



August 18, 2023

Attention: Los Angeles City Planning Commission

Re: Harvard-Westlake River Park (Case Numbers: CPC-2020-1511-VCU-SPR and ENV-2020-1512-EIR)

Dear Commissioner Millman and Honorable City Planning Commissioners,

I am writing to you in response to the letter from 4th District Los Angeles City Councilmember Nithya Raman, dated August 14, 2023, in regard to the Harvard-Westlake River Park project, which will come before your Commission on August 24, 2023.

I first want to thank Councilmember Raman for her thorough review of Harvard-Westlake's proposal. As a result of the extensive outreach that she and her staff conducted with City departments, community stakeholders, and our school's leadership, I believe we have successfully found common ground on the vision for River Park as a resource to be enjoyed by students and the community. The most important areas of agreement include increased public access, improving pedestrian safety, activating transportation demand management strategies, reducing the number of special events, and promoting green building and environmental protections.

The school has considered her thoughtful requests and, I am pleased to share, has accepted her proposed conditions. While we hope to work with the City Planning Commission to enact minor modifications on the conditions regarding constructing a carbon-free building and increasing the net total of native trees, as described below, on the whole we find the proposed conditions to be fair, reasoned, and acceptable. As to the minor modifications, we are excited to construct an all-electric building consistent with City Ordinance No. 187714. Consistent with the Ordinance, the two commercial kitchens (one in the gym and one in the café) and the swimming pool heater must remain natural gas. Secondly, with regard to increasing the net total of native trees, we propose to mitigate the replacement of on-site trees that the City deems "dead", including those that have succumbed to disease or adverse weather during the time that the school has owned the property, even though the City does not require mitigation for either. Replacement species shall be native to California, consistent with the Project's entire landscaping palette.

We have worked closely with the City, neighbors, and the Studio City community on this project, and we have strived to incorporate public feedback to design what we feel is a better project today. River Park has evolved in that time so as to reduce its potential impacts on our residential neighbors, increase public access, and to retain the physical elements that have long defined the property.

Harvard-Westlake River Park will be a tremendous asset for our students and the Studio City community. The project's environmental benefits will improve conditions at the property over their current state. The recreational opportunities will be expanded far beyond the golf and tennis offered at present. And the public accessibility of the facility will make it open to use by our community partners and the surrounding neighborhood.



When Harvard-Westlake purchased this property in 2017, we set out with the goal to make the development process transparent and thoughtful, upholding the school's mission in a manner consistent with the neighborhood's goals for the property. I believe we have achieved those ambitions, and I am gratified that the Councilmember agrees with that assessment.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter, and we look forward to our continued work with the Councilmember and her office to ensure that River Park will be a beloved resource in Studio City for years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick Commons". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Rick Commons
President
Harvard-Westlake School