

MOTION

PUBLIC WORKS

The Mandeville Canyon area of West Los Angeles is a designated City of Los Angeles Special Flood Risk Area. Over the last several decades, Mandeville Canyon has received more than its fair share of natural disasters, usually in the form of floods and mudslides. In fact, many Mandeville Canyon properties have filed repeat disaster claims to the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Recently, the Bureau of Engineering (BOE) made a significant effort to secure the safety of the community by creating a Special Order, which has been very effective in ensuring that future development in the Canyon watercourse areas will occur in a safe and appropriate manner. However, a concern remains that this does not go far enough in protecting the community and guiding property owners in the appropriate manner in which development in the watershed should occur. Property owners often are not fully aware of their responsibilities toward the watercourse and City staff is often unaware of some of the building restrictions near the watercourse. As has been seen several times over the years, any obstructions in the watercourse can lead to potential disaster.

The Bureau of Engineering has identified that the enforcement authority of the Bureau of Engineering and the Department of Building and Safety, its sister permitting agency, must be strengthened. Accordingly, the Bureau has suggested that a map outlining the Mandeville area be submitted for approval and inclusion into the Los Angeles Flood Hazard Map (LAFHM). The LAFHM is the official map for the City of Los Angeles identified by the Specific Plan for the Management of Flood Hazards (Ordinance 172081). The LAFHM includes the 100-year Flood Insurance Rate Maps published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and can include other maps designated by the City Council. This inclusion would give City staff a stronger position should an applicant choose to challenge the City's regulatory authority. It would also help the Floodplain Manager work with the Zoning Administrator to ensure that this issue is brought into consideration in conjunction with any Planning Department decisions.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council request the City Attorney to draft an ordinance for presentation to the City Council to amend Ordinance 172081, which defines the Los Angeles Flood Hazard Map, to include the Mandeville Canyon watershed.

I FURTHER MOVE that if other areas experiencing significant damage to life and/or property or significant repetitive loss claims are identified in the future, that the City Engineer be directed to notify the City Council for inclusion of such areas on the Los Angeles Flood Hazard Map.

PRESENTED BY

Cindy Miscikowski
 CINDY MISCIKOWSKI
 Councilmember, 11th District

SECONDED BY

Greg

AP FEB 22 2005

05-0332 CD 11
 REF TO 98.1023

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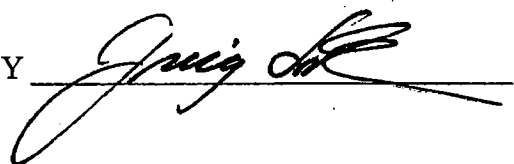
PRESENTED BY



CINDY MISCIKOWSKI

Councilmember, 11th District

SECONDED BY



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The record-setting rains that occurred in the first weeks of January, 2005 have shown the importance and effectiveness of the City of Los Angeles' flood control system. Overall the system worked exceptionally well. However, in some of the hillside and canyon areas, where the flood control system consists in part or wholly of natural watercourses, there were instances in which the watercourses were blocked by debris, both manmade and naturally-occurring, causing instances of flooding.

Chapter 6, Sections 64.07, 64 .08 and 64.09 of the City's Municipal Code prohibit property owners from obstructing the public right of way without a permit from the City. When a watercourse is blocked, damage can result both upstream and downstream, going far beyond the property on which the blockage occurs. This past major rain event saw flood damage occurring on both private and public property, as mud flow and debris, along with water, ended up on adjacent properties and City streets. Unfortunately, much of this damage can be attributed to obstruction of many of these watercourses prior to the rains. Though certain blockages and obstructions can be traced to new debris brought into the watercourse during these recent rains, many watercourses had previously existing obstructions that constricted the waterways. Had these locations been identified and kept clear of debris or other blockages, such as fences, storm damage might have been significantly reduced.

Mandeville Canyon Road in the Brentwood area of the City has a history of mudslides and floods. This was evident once again when it was particularly hard hit by the recent rains, and significant damage and disruption was due to blocked watercourses. A tremendous amount of City resources were spent to ensure the safety and stability of this road, and its tributary roads and canyons.

City inspectors need to be able to investigate these watercourses on a regular basis to help prevent additional instances of unnecessary flooding, in much the same way the Fire Department is empowered to enforce brush clearance to avoid brush fires. Until funding is provided for such a proactive inspection program, the flooding problem will continue to exist.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council, instruct the Department of Public Works, in conjunction with the Department of Building and Safety, City Administrative Officer and Chief Legislative Analyst, with the assistance of the City Attorney, report back to the Council within 45 days on creating a framework for a pilot program for mandatory watercourse inspections, including: estimated cost; proposed funding; implementation schedule; and challenges that must be addressed.

I FURTHER MOVE that upon approval of a pilot program, the first area for program implementation will be Mandeville Canyon.

I FURTHER MOVE that 180 days after the start of this pilot inspection program, the Department of Public Works report back on a framework, estimated cost, funding source and schedule for implementing this program on a City-wide basis.

PRESENTED BY

Cindy Miscikowski
CINDY MISCIKOWSKI
Councilmember, 11th District

SECONDED BY

Greg
05-0331
CD 11

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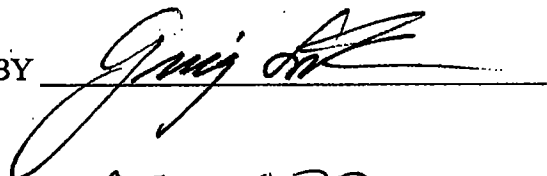
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