



TreePeople

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SAVE OUR CANYON!
New Commercial Zoning in Benedict Canyon
is a Big Threat to the Santa Monica Mountains**

LOS ANGELES, CA [October 16, 2018] – Currently, a developer is aggressively petitioning the City to change the residential zoning laws that would allow for a large-scale commercial project in the heart of Benedict Canyon, within a few miles of TreePeople. This zoning change will enable the development of a project in the local mountains which includes an 80-foot-tall 99 room full service hotel, a 5,500 square foot banquet hall, 26 other detached buildings to house 438 guests, and 9 large single-family residences.

TreePeople does not generally take positions on individual development projects. However, the organization’s Board of Directors has approved TreePeople to take a stand against this proposed zone change because it would introduce a new and legal measure that would drastically change the landscape. This proposal would create an entirely new and currently non-existent zoning classification of “Specialized Hospitality,” which could set a precedent for inappropriate or inconsistent development throughout the Santa Monica Mountains.

TreePeople is concerned that a zone change would open the floodgates not only to this project but to others like it thereby increasing fire risk, endangering wildlife habitat, and causing further destruction of protected walnut and oak woodlands. In fact, the project requires the likely removal or destruction of hundreds of mature and protected trees. **The legal ramifications and the project’s potential negative impacts on the surrounding trees, ecosystem, and health and safety of people are antithetical to TreePeople’s work and commitment to restore the surrounding landscape.** TreePeople declared:

“TreePeople opposes the proposed zone change, which would threaten the fragile ecosystem of the Santa Monica Mountains, because it would create a new ‘Specialized Hospitality’ classification, which could set a precedent for inappropriate or inconsistent development throughout the Santa Monica Mountains.”

Therefore, TreePeople will join the **Save Our Canyons Coalition**, a local group of neighbors united by the goal to educate others about the proposed zone change and its ramifications. TreePeople is dedicated to protecting trees and wildlife corridors especially in the Santa Monica Mountains. Save Our Canyon noted:

"The board of Save Our Canyon is proud to join with with TreePeople, a organization that has been a powerful protector of our canyons and our environment for generations. We look forward to locking arms together across the Santa Monica Mountains."

The coalition has engaged over 1,000 local residents who have signed a petition against the project, donated to the group and/or emailed asking their Los Angeles City Councilmember Paul Koretz to stand with his community to stop the proposed land use request. As a result, he has officially taken a public position to stand with his constituents against the hotel and zone change.

Learn more about the proposed zone change at saveourcanyon.la.

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About TreePeople

TreePeople unites the power of trees, people, and nature-based solutions to grow a more climate-resilient city as the region faces historic drought and a hotter, drier future. The organization inspires, engages and supports people to take personal responsibility for the urban environment, facilitates collaboration among government agencies, and promotes leadership in grassroots volunteers, students and communities. In this way, TreePeople seeks to build a powerful and diverse coalition to grow a greener, healthier and more water-secure Los Angeles for present and future generations. For more information, visit treepeople.org.