

April 22, 2015

Mr. Russ Guiney
Director, Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation
433 South Vermont Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90020

Re: Grant No. 58G8-14-2433 and Project Agreement V-14

Dear Mr. Guiney:

This is a request for your department to investigate what appears to be a misuse of funds awarded to the City of Palos Verdes Estates (PVE) involving the above noted 2013 Trails Grant of \$75,000 from your department (not yet used), which was intended for trail access improvements and hikers/bikers. Instead, the money is expected to be used to fund a turnaround that will primarily be used to benefit the residence at the end of a semi-private street (2035 Paseo Del Sol in PVE), and to a lesser extent several neighboring homes, so that delivery trucks and other vehicles will no longer need to turn around in their driveways. Since public parking was removed on lower Paseo del Sol in mid 2013, only residents and their guests can now park on this street where the turnaround is planned. The City did this to support the desire of these residents to not only limit street traffic, but to also reduce public access to the trail at the end of this street. Without public parking on lower Paseo Del Sol, the proposed turnaround is simply not for "hikers" or the "public-at-large" and the service area is not "Regional," contrary to what is stated in the grant application. (See Attachment A.)

The main intent of the turnaround to largely benefit a specific individual, not the public, has been well documented during a recent City Council meeting discussing this topic on April 14, 2015. (The City tapes these meetings and posts the audio on its website at <http://www.pvestates.org/index.aspx?page=191>, so county authorities can readily confirm the points mentioned herein.) Even though there may be a need to have a turnaround to resolve the inconveniences of residents on that street, at issue is whether this would be wrong and improper under the terms of the grant program awarded by your department to the City of PVE, which are stated to be for trails and public access. (See Attachment B.)

In addition, the City of PVE contends that the turnaround is needed for public safety so that a standard pumper fire truck could more easily turn around in the event of a possible fire on public Parklands at the end of the stated street. However, a county fire department official who testified at the April 14, 2015 meeting indicated that the turnaround would be helpful, but that "it is not critical." He also mentioned that there was a possibility any vehicles needed for a

fire that might occur in the area would simply park on a parallel and wider nearby street (Via Del Monte) and have hoses extended down the hill, or that a fire truck smaller than a standard pumper would be used instead. There are also other areas to access this hillside to fight fires. Further as long as parking is allowed on the very narrow lower Paseo Del Sol for residences and their guests a standard pumper may not even be able to access the proposed turnaround. Regardless that the City may claim that the turnaround is for "Fire Department Personnel" as stated in the application or that it's for public safety, such reasons are not covered by this grant. Even if they were, there is doubt that a fire vehicle would ever use the turnaround.

As shown in Attachment C, hikers and bikers using the Del Sol Fire Trail will not use the planned turnaround if they need to park and turn their cars around one-quarter mile away on Via Del Monte. A remedy may be to make public parking on lower Paseo Del Sol a grant requirement. However, if this street is considered too narrow for street parking, and given the above information, your department may want to reconsider its decision to award the \$75,000 grant. I am of course available to provide any clarification based on my understanding of the matter.

Should the Department of Parks and Recreation decide to rescind their grant to Palos Verdes Estates for the aforementioned turnaround, because of what appears to be misleading or incorrect information filed on the grant application, it is hoped that these funds could still actually be used for trails and public access in PVE. Perhaps the grant could be amended to repave, improve and refortify the entire Del Sol Fire Trail, not just a part of it. This would make the service area, use and scope of the application similar to what was in the original application. Another possibility is to simply create a new connecting trail on Parklands from the Fire Trail entrance to the public parking area along Via Del Monte. However, for City and other county residents, such as myself, please don't let what appears to be a misappropriation of grant funds from your department be used for the specific benefit of primarily one PVE resident, prevent better utilization of Parklands for the enjoy nature and to improve our health.

Sincerely,

L. Ried Schott
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