



PAUL KREKORIAN
Councilmember, Second District

January 23, 2020

Richard B. Commons
Harvard-Westlake School
3700 Coldwater Canyon Avenue
Studio City, CA 91604

Re: Harvard-Westlake River Park facility

Dear Mr. Commons:

The Weddington Golf & Tennis site is a true gem in the Studio City community and an important ecological, recreational and aesthetic asset in our neighborhood. It is the largest privately-held open space facing the Los Angeles River in the entire San Fernando Valley, and is very near and dear to my heart.

Since my days as a state legislator and through my time on the City Council, I have worked hard to prevent this property from being developed with housing, to preserve open space at this site and to improve access to the Los Angeles River. I have consistently joined with the neighborhood in successfully blocking all of the many proposals that included plans for condominiums and apartments that would have destroyed the site with hundreds of units of housing.

I appreciate that Harvard-Westlake, in its initial proposal on the Weddington site, respected my position that no housing or above-ground parking structures would be built on the property. The school has committed to respect my and the community's preferences to maintain open space, improve public access to the revitalized Los Angeles River, maintain publicly accessible recreational activities on the site and enhance community benefits on the property. With the plans presented this summer to the community, this project appears to be a significant step in the right direction, especially compared to all of the previous proposals. The importance of this

site in Studio City is so great, however, that being better than the previous proposals is not good enough.

I take seriously the commitment that the school has made to work closely with the community and my office in the continued revision of the proposed Harvard-Westlake River Park facility and appreciate the community meetings and presentation to the Studio City Residents Association that took place over the summer. My staff and I have heard both from community members who support the proposal as it is and those that have concerns. While I understand that the school is still in the beginning phases of this process, I expect the school to be open to making changes to its initial proposal and accommodating for the concerns expressed regarding the proposed plans.

After reviewing the plans and taking into account all of the feedback that my office has heard from the community, I request that the school commit to at least the following changes and conditions to ensure the proposed development remains a cohesive use within the Studio City community:

MINIMIZING NEIGHBORHOOD IMPACTS

- The school must provide adequate parking onsite to eliminate the threat of overflow parking that could impact the surrounding neighborhood, at a minimum of 400 parking spaces, without building above ground structures.
- The school must accept a binding and enforceable condition that there will be no football games allowed on the property at any time.
- The proposed gym is too large and must be reduced from the proposed three bays to a maximum of two bays; the height of the gym must be at or below the 30 foot height allowed by current zoning on the property.
- Only one pool will be allowed onsite, and appropriate measures must be taken to screen the pool and its potential noise impacts from the surrounding neighborhood.
- The school must analyze all potential impacts that may arise from lights on the site, and must implement shielded and LED lighting to eradicate potential light impacts that could originate from the site.
- The school must analyze and address all significant noise impacts from the property to the adjacent residential community and utilize all feasible solutions to address noise impacts.
- The school must provide a clear and defined traffic mitigation plan that will prevent cut-through traffic from students and others driving to the site from the Upper Campus, ensuring that local neighborhood roads are not impacted.

- The school must create a detailed security plan and code of conduct that will protect the property, students and neighborhood, and also identify how the school will manage and deter students, families, and others using the facilities from parking in the surrounding neighborhoods and walking onto the site. Hours of operation that will preserve the tranquil nature of the community must be established and rigorously enforced.
- The school must commit to mitigating construction impacts by using best practices, including but not limited to limiting construction hauling hours, staging all construction equipment on the site, and agreeing to regular community meetings during the construction to update and inform the neighbors. The school must further provide a point of contact accessible whenever any construction activity is ongoing so that community members may communicate any concerns.

INCREASING PUBLIC BENEFITS

- The school will improve and continuously maintain the Zev Yaroslavsky Walkway on the north side of the Los Angeles River from Whitsett to Coldwater Canyon, and build an ADA accessible ramp along the north side of the Los Angeles River at Coldwater Canyon to continue the connection through the walkway.
- The school must provide publicly accessible tennis courts with a reservation system and establish appropriate closing times for the tennis courts to allow for additional public usage in the evenings.
- The school shall preserve the existing golf clubhouse, the café, and the community putting green at Valley Spring Lane and Whitsett Avenue and continue to allow public access.
- The school must increase the total non-recreational open space areas on the site, and commit those spaces to be open to the public from dawn to dusk every day.
- The school must allow access to community groups, including local schools and youth groups, to reserve the sports fields and gymnasium at times that the school is not using them, and Studio City based non-profit groups must have priority access.

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

- The school will commit to implementing water reclamation and storm water capture infrastructure to provide a more environmentally sustainable development that will treat, capture and reuse (to the highest levels of low impact development requirements) all rainwater that falls on the property. This infrastructure must also treat, capture and reuse all stormwater and runoff from the 40 acres to the north of the site, with a combined treatment and storage capacity of a million gallons, thus meeting the intent of the proposed Los Angeles River Natural Park project that the city used in its unsuccessful

Proposition O grant application. Meeting these requirements will make this the largest privately funded stormwater treatment and capture project in the City.

- Mindful of the urgent threat that we face from climate change, I will require that from its opening day the site will have carbon sequestration that is greater than the carbon sequestration capacity of the property as it is today.
- All trees deemed protected by the City of Los Angeles shall be preserved. Any nonnative tree removed shall be replaced with two 24-inch box trees (at a minimum) that shall be a native species that complies with the Los Angeles River Improvement Overlay and Los Angeles County River Master Plan Landscaping Guidelines. Replacement trees shall be planted on the property or along the Los Angeles River. Additionally, all invasive palm trees on the site shall be removed and replaced.
- **The school must prepare a full Environmental Impact Report**, with expanded public comment periods, that will analyze and mitigate its environmental impacts and ensure that all of my requirements specified herein are met.

With the proposed changes mentioned in this letter and feedback heard from the community, this project will be a better fit for Studio City and will promote Harvard-Westlake's expressed desire to be a good neighbor. As the school moves forward in updating the proposed plans, I will continue to advocate for the needs of our community and ensure that the site continues to remain an environmental, aesthetic and recreational asset to Studio City that improves river access, preserves open space and provides beneficial uses to the community.

I will always insist that the community is both engaged in, and protected against any impacts that may result from, Harvard-Westlake's plans. I want to reiterate that these plans are substantially better than previous proposals for this property and that I absolutely will not support any attempt to regress and place housing or an above-ground parking structure on the site. I know that if we all continue to work together, we will arrive at a project that will meet the needs of the school and the community.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact my Planning Deputy, Adrienne Asadoorian, in my City Hall office at (213) 473-7002 or adrienne.asadoorian@lacity.org.

Very truly yours,



PAUL KERKORIAN

Councilmember, Second District