



Catherine Palmer <council@babcnc.org>

Opposition to Bel Air Glen Vacation and Gating Project

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To: Travis Longcore <tlongcore@babcnc.org>, rschlesinger@babcnc.org, Catherine Palmer <council@babcnc.org>

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July 21, 2022

Dear President Travis Longcore, Planning and Land Use Committee Chair Schlesinger, and Members of the Bel Air Beverly Glen Neighborhood Council:

Thank you for all that you do for the Bel Air Beverly Crest Neighborhood. I appreciate all the time and energy you spend on representing the hillsides' interests and making our voices heard in local government.

I am writing to express my strong, continuing opposition to Bel Air Glen's proposed vacation and gating project (Project: VAC-E1401394). I am a member of the Bel Air Ridge (BAR) Board of Directors but am writing to you as an individual resident of BAR.

I've summarized a few, major reasons why I oppose the project:

1. There is no current, valid evidence that cut-through traffic is a significant problem for Bel Air Glen (BAG) during afternoon commute hours (3 or 4pm-6pm). The traffic study that BAG conducted was pre-COVID, and the methodology was flawed, in that car pools with BAG families, child drop off or pick-up, and deliveries, etc, would have been incorrectly counted as cut-through traffic. One set of videos of Woodwardia traffic on an atypical stormy day does not represent typical conditions. There is at least equal observational and video evidence that cut-through traffic is not currently a problem during afternoon and evening commute hours.
2. Privatizing public streets is a radical option. Privatizing public streets and restricting public access to existing city sidewalks in the Mulholland Scenic Parkway as well as restricting Bel Air Ridge residents, their family and friends to BAR facilities should not be permitted – or at least should be a last resort, not a first one. BAG has not attempted any other solutions to limit traffic and reduce speeding that have worked in other areas of the city, – for example, no-turn signs with intermittent enforcement, speed bumps, and other available traffic calming tools. BAG has not worked with the city to find other available options. The most recent BAG proposal does not seriously consider implementing reasonable alternatives nor include plausible criteria for determining their success or failure.
3. Moreover, a BAG-only solution will have negative consequences for the rest of the Beverly Glen neighborhoods – BAR, Colina Glen, Residents of Beverly Glen, other residents of the area. The current BAG-only proposed solution is likely to cause additional rush-hour traffic backup on Beverly Glen, more traffic on Nicada, Windtree,

Briarwood, and other BAR streets, increased travel time and distance for delivery and service providers, and also will negatively affect access and ambiance of the surrounding community.

4. BAG's proposal to privatize Woodwardia and its portion of Angelo Drive is opposed by the vast majority of residents of BAR's 377 homes, and it is clear that the plan does not have the full support of the BAG community. BAG's recent polling procedures appeared flawed and conducted in the absence of giving BAG owners critical data on costs or even a stable plan to evaluate. It seems difficult to make a serious decision on the matter of privatization and gating in the absence of critical evidence.

5. BAG's application for privatizing its streets includes a gating plan that seems to be a moving target. Will there be a gate at Angelo and Beverly Glen? Will that gate be exit only? How will any gate at that location be accomplished without resulting in backup on Beverly Glen and potentially dangerous left turns from Beverly Glen onto Angelo? Will the gates be staffed? How will remote operators be able to immediately fix equipment malfunctions? The answer seems to vary, depending on the context. Will all of BAR be given gate access devices or codes? How will BAG or BAR guests, delivery people and service providers gain access? Will this access be free in perpetuity? Again, the answer seems to vary, and there are many important components yet to be worked out. Certainly, the plan that was submitted in BAG's application is no longer accurate. It would seem premature, then, at this point to consider BAG's application.

6. Inaccuracies in BAG's initial application also give pause: Section II of its Environmental Assessment Form contains a number of incorrect answers:

- Question #3: "Could the project result in annoyance to community residents." BAG responded "no," but the answer is, without question, "yes." The many complaints I believe you have received about this issue underscore the inaccuracy.
- Question #6: "Could the project cause increased traffic congestion through a residential neighborhood, or cause increased street parking or loading? Could the project cause increased congestion in the use of other facilities ...?" The answer given was "no," but should be "yes." BAG's plan will cause traffic backup on Beverly Glen with the time needed for gates opening and closing and particularly when gates malfunction, as they inevitably will. It is also the case that BAG's plan will cause excess traffic on BAR's Angelo and Briarwood sections, both if this is the only route to our east side facilities and when drivers looking for a throughway are stopped at the south Angelo gate, where they would be forced to make a U turn on a narrow residential street and return to Beverly Glen, effectively doubling the amount of excess traffic on the south portion of Angelo and Briarwood through BAR.
- Question #8: "Could existing ambient noise levels be increased by the project. " Again, the answer given was "no," but should be "yes."· Conceding that BAG residents will quickly pass through the gates with electronic access, those without such access will need to queue at the gate, waiting for it to be opened. This would include traditionally noisy delivery vehicles (Amazon, UPS,

FedEx, USPS, etc.), household employees, construction vehicles, etc., all of which make significant noise and have tailpipe emissions.

· Question #11: "Could the project change or affect the continued use or enjoyment of a natural, ecological, recreational or scenic area or resource?" BAG responded "no," but the answer should really be "yes." The northernmost two proposed gates are in the outer corridor of the "Mulholland Scenic Parkway." Prohibiting public access to existing city sidewalks in the Mulholland Scenic Parkway should not be allowed.

· Question #26: "Could the project generate a controversy or result in public objections?" As with Question #3 above, the answer given was "no," but certainly the answer is clearly "yes." You've heard outcry and objections from many of us. It is not only BAR residents who will be affected but virtually all residents on and north of Briarwood Drive and west and east of Beverly Glen and all along Beverly Glen in Los Angeles 90077.

The environmental impact of this plan clearly needs thorough study.

Privatizing public streets is bad public policy, particularly in the absence of evidence of need, before trying other available traffic calming measures and without adequately studying environmental and other consequences. I urge you to recommend that BAG's application be rejected.

Thank you for your consideration, and again, thank you for all your time and effort on behalf of the Bel Air-Beverly Crest neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

Joan Herman

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