



BRENTWOOD
COMMUNITY
COUNCIL

January 18, 2021

planning.media@lacity.org.
Attention: Alan Como
Department of City Planning
201 North Figueroa Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Re: Berggruen Institute Project
Case No. ENV 2019-4565-EIR**

Dear Mr. Como:

On behalf of the Brentwood Community Council (BCC), I wish to submit the following comments concerning the scope of the EIR for the above Berggruen Institute Project (“Project”). The Brentwood Community Council represents 35,000 Brentwood residents, 13 HOA’s, 3 business districts and multiple special topic committees, including land use, transportation and the environment. After multiple public meetings that included this topic, and substantial Board input, we believe these comments to be the most inclusive set of comments to date.

These comments are based upon a review of the November 2020 Initial Study by the BCC ad hoc Berggruen Committee (Committee) and the December 8, 2020 Scoping Meeting conducted by the Planning Department. The sole purpose of this letter is to help assure that the Project EIR adequately analyzes and assesses potential significant environmental impacts and should not be deemed as either supporting or opposing the Project. The BCC has not taken a position on the merits of the Project.

Throughout the Initial Study there are references to a proposed Specific Plan, but the specifics of such Specific plan are not identified. Without a description of the proposed Specific Plan it was not possible for the Committee to ascertain potential significant impacts that may arise from the adoption of the plan. Accordingly, the EIR process should not be concluded until the public is afforded a reasonable opportunity to review and comment upon the proposed Specific Plan.

The BCC agrees that each potentially significant environmental impact identified in the Initial Study must be thoroughly and objectively analyzed and evaluated so that the City and the public will have an honest assessment of the Project’s impact upon the environment. The BCC further believes that the EIR should specifically analyze and evaluate the topics specified below

1. **Migratory Wildlife** - The EIR should specifically address the potential impact upon wildlife corridors utilized by the California mountain lion, bobcat and mule deer.

2. **Hazards & Hazardous Materials.**

- a. The EIR should analyze whether adequate evacuation routes exist in the event of a fire originating to the east of the Project and identify same.
- b. The EIR should analyze the impact of ongoing vehicular traffic using the “Serpentine Road” on the methane gas that presently underlies such road and surrounding area within the proposed Project.

3. **Hydrology & Water Quality.** The EIR should analyze whether water quality may be compromised by the proximity of most of the suggested buildings to the leaking, unlined closed solid waste dumps or landfills: Canyons 7 and 8.

4. **Land Use & Planning.**

- a. As noted above, the Project contemplates the adoption of a Specific Plan that is not described in the Initial Study. Such a plan could have substantial impacts upon the Brentwood-Pacific Plan and the West Los Angeles Community Plan and its unavailability may render the Initial Study premature or defective. The potential substantial impacts of the Initial Study should be studied and disclosed in the EIR.
- b. The EIR should address the propriety of the use of a Specific Plan zoning tool for the proposed Project.

5. **Noise.**

- a. The EIR should address the impact of noise arising from recreational activities and large groups attended events.
- b. The EIR should address the potential impacts of construction noise upon wildlife.

6. **Public Services.**

- a. **Fire Services.** The Project will create additional demand of the existing fire services, whose budgets are presently being cut, leaving the community with under-funded first responders. The EIR needs to address the additional strain the Project will create, and whether there are monetary and non-monetary mitigations that would compensate the community for such strain, including the requirement of fire sub-stations as part of the Project.
- b. **Police Services.** The Project will create additional demand of the existing public police services, whose budget is presently being cut, leaving the community with under-funded first responders. The EIR needs to address the additional strain the Project will create, and whether there are monetary and non-monetary mitigations that would compensate the community for such strain, including the requirement of police fire sub-stations as part of the Project.

7. **Recreation: Increased Use of Existing Recreational Resources.** The EIR should specifically address the potential impacts of the Project upon hiking trails and public access to the mountain conservation areas abutting the Project.

8. **Transportation.**

a. The Initial Study identifies a number circumstances where the Project may have potentially significant traffic impacts that will require traffic studies. All such traffic studies should include an analysis of the potential traffic impacts during the morning rush hours (6:00 A.M. to 10:00 A.M.) and the evening rush hours (3:30 P.M. to [p.m.to] 7:00 P.M.), e.g. the rush hour periods recently adopted by LADOT for Ventura Blvd.

b. Conflicts With Existing Circulation System. The EIR should analyze the potential traffic impacts the Project will have upon Sunset Boulevard west of the 405.

c. Methodology to be used to determine “vehicle miles traveled.”

d. Inadequate Emergency Access. The Initial Study notes the Project is located within a designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. The Planning Department has been recently directed undertaken to study and make recommendations concerning emergency evacuation routes zones. The EIR should analyze this subject in conjunction with the results of this study.

9. **Utilities & Services Systems**

a. Water and Wastewater. In addition to evaluating the water supply adequacy to meet the additional needs mandated by the proposed Project, we would expect the EIR to evaluate the additional strain on existing infrastructure in Los Angeles in connection with the flow of additional water through the current water lines, which have been bursting and collapsing within the Brentwood and neighboring communities at an alarming rate.

b. Electricity. We expect any EIR to address the adequacy of existing infrastructure in Los Angeles to meet the electrical needs of the proposed Project and evaluate the additional strain it may place on a presently overburdened system. Given that wildfires have been started from sparks generated by above ground electrical lines, we would also expect any EIR to evaluate the benefits of requiring underground electrical lines for the proposed Project.

10. **Wildfire.**

a. Will Project Exacerbate Wildfire Risk:

- 1) EIR should analyze the increased risk of fire during construction of the Project given the presence of methane along Serpentine road. EIR should

analyze whether high wind driven fires be contained when aerial firefighting equipment cannot be operated?

2) The EIR should study and disclose in what ways and to what extent the (a) construction and the (b) operation of the BI would increase the risk of a fire starting on that land compared with the risk if (i) there were no project, or (ii) there were the 29 homes currently entitled. The EIR should study and disclose what firefighting equipment and personnel would likely be allocated to fighting a fire on the BI land if the Project is built, compared with the equipment and personnel allocated if (i) no project, or (ii) 29 homes (and describe the diversion of equipment and personnel from nearby communities).

3) The EIR should study and disclose the potential, during a fire on the BI land, for use by (a) firefighting personnel and equipment and (b) BI residents, guests, and staff of the "fire roads" between (i) the top of Kenter Ave and the Project, and (ii) the top of Mount Saint Mary's and the Project. The EIR should study and disclose the impact of such use on the residents between Sunset Blvd and the southern point of those fire roads during a mandatory evacuation order.

4) The EIR should study and disclose the potential impacts during a fire on the BI land: (a) whether Ridge I is of sufficient width at all points to satisfy LAFD access requirements for firefighting personnel and equipment; and (b) whether Serpentine Road provides viable egress from the BI in the event of a fire and c) and an analysis of the impacts should emergency egress via Stoney Hill Road be unavailable to BI residents, guests and staff.

5) The EIR should study and disclose the impact of use of Mountaingate Roads upon the residents of the Mountaingate development during a mandatory evacuation order.

c. Will Project Require Installation and Maintenance of Infrastructure that Increases Fire Risk

d. Will the Project Contribute to Increased Risks from Runoff, Post-Fire Slope Instability or Drainage Changes.

11. **Geology & Soils.** The Initial Study acknowledges that portions of the project site may be underlain by soils and/or landfill materials that are unstable or that become unstable due to ground shaking. Additionally, other portions of the project site are susceptible to seismically-induced landslides and liquefaction. Given the size of this project, the EIR should fully analyze the increased risks to life and neighboring properties arising from these existing conditions in the event of a reasonably foreseeable seismic event exceeding 6.0 on the Richter scale.

Sincerely,

BRENTWOOD COMMUNITY COUNCIL

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry Watts". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

T. Larry Watts

BCC Secretary

BCC Chair of Ad Hoc Berggruen Project Committee