



Catherine Palmer <council@babnc.org>

Opposition to Education First's Proposal

Marlene H <marlenehca@gmail.com>

Mon, Apr 10, 2023 at 8:21 AM

Bcc: Council@babnc.org

April 10, 2023

Dear Members of the Land Use Committee of Bel-Air Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council,

Bel Air Park is our home. What binds all of us is our deep understanding and awareness of the risk to life and property from the far too frequent wildfires. In late 2017, our community was forced to evacuate, more correctly flee, our homes as the fast-moving fires raced up the Sepulveda corridor. What we were reminded of and quite evident was how approximately 500 residents trying to escape a single-lane road onto an already congested major thoroughfare, Mulholland Drive, was a daunting task.

My serious concern now is how the expansion of a school that for a half-century had typically housed only several hundred to grow to 3-4x the size of our existing neighborhood, exposes the broader neighborhood and their very own students to an even greater risk of harm. If a fire broke out at 2am on one of the hillsides and the community only had minutes to evacuate, adding 1,000 students **and** faculty/services with the existing infrastructure from 50 years ago would result in an even more difficult transition to safety than we faced five years ago. Additional roads and exits are not planned and the school only plans to add to the congestion at our neighborhood's only (single-lane) entrance and exit. I also think people forget that Bel Air Crest AND Mountaingate have potential evacuation on Casiano Road. That would be thousands of people trying to get out of a one-lane road! In 2017, when the Skirball Fire happened, there was a house fire on Casiano Road a day or so later. Residents in the back of our community were temporarily trapped as the Bel Air Crest gate was not immediately opened. The panic that ensued was something to be seen. If just 60 homes were panicking (including erratic driving), image what it would be like with many more homes.

I ask that this committee consider the safety of our longstanding community, the lives of the students on campus, and the broader Mulholland area when considering whether this plan, as currently proposed, aids the safety of the community in times of fire danger, or more clearly, adds further obstacles to evacuations, first responders and a greater chance of loss of life.

I respectfully request the Land Use Committee deny the current proposal for the elevated number of students to ensure the safety of all. We are not opposed to EF coming here, we are gravely concerned for the safety of residents in the areas. The city would have a hard financial time if hundreds of homes in Bel Air burned and potentially lives could be lost because escape on a one-lane road is impossible when thousands of people are affected. EF's ability to make money is not more important than our lives, our safety, and our homes.

Sincerely,

Marlene Hakakha

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Bel Air Park Resident