



Catherine Palmer &lt;council@babnc.org&gt;

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**Fwd: Bel Air Glen Street Privatization and Gating Proposal**

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**Travis Longcore** <tlongcore@babnc.org>  
To: Catherine Palmer <council@babnc.org>

Wed, Aug 24, 2022 at 2:56 PM

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "David E. Van Iderstine" <davidvaniderstine@sbcglobal.net>  
**Subject:** **Bel Air Glen Street Privatization and Gating Proposal**  
**Date:** August 24, 2022 at 2:40:11 PM PDT  
**To:** Travis Longcore <tlongcore@babnc.org>

Dear Mr. Longcore,

While I thought I had submitted everything I reasonably could, or that I could reasonably expect the BABNC to read, in connection with the Bel Air Glen HOA (BAG) proposal to privatize portions of Woodwardia, Nicada and Angelo Drive, the latest last-minute submission by counsel for BAG unfortunately calls for additional response.

Premised almost entirely on hearsay, counsel's letter contains unsupported allegations of fact and law, out-of-date information, and hyperbolic verbiage that all but directly claims the BABNC will have children's blood on its hands unless it votes to support the project. BABNC should accept none of this.

1. CEQA -- If any competent city authority has informed BAG that the privatization and gating plan does not rise to the level of being a "project" for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act ("projects" require a CEQA process), BAG must submit evidence of that determination **in writing**. If any competent city authority has informed BAG that although the proposal does constitute a CEQA-cognizable project, but nevertheless enjoys some exemption from the process, BAG must submit evidence of that determination **in writing**. Counsel's hearsay assertion of what unnamed Building and Safety Department staff "sees" as being the CEQA status of this project should not be accepted as any basis for BABNC action.

2. Traffic -- The figure offered as evidence of the severity of alleged cut-through traffic (PowerPoint p. 3), seems to be taken from the 2019 (pre-Covid) traffic study. That study is no longer relevant.

3. Gating Will Make Traffic Worse and Will Be Unsafe -- It is inconceivable that a two-way gate at Angelo and Beverly Glen can operate safely. There is barely enough room for a single car to come to a stop on Angelo before the corner at Woodwardia, where the entry gate would have to be set. The curb, by the way, is all red there. Cars coming north on Beverly Glen would stack up (if not run into each other) as each one in turn came to a stop to open the gate. There is absolutely no room for a car that makes a mistake to back out or turn around. Southbound traffic waiting to turn from Beverly Glen across the northbound lanes to reach the gate on Angelo would likewise stack up.

There would be a "fight" for a place in line -- but wait, there is no room for a "line" -- at the gate, and there is no way to manage or enforce an alternate merge to the gate.

Recall that the original plan called for the gate to be exit only, which is the only safe way to manage the intersection. If that were to return to being the case, all the traffic that has legitimate cause to enter Bel Air Glen, and would today do so on Angelo, would be required to do so at Nicada. There is barely more room on the narrow slice of Nicada between Beverly Glen and Woodwardia, and so a massive pileup there can be anticipated. Similarly, there appears to be no way to design the entry so as to allow for mistaken drivers to back up or turn around. Moreover, the BAG residents on Woodwardia would trade Monday-Friday rush-hour cut-through traffic for all-day, every day traffic by resident and invited vehicles.

4. Cut-Through Traffic Is An Issue, If At All, Only for the Woodwardia Area -- It is no mere coincidence that the 2017 BAG board that first advanced this plan comprised three members who lived on Woodwardia between Nicada and Angelo, while a fourth lived on a Woodwardia feeder street. Similarly, it is no mere coincidence that three current members live on affected Woodwardia and both of the other two on feeder streets. To the extent the plan is for the purpose of eliminating cut-through traffic, the genius of the plan is that it socializes to all 220 BAG homes the million-dollar-plus up-front cost and the ongoing costs as well.

4. Waze and Other Mapping Apps -- Counsel has previously claimed Waze has refused to assist in this matter. No letter or email from Waze has been offered to substantiate this claim. We have no competent evidence of what the specific request made to Waze was, and no competent evidence of what the response was. Though in his live presentation to the PLU meeting counsel used a verb such as "eliminate" or "remove" BAG streets from the apps to describe the ask, if that was the request, it should not have been. The request should have been to tweak the Waze programming so as not to display a cut-through route on Woodwardia on what assumedly is a trip over the hill into the San Fernando Valley. (Recall that BAG expressed concern that removing BAG streets would prevent invitees from finding the addresses they were legitimately looking for. While "removal" or "elimination" of all BAG streets might have that effect, there would be no need to make so broad a request if elimination of cut-through traffic was all that was (and should have been) sought.)

5. Internal BAG Support for the Proposal -- As has been noted, and as the actual "ballot" the BAG board submitted to homeowners shows, BAG asked homeowners in 2017 if they would support gates for the three purposes of (1) reducing traffic, (2) reducing crime and (3) increasing property values. This mom-and-apple-pie ballot did not follow the circulation of any project plan, any budget or any statement of the going-forward financial impact (increased insurance, maintenance costs, dues, etc.) if the project were undertaken. Certainly there were no pre-vote workshops at which questions could be asked and answered (or dodged). The ballot appealed to ignorance and financial self-interest. The 2017 vote is therefore all but meaningless.

Similarly, the October 2021 open house -- at which "Yes" ballots were made available, but no "No" ballots -- is similarly useless.

6. Bel Air Ridge Opposition -- To the extent the 2021 Open House was attended by Bel Air Ridge residents, however, it was useful in that it made clear that BAG had either never asked Bel Air Ridge for an informed position on the proposal, or had ignored its stated opposition. Even BAG's claim in the PowerPoint that Bel Air Ridge has "declined" to discuss the project -- from the PowerPoint it appears that even BAG only

claims one 2018 refusal -- is very vague and should not be taken at face value. Did this happen only once? To whom at Bel Air Ridge did BAG reach out? The full board, its president, the relevant committee? Is there an email or letter reflecting the outreach? Had Bel Air not already informed BAG of its opposition? If so, was Bel Air Ridge required to repeat that opposition?

BAG appears to believe that Bel Air Ridge's position is irrelevant -- and therefore why spend much time on them? -- or that it is BAG that will decide both the merits of that opposition and the sufficiency of BAG's own proposed mitigation. Where does BAG get off presuming to tell a neighboring HOA what its residents and their invitees and service providers must accept or put up with to traverse a city street?

7. BAG's Proposed Modification -- I will not here repeat the points I expressed in writing on BAG's previous last-minute filing, the one proposing a modification -- signage, a six-month deadline and a one-week, zero-tolerance traffic study -- to the proposal. That was an inadequate, doomed-to-fail and intended-to-fail idea, proposed in bad faith at the last minute and easily seen through.

Conclusion -- Each of us can sympathize with the frustration of having to wait, even occasionally, for the ability to back out of a driveway. Each of us has been angered and even frightened by a car that has driven too fast through a residential neighborhood. And each of us would feel horrible if a child living on Woodwardia, permitted to play unsupervised and presumably not old enough to be aware of safe behavior, were injured or worse by a cut-through driver. The costs and negative consequences of this project, however, are not an appropriate answer to those concerns.

At the end of the day, there is also the social-political issue of whether this neighborhood council wants to be on the side of helping to increase the already-high property values in Bel Air Glen at all, much less if doing so can only be achieved at the cost of increased traffic, increased inconvenience to nonresidents and the unnecessarily-increased resentment of at least as many Angelenos as it makes happy.

I strongly urge the full BABCNC to affirm the vote of its Planning and Land Use Committee that itself affirmed its Task Force recommendation to **oppose** this project.

David E. Van Iderstine