



Catherine Palmer <council@babnc.org>

Opposition to EF's Proposal

Sandy Ryan <jsryan04@gmail.com>

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To: katy.yaroslavsky@lacity.org, jarrett.thompson@lacity.org, dylan.sittig@lacity.org, gary.gero@lacity.org, rschlesinger@babnc.org, tlongcore@babnc.org, rgreenberg@babnc.org, jhall@babnc.org, vlevotman@babnc.org, nminer@babnc.org, abarondes@babnc.org, sbayliss@babnc.org, bcobb@babnc.org, eevans@babnc.org, mgoodman@babnc.org, sgrey@babnc.org, dkadin@babnc.org, bkwan@babnc.org, kholmes@babnc.org, mlevinson@babnc.org, dloze@babnc.org, apaden@babnc.org, dpalmer@babnc.org, isandler@babnc.org, jspradlin@babnc.org, gsroloff@babnc.org, mmann@babnc.org, pmurphy@babnc.org, sprothro@babnc.org, rringler@babnc.org, ssavage@babnc.org, tsteele@babnc.org, astojka@babnc.org, ptempleton@babnc.org, cwayne@babnc.org, sweinberg@babnc.org, lweisberg@babnc.org, jwimbish@babnc.org, council@babnc.org, PLU@babnc.org

Committee Members -

I grew up in a suburb of Los Angeles, not very different from most of the small communities dotting both sides of the Mulholland corridor where my family and I now live. My wife and I spent our 20's and 30's living in Santa Monica and Brentwood before starting a family and buying our first home in 2021. We chose this neighborhood for its great public schools, community involvement (which all of you have sacrificed to be a part of) and safety. That safety is tantamount in our decision to choose this area vs. a variety of others in West Los Angeles. That safety was evident in the way the two existing schools (Stephen Wise & AJU) operated when we moved in. The proposed plan to move from a not for profit model tenant to one that seeks to optimize dollars by enrolling as many students as possible greatly concerns myself, my wife and what it could mean to our children.

One thing that is clear for my neighbors and I who have lived in Los Angeles for more than a few years is our deep understanding and awareness of the risk to life and property from the far too frequent wildfires. In late 2018, 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 and already congested major thoroughfare, Mulholland Drive, was a daunting task. My grave 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 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.

This is not a case of "NIMBY" (Not in my backyard). I recognize the value of the real estate and the benefits it can serve students but as someone who works in finance and understands a business model, the goal in EF's plan is not to provide what's best to all of our neighborhoods, it's to optimize earnings and generate the highest possible ROI/dollars. To do this, the easiest lever to pull is student enrollment and putting as many students as possible on the campus. Consider the stress on what could happen during the next wildfire and put the safety of those of us who call this area home as your top priority. Thank you for taking the time to volunteer and work for our community, it's why you dedicate your time to this board. You wouldn't be doing this if you didn't care.

Regards,

Sandy & Pamela Ryan