

From: Mindy Nguyen <Mindy.Nguyen@lacity.org>
Sent time: 05/29/2020 12:49:21 PM
To: John Given <john@johngiven.com>
Mayor Garcetti <mayor.garcetti@lacity.org>; Vince Bertoni <vince.bertoni@lacity.org>; Kevin Keller <kevin.keller@lacity.org>; Mitch O'Farrell <councilmember.ofarrell@lacity.org>; David Ryu <councilmember.ryu@lacity.org>; Mike Bonin <mike.bonin@lacity.org>; Marian Dodge <chairman@hillsidefederation.org>; Charley M. Mims <president@hillsidefederation.org>; david.zahniser@latimes.com; emily.alpert@latimes.com
Cc:
Subject: Re: URGENT - Extend the Hollywood Center DEIR comment period (ENV-2018-2116-EIR)

Dear John,

Thank you for your email. Your comments have been received and will be included in the administrative record for the Hollywood Center Project EIR.

Regards,

On Fri, May 29, 2020 at 11:49 AM John Given <john@johngiven.com> wrote:
Dear Mayor Garcetti, Director Bertoni, Honorable Councilmembers, and others:

It is truly unconscionable that the 45-day public comment period for the massive and complex reboot of the Millennium Hollywood project, now dubbed the Hollywood Center, with its highly technical and lengthy Draft EIR (well over 12,000 pages), has not already been extended. The public review and comment period for this project should have been much, much longer, even if our state and local communities were not still in the midst of the Safer At Home period, which promises to extend well into the summer if not beyond.

A project of this size and impact could never have been adequately vetted by community members in a mere 45 days, even in the best of times. But during the COVID-19 pandemic there are significant environmental justice issues in denying an extension, and in pretending that greater online access, or in some cases delivery of cd-rom or thumb drives or massive print editions (of course, only to those who know to request them) will be adequate to the task. More likely, people with no legitimate hope of making a meaningful review and comment do to lack of time or access will take the chance that they may rely on others with better access and technology.

The City's decision not to use its discretion to do the right thing in this case is beyond perplexing, especially as it occurs against a backdrop of daily news articles on corruption at the highest levels of our City government (for example, today's online story by Ms. Alpert Reyes and Mr. Zahniser, available at <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-05-29/jose-huizar-george-esparza-alleged-secret-sexual-harassment-settlement>). The City hides behind the weak argument that its hands are essentially tied and it *must* limit the public review period. But this is false. As the Hillside Federation's email makes clear, the City has broad discretion to determine the appropriate review period, discretion it has used readily in the past. This is confirmed by the Chief Counsel for the state agency charged with oversight of CEQA.

Our California Supreme Court has held that the environmental review process is intended "to demonstrate to an apprehensive citizenry that the [City] has, in fact, analyzed and considered the ecological implications of its action." An EIR "is a document of accountability . . . protect[ing] not only the environment but also informed self-government." *Laurel Heights Improvement Assn. v. Regents of the University of California* (1988) 47 Cal.3d 376, 392.

Angelenos are deservedly apprehensive about the environmental review process in Los Angeles due to the terrible corruption in our City government of which we seem to learn more every day, and also due to the City's business-as-usual approach to planning and land use decision-making, even while we are at the height of the worst public health emergency in the modern era that limits public access to public buildings such as libraries, where environmental review documents are ordinarily available for review, and where computer systems are available to be used by members of the public who do not have the personal resources to own that technology. One cannot review a 12,400 page DEIR on a smartphone.

The City's decision to do the right thing in this case would go a long way to resolving the apprehension of its citizens. I urge you to extend the public comment period in the Hollywood Center by a reasonable amount, but certainly by no less than an additional 45 days. (A more reasonable extension to ensure environmental justice concerns are adequately met would be to extend until 60 days *after* public libraries reopen so that the usual public access to environmental documents is available to interested members of the public.)

Thank you for your consideration.

John Given

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John Given

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Dear Hillside Federation Friends,

The City has refused the many reasonable requests to extend the public comment period for the Hollywood Center Draft EIR. Interested members of the public, including many of our members, are currently scrambling to complete their initial review of this highly technical, 12,400-page document describing the potentially significant environmental impacts of this 4.5-acre, 1.3 million square-foot revision of the controversial Millenium Hollywood Project in time to make meaningful public comments. Comments are due this Monday, June 1.

But it is not too late for the City to do the right thing.

Please join us in reaching out to your councilmembers, Mayor Garcetti, and Director of Planning Vince Bertoni to demand that they allow for fully informed public participation by extending the public comment period by a reasonable amount.

The City is well aware of its broad discretion to extend the comment period. Mayor Garcetti requested just such an extension of the Millenium Hollywood DEIR when he was Councilmember for the 13th Council District. The City extended the comment period for its Citywide Sidewalk DEIR (twice) to allow a total public comment period of 157 days.^[1] Nonetheless, the City hides behind the weak argument that “the public review period for a Draft EIR should not be less than 30 days nor should it be longer than 60 days, except under unusual circumstances.”^[2] Have there ever been more unusual circumstances?

Thursday the Hillside Federation received guidance from the Chief Counsel of the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, the regulatory agency with primary oversight of CEQA regulations and environmental justice:

We agree that public review of projects is an important part of the CEQA process. CEQA provides a floor and not a ceiling for the deadlines for public review and comments. Accordingly, **public agencies may use their discretion to extend the time for public review and comment.** We have included language on our website making that clear.^[3]

Please write to Mayor Garcetti, Director Bertoni, Planner Mindy Nguyen, Councilmember Mitch O’Farrell, Councilmember David Ryu, and your own councilmember, to demand their support for a reasonable extension of the Hollywood Center Draft EIR comment period.

Mayor Eric Garcetti: mayor.garcetti@lacity.org

Director of Planning Vince Bertoni: vince.bertoni@lacity.org

City Planner Mindy Nguyen: mindy.nguyen@lacity.org

Councilmember Mitch O’Farrell: councilmember.ofarrell@lacity.org

Councilmember David Ryu: councilmember.ryu@lacity.org

Thank you for your continued support.

Best regards,

Marian Dodge, Chairman
Federation of Hillside and Canyon Associations, Inc.
www.hillsidefederation.org

[1] See <https://sidewalks.lacity.org/environmental-impact-report>.

[2] Project planner Mindy Nguyen, in a boilerplate response made to numerous extension requests. (See, e.g., May 5, 2020 email response to Mary Ledding, available at: [https://planning.lacity.org/eir/HollywoodCenter/Deir/ELDP/\(H\)%20Remainder%20of%20Administrative%20Record/Public%20Comments/Public%20Correspondence/20200511%201819%20M.%20Ledding%20HC%20Request.pdf](https://planning.lacity.org/eir/HollywoodCenter/Deir/ELDP/(H)%20Remainder%20of%20Administrative%20Record/Public%20Comments/Public%20Correspondence/20200511%201819%20M.%20Ledding%20HC%20Request.pdf)).

[3] Email from Jeannie Lee, Chief Counsel of Governor's Office of Planning and Research, to Charley M. Mims, President, Federation of Hillside and Canyon Associations, Inc. (May 28, 2020) (emphasis added), available upon request.



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