

Communication from Public

Name: Marian Dodge

Date Submitted: 02/02/2026 11:15 PM

Council File No: 25-1259

Comments for Public Posting: Oppose CF 25-1259 unless the two VHFHSZ hillside properties, 6941/6945 Camrose Drive and 1635 Laurel Canyon Boulevard are removed



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Los Angeles City Council
Members of the Housing and Homelessness Committee
200 North Spring St., Room 340
Los Angeles, CA 90012

February 2, 2026

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Brentwood Hills Homeowners
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Canyon Back Alliance
Crests Neighborhood Assn.
Dixie Canyon Assn.
Doheny-Sunset Plaza NA
Encino Property Owners
Franklin/Hollywood West Res.
Franklin Hills Residents Assn.
Friends of Walnut Canyon
Highlands Owners Assn.
Hollywood Dell Civic Assn.
Hollywood Heights Assn.
Hollywoodland HOA
Holmby Hills Homeowners Assn.
Kagel Canyon Civic Assn.
Lake Hollywood HOA
Laurel Canyon Assn.
LFIA (Los Feliz)
Mandeville Canyon
Mountaingate
Mt. Olympus Property Owners
Mt. Washington Homeowners All.
Nichols Canyon NA
Oak Forest Canyon HOA
Oaks Neighborhood Assn.
Outpost Neighborhood Assn.
Pacific Palisades Res. Assn.
Residents of Beverly Glen
Save LA River Open Space
Save Our Canyon
Shadow Hills POA
Sherman Oaks HOA
Studio City Residents Assn.
Sunset Hills HOA
Sunshine Hills Residents Assn.
Upper Mandeville Canyon Assn.
Upper Nichols Canyon NA
West Hollywood Heights
Whitley Heights Civic Assn.

Re: CF 25-1259; Small Lots, Big Impacts (SLBI)/ City-Owned Land – OPPOSE Inclusion of Parcels in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone

Council and Committee Members:

The Hillside Federation (Federation), founded in 1952 and representing hillside and canyon communities throughout Los Angeles, **vigorously opposes** the inclusion of two City-owned hillside parcels in Council File Motion 25-1259 — the *Small Lots, Big Impacts (SLBI)/ City-Owned Land/ Request for Qualifications* initiative. These two sites are located within the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (High Fire Zone) of the Santa Monica Mountains, which in itself must disqualify them from the program.

While the Federation recognizes this program as part of the City's efforts to address the housing shortage, we are deeply concerned that hillside lots pose significant safety risks to the public and emergency personnel that cannot be mitigated through building design.

Existing Hillside Site Conditions

6941/6945 Camrose Drive

6945 Camrose sits above the Hollywood Bowl in the Santa Monica Mountains, at the end of a narrow hillside access road (6941 Camrose) already serving multiple existing residences in a mapped High Fire Zone. The parcel has remained vacant for decades and is widely understood to be constrained by topography, access, and stability issues. A previous structure at this site was demolished by the City following a massive landslide. Adding residential density in the same location would increase evacuation risk and fire exposure, particularly given narrow hillside streets and congestion on Highland Avenue. The parcel was subsequently acquired by the City for slope stabilization and infrastructure purposes, not housing, and repurposing it for development would increase risk in this already fragile hillside environment.

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1635 Laurel Canyon Boulevard

1635 Laurel Canyon fronts Laurel Canyon Boulevard, a major north–south arterial connecting the Hollywood Basin to the Santa Monica Mountains High Fire Zone. While the site does not share the dead-end access issues present at Camrose, it is situated along one of the most heavily trafficked hillside corridors in Los Angeles, frequently experiencing severe congestion during peak hours. The densely populated surrounding area has a history of wildfire activity and in emergency conditions, traffic volume and limited roadway capacity would significantly constrain evacuation and first-responder access. This parcel also contains numerous protected trees. Development of the site would likely require removal of some or all of these trees. In addition, compliance with the City’s Protected Tree Ordinance, including the required 4:1 mitigation ratio, would be difficult—if not completely infeasible—given defensible space and fire clearance requirements.

Fire Safety and Evacuation Risk

Both parcels are located in areas where wildfire risk is not hypothetical but well established. As recent fires in hillside and urban-interface communities have shown, wildfire impacts are increasingly wind-driven, fast-moving, and ember-dominated, placing extreme stress on evacuation systems, emergency response, and often inadequate infrastructure (i.e. roadways, water, utilities, etc.).

City staff have suggested that modern construction standards, home hardening, and vegetation clearance can mitigate these risks. The Federation does not dispute the value of such measures; however, they do not resolve the fundamental life-safety challenges associated with siting new residential density in the High Fire Zone.

Even where building-level mitigation may reduce the risk of direct structure ignition under certain conditions, residents must still evacuate, and emergency access must remain viable. Peer-reviewed fire science finds that **inadequate spacing between buildings is a key driver of structure-to-structure ignition and loss in urban conflagrations**. The SLBI proposal does not simply place one home on each parcel; it contemplates subdivision of small lots to accommodate multiple units, reducing spacing between structures and compounding evacuation and emergency response challenges.

In hillside fire zones, you cannot engineer your way out of bad siting decisions. Structure hardening cannot compensate for constrained access, traffic congestion, building density, or the realities of evacuation under extreme fire conditions or other natural disasters.

City-Owned Land Requires a Higher Standard

Because these parcels are owned by the City of Los Angeles, their development carries added significance. The SLBI initiative is explicitly intended to “show the way” and incentivize broader private development. Including parcels in the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone sends the message that danger from wildfire is not a consideration in land-use decisions, not even on public land.

The Federation has consistently supported wildfire preparedness, enforcement of existing regulations, and coordinated City response. At the same time, we have long advocated that development intensity, access, topography, and hazard conditions must be evaluated together, particularly in hillside and canyon areas. The SLBI program claims to model high-quality, context-sensitive development; however, if these two extremely vulnerable, high risk hillside properties remain part of the current motion (or if additional hillside parcels are included in future motions) the effect will be to undermine the very goals set forth by the program.

Conclusion

For all of the reasons stated above, the Hillside Federation urges the City to:

1. Remove 6945/6941 Camrose Drive and 1635 Laurel Canyon Boulevard from the Small Lots, Big Impacts initiative; and
2. Establish a clear fire risk reduction policy specifying that City-owned parcels located within Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones are ***not*** *appropriate candidates for development and should be treated instead as buffers to aid in protecting vulnerable communities.*

The Camrose and Laurel Canyon sites have remained vacant for decades for good reason. Developing them now would place future residents, neighboring communities, and first responders at unnecessary risk and would undermine the City's stated wildfire safety objectives.

Thank you for your attention to public safety, wildfire prevention, and responsible land-use planning.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charley Mims". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charley Mims

cc: CM Nithya Raman
CM Isabel Jurado
CM Bob Blumenfeld
CM Heather Hutt
CM Tim McOsker

Communication from Public

Name: Marian Dodge

Date Submitted: 02/02/2026 11:16 PM

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Charley Mims

cc: CM Nithya Raman
CM Isabel Jurado
CM Bob Blumenfeld
CM Heather Hutt
CM Tim McOsker

Communication from Public

Name: Carrie Gammell
Date Submitted: 02/02/2026 11:41 AM
Council File No: 25-1259

Comments for Public Posting: My name is Carrie, and as an architectural historian and preservationist, I strongly support the Small Lots, Big Impacts initiative. Los Angeles' residential land is almost entirely low-rise, and the city is famously spread out. To drive change in L.A. we need a housing model that can work in these places, and I appreciate that this initiative isn't proposing Manhattan-like towers. What it is proposing is an Angeleno solution to our housing problems. I ask that you approve this motion.

Communication from Public

Name: Joan Ling

Date Submitted: 02/02/2026 12:47 PM

Council File No: 25-1259

Comments for Public Posting: My name is Joan Ling, and as a homeowner and more housing advocate, I want to voice my strong support for the Small Lots, Big Impacts initiative. I know that conversations about building housing can be fraught, but this program's approach to gentle density and its respect for existing rules and regulations make it the perfect vehicle for exploring new housing options in L.A.'s residential neighborhoods. I ask that you approve this motion.

Communication from Public

Name: Tom De Simone

Date Submitted: 02/02/2026 02:14 PM

Council File No: 25-1259

Comments for Public Posting: My name is Tom De Simone, and I lead Genesis LA, a nonprofit community development loan fund that makes loans across the region. We strongly support the Small Lots, Big Impacts initiative and have provided advice to the Mayor's Office and CityLAB team as they developed the program. I know that conversations about building housing can be fraught, but this program's approach to gentle density and its respect for existing rules and regulations make it the perfect vehicle for exploring new housing options in L.A.'s residential neighborhoods. I ask that you approve this motion.

Communication from Public

Name: Jane Blumenfeld

Date Submitted: 02/02/2026 03:01 PM

Council File No: 25-1259

Comments for Public Posting: My name is Jane Blumenfeld. I am writing in strong support of the Small Lots, Big Impacts Initiative. I worked in the city of Los Angeles for over 30 years - in the Department of City Planning, as the Chief of Staff in Council District 5, and as the Advisor to Mayor Bradley regarding planning, real estate and development. I remember seeing the list of city owned properties in the 1980's, which included many or all of these properties. Even at that time, the city was far behind the rest of the nation in creating home ownership opportunities, yet these vacant city-owned lots have continued to languish in public ownership. The Mayor, Planning Commission and Planning Director responded by creating the Small Lot Subdivision ordinance in 2004, which created hundreds of new home ownership units. And other city departments helped create several housing projects over city-owned parking lots. But today the need for homeownership is far greater; these relatively simple solutions are no longer adequate. Today we need new, creative, and feasible ideas that neighborhoods will embrace. For the first time, the Small Lots, Big Impacts initiative has provided the city with a realistic opportunity to build a significant amount of well designed, gentle density into our neighborhoods. This Initiative eliminates the need for new zoning or any discretionary action in order to build. And, all of the immense amount of complex and technical research, creativity, design, and financial expertise that no entity has been willing or able to undertake has been undertaken by dedicated, committed, and highly experienced professionals. They have laid out a path forward. These lots can not be left to languish any longer. The winning prototype projects that would be developed through this initiative are the tip of the iceberg. They will be built in various settings so we will all be able to see for ourselves how well such projects can fit into established neighborhoods. And, most importantly, there are over 1,000 small lots like these all over the city. Imagine utilizing all of the research developed through this initiative and building on hundreds of available lots that will make home ownership possible for many people and many families. I urge you to approve this Motion.

Communication from Public

Name: Jane Blumenfeld

Date Submitted: 02/02/2026 03:13 PM

Council File No: 25-1259

Comments for Public Posting: My name is Jane Blumenfeld. I am writing in strong support of the Small Lots, Big Impacts Initiative. I worked in the city of Los Angeles for over 30 years - in the Department of City Planning, as the Chief of Staff in Council District 5, and as the Advisor to Mayor Bradley regarding planning, real estate and development. I remember seeing the list of city owned properties in the 1980's, which included many or all of these properties. Even at that time, the city was far behind the rest of the nation in creating home ownership opportunities, yet these vacant city-owned lots have continued to languish in public ownership. The Mayor, Planning Commission and Planning Director responded by creating the Small Lot Subdivision ordinance in 2004, which created hundreds of new home ownership units. And other city departments helped create several housing projects over city-owned parking lots. But today the need for homeownership is far greater; these relatively simple solutions are no longer adequate. Today we need new, creative, and feasible ideas that neighborhoods will embrace. For the first time, the Small Lots, Big Impacts initiative has provided the city with a realistic opportunity to build a significant amount of well designed, gentle density into our neighborhoods. This Initiative eliminates the need for new zoning or any discretionary action in order to build. And, all of the immense amount of complex and technical research, creativity, design, and financial expertise that no entity has been willing or able to undertake has been undertaken by dedicated, committed, and highly experienced professionals. They have laid out a path forward. These lots can not be left to languish any longer. The winning prototype projects that would be developed through this initiative are the tip of the iceberg. They will be built in various settings so we will all be able to see for ourselves how well such projects can fit into established neighborhoods. And, most importantly, there are over 1,000 small lots like these all over the city. Imagine utilizing all of the research developed through this initiative and building on hundreds of available lots that will make home ownership possible for many people and many families. I urge you to approve this Motion.