogers State Park Road (recent slippage has been remediated by clean-up and K-rails but needs a permanent fix)
- Sunset Blvd. between Amalfi Drive and Brooktree Road (slippage on slope, north side of Sunset/south of Ravoli).