

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

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February 28, 2005

Jimmy C. Liao, City Planner
Environmental Review Section
Department of City Planning
200 North Spring Street, Room 750
Los Angeles, California 90012

Notice of Preparation Comments
The Buckley School Campus Enhancement Plan - ENV-2004-7171 EIR

Dear Mr. Liao:

The Notice of Preparation correctly states the Conservancy staff is exploring an agreement to exchange easements with The Buckley School. The maximum size of any easement provided to the school on the Conservancy's Fossil Ridge park will likely be much smaller than the 4.85 acres in the project description. The boundary of any such easement over public land will maximize resource protection and provide a minimum buffer to the campus. The only disturbance contemplated on existing parkland is that associated with converting the present court area to a swimming facility. The remainder of any other private easement area in Fossil Ridge park would be completely free of all structures, lighting, fencing, vegetation or drainage disturbance. The DEIR should make clear what uses and exclusive requirements the school would propose to retain in any easement area provided by the Conservancy.

The 12.6-acre easement proposed to be given to the Conservancy is over a parcel that has long been sought for public acquisition. It offers superior public access that in turn will significantly improve public access to Fossil Ridge park. The reason the Conservancy is requesting an interest in an easement, as opposed to fee title, is the considerable annual fuel modification required on the property. The Buckley School would retain that obligation in perpetuity.

The DEIR should address the potential impacts of public use on the 12.6-acre easement area. Such analysis should include the two legal street access points of the 12.6-acre parcel. The DEIR should also address the schools' existing and proposed use of the 12.6 acre parcel and any portion of Fossil Ridge park for trail, recreation and educational purposes.

The DEIR should include mitigation measures that prohibit night lighting of the entire athletic complex in order to minimize disruption of wildlife. This agency urges the school to consider restrictions to permanently maintain native habitat and plant communities on

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portions of its property that would not be subject to any further disturbance after the proposed improvements are complete. All efforts should be made to retain native California black walnut trees and to maximize the planting of native perennial bunch grasses on hillsides, both disturbed and undisturbed. Any such habitat enhancement efforts on the school's property would benefit the local ecosystem.

Please address any comments to Paul Edelman of our staff at (310) 589-3200 ext. 128

Sincerely,

ELIZABETH A. CHEADLE
Chairperson