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January 6, 2012

Honorable Antonio R. Villaraigosa  
Mayor, City of Los Angeles

Dear Mayor Villaraigosa:

I am a Los Angeles resident; I live in the Hollywood Hills. I am writing you to express my view of what the Times refers to as the Hollywood Community Plan. My view is simple. I think we should fix what we have before adding tall structures and increasing the population.

The streets where I live are in terrible condition and few in the city seem to care. These 2 photos show a hole in the street a few blocks from my home. The hole is 6 & 1/2 inches



deep. It is located on a curve in an intersection of several streets and is difficult to see. Hitting it could damage a car and injure the car's occupants. A bicyclist would probably fare worse. I have not previously reported this to the streets bureau because that does not seem to do much good.

About a year ago there was a similar problem in the street on a steep hill even closer to my home. On that occasion I called the city phone number supposedly dedicated to pothole issues and reported the hole. As I recall, it too was 6 or 7 inches deep and I pointed that out to the operator who took my call. When I called again to follow up several days later I was told no action had been taken; no one had even come to look at the hole. During this call I emphasized that I thought the situation presented a danger and that if the city was not going to promptly repair the street they should put up signs warning of the dangerous condition. Again, nothing was done.

I next called my councilman's office and was eventually put in contact with the field representative for my area. I explained the situation to that individual and she told me she would take a look in a few days when she was in the area. When I asked her to tell me when she would be coming so I could meet her and show her what I was talking about she declined. Her boss, the councilman, did agree to meet me a short time later. It may be that his interest in my street problem was connected to the fact that I was also persistently requesting information from his office detailing his spending of discretionary funds. In any event he came, he saw the dangerous street condition, within hours yellow sawhorses warned drivers of the situation and before long the street was patched.

In my view, a city is grossly dysfunctional when it takes the personal involvement of an elected city councilman to fix a dangerous pothole. It is ridiculous to be discussing building skyscrapers when this city cannot provide basic services in a rational manner. If you want to get a clear sense of why local residents are not enamored with the Hollywood Community Plan come and take a close-up look at these streets. While you are here I promise I will listen attentively while you explain your concept of "elegant density."

The general condition of many of the streets in my neighborhood is terrible. Our streets are concrete and therefore more expensive to repair. That is no excuse for allowing dangerous conditions to exist. Presumably, once repaired, these concrete streets will last longer than asphalt streets. Whether they last long enough to be cost effective I cannot say. It seems to me it is the city's job to figure out what material is more cost effective. Once that has been determined these streets should be put into a decent condition which is safe to drive, ride a bike or walk upon, using whatever material is best suited to the purpose.

If the city is unwilling to fix these streets then it should impose a moratorium on building in the hills as these streets cannot tolerate additional traffic. Further, large trucks must be kept off these streets to prevent further damage. It might be fruitful for the city to contact one of our local universities to see if someone in their chemistry or a related department can suggest better ways or better and stronger materials for repairing the streets we have. Consistently patching concrete streets with asphalt does not produce a lasting solution where the streets are subject to the effects of rushing water in rainy season.

The final photos are of a street sign at the intersection that has the 6 & 1/2 inch hole and a shot in front of my house showing the general street condition. I suspect the streets do not look like this in Windsor Square.



I would be happy to show you or someone on your staff the condition of our streets and provide some ideas of what should be done to improve this part of the community. I would like to think that as a resident and voter my opinions would be as important to the city as the opinions of developers who hope to profit financially from what they build. If you and other city leaders continue to ignore our streets you can reasonably expect us to continue to be unimpressed by your development plans.

Yours truly,

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John A. Brock

C: Richard Platkin  
Councilman Eric Garcetti  
Councilman Tom Labonge  
Jim Newton  
Steve Lopez  
Nazario Saucedo, Interim Director, Bureau of Street Services