



September 10, 2007

President Eric Garcetti
Honorable Members of the Los Angeles City Council
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Re: Motion Regarding Tract 35022 on Elephant Hill in El Sereno (File #: 04-1413)

Dear President Garcetti and Honorable Councilmembers:

We urge the Los Angeles City Council to support the motion recently introduced by Councilmember Jose Huizar (CD 14) regarding Tract 35022 (File # 04-1413). This motion asserts jurisdiction over the August 8, 2007 action of the Board of Public Works (BPW) to approve the building permit, final parcel map and other ministerial permits associated with the Tract 35022. This project, also known as the Pueblo Avenue Subdivision, is a controversial development of 24 luxury homes on Elephant Hill in El Sereno. Please stay for the full City Council vote on Tuesday, September 11, 2007 in order to consider this motion.

The Los Angeles Times recently reported on the disparities in access to parkland based on City Council Districts:

Los Angeles parkland

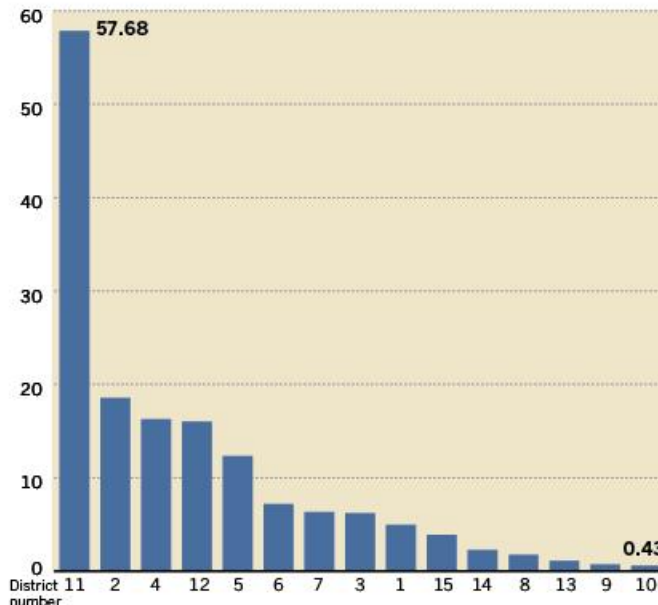
The amount of park acreage available to L.A. residents varies widely from one part of the city to another. Nationally, some park planners recommend six to 10 acres of parks per 1,000 residents.

City Council districts



Note: Includes city parks, Angeles National Forest and Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

Acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, by council district



Source: The City Project: "Healthy Parks, Schools and Communities," 2006

Los Angeles Times

Deborah Schoch, *How Can L.A. Create Better Places To Play?*, L.A. Times, June 1, 2007.

The *Los Angeles Times* in an Editorial has emphasized the unfair disparities in land use and planning for Northeast Los Angeles, including El Sereno and Glassell Park. According to the *Times*, it is necessary to protect the quality of life in Northeast Los Angeles by providing access to public parks and preserving ridgeline views, the same way the Mulholland Specific Plan and the Brentwood hills do on the Westside. Preserving Northeast Los Angeles Open Space creates a woody feel in the midst of the city, open space and priceless views not just for the people who live there but for all Eastside Angelenos who want to take a hike or drive into the hills. Los Angeles Times Editorial, *The Value of Property*, March 11, 2006.

City Council District 14, where the proposed Elephant Hill luxury housing project is located, has only 2.12 total acres of parks per thousand residents, compared to 57.68 acres in City Council District 11. The population of City Council District 14 is disproportionately Latino and low income. Children of color living in poverty with no access to a car have the worst access to parks and school fields, and suffer from the highest levels of child obesity in the Los Angeles region. Robert García and Aubrey White, *Healthy Parks, Schools, and Communities: Mapping Green Access and Equity for the Los Angeles Region* 8-10, Map 801, Chart 801N (The City Project Policy Report 2006). The legal and policy justifications for equal access to parks and recreation for Los Angeles are analyzed in that Policy Report. *Id.* at 21-22; 1-6, 8-21, 22-24; which we fully incorporate by reference here. We urge you to protect the people and the environment through compliance with environmental and civil rights laws. SEE, e.g. California Government code section 11135 and the California statutory definition of environmental justice.

Los Angeles City Controller Laura Chick has published an audit documenting the unfair disparities in access to parks and recreation in Los Angeles, and calling for a strategic plan and community needs assessment to improve access to parks in every neighborhood. Northeast Los Angeles Open Space, including this Tract in Elephant Hill, should be included in the community needs assessment and strategic plan. The Controller's audit is available online at [www.cityprojectca.org/blog/archives/255](http://www.cityprojectca.org/blog/archives/255).

Anahuak Youth Association and The City Project has long advocated for a collective vision for a comprehensive and coherent web of parks, schools, beaches, forests, and transportation that promotes human health, a better environment, and economic vitality for all, and reflects the cultural diversity of Los Angeles. Proper planning for Northeast Los Angeles Open Space, including adoption of councilmember Huizar's motion, is necessary to help make this vision a reality.

We urge you to support councilmember Huizar's motion in order to achieve healthy, livable communities for all.

Honorable City Council Members  
September 10, 2007  
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Sincerely,

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Anahuak Youth Association

Robert García  
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The City Project

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The City Project