

May 10, 2009

Jon Kirk Mukri, General Manager
Department of Recreation and Parks
221 N. Figueroa St., Suite 1550
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Rita L. Robinson, General Manager
Department of Transportation
100 S. Main Street, 10th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: 07-3494-S1

Dear Mr. Mukri and Ms. Robinson:

The Department of Transportation (DOT) is currently engaged in proceedings that can only be aimed at undermining or reversing the City's long-standing policy, based upon Los Angeles City Municipal Code Section 63.44 B 16, excluding bikes from dirt trails in City parks. The Los Feliz Improvement Association (LFIA), representing over 1000 households in the Los Feliz area, and, backed by numerous prominent hiking, equestrian and environmental organizations, successfully opposed similar efforts for over a decade. Our opposition to such activities has only become more entrenched over the years as the fragility of our parks has become more obvious.

We believe the DOT lacks authority to initiate any change in the designation of dirt trails to permit the use of mountain bikes since this activity is exclusively a recreational use of our parks. If the well-funded special interests groups and trade associations representing mountain bike manufacturing and distributing interests hope to force their way into our City parks, they should be soliciting the support of the Department of Recreation and Parks, which has the authority to determine park policy.

Even assuming the DOT can justify its involvement, we strongly object to its current approach. The DOT has used every means to exclude the public from this process, while welcoming the participation of mountain biking lobbyists. Under the guise of orchestrating a "mediation," the DOT has engaged an agency with a clear conflict of interest to discuss resolution among a group of individuals hand-selected by the same conflicted agency. This process only serves to undermine public confidence in the DOT, its motive and any outcome from this charade.

We are grateful that Councilman Tom LaBonge has asked the City Attorney to investigate the DOT's lack of transparency and compliance with city and state open meeting laws.

We remind everyone involved that the justifications for excluding bikes from dirt trails are as cogent today as ever. Allowing such activities would cause additional physical degradation of our parks. Furthermore, such activities will unquestionably displace and interfere with the enjoyment of walkers, hikers and equestrians (whose legal use of City parks has been recognized for decades) placing them in serious physical danger and diminishing their experience.

The LFIA hopes that all City agencies and departments will uphold the existing ban on off-road mountain biking in all City parks and that the DOT's efforts to undermine or reverse this prohibition will promptly cease.

Sincerely,

Marian Dodge, President

cc: Councilmember Tom LaBonge
Councilmember Eric Garcetti
Councilmember Wendy Greuel
RAP Asst. General Manager Vicki Israel
Griffith Superintendent Debby Rolland