

**SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY**

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October 24, 2016

City Clerk  
City Hall – Room 395  
Planning and Land Use Committee  
200 North Spring Street  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Date 10/25/16  
Submitted by PLUM Commission  
Case No. 16-1112, 16-1113  
Serial No. 9+10  
City

Attention: Sharon Dickinson, Legislative Assistant

**Need for Public Open Space and Access**  
**VTT-73714-SL-1A and VTT-73814-SL-1A**  
**CF Nos. 16-1113 and CF-1112**  
**Mitigated Negative Declaration ENV-2015-4679-MND**

Hon. Chairperson Huizar and Committee Members:

The Los Angeles River and its tributaries are part of the Public Trust and Commons. It behooves City officials to maximize public benefit and amenities along this network of channels at every opportunity. Unfortunately, river-adjacent public open space and parkland is almost non-existent upstream of Sepulveda Basin. Undeveloped river-adjacent land is equally scarce which leaves a minute set of options for realizing any additional such parkland. Alternatively, it is almost \$3 million-per-acre to buy developed riverfront land for public parkland.

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) is compelled to appeal the two City Planning Commission decisions because they provide no new public open space in conjunction with a 1,200 percent zoning density increase.

This is no ordinary proposed small lot subdivision. The proposed 49 homes on an iconic west San Fernando Valley field abutting the Bell Creek channel arise from a 1,200 percent increasing in zoning density. The nexus and proportion to require just 10,000-square-feet of public parkland along the river in a 200,000-square-foot property (both tracts) is indisputable. The City just needs the vision, will, and courage to require such a dedication of parkland to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority or any other qualified agency.

Planning and Land Use Management Committee  
VTT-73714-SL-1A and VTT-73814-SL-1A  
October 24, 2016  
Page 2

How can the public have faith in the Los Angeles River planning approval process if a 1,200 percent density increase on the last private riverside open space lots yield no permanent public open space along the river?

The Conservancy implores you to recognize this imbalance and potentially tragic missed opportunity for permanent public benefit. The developer is not entitled to a 1,200 percent density increase. If the project is required to offer to dedicate 10,000-square-feet of riverfront land to a public agency that would still leave 47 large single-family homes to provide additional housing and economic stimulus.

This requested minimum 10,000 square feet of riverside public open space can be achieved without changing the lot configuration of the tract maps. The Conservancy's two appeals can be granted, in part, to require the riverside open space dedication as best suits the developer. The 10,000 square feet of public land will have optimal public access with adjacent street parking. The riverfront park will be complemented by the City's temporary allowance of some Woodlake Avenue street right-of-way to be parkland.

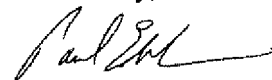
The Conservancy's request is two convert the two conditioned private HOA lots into public ownership and to add additional lots as necessary to achieve a minimum total of 10,000 square feet of public fee simple ownership along the river.

Private open space is not public parkland. Private land cannot provide the guarantee of either for public enjoyment or habitat resource protection, in perpetuity.

The requirement for 10,000 square feet of riverfront public parkland should also be augmented to require a decorative seven-foot-tall wrought iron fence to gate the parkland at night. Such fencing will benefit the tract residents and reduce operations costs for the public entity managing the land.

We appreciate your consideration of this appeal request to achieve a riverfront park at no public expense.

Sincerely,



PAUL EDELMAN  
Deputy Director  
Natural Resources and Planning

Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy  
October 17, 2016  
Council File Nos. 16-1112, 16-1113

# Zoned for only 4 homes Approved for 49 homes

Only 1200 feet from West Hills Hospital complex -  
key public amenity should be secured for this valley resource

## Is this how little a developer has to give back to the public for a 1,200 percent upzoning along an LA River tributary?

The best natural land on floor of the West San Fernando Valley  
and the public gets no new open space?

Public access and open space is just a paper street  
already owned by the City.  
All open space (2 small lots) is reserved for private HOA

Require a minimum of 10,000 square feet of  
public open space along the Bell Creek Channel

Dedicate to Mountains Recreation  
Conservation Authority

HOA open space  
as approved by CPC  
(No public access)

10,000 square feet of  
public open space along the Bell Creek Channel.

Dedicate to Mountains Recreation  
Conservation Authority

HOA open space  
as approved by CPC  
(No public access)

Preferred  
cul-de-sac  
footprint

Public street parking for riverfront park

SHERMAN WAY

← Bell Creek Future River Left Trail →

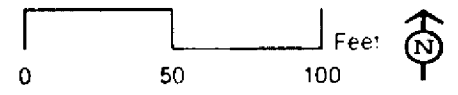
BELL CREEK CHANNEL

← Bell Creek Future River Right Trail →

(Existing Area is Already a Public Street)  
Would be Only Public Open Space as Proposed.

End of Woodlake Ave →

Subject Tracts  
Public Land



Historic Lederer Ranch - Bell Creek Property

# Simi Hills-Central Bell Creek Project Plan

## Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy

### Plan Area Update (July 2008 aerial)

APNs 2024-024-023, 2024-016-026 3.55 acres  
(shown prior to developed 18-home subdivision)  
3/2006 aerial

MRCA open space dedication  
APN 2042-024-901  
0.37 acres






Example of subdivision providing  
MRCA dedicated open space lot  
for future Bell Creek Greenway

VTT 73714-SL  
Subject CPC 36-Unit  
Tract Map Area

VTT 73814-SL-1A  
Subject CPC 15-Unit  
Tract Map Area

Council File Nos. 16-1112, 16-1113  
[Submitted by Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, October 25, 2016]  
Simi Hills - Central Bell Creek Project Plan  
Adopted by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy  
January 2004  
(Includes Lederer Ranch Riverfront Property)

**Legend**

-  Subject project plan boundary
-  Subject project plan properties
-  Public owned land (schools, municipalities, etc.)
-  Los Angeles Flood Control District property
-  Protected parks & open space

0 500 1,000 Feet

