



Building a Better Community

Attachment “E” for Board Meeting 10-27-2021

October XX, 2021

City Council
City of Los Angeles

Re: CF-21-0777; Rejection of application for General Plan update, 9712 Oak Pass Road, ENV-2018-1509-EIR

Honorable Members of the City Council

This letter is in opposition to the proposed commercial hotel project in Benedict Canyon (“The Retreat in Benedict Canyon”), recently affiliated with Bulgari Hotels, and officially referred to as 9712 Oak Pass Road.

This project is under the umbrella of the Bel Air-Beverly Crest Community Plan (“Community Plan”). The Community Plan was the result of countless hours of work on behalf of the community and the staff of the City, and that code required Findings for amendments to the General Plan and establishment of a Specific Plan as enumerated in the City Charter and Municipal Code cannot be made.

The Community Plan specifies minimal grading and requires a development plan that preserves the existing topography and natural resources. This proposed plan would require extensive grading and the removal of over 700 protected and significant trees. We are concerned that this plan would also create significant traffic, noise and other issues for the community, including but not limited to increased fire danger in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. Most importantly, the developer’s effort to circumvent the zoning, grading and construction restrictions imposed by the current residential zoning, Baseline Hillside Ordinance and Overlay

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Bel Air Association
Bel Air Crest Master Association
Bel Air Hills Association
Bel Air Ridge Association
Benedict Canyon Association
Casiano Estates Association
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Holmby Hills Homeowners Association
Laurel Canyon Association
Residents of Beverly Glen

RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

Bel Air District
Bel Air Glen District
Franklin-Coldwater District
North of Sunset District

NON-RESIDENTIAL REPRESENTATION

At-Large Members
Commercial or Office Enterprise Districts
Custodians of Open Space
Faith-Based Institutions
Public Schools & Private Schools

District through the use of a so-called Specific Plan, is not only contrary to established policies and good zoning practices, it would also establish an irreversible precedent for future commercial development of the Santa Monica Mountains.

The “lynchpin” required to make the Findings is repeatedly stated that action by the city for any amendment and specific plan shall and must; be good zoning practice; in conformity with the public interest, necessity, convenience, and welfare; compatibility with surrounding neighborhood; and appropriate development in harmony with the objectives of the General Plan. Additionally, given such code provisions (and other related procedural code sections), the city is not compelled to proceed with the Project, and in regard with proceeding to an EIR is both counterintuitive and putting the “cart before the horse”.

We stand with our Councilmember in his clear objection to the proposed commercial project that will set a dangerous precedent creating a template for converting natural hillsides and residential areas to hotel and other commercial uses. This outrageous proposed General Plan Amendment and Zoning Change would have a profound impact on the community, the environment, and the character of this residential area forever. The hotel project with its years of construction, commercial usage, round-the-clock staff and events, would have extraordinary environmental impacts such as traffic congestion, noise, grading, removal of protected trees, devastation of wildlife corridors, along with significant impact of a project of this scale on fire safety.

A Motion was recently submitted to the City Council by Councilmembers Paul Koretz, and seconded by Bob Blumenfield in opposition to this project, which has been sent to the PLUM Committee. Every major environmental organization in the region opposes the project. For all of these reasons, the Bel Air Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council and our community vehemently oppose the project. We urge the Planning Department to reject the developer’s application for a General Plan Amendment without further requiring the community and City staff to expend time, effort and money to resist this project.

Since Bulgari entered the picture, this does not seem to be a project for the betterment of the community as they claim. It has turned into a full-blown hotel project, and eventually if they are successful, they could come back with a greater expansion of the hotel and minimize or disregard the private estates.

Sincerely,

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